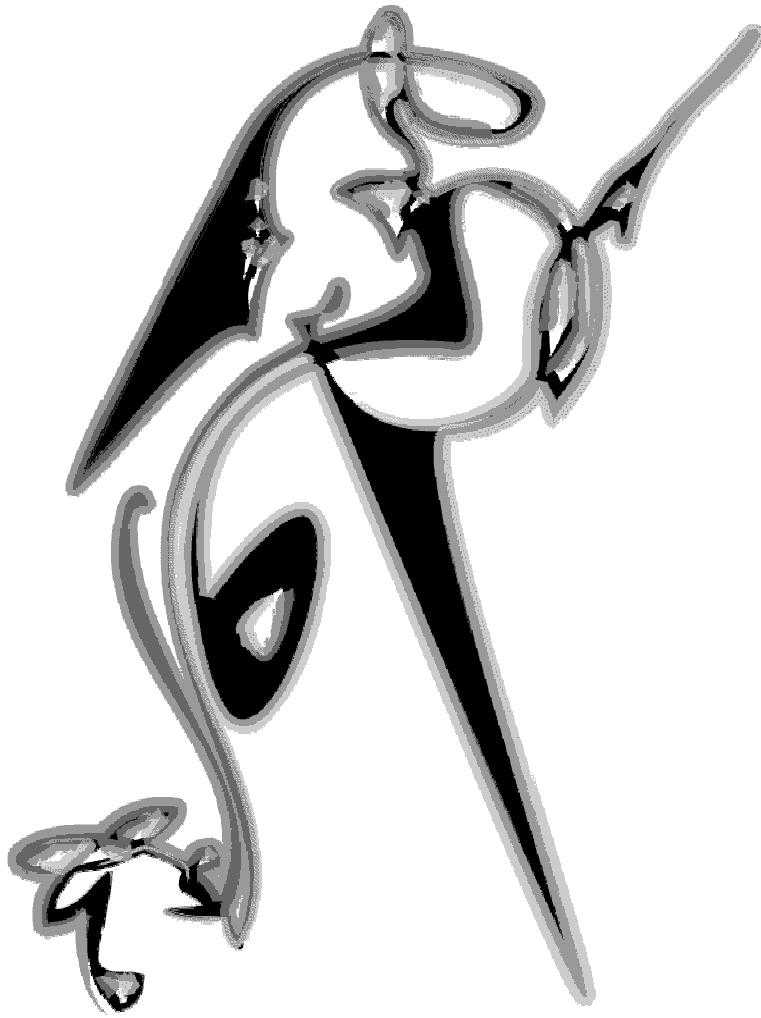


ప్రశ్నలీక్ష లేఖనిత్రు వ్రాయ



Book of Visitations
of Glory

Issue 3



Contributors

Hastfasíltum Temple – Brad Johnson

A Day in the Life - Krista Donnelly

Perception of the Energies #3 - Robert A. Dushay

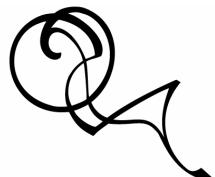
Hastfalsiltum Temple



Imagine a large flame rising from the surface of the pool and floating upon the water. Based on the nearby ancient inscriptions this has been a center of prayer for many ages.

The oldest words refer to this place as

“The Origin of the Cleansing Fire”



As a whole, the temple is a raised open-flat pavilion, but conversely, the temple expresses the idea of a “closed world”, that of a fiery beginning and a fiery end. The latter expression is felt when one enters the building proper.

A great king named Sammatúngga, whose other deeds are now forgotten, built Hastfasíltum during the Engsványáli Empire. The temple was abandoned sometime during the Time of No Kings and was found in ruins during the reign of the First Emperor.

The overall height was 38 dháiba, but is only 34.5 dháiba after restoration, and has the dimension of 115 x 115 dháiba. The first floor up to the sixth floor is square form; the seventh to the tenth floors are of an undulating round form.

The view inside is limited to high walls full of reliefs. Hastfasíltum faces to the west with a total of 1460 panels (2 dháiba wide each). Total size of the temple walls is 2500 square dháiba. The total number of panels with reliefs is 1301. According to investigations, the total number of Vimúhla statues was 479 including the intact and damaged figures.

Structural Design of Hastfasíltum Temple

Ever since the first excavation, most experts have disagreed on the exact shape of the original temple. The most common speculation is that the original form had three gates (each with three subgates) and nine floors. The original purpose of small adjacent flame-shaped buildings was for storage of the priests' cremated ash.

The reliefs of Hastfasíltum Temple start from the base of the temple up to the third platform. The reliefs at the base contain the interpretations of the Aspect Dumúggash, The Spirit of Battle, concerning the universe, the life and death of worlds, the voyaging to the Planes of Fire, and Passage into the Blazing Paradise. The most fascinating section of this series is the number and types of vehicles used for these travels. Most are unrecognizable, but some are as simple as a fisherman's flat bottomed boat.

Reliefs Along the Alley Walls

There is a long series of main reliefs along the first alley. The southern wall depicts Dikkómtla, The Blazing Trident, telling the tales of the masked priests that led that one last final attack during a losing battle and achieved victory.

And the northern wall honors Pa'lákh, The Swath of Red, with faces of the martyrs of that ancient empire. Only one third of the reliefs are known, the rest are still unclear.



There are many beautiful glyphs inscribed in the wall of the third alley. The rest of the alleys are featureless and probably were painted with frescoes that have been lost to time. At the end of each alley is a transition to the next level.

At the end of each transitional passage is a raised platform that is used for placing sacrifices to the Aspects depicted on that level. At the end of the day these items are gathered and used either during the nighttime feast or sent to the flames for the ceremony of “The Closing of The Eye”.

The Ttsuru'úmikh

Nothing is known of the underworld beneath the temple. Several tunnels have been discovered, but are filled in with saltwater. There is no explanation as to how a temple can sit in the middle of a freshwater oasis but contain saltwater in its bowels. Reports from expeditions into this mystery are closely held secrets of the temple.



A Day in the Life

by Krista Donnelly

Author's Introduction

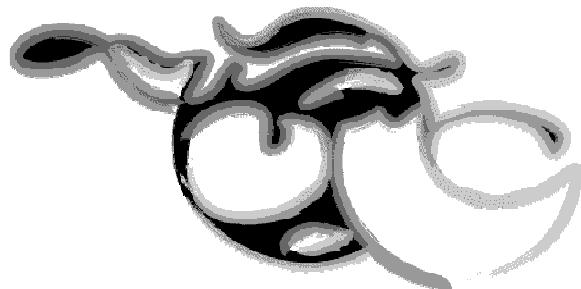
This scenario is a continuation two weeks later of *A Dark and Stormy Night*. I based the circumstances on my play group's experiences: Mígör was poisoned, Ngáya stole the money but didn't run away, and Kotáru saved the day by defeating the tirrikámu of the deserters in a duel.

Referee's Introduction

Once again, this adventure is set in a villa by the Sákbe road between Chéne Hó and Tumíssa, where the Nátla River bisects the Sákbe road, necessitating a ferry crossing. It is the 3rd of Didóm, the end of the rainy season, and the year is 2357 A.S., late in Hirkáne's reign. The war with Yán Kór has just turned hot with the Battle of the Átkolel Heights occurring several months earlier.

There are several major plot threads woven into this depiction of "a day in the life" in this villa by the roadside. The first and most obvious is the question of Ngáya's marriage and who will control the ferry concession. Each of Ngáya's fathers (Mígör and Mnéktu) has promised her to a different man, and neither of the men knows about the other's promise. Somewhat beneath the scene is the fact that the villa has been chosen as a drop site for a stolen High Cartography stone of N'lüssa that the Mu'ugalavyáni Red Mountain clan is attempting to obtain. Additionally, the Palace of the Realm is investigating Mígör's death, the kitchen boy is hiding a deserter, one of the ferries is in need of repair and may succumb to a feshénga attack, the transportation clan is cheating the concession holder and the Sákbe guard is having its usual fun with the merchant travelers.

This is a role-playing heavy scenario with many possible endings, dependent on the PC's actions. There are 11 possible PCs, but a number of them can be turned into NPCs without disrupting the plot overmuch. In essence, simply choose which plot threads you want to downplay and turn the characters most involved in those threads into NPCs.



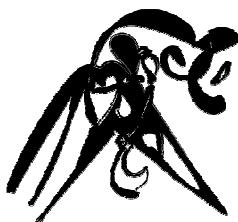
Introduction

Thank the gods that the month of Shápru is finally at an end! First such a torrent of rain pours down that no one can remember its like. The Nátla river floods, bringing even the ferry traffic to a halt. Then a semetl of soldiers deserting from the Legion of the Givers of Sorrow (8th Imperial Heavy Infantry) besiege the villa, demanding 1,000 káitars. But the overseer, Kotáru hiVraisúna, beats their tirrikámu in single combat. The survivors flee on their raft, presumably drowned in the river. That same evening the master of the villa, Mígör hiFésrengala, finally falls prey to his months long illness.

Slowly life returns to normal as the river crests and recedes. Mígör's brother Mnéktu handles the affairs of his death, sending notification to the clan elders in their home village of Purússa and to the local fief-holder, Lord Visán hiZhemré, and then accompanying the body home for burial.

With the tapering off of the rains, traffic has surged again to make up for lost time. Merchants wend their north and south, both those carrying precious goods and the peasants with their great chlén-carts creaking along filled with Dná grain, the staff of life. Adding to the flow is the constant stream of soldiers and officials northward, bolstering the war effort. It's a busy time; the large and the small ferry run constantly. The field before the entrance to the Villa of Pleasant Abode is again transformed into a marketplace. Local peasants arrive to sell their fruits and meats to hungry travelers. Others hopefully open up hampers full of cheap cloth and jewelry. Hawkers of amulets and potions take up positions while children run around selling wine, bitter beer and chumétl. Even some women stroll around eyeing those who disembark from the ferries. Many travelers pause for a short while to purchase odds and ends before climbing the ramp back up to the broad 1st tier of the great Sákbe road and continuing on their way.

This morning is particularly frantic as a ferry docks and from it steps an Imperial Messenger, clad in his characteristic blue clothe headdress bound with a golden cord. He firmly grasps in one hand his tasseled blue and white baton. In a sign of the times, a short sword is buckled to his side. At the same time, another party is approaching the villa, though coming along a dirt path through the fields rather than descending down from the Sákbe road. It appears to be the fief-holder himself, Lord Visán hiZhemré. Walking no less! But he always was a bit of an eccentric.



Game Master's Background

The Dead Drop

Several months ago a leather case was stolen from the Monastery of the Sapient Eye, a Thúmis monastery set in the Do Chákan hills. It was filled with High Cartography stones symbolizing every nation and major geographic feature on the continent. A devastating loss, not only of artistic beauty and fine craftsmanship (some were even the living variety created by the ancients), but also of information. For in addition to storing vast amounts of geographical data, High Cartography map symbols also contain data on cities, towns, villages, roads, populations and products. In the hands of a Thúmis priest, such information is put to suitably benign projects. But others would find highly different uses for the small pyramid of blue lapis lazuli which symbolizes Tsolyánu, the faceted rhomboid of smooth green serpentine representing Yán Kór, Milumanayá's oblong of sand-yellow jasper, and so on.

The thief is Umá hiKórodu, the wife of the Kémuel, the Mriyén of the monastery, and coincidentally the former lover of Lord Visán. In this scenario she is selling the N'lüssa map symbol, a small polyhedron of red porphyry, to the Mu'ugalavyáni. Knowing the connections that the Red clans maintain with their Mu'ugalavyáni cousins, she sent an offer to the Red Mountain clan in Tumíssa. In response they sent a scholar along with a regular merchant caravan to her clanhouse. After examining the map symbol, they left the payment with Umá and instructed her to deliver the map symbol to a drop site at the Villa of Pleasant Abode where the caravan had previously left a 'sick' member behind. The Red Mountain man was instructed to stay at the villa until the 3rd of Didóm. On this date, he was to 'get better' and then check each of the proposed drop locations. Once recovering the map symbol (or a message that the sale had fallen through), he was to return home.

Complications will arise because leaks have occurred. A frightened Red Mountain clan elder has gone to the OAL and told them part of what he knows: a drop will occur on the 3rd of Didóm which interests the Mu'ugalavyáni greatly. In addition, servants of Umá have leaked information. A young N'lüssa girl, adept at eavesdropping, has passed on the information about the N'lüssa map symbol to her fellow refugees living in the Do Chákan forests. They know there is only one reason why the Mu'ugalavyáni want this High Cartography stone: they are finally planning a full-scale invasion of their homeland. The stone must be recovered at any cost.

The Deserter: Pakái hiZhnáyu

After the death of Tirrikámu Kágesh hiNezár in single combat with Kotáru two weeks ago, the remaining deserters fled into the night. (Except for the three who successfully surrendered. They were taken by Gayán hiSsánkoral to Tumíssa.) Most went to the raft they'd built and tried their luck upon the raging river. However, Pakái lost his courage at the last moment. He set several wet, hungry, miserable days hiding in the forest by the

river, not far from the villa. He conceived a plan when he saw the cook's son playing nearby one day. Luring the boy over, he proposed a deal. He would exchange his armor and weapons one by one for items the boy would smuggle out of the villa for him. Then he would leave, and the boy could join a legion when he grew up!

The boy, Tetkóru, agreed, obviously wanting the armor and weapons. But he pointed out that he rarely had time to come out and play. Instead, he decided to sneak the deserter into the villa at night and have him hide in the food cellar. Usually, only Tetkóru or his sister Múru went down there.

Tetkóru will work hard through the scenario, stealing for the deserter (see his NPC character background for more information). He will recruit his little sister to help. He's hiding the soldier's equipment behind some old baskets in the room he shares with his family. So far he has a round helmet and an oval shield.

Pakái will stay hidden throughout the scenario. If someone other than Tetkóru or Múru comes down into the cellar he will panic, assuming that they're coming for him. He still has his weapons, a short sword and a spear, as well as his breastplate and vambraces. He will attempt to subdue and bind any intruders. He doesn't want any murders on his conscience. Pakái simply wants to go to his Chéne Hó clanhouse and start his life over again, working as a laborer.

Pakái's relevant stats:	Melee Attack 5	Missile Attack 5
Initiative Base 5	Melee Defense 3	Missile Defense 3
Weapon skill of 1 for short sword and spear. He also has a dagger (which he's keeping) for which he has a skill familiarity.		

The Marriage

There will be some dispute in this scenario over who can decide whether a wedding will take place. Normally, the parents make a marriage decision in conjunction with the clan elders when their child is still young. Mígor, however, failed to do so for Ngáya. Though it worked out to his advantage later, in truth, it was simply due to his failure to pay attention to his children earlier in life.

The conflict that arises is as follows:

1. Before his death, Mígor had been sounding out Lord Visán to see if he was interested in marrying Ngáya. Since Mígor is from a medium status clan and Visán's clan is High status, this would be a prestigious marriage for Golden Sheaf. Visán would get out of it the return of the ferry & villa concession to his family's control (see his character background for more information). Three weeks ago Visán visited the villa to meet Ngáya and found her satisfactory. Ngáya was not told the reason for the visit, but she guessed it. At that time, Mígor verbally promised Ngáya in marriage to Visán. Mígor also sent a note to the clan elders in Purússa informing them of the agreement and

requesting a Palace of the Realm official be sent for to draw up a proper marriage contract. Thus, Visán has:

- a) A verbal promise which can't be confirmed (the other party is now dead)
 - b) An informal note attesting to the promise (not legally binding)
 - c) Probable support of Zagár, the clan elder, due to the advantageous nature of the proposed marriage alliance
 - d) Probable opposition of Ngáya (she finds him boring)
2. Mnéktu, Mígor's brother and hence Ngáya's other father, talked Adlár into poisoning Mígor in exchange for a promise of marriage to Ngáya. This marriage would give Adlár the villa & ferry concession, and he in turn would give part of the proceeds to Mnéktu. The night that Adlár killed Mígor, Mnéktu gave him a formal written promise of marriage. However, Adlár is from a low status lineage within Golden Sheaf and is a rebel to boot (went off and became a priest of Chiténg). This marriage would bring no prestige to Golden Sheaf, though it would keep the concession within the clan. Thus, Adlár has:

- a) A written promise, but it's dated after the Mígor's informal note
- b) Probable opposition by Zagár due to his low standing
- c) Probable opposition of Ngáya (she finds him annoying)

Now, Ngáya can be forced to marry one of them against her will if she does not declare Aridáni status (she will lose the concession if she does this). If she goes so far as to refuse to sign the marriage contract, her father can sign it for her. However, traditionally the clans are reluctant to push a woman this hard due to the cost of future harmony and tranquility within the clan house.

But the law is not clear-cut in this complicated circumstance as to who has the stronger claim to marriage. Non-Aridáni women do not have more than one husband, so a choice must be made. Mnéktu may try and argue that Zagár doesn't have the right to override his wishes. Adlár may bring up that he will have a shámtla claim if the written agreement is not kept (and Adlár's history shows that he very much is willing to bring a shámtla claim against his own clan). However, it will all boil down to who persuades Zagár.

Kénesh, the Palace of the Realm official, should follow what the clan elder decides and draw up an appropriate contract (though he's a PC, so this is a wild card). By law, any of the losers can take the case to the Palace of the Realm. If Kénesh's player asks for advice, tell him that:

1. You know the case is complicated. Refuse to pass a judgment on who is correct. Advise them to bring it before the marriage court in the Palace of the Realm.
2. Advise that Mnéktu and Adlár are probably right in that they will have a shámtla claim if their agreement is not honored.

3. You can provide Ngáya with Aridáni status immediately if she so demands.

Note that if Ngáya's player is canny, she can use Aridáni status as a threat. If the clan tries to force her into a marriage she doesn't want, she can simply declare Aridáni status: the concession will revert to Visán, and there will be no marriage alliance. While such an action will negate Mnéktu and Adlár's shámtla claims, in no other way will the clan benefit. This is her strongest argument for why the clan should let her remain unattached and move to a big city and have the dalliances she wants.

The Wedding

If there is a wedding, it will take place after the official marriage contract has been drawn up. At a minimum, the groom should hold a feast that night for everyone present (all the low status folk can eat outside). To make it more festive, the groom should also hire entertainers from the caravan to perform.

The only true ceremony in this region is The Sword-Kissing ceremony. Otherwise, if it's an intra-clan marriage, there's usually simply a big procession as clan members visit first the bride's old quarters and then the groom's old quarters and take their belongings, moving them into new joint quarters within the clan house. (Traditionally, a few belongings also turn up missing afterwards.) If it's an inter-clan marriage, whichever spouse is moving will have their clan perform the procession to the couple's resident clan house. In both cases, a grand feast then follows.

But before the processions and the feasting, there is the Sword-Kissing Ceremony. The ceremony symbolizes the bride's acceptance of her husband's protection. It is as follows:

- * Observers sit in two rows (on appropriate piles of mats!)
- * The groom stands at one end of the aisle with an ancestral sword in his hand.
- * A designated 'enemy' comes running down between the rows and takes a couple mock swings at the groom with a sword. The groom 'parries' and makes a slashing motion with the sword whereupon the 'enemy' falls dead.
- * The bride then walks down the aisle, stepping over the 'enemy' and stops in front of the groom. He lifts the sword to her, and she kisses it.
- * The bride then moves to stand by his side and the groom makes a final elaborate slashing motion with the sword. He then proclaims, "Death forever to all who would harm us! Safety and long life for all our friends! Let the celebration begin!"

The part of the 'enemy' is usually played by one of the closest friends of the groom. He or she is then given a place of honor at the feast.

Player Characters

Lord Visán hiZhemré

Fief-holder, Red Sword, Chiténg

5'5", medium build, 33 years old

Strength 4	Melee Attack 4	Shock Value 9
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Dexterity 4	Missile Attack 4	Magic Resistance 4
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Intelligence 4	Melee Defense 2	
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Psyche 4	Missile Defense 2	
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Willpower 4	Initiative Base 4	
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Charisma 4	Health Points 45	
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Bad Reputation (level 2)

Good with Animals (level 2)

Nemesis (level 1: Kémuel hiKurodu)

Older (level 2)

Responsibilities (level 1)

Tough (level 1) -1 bonus to resist poisons and similar effects

Wealthy (level 3)

Administration (Clan) 2

Calligraphy (Tsolyáni) - Familiarity

Language (Tsolyáni, speak) - 3

Language (Tsolyáni, read) - 1

Etiquette (High) – 2

Hiking (Civilian) - 3

Hunting (Forest) – 4

Knowledge (NW Tsolyánu) - 2

Planning (Clan) - 2

Sexuality (Heterosexuality) - 2

Subculture (High) – 2

Theology (Chiténg) – Familiarity

You are the fief-holder of this entire region (hex 4305 on map) as your father was before you. In fact, a member of the Zhemré lineage has held this fief for several generations. It's not a highly desirable locale as most of the inhabitants are simply farmers. The most lucrative aspect of the fief was the concession on the ferry crossing where the Nátla River intersects the Sákbe road between Chéne Hó and Tumíssa. Unfortunately, your family lost control of the concession 12 years ago, and it was your fault.

You had been living in Chéne Hó for a number of years at the time, attending the school run by the Temple of Thúmis, and receiving practical instruction in the clan house on

how to run a fief. You concentrated as best you could, but in the end, who could have blamed you? She was so beautiful and so obviously interested in you. At the age of 18, you stood no chance against the wiles of Umá hiKurodu, the wife of Kémuel, the Mriyén (bishop) of the Thúmis temple. You carried on your affair with this "good clan woman" for two years before you were caught.

Kémuel, furious at your betrayal of his trust, demanded a huge shámtla. Since your family controlled a fief and thus had resources, Red Sword refused to help pay it. Lacking the liquid funds, your father leased "in perpetuity" the lucrative ferry concession and villa to a local successful Golden Sheaf merchant, Mígor hiFésrengala. His punishment was for you to regain the rights. The lease was made intentionally strict: Mígor could only pass it on to a direct descendant, and if it was a daughter, only if she were non-Aridáni.

As fortune would have it, Mígor's only son drowned in the river two years ago. Then, a month ago, a dying Mígor contacted you with an offer of marriage to his daughter Ngáya. It would mean marrying beneath your station but it would restore the fief to completeness and thus please the clan. You visited the villa 3 weeks ago and found Ngáya satisfactory. Mígor privately promised her to you and sent word to the clan elders in Purússa. You returned to your manor and awaited the arrival of the Golden Sheaf elder and a proper official from the Palace of the Realm. Unfortunately, Mígor died not long after your visit, which has delayed things somewhat. But at last the elder and scribe have arrived, and the lot of you have set out for the Villa of Peaceful Abode. This time you will marry Ngáya and regain what's rightfully yours.

But that's not all. After the fiasco in Chéne Hó, you returned to Zhemré manor and began leading a quiet provincial life. When not administering the fief, you took great joy in hunting, particularly with your kúni bird. You derived satisfaction from raising and training the semi-intelligent birds. But you never put your past completely behind you. It's partly why you haven't married yet. It rankles that Kémuel demanded such a high shámtla (was it because you're a Change worshipper?) and that the clan refused to help (what happened to clan loyalty?) And so, when the stranger came to your manor several months ago (your hospitality is well-known), not long after the Battle of Átkolel Heights, you heard him out. Soon it was clear that he was Yán Kóryani agent, and he was offering you a high position and more land once Yán Kór conquered the region. And the Yán Kóryani very well might win. You know for a fact that Tsolyáni soldiers have deserted from the front lines. All he asked is that you pass along any useful information and, if the opportunity arises, do your bit to sabotage the Tsolyáni war effort. You told him you'd consider it. And you have been. It sounds very attractive . . .

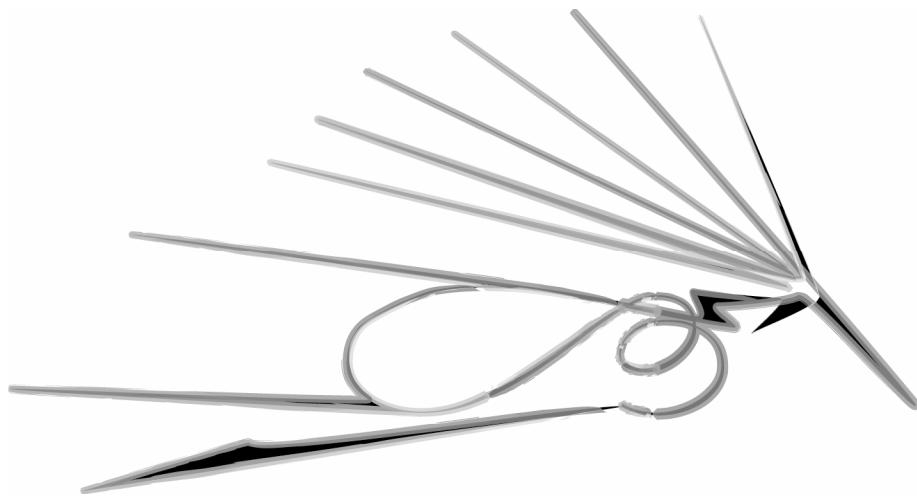
Additional Information

1. You've brought along your family's ancestral sword to use in the short ceremony when you get married. You've been told that an ancestor used it in the Great War of 2020 against Mu'ugalavyá.

2. You brought your bodyguard Hóru along. He's been with you since Chéne Hó, a poor clan-cousin. He's nice enough and you tend to treat him more as a friend than as a subordinate.

Goals

1. Marry Ngáya and regain the ferry concession.
2. Pick all the interesting information that you can.



Dlamúz hiArusá

Imperial messenger, Sword of Fire, Vimúhla

5'7", medium build, 24 years old

Strength 7
Dexterity 7
Intelligence 6
Psyche 3
Willpower 6
Charisma 4

Melee Attack 7
Missile Attack 7
Melee Defense 5
Missile Defense 5
Initiative Base 7
Health Points 65

Shock Value 13
Magic Resistance 4

High Stamina (level 1)
Highly Skilled (level 1)
Low Pedhtel – 2
Psychic Dampener
Responsibilities (level 2)

Language (Tsolyáni, speak) - 2
Language (Tsolyáni, read) – 1
Deception (Offensive, Defensive) - 1
Etiquette (Gov) - 1
Etiquette (Very High) – 1
Interrogation (Defensive, Offensive) - 1
Observation (Law Enforcement) - 1
Occupation (Intelligence) – 1
Subculture (Gov) – 1
Subculture (Intelligence) - 1
Subculture (Very High) – 1
Sword (Short) – 3 (Damage modifier x3)
Theology (Vimúhla) – Familiarity

You are not an Imperial messenger. In truth, you are a highly trained operative of the Omnipotent Azure Legion, the Tsolyáni secret police/intelligence agency. You know only what has been told to you by your superiors, but that has been disturbing enough. Apparently, certain clan elders of Red Mountain in Tumíssa have a very different idea of what constitutes noble action. Fortunately, one retained enough loyalty to come to the OAL and make a report: A Mu'ugalavyáni sympathizer is going to use the Villa of Pleasant Abode as a drop for something that the Mu'ugalavyáni Red Mountain clan members have expressed a great interest in. The drop will take place on the 2nd of Didóm. Your main orders are to intercept and seize whatever is being passed on. You are to identify but not arrest the Red Mountain clan member who is picking up the drop. If possible, you are to find out who dropped the item. If you can do all this without revealing yourself as a member of the OAL or drawing undue attention to yourself, than

your mission will be a complete success. In this way, you will have frustrated the Mu'ugalavyáni and not compromised your Red Mountain source.

Your cover is that of an Imperial messenger. This is a cover you have often used, and you are very familiar with the role. You wear the blue cloth headdress bound with a golden cord that is the uniform of a messenger. You also carry the tasseled blue and white baton that contains the message. Your "message" is a writ from the Palace of War that commands anyone reading it to obey your every command on penalty of death. You run at night on the 3rd (most elite) tier of the Sákbe road, and rest during the day. You've timed your journey carefully so that you arrive at the villa on the correct day. Now you will stay here to "rest" until the night and watch the action. You are determined not to fail.

Additional Information

1. You carry a short sword, ostensibly due to the tense situation with Yán Kór, and are very proficient at it.
2. You also have an Excellent Ruby Eye.

Goals

1. Intercept the item.
2. Identify who dropped the item, and the Red Mountain clan member who's there to retrieve it.
3. Keep your identity as an OAL operative secret.



Héttukeng hiGurúma

Sákbe Road Guard Captain, Red Sky, Vimúhla

5'6", heavy build, 29 years old

Strength 8
Dexterity 5
Intelligence 3
Psyche 4
Willpower 2
Charisma 4

Melee Attack 7
Missile Attack 6
Melee Defense 5
Missile Defense 4
Initiative Base 5
Health Points 50

Shock Value 10
Magic Resistance 4

Addicted (Gambling – Kévuk, level 1)

Greedy (level 1)

Older (level 1)

Very Attractive (level 4) -1 bonus to any Skill check where appearance is relevant

Must make a Willpower check to resist a gambling opportunity or an opportunity to make money (unless it's seriously ignoble)

Administration (Military) - 1
Etiquette (Medium) – 1
Hiking (Marching) - 1
Knowledge (Chéne Hó) - 1
Knowledge (Sákbe Road) - 2
Language (Tsolyáni, speak) – 2
Law - Familiarity
Polearm (Spear) – 1 (Damage modifier x 4)
Subculture (Gov) – 1
Subculture (Guard) – 1
Subculture (Medium) – 1
Sword (Short) – 2 (Damage modifier x3)

You are a member of the Sákbe Road guard. This carries certain connotations on Tékulme . . . lazy, incompetent, cowardly, etc. etc. No one, of course, says this to your face. But everyone knows you weren't good enough or brave enough to join a legion. About the only group with a worse reputation than a Sákbe guard is a Temple guard. You don't care much though. As captain, you rule in your domain. You can harass low status travelers to your heart's content (though you stay out of the way of the high status folk travelling on the 2nd and 3rd tier). You like to cross the river and hang out at the Villa of Pleasant Abode. Often people will stop there for the night, either camping out or staying in the villa. More often than not, you can get a good game of Kévuk going. The new overseer, Kotáru, who arrived last month has really livened the place up. He used to fight in the Hirilákte arena and always has a good story ready.

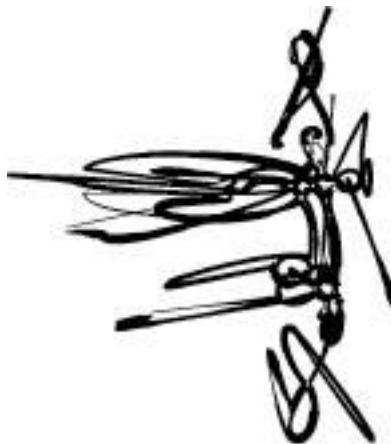
When not trying to scare up a good game of Kévuk, you shake down merchants and lone travelers. One favorite scam is to have a guard 'purchase' a valuable item from a merchant for a 1/10 of its true value (about 1/20 of what the merchant's asking for it). The guard then re-sells it later to another merchant. You always cut yourself in for half of the profit. Other times, you will announce an "inspection" and then charge the merchants an inspection fee. Occasionally, you will simply detain someone because they look "suspicious" and hold them until they bribe you to get their freedom. It's an art to know just how far you can push someone. And they say this job takes no brains.

Additional Information

1. Usually you and 5 other guards take your own boat over to the villa side of the river in the morning. The other 15 guards stay in or near the Sákbe road tower where you live.

Goals

1. Shake down a merchant.
2. Get a good game of Kévuk going and win some money



Zagár hiVraisúna

Clan Elder, Golden Sheaf, Avánthe

5'4", medium build, 49 years old

Strength 2	Melee Attack 3	Shock Value 7
Dexterity 3	Missile Attack 4	Magic Resistance 4
Intelligence 6	Melee Defense 1	
Psyche 3	Missile Defense 2	
Willpower 5	Initiative Base 3	
Charisma 3	Health Points 35	

Friends in High Places (level 3: in Chéne Hó)

Older (level 4)

Physical Disability (limp)

Responsibilities (level 2)

Administration (Clan) – 3

Analysis (Mercantile, Political) - 2

Calligraphy (Tsolyáni) - 3

Etiquette (Medium) – 2

Knowledge (NW Tsolyánu) - 1

Language (Tsolyáni, speak) – 2

Language (Tsolyáni, read) – 1

Law (Imperial) – 3

Planning (Clan) - 2

Subculture (Medium) – 3

Theology (Avánthe) - Familiarity

In your years as clan elder, you have never faced as great a challenge as what lies before you now. It started simply enough when almost 3 weeks ago a servant came trotting up the Sákbe road from the Villa of Peaceful Abode. He bore a simple note from Mígor hiFésrengala, a member of one of the most prestigious lineages of your clan and the owner of the villa. Mígor announced that he had arranged a very successful marriage for his daughter Ngáya to the local fief-holder, Lord Visán hiZhemré. A marriage alliance with a high status Red Sword clan will be quite a coup. You immediately sent word to Chéne Hó for a proper Palace of the Realm official to come and draw up the marriage contract. Due to the exceptionally heavy rains this year, he delayed several days before setting out. While waiting for him, another runner came panting up the Sákbe road from the Villa. The message was somewhat confusing. Deserters had besieged the villa, and Mígor had died. It wasn't until several days later when Mígor's brother Mnéktu returned with his body that you found out that the deserters had not killed him. Rather, the illness he'd been complaining about recently had taken a sudden turn for the worse.

While regrettable, this would not have proved a great problem. But then Mnéktu asked you to summon a Palace of the Realm official as he had just arranged a marriage for his daughter Ngáya. You were about to interrupt, saying you already knew this when he continued. He had promised Ngáya to Adlár hiSórunga, the house priest (3rd Circle, Chiténg) and steward of the estate. You were stunned. Not only was Adlár just a member of your own clan (no marriage alliance there), but he was from a low lineage and was a rebel to boot (Golden Sheaf is traditionally a Stability-worshipping clan). Before you could inquire further, Mnéktu rushed off back to the villa to watch over Ngáya and the lucrative ferry operation.

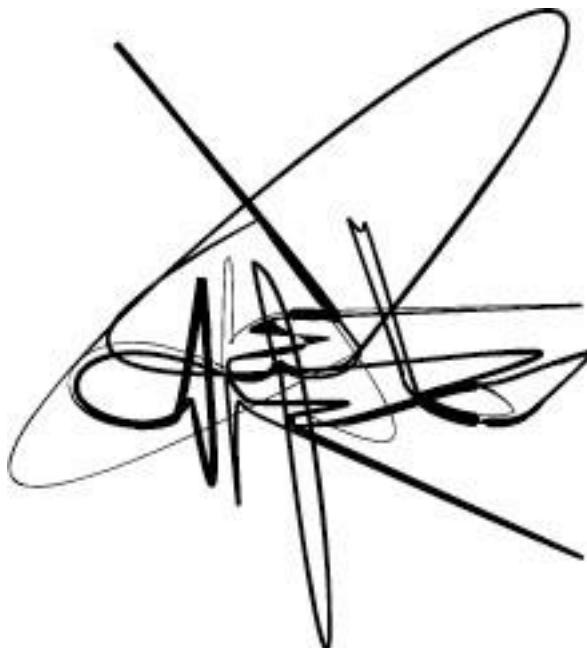
Once the Realm official arrived, you set off for Zhemré manor. You have resolved not to mention this minor problem to Lord Visán. Once all of you reach the villa, you will take Adlár aside and explain things to him. You'll make it up to him. You hope he's willing to go along with you. You've never liked asserting your authority; your stomach has been feeling quite uneasy lately.

Additional Information

1. Ngáya's fathers do have the right to make marriage decisions for her, though as a clan elder you can override them. As a non-Aridáni woman, her consent is not needed, though for the sake of peace, it's better not to completely force a woman to marry.

Goals

1. Protect the clan's best interests
2. Get through this mess without making someone angry at you.



Túrisan hiNgósakh

Clan Elder/Ferry Operator, Peaceful Water, Avánthe

5'4", slender build, 31 years old

Strength 4
Dexterity 4
Intelligence 5
Psyche 3
Willpower 5
Charisma 4

Melee Attack 4
Missile Attack 4
Melee Defense 2
Missile Defense 2
Initiative Base 4
Health Points 45

Shock Value 9
Magic Resistance 4

Good Reputation (level 1)
High Stamina (level 2)
Highly Skilled (level 2)
Low Status (level 2)
Older (level 2)
Responsibilities (level 2)

+3 points to starting Respect
-4 bonus to Stat/Skill checks on endurance

Brawling (Unarmed) – 3 (Damage modifier x 1)
Etiquette (Low) - 4
Knowledge (NW Tsolyánu) - 1
Language (Tsolyáni, speak) – 2
Negotiation (Business) – 3
Planning (Clan) – 3
Sailing - 4
Streetwise (Sákbe Road) - 2
Subculture (Low) – 3
Swimming – 2

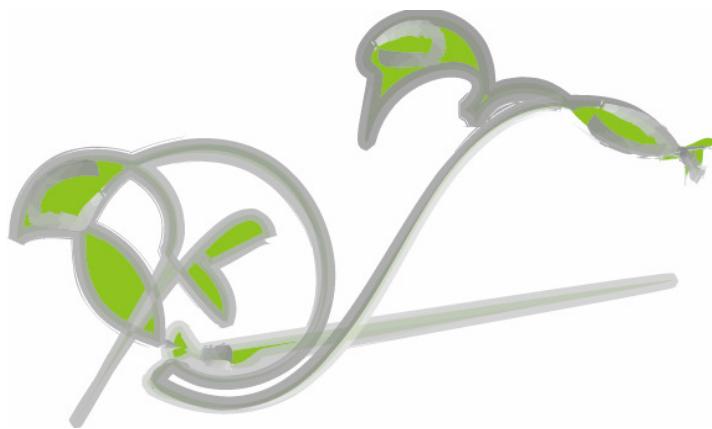
You are the primary presence of Peaceful Water at the ferry crossing by the Villa of Peaceful Abode. You're very young to be a clan elder and hold the rank mainly to increase your stature when dealing with Mígor hiFésrengala, the leaseholder to the villa and the ferry concession. Peaceful Water is a transportation clan, low status but performing a vital role. Your clan has a lock on all ferry activity throughout the northwestern region of Tsolyánu. Due to the nature of your work, your living and working conditions are somewhat peculiar by Tsolyáni standards. Rather than having clan houses in the cities and villages, you mostly live in portions of other clan's dwellings situated near the ferry crossings. This is because while you own the ferries, you do not own the docks or the shore around the landings. Thus, you lease from the fief-holder the right to use his docks and land. In practice, this "concession" amounts to 30% of the ferry proceeds. In return, by tradition you are granted lodging at the leaseholder's clan dwelling. It's an equitable arrangement, but you are ever watchful of the rights of your clansmen.

The situation here is in a bit of an uproar. Two weeks ago Mígor died when his illness took a sudden fatal bent. His flighty daughter Ngáya has inherited the lease and is nominally in charge until she gets married. In practice, Adlár, Mnéktu (Mígor's brother) and Ngáya all seem to be trying to run things without a lot of coordination. This is somewhat removed from you as you normally deal with Kotáru, the overseer of the estate. Kotáru has only been there a month and is very lax in his duties. You have quietly taken advantage of the situation by siphoning off a larger portion of the monies than usual. No one seems to have noticed.

One of the reasons Peaceful Water has the ferry monopoly is because no one else wants the job. Tékumel's rivers are rife with unwholesome creatures: the feshénga "The One Who Introduces You to Lord Srukaram, the Lord of Death," the hypnotic chashkéri who will lure you to your death, the étla crab which reaches 2-3 feet in size in the rivers, the mu'ágh jellyfish which lurks in dark water, and so on. Several years ago, Mígor's son Chúrisan died while swimming in the river. The Golden Sheaf folk say he drowned. You know better. Something's lurking in those waters. You just haven't figured out what yet.

Additional Information

1. You do not get along with Héttukeng, the Sákbe road guard captain.



Ferry Operations:

By law, the rates for ferry travel are set at 1 hlásh per chlén cart and 10 qírgals per chlén. All other travelers get free passage. To subsidize this free passage for foot travelers (which benefits the empire as a whole), the Palace of the Realm pays a substantial sum every 3 months to Peaceful Water based on how many ferries they have in operation. Peaceful Water keeps careful accounts and apportions the money out to each operation based on how much traffic they recorded. The holders of the ferry concession also receive 30% of this money.

However, outside of the major cities, Peaceful Water has set up a different rate structure:

Foot travelers on the 3rd (lowest) tier - 2 qírgals

Travelers on the 2nd and 3rd tier, being higher status - free passage

Palanquins - 10 qírgals (speak to the head bearer, not the occupant)

Chlén – 1 hlásh

Chlén cart – 1 hlásh

This is illegal, but since it's consistent at all the Peaceful Water crossings (and most people aren't aware of the law), it's not challenged much. If faced with credible threats of prosecution for extortion, Peaceful Water toll collectors usually back down.

Peaceful Water has two ferries at the Nátla crossing: the large ferry and the small ferry. At capacity, the large ferry can carry 40 passengers, the small 20 passengers. Each chlén and cart take the place of 10 passengers. A palanquin takes the place of 5 passengers. It's possible to overload the ferries and earn more money, but this is not advisable.

On the average, it takes 15 minutes to load a ferry (faster if there are not chlén), 15 minutes to make it across the river, 10 minutes to unload. Thus, each crossing consumes about 45 minutes. Normally, Peaceful Water waits until the ferry is at least half full before making a crossing. The waiting time varies greatly on the status of the passengers and how fast traffic has been that day. On a good, busy day each ferry will make 16 crossings.

Thus, a busy day with ferries of paying passengers running constantly will yield 2 káitars, 3 hlásh for the leaseholder, and 6 káitars, 3 hlásh for Peaceful Water. The leaseholder of the villa gets most of their money through providing lodging for medium and high status travelers (25 or 35 káitars a night, respectively) and the Palace of the Realm subsidy.

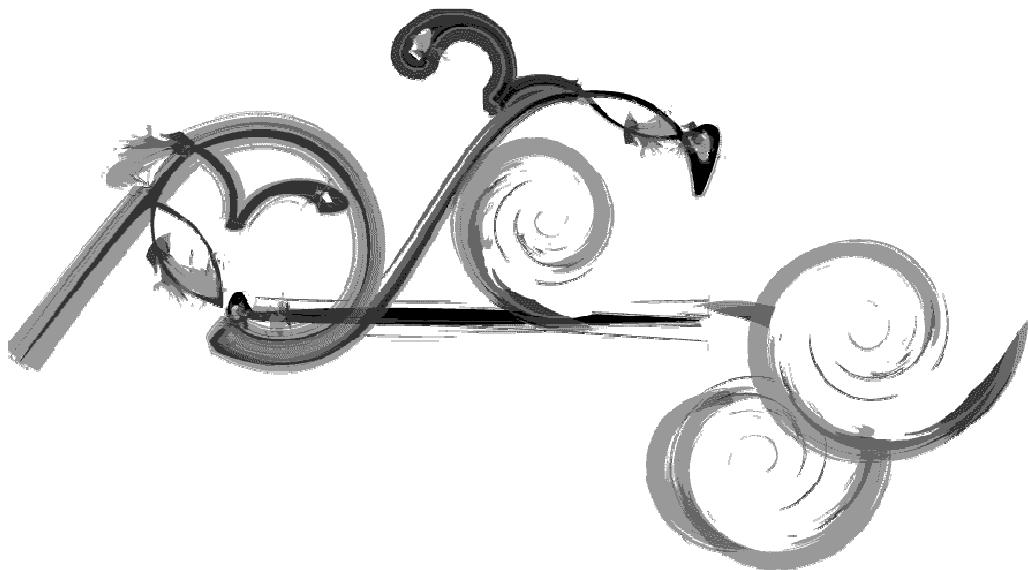
Normally, Peaceful Water collects the tolls and keeps track of how many of each type of passenger crossed. At the end of day, a good overseer will look over the books and see if that jibes with his memory of the day's traffic. An even better overseer will assign one of the servants to make their own records of the passengers. Kotáru simply accepts without question the hlásh and qírgals you hand him at the end of the day.

You are shorting Kotáru 25% of each day's proceedings. You have been since a couple days after he took over. Mígor seemed to be too sick at the time to concentrate on counting money; at least, he never complained.

You keep the hlásh and qírgals each in their own locked box in the Peaceful Water quarters. You keep the few káitars that come up on your person at all times.

Goals

1. Watch over the ferry operations and earn as large a profit as you can
2. Aggravate Héttukeng.



Kotáru hiVraisúna

Arena Fighter/Overseer, Golden Sheaf, Avánthe

6', medium build, 20 years old

Strength 7
Dexterity 5
Intelligence 4
Psyche 3
Willpower 4
Charisma 7

Melee Attack 6
Missile Attack 6
Melee Defense 4
Missile Defense 4
Initiative Base 5
Health Points 55

Shock Value 11
Magic Resistance 4

Bad Reputation (level 2)
Impulsive (level 1)
Very attractive (level 3)

1 negative level of Respect
+1 penalty at analysis and planning

Etiquette (Medium) – 2
Intoxicants (Powders) - 1
Knowledge (Khírgár) - 1
Language (Tsolyáni, speak) – 2
Merchant - Familiarity
Subculture (Arena) - 1
Subculture (Medium) - 2
Sword (Long) – 2 (Damage modifier x 4)

You came here only a month ago, under a great cloud. Previously, you had been in Khírgár, attending the Hall of Heroes academy and frequenting the priestesses of Dlamélish. To supplement your too meager clan support, you had taken to fighting in the Hirilákte arena. It all came to an end when you slew a high status man after challenging him to a duel for insulting you. If only you had followed tradition and allowed him to choose a champion first! Golden Sheaf paid the shámtla and exiled you here.

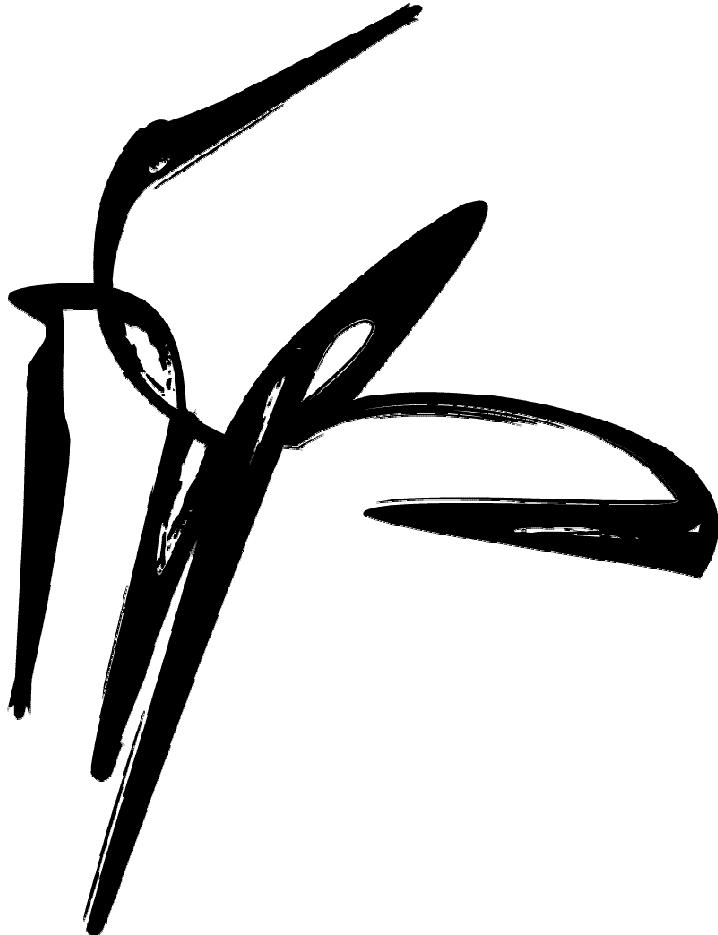
It's dreary here in this rural backwater. You brightened your nights somewhat by sharing the sleeping mat of Ngáya, the daughter of the late owner of the villa, Mígór. Unfortunately, you discovered her designs on you that splendid night two weeks ago. Deserters were besieging the villa, demanding an enormous sum of money, when you saved the day by killing their leader in single combat! You didn't even get a scratch on you. But Ngáya also came to you with the most chlén-brained idea you'd ever heard. She wanted you to run away with her! How can you have a life outside the clan? Does she want to be nakomé? You have doubted her sanity ever since (maybe her father's death unhinged her?) and avoided her as much as possible. You're hoping that word of your heroic deed will filter upwards, and the clan will forgive you. Perhaps then the good times will roll again!

Additional Information

1. Your duties as overseer are really easy: you collect the villa's share of the money at the end of the day from Túrisan, the Peaceful Water elder, and you stop any fights that happen to break out.
2. Your easy job means that most of the time you simply socialize with Héttukeng, the Sákbe road guard captain, talking, exchanging stories and occasionally playing Kévuk. (You try not to play Kévuk too often, as he seems to win all the time.) Héttukeng comes across the river with a couple guards the first thing in the morning and usually stays all day. It sure beats having to talk to Adlár.

Goals

1. Avoid Ngáya, Adlár and Mnéktu and enjoy yourself with Héttukeng.
2. Get out of here somehow (your debt to the clan is 5,000 káitars, you earn 35 káitars a month here) and get back to the good life



Mnéktu hiFésrengala

Merchant/Brother of the late Mígor, Golden Sheaf, Avánthe

5' 4", heavy build, 38 years old

Strength 3	Melee Attack 3	Shock Value 7
Dexterity 3	Missile Attack 3	Magic Resistance 5
Intelligence 7	Melee Defense 1	
Psyche 3	Missile Defense 1	
Willpower 4	Initiative Base 4	
Charisma 4	Health Points 35	

Greedy (level 2)

Older

Very High Lineage

Bribery (Clan) - 1

Charm (Professional) – 2

Deception (Offensive) - 2

Etiquette (Medium) – 3

Knowledge (NW Tsolyánu) - 2

Language (Tsolyáni, speak) –2

Language (Tsolyáni, read) – 2

Merchant (Animals, Foodstuffs, Intoxicants, Spices) – 3

Negotiation (Business) – 2

Poisons - Familiarity

Subculture (Medium) - 3

Subculture (Merchant) - 2

Your plan to secure your financial standing has almost reached fruition. Several months ago, you approached Adlár, the steward of the Villa of Peaceful Abode, with a carefully conceived plot. He would slowly poison Mígor, the owner of the villa, with arsenic. When Mígor died, you would arrange Adlár's marriage to Ngáya, Mígor's only living heir. In return, Adlár would kick back a portion of the profits from the ferry concession to you.

Two weeks ago, the plan was sped up when Mígor started making arrangements to have Ngáya marry the local fief-holder Lord Visán. In a stroke of good luck, the night you pushed Adlár to finish the job, a group of deserters besieged the villa. In all the confusion of dealing with them, no one seems to have been suspicious of Mígor's death. Now you have impatiently waited as the formalities around the death were taken care of. You sent messages of the death to the clan elders in Purússa and to Lord Visán. Then you accompanied Mígor's body back to Purússa and oversaw its burial. Having left word

of your intentions regarding Ngáya and Adlár, you hurried back to the villa in full expectation that the clan would soon send a Palace of the Realm official down to draw up a proper marriage contract. Now you only wait for the official and keep an eye on Ngáya to make sure she doesn't do anything foolish. She was always a flighty girl.

Additional Information

1. Your original agreement with Adlár was that he would kick 10% of the concession profits to you. You plan to blackmail him later and take far more.
2. Ngáya is already causing problems. She's hidden the accounts books and refuses to reveal the location of where Mígor kept the money.
3. You still have the extra arsenic on your person that you brought to give to Adlár. It would have been better to get rid of it in Purússa but you forgot.
4. There's a remote possibility of Visán wanting to follow up on his visit and marry Ngáya. A good argument to use with the clan elders is that if Ngáya marries Visán, the concession will leave the clan's possession. Running the villa and owning the concession is a wonderful opportunity to gain recognition and honor for the clan, while after one generation, the benefits of a marriage alliance are far less.

Goals

1. Marry Ngáya to Adlár.
2. Keep the estate running smoothly



Kénesz hiTokólú

7th Circle Palace of the Realm official, Blue Kirtle, Avánthe
5'5", medium build, 33 years old

Strength 3	Melee Attack 3	Shock Value 9
Dexterity 3	Missile Attack 3	Magic Resistance 4
Intelligence 7	Melee Defense 1	
Psyche 2	Missile Defense 1	
Willpower 6	Initiative Base 4	
Charisma 4	Health Points 45	

Emotional Control (level 2) -1 bonus to resist Intimidation, Charm or Seduction
-2 bonus to using Deception to detect a lie
-2 bonus to using Etiquette or Charm skills

Highly Skilled (level 1)
Nemesis (level 2) Revealing ignobility doesn't make you many friends
Older (level 2)
Poor (level 2)

Analysis (Intelligence) - 3
Bribery (Bureaucracy) - 1
Calligraphy (Tsolyáni) – 2
Deception (Defensive, Offensive) - 1
Etiquette (Gov) - 3
Etiquette (Medium) – 1
Forgery (Detecting) - 1
Language (Tsolyáni, speak) – 2
Language (Tsolyáni, read) – 2
Law (Imperial) – 2
Observation (Scholarly) - 3
Subculture (Gov) – 3
Subculture (Medium) – 1
Theology (Avánthe) - Familiarity

You are an investigator in the Palace of the Realm, stationed in Chéne Hó. When you were lower circle, you performed simple clerkly tasks: recording contracts, births, marriages, deaths, and so on. Your acute powers of observation and careful reasoning served you in good stead. While others plowed through menial tasks, you thought about what you were recording. And thus, you saw patterns in the data. You carefully unraveled the mystery of the suspicious contracts to discover that High Pinnacle was cleverly managing to get multiple contracts to cover the same construction assignment for the Palace of Ever-Glorious War. This earned you promotion to the 5th Circle, a new assignment of auditing data for suspicious incidents, and steady promotions ever since.

Close to two weeks ago, a messenger arrived in Chéne Hó with a secret message for you. Your colleague and friend in the Palace of the Realm, Gayán hiSsánkoral, was concerned. While en route to Tumíssa to take up a new assignment, he'd spent a very interesting evening at a villa by the Sákbe road. Skipping over the main news of the deserters who'd besieged the place, he'd outlined a very disturbing concern. He believed that the leaseholder of the villa, who died that same evening, had not succumbed to an illness as was commonly believed. After describing the symptoms, he concluded that he believed the man, Mígör hiFésrengala, was murdered. Poisoned. Due to the behavior of his daughter Ngáya, his chief suspicions rested on her. Unfortunately, he had no time to investigate and had to continue on to Tumíssa the next day. Perhaps Kénesh could look into it?

A short amount of research soon revealed that only a couple days before, a request had come up from Mígör's clan, Golden Sheaf, for an official to come and draw up a marriage contract for Ngáya hiFésrengala and Lord Visán hiZhemré. Due to the exceptionally heavy rains this season, no one had been sent out yet in response. You intervened and decided to go yourself. This would be a prime opportunity to quietly investigate Mígör's death.

You first went to the Sákbe road village of Purússa, from where Golden Sheaf had sent up the request. Meeting up there with a clan elder, Zagár hiVraisúna, you travelled on to Zhemré manor and met Lord Visán hiZhemré. Then yourself, Zagár, Visán, and Visán's bodyguard Hóru set out together for the Villa of Pleasant Abode.

You are not certain about Zagár, the clan elder. He seems nervous, eating little and always steering the conversation away from the topic of the marriage.

Additional Information

1. Gayán's evidence that led him to suspect a poisoning: Mígör was nauseous and in constant pain. After dinner, he collapsed from a seizure with muscle spasms, abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhea. Shortly after that, he died.
2. Gayán suspected Ngáya because she sat by Mígör during the dinner and then led him from the dining hall. She kept quite close to him during the evening.

Goals

1. Discover who murdered Mígör hiFésrengala. But remember not to open yourself or the Palace up to shámtla claims by making accusations that cannot be supported.
2. Support the laws of the empire.

Ngáya hiFésrengala

Clan-woman/New Lease-holder, Golden Sheaf, Avánthe
5'2", slender build, 20 years

Strength 4	Melee Attack 7	Shock Value 5
Dexterity 9	Missile Attack 7	Magic Resistance 4
Intelligence 3	Melee Defense 5	
Psyche 4	Missile Defense 5	
Willpower 6	Initiative Base 9	
Charisma 4	Health Points 50	

Attention Deficit +2 penalty when dealing with project management
Easily bored, make Willpower checks every 5 minutes to concentrate on a dull task

Clan-woman
Very High Lineage

Administration - Familiarity
Charm (Social) - 1
Cooking (Chákan) - 1
Etiquette (Medium) - 2
Knowledge (NW Tsolyánu) - 1
Language (Tsolyáni, speak) – 2
Merchant – Familiarity
Negotiation (Social) - 1
Style (Chákan) - 1
Subculture (Medium) - 2

About two weeks ago, your father Mígor died after a two-month illness. The night of his death was the most memorable of your life (not that there had been much competition out here in this rural backwater). A group of deserters had besieged the villa demanding all of Mígor's money. So you decided to steal your father's box of káitars and run away with the overseer, your lover Kotáru. You stole the money, but Kotáru resisted your overtures. Somewhat hurt and puzzled, you watched as Kotáru fought the ignoble tirrikámu in single combat and won! It was glorious and saved the day for everyone.

With your father dead (you knew he'd been about to marry you off to the boring Lord Visán – a big factor in your decision to run away) and Kotáru now avoiding you, you decided to wait to see how things unfolded. After all, you do now hold the ferry concession. It's yours unless you get married (then it becomes your husband's property) or declare Aridáni status (then it reverts back to the Zhemré family). Maybe you can talk a clan elder into letting you move to a clan house in Chéne Hó or even Tumíssa. Surely

life would be more exciting there, especially with the money coming in from the ferry concession. You could remain unmarried and have whatever dalliances you want!

Additional Information

1. Only you knew where Mígor kept his money. It was in a chest that was locked away in a hidden compartment in his bedroom. The key to the compartment is itself hidden. You press on a certain flower in a wooden mural carved in his bedroom wall and a spring releases a small drawer. Then, in another part of the mural, you push aside a leaf to reveal a keyhole. This opens up to reveal a small cavity in the wall where the chest resides. You took this chest and put in your secret room the night Mígor died. You haven't returned it yet or told anyone about where the money is.
2. You know of a secret room within the villa that no one else does (you discovered it while playing as a child). It is reached by manipulating carvings on the mural in your room. A small door opens into a narrow passage (see map) and ends with a trap door in the floor leading down into a damp, muddy tunnel. You have never explored the tunnel.
3. Once Mígor died, you took all his account books and hid them in your secret room. You knew your other father Mnéktu and Adlár, the steward, would want them and then would take over running everything, ignoring you. Now they can't look anything up. But Kotáru doesn't give you the receipts at the end of each day like he did with Mígor. Instead, he hands them over to Adlár. Adlár hasn't given you any of the money. He claims he needs to pay for operating expenses of the villa.
4. You know that a lot of the money from the concession is earned by the visitors who stay in the villa each night. There's five guest rooms in which Medium and High status travellers may stay if they choose. (You would never dream of accepting Low or Very Low status travellers and Very High Status travellers would never dream of staying in a Medium status clan house.) Medium status guests pay 25 káitars a night; High status guests pay 35 káitars. You currently have one guest, a Red Mountain merchant who got sick and left his caravan to recuperate here. He's been here a week or so – very lucrative for you. He's also pretty cute. You're thinking of seducing him since he looks all better now.

Goals

1. Make Mnéktu, Adlár and Kotáru take you seriously and stop trying to cut you out of the loop.
2. Talk the clan elder into letting you stay unmarried and move to a large city
3. Seduce the cute Red Mountain guest.

Adlár hiSóruna

Steward/House Priest (3rd Circle), Golden Sheaf, Chiténg
5'5", medium build, 25 years old

Strength 3
Dexterity 5
Intelligence 7
Psyche 7
Willpower 4
Charisma 4

Melee Attack 4
Missile Attack 4
Melee Defense 2
Missile Defense 2
Initiative Base 6
Health Points 35

Shock Value 7
Magic Resistance 6
Psychic Pool 80

Calligraphy (Tsolyáni) - 1
Etiquette (Medium) - 1
Etiquette (Temple) - 1
Language (Tsolyáni, speak) - 2
Language (Tsolyáni, read) - 1
Magic (Ritual) - 2
Ritual (Chiténg) - 1
Subculture (Medium) - 1
Subculture (Priesthood) - 1
Theology (Chiténg) - 1

Spells

Alleviation U2
Far-Seeing G1
Healing U1, U2, U3
Light and Darkness U1
The Radiant Gaze G3

All spells cost 1 psychic point to cast, except for the Radiant Gaze, which costs 4. Your target number for success is 6.

You've been on edge the last two weeks. Was it only two months ago that Mnéktu first came to you with his plan? You would use your position as steward in the Villa of Peaceful Abode to slowly poison Mígor, the owner of the villa. With him dead, the villa and ferry concession would pass to his daughter Ngáya. Mnéktu, Ngáya's other father, gave you a written promise of marriage to Ngáya. In exchange, you will kick back a portion of the profits to him. Your plans had to be greatly speeded up when the dying Mígor unexpectedly hosted Lord Visán, the local fief-holder who wants to marry Ngáya for the same reason you do.

Fortunately, deserters besieged the villa on the night you gave Mígor the fatal dose of arsenic. In all the excitement, it looks like no one's noticed any irregularities in his

death. You've waited impatiently the last two weeks as proprieties were observed: messages sent to the clan house in Purússa and Lord Visán, Mígor's body taken to Purússa and buried. Now that a bare minimum of time has passed, it's time to complete the plan. Mígor has had the clan send for a Palace of the Realm official who should arrive any day now to draw up the official marriage contract. Of course, you have yet to approach Ngáya with the happy news. Although legally her consent isn't required, it will make life easier for you in the future if she's not adamantly opposed.

In the meantime, you've tried to ensure the smooth operation of the estate as this can only reflect well on your abilities. This hasn't been easy. Ngáya has refused to tell you where Mígor kept his funds, let alone giving you the keys. To make matters worse, she has hidden all of his account books. Fortunately, Kotáru turns all the monies from Peaceful Water directly over to you instead of Ngáya (they seem to have had some kind of falling out), and you have always collected the money from the travellers who stay at the villa. Still, it's frustrating that she won't cooperate. You've started your own account book for the villa and ferry, but you need the originals to know how everything's been doing and how much money is in reserve.

Everyone is usually paid at the first of the month, but it's now the 3rd and nothing's been done yet. Ngáya doesn't seem to have thought of paying everyone out of the general funds, and you don't want to spend the money you've taken in since Mígor's death on payroll since it's all you have to pay for the other operating expenses (buying food, replacing equipment, etc.).

Additional Information

1. You still have two more month's supply of arsenic hidden in your room since you never had a chance to use up Mnéktu's original four month supply.

Goals

1. Marry Ngáya and secure the ferry/villa concession for yourself.
2. Keep the estate running smoothly



Hóru hiMrékka

Bodyguard for Lord Visán, Red Sword, Chiténg
5'8", medium build, 34 years

Strength 8	Melee Attack 7	Shock Value 13
Dexterity 5	Missile Attack 6	Magic Resistance 4
Intelligence 3	Melee Defense 5	
Psyche 5	Missile Defense 4	
Willpower 4	Initiative Base 5	
Charisma 4	Health Points 65	

Behavioral Characteristic (Phobia: Water)

Low Lineage (level 1)

Older (level 2)

Poor (level 1)

Tough (level 1)

-1 bonus on checks against poisons or similar effects

Ugly (level 1)

Dagger - 3

Etiquette (High) – 2

Intimidation (Military, Street) - 3

Language (Tsolyáni, speak) – 2

Language (Tsolyáni, read) – 1

Observation (Military) - 2

Subculture (High) – 2

Sword (Long) - 3

Theology (Chiténg) – Familiarity

Ever since you failed to get into a legion, you have served as a bodyguard for your clan cousin Visán hiZhemré. While your job lacks prestige, it certainly hasn't been difficult. It was more interesting years ago when Visán stayed in Chéne Hó, but it hasn't been bad living at Zhemré manor. Visán treats you more like a friend than a servant. You go hunting with him (and have gained more than a few stories to impress the ladies with), help him with the kúni birds and even eat together with him.

One day several months ago, Visán had a visitor. Visitors are nothing new. Visán's hospitality is well known, and travelers of note often make a detour to meet him and spend the night. But this visitor stayed longer than most and spent much time closeted alone with Visán. You noticed that Visán grew more and more quiet and thoughtful. Finally, late one night, you heard a soft knock on your door. It was the visitor. He sat up talking with you most of the night. At first he simply told you information about the ill-preparedness of the Tsolyáni legions, the growing strength of Yán Kór, and the restlessness of the Mu'ugalavyáni. But as the night grew later and your mind reeled with

the new information, he leaned in closer and whispered about the Weapon Without Answer. You sat stunned. How could the Seal Emperor prevail? Your visitor studied you intently and then offered you the opportunity to serve your Emperor. There was Mu'ugalavyáni activity in the region, specifically at the Villa of Peaceful Abode. It was being used as a drop for something, maybe weapons, maybe káitars, maybe information. You were requested to keep your eyes and ears open whenever the opportunity presented itself.

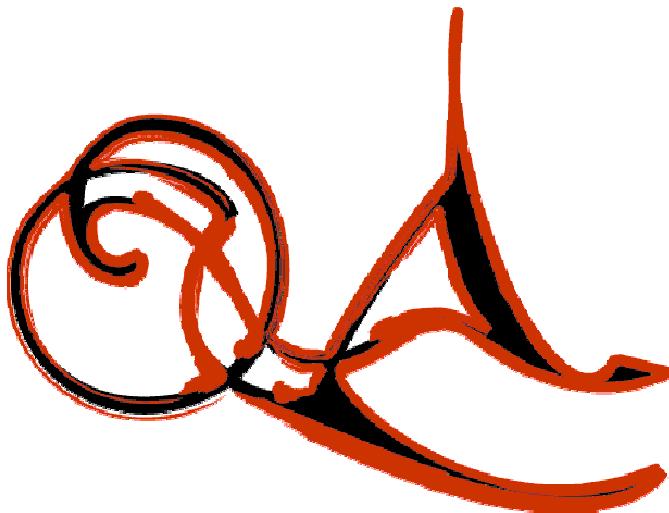
And now the opportunity has come. You are accompanying Visán, a Golden Sheaf elder, and a Palace of the Realm official to the Villa of Pleasant Abode where Visán will wed Ngáya, the daughter of the newly deceased owner of the villa. If there is any Mu'ugalavyáni activity in the area, you will foil it!

Additional Information

1. You've heard so many tales of the dangerous creatures in Tékumel's waters that you hate to go near any body of water. Unfortunately, the villa sits right by the Nátla river. The river makes you queasy and you stay away from it as much as possible.
2. You have a crush on Ngáya.

Goals

1. Stop any Mu'ugalavyáni activity
2. Protect Visán



Non-Player Characters

Shekkára hiSsáivra

'Merchant'/Servant of Umá

Shekkára is Umá's agent who is bringing down the High Cartography stone depicting N'lüssa, a small polyhedron of red porphyry. She is posing as a merchant of unusual spices and carries her wares in a basket on her back. If 'inspected' by Héttukeng, she will be lacking the proper license to sell spices. If Mnéktu ever engages her in conversation, he will soon discover that she really knows nothing about spices. Umá has given her 50 káitars to use in bribes. She is inexperienced at bribing and will offer too much, 30 káitars, to the person she wants to leave the map symbol with.

Her instructions (which originated from Red Mountain) are to approach the transportation clan's elder first and try to bribe him into holding the symbol for the day. If he refuses, she should seek out the overseer of the estate. If he refuses, she should go to the cook. She does not know these people by name or sight so she will have to do some discreet inquiries. She will be vague, "30 káitars for a favor," and won't specify what needs to be done unless the person agrees to do 'the favor.' If questioned fiercely by Túrisan or Kotáru, she will claim that the favor is to arrange a meeting with her lover, a high status clan woman, at the villa.

When she finds someone who will do 'the favor,' she will hand over a small locked wooden box in a leather pouch. (The map symbol is inside the box.) She will tell the person that today someone will come by and say, "I love the smell of rain in the summer." They are to give the pouch with the wooden box in it to that person.

If Shekkára is caught and questioned by Dlamúz, Kénesh or someone else with authority, she will eventually reveal that she is following the orders of her mistress, Umá hiKórodu. (Visán will recognize this name.) She has no idea what's in the box or who's supposed to pick it up.

Ókan hiNáshomai

Assistant Clan Quartermaster, Red Mountain, Vimúhla
5' 5", medium build, 27 years old

Ókan's normal job was to help see that the clan house was properly stocked, and to occasionally travel with a merchant caravan to personally supervise the purchase of exotic items. This time he was summoned by his clan elders and given an unusual task. He was told precisely what to do and was given to understand that declining, or asking any questions, was not an option. His task was to travel with a caravan until it reached the Villa of Pleasant Abode. There he was to 'fall ill' with a stomach ailment, and stay

recuperating until the 3rd of Didóm. On that day, he would 'recover' enough to return home. But before leaving, he was to approach, in order, the elder of the transportation clan, the overseer of the estate, and the cook. To each, he was to work the phrase, "I love the smell of rain in the summer," into the conversation. One of them would in response hand over to him a leather pouch with a small wooden box inside. Or possibly, the person would hand him a note stating that the deal didn't go through. As soon as he received either the box or the note, he was to return home.

Ókan has done all that was commanded of him. He's been here at the villa for over a week now. He's been given 500 káitars to cover his expenses (8 nights at the villa costs 280 káitars). No bribes should be needed. Ókan is extremely nervous. He knows something illegal is going on, otherwise why pay with money instead of a Red Mountain writ? Why the skullduggery? If he is caught and questioned, he will soon break down and confess his suspicions. However, beyond the names of the clan elders who sent him and the names of the others in the caravan, he doesn't know what's going on.

Tetkóru

Kitchen boy, Granite Lintel, Hnálla
8 years old, slender build

Tetkóru has lived at the Villa of Pleasant Abode his entire life. His father is the cook, and his mother is the maid. He and his little sister (5 years old) Múru help whichever one needs them the most. He's found it lonely living in the villa as his family is the only Granite Lintel clan members there. Their clan is lower status than even Red Moon and Flat Rock, which the other servants belong to so people only talk to him to order him around, even the other children who come to sell things in the marketplace outside the villa. Tetkóru also is somewhat frightened of the villa. He believes it to be haunted by the ghost of Chúrisan, Mígör's only son who died in the river several years ago. Sometimes when he lies down on his mat at night, he thinks he can hear him walking around and whispering. He's told this story to anyone who will listen, but only Múru believes him. [He's actually hearing Ngáya moving around in the secret room which shares a wall with his family's room.]

When Pakái spoke to him outside the other day, he listened carefully. He guesses that Pakái is one of the deserters, but since nothing bad happened to his family as a result of the siege, he doesn't think of the deserters as ignoble people. They were simply doing what they had to do. Pakái's offer of armor and weapons for items he'd steal was very tempting to Tetkóru. With equipment, he actually might be accepted into a legion when he grew up. And if he wasn't, he would always have something to defend himself with.

Tetkóru fully intends to keep his bargain with Pakái. He's brought him mainly food (dried meat, fruit, biscuits), clothing (stolen from a Red Moon servant) and wine so far. He will steal during the scenario a bearer's pack, a blanket, and as many hlásh and qírgals that he can find.

The Caravan

A caravan will stop and spend the day at the villa. Its members include:

1. A Salarvyáni slaver, Chnésuru, who wears a thick-woven hmélu-wool tunic and is looking to sell slaves to work in the fields. He will stress how the army in the area is going to start requisitioning peasants and slaves to help with the war effort, and extra hands will be needed this season. He's correct, but he will be obnoxious about it. He has all the proper papers and will stand up to Héttukeng (though sensibly offering him a bribe afterwards). His prices are high, but he can be bargained with. His slaves are mostly male criminals that he bought at the government auction block.
2. Bejjéksa, another Salarvyáni merchant, is travelling with Chnésuru for companionship with a fellow countryman. Bejjéksa has a string of bearer slaves carrying bales of finely-figured cloth and chests of soapstone carvings. His goods are of high quality, and his prices are fair. He has the proper permits.
3. Two Mu'ugalavyáni brothers are travelling together, carrying rare earths, perfumes and scented oils in packs on their backs. They're from Khéiris and commonly make the rounds in the Chákan protectorates. If pressed, Héttukeng will vaguely remember seeing them before.
4. A Keténgku priest, Mápi hiPagásu, is travelling to a new temple assignment. He is quiet and will keep to himself. If asked, he is a sorcerer. His spells are:

Alleviation U2

Ascertainment U1, U2

Control of Self U1, U3

Guarding G6

Healing U1, U2, U3

He has a Magic Skill of 2 in both Ritual and Psychic. All his spells cost 1 psychic point except for Guarding which costs 10. He has a pool of 80 psychic points. His Magic Resistance is 6.

He is also a physician and carries a great number of herbs with him. Mápi is peaceful and will resist any suggestions to try and use his abilities to hurt another (in particular, casting Ascertainment), though he's also law-abiding and thus susceptible to persuasion from Dlamúz or Kénesh.

5. Orodái hiSayúncha works as an agent for some Shén, taking the flame opals and garnets that they value so little, and selling them in Tsolyánu for a commission. He carries them in a small pouch, and has all the proper permits. He is confident that people respect (i.e. fear) his employers enough that he will not be robbed.

6. A troupe of Emerald Circlet entertainers are on their way up north to set up shop in a village near where a legion is stationed. The troupe includes singers, dancers, jugglers, story-tellers and prostitutes.

The N'lüss: Regyur, Myunch, Dyfur, Skae, Malarta

Five strapping N'lüss men will arrive at the villa near the end of the scenario in search of the High Cartography stone, tipped off by the young N'lüss maid who works for Umá. They know that Shekkára came here today, and that she was supposed to give the stone to someone. It hasn't crossed their minds that the theft was also a crime in Tsolyánu, and they could report it and get official help, maybe even a reward for their information. They are refugees from a border region that Mu'ugalavyá has overrun already, and they assume no one will look out for their best interests if they don't do it. Like most N'lüss, they are all armed.

They will start asking everyone if Shekkára has been here, using her name and then describing her if no one recognizes the name. If they suspect someone is lying to them, they will start to physically rough them up. They will offer nothing in exchange for the map symbol "except the privilege of living." If Dlamúz has recovered it, they will not respect his status as an Imperial messenger or even OAL operative, if that is revealed. They will only be stopped by force or judicious use of the Dlamúz's Excellent Ruby Eye.

These N'lüss are from the Band of Mnerr (Mnerr has formed a legion and fought for Tsolyánu at the Battle for the Átkolel Heights), but not part of his legion. They speak in heavily accented Tsolyáni and worship Vimúhla. All of them are equipped with a greatsword and a dagger.

Melee Attack 8	Missile Attack 8
Melee Defense 6	Missile Defense 6
Initiative Base 8	
Health Points 60	
Shock Value 12	

Sword (Two-handed) – 3 (Damage modifier x5)

The Feshénga

The feshénga is a large adult, 18' feet in length. It's a newcomer to the area, having been swept down the river by the recent flooding. It's hungry and not in a good mood. When the refugees make their ferry crossing, they will overcrowd the boat (unless Túrisan specifically forbids this). The feshénga will see the bodies perched on the edge of the boat and make a lunge. If the large ferry is in use, this will be the final straw and part of the side of the boat will cave in. Within the inrushing water, the ferry will overbalance and sink inside a minute. If there are chlén, they will panic, thrashing about as they drown. The feshénga will bite several people, trying to gather as much of this unexpected

bounty as possible. The rest who survive the feshénga and the chlén will have a chance to make it to shore, but if they can't swim, there's little hope for them.

Feshénga's stats:

Melee Attack: 8 Missile Attack: 6 Attacks per Round: 1

Melee Defense: 6 Missile Defense: 3

Attack Type:

Bite -1, Damage *5, *8 with venom

Armor Rating: 12 Health Points: 90 Shock: 18

Chlén stats:

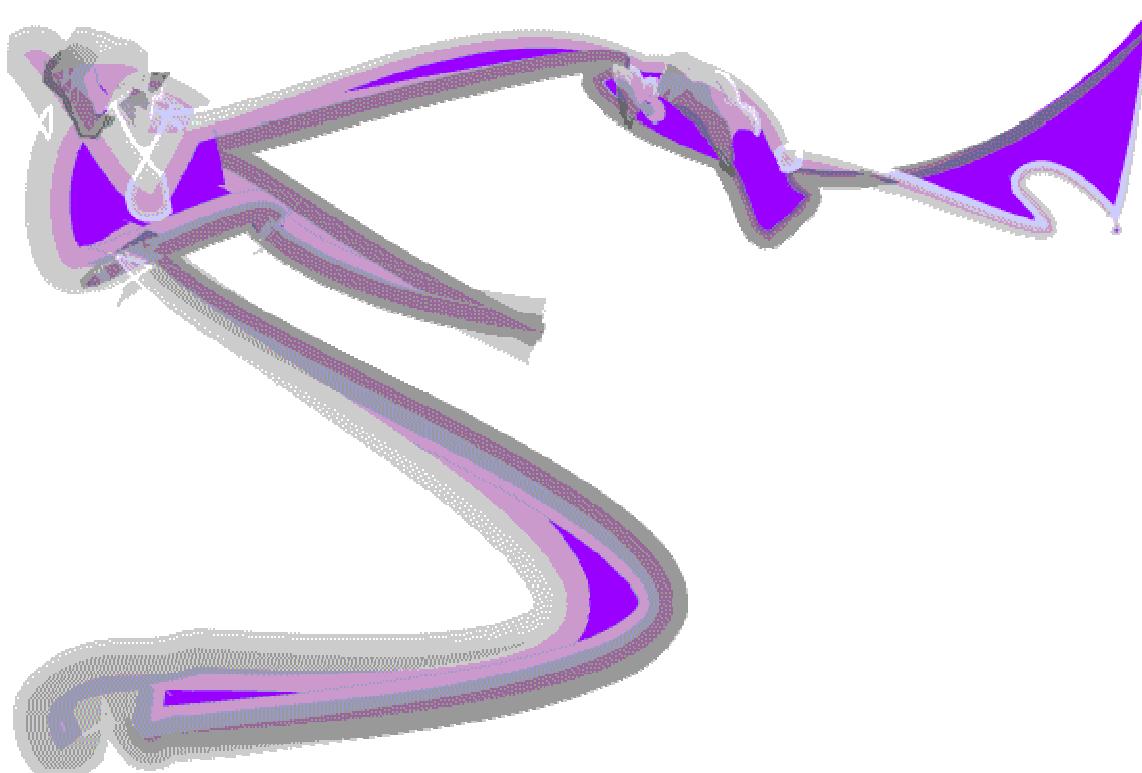
Melee Attack: 8 Missile Attack: 4 Attacks per Round: 1/2

Melee Defense: 6 Missile Defense: 2

Attack Type:

Stomp or Kick +1 Damage *6

Armor Rating: 6 Health Points: 105 Shock: 21



Timeline of Events

10:30 The scenario opens with Dlamúz, the Imperial messenger/OAL agent arriving off the ferry. Lord Visán, his bodyguard Hóru, Zagár hiVraisúna (the Golden Sheaf elder) and Kénes, the Palace of the Realm official, are all arriving from a dirt path across the fields.

Adlár is in the front courtyard coordinating the servants. Kotáru is out in the marketplace chatting with Héttukeng, the Sákbe road guard captain. Túrisan is overseeing the collecting of tolls. Ngáya seems to be sulking inside. Mnéktu is bustling about.

Ókan, the Red Mountain guest, is sitting in a corner of the courtyard on his mats, watching the passing activity.

10:45 The large ferry docks. The crew chief comes over to get Túrisan's and Kotáru's attention. As the heavy chlén-carts disembark, he points to several places on the ferry where he fears the wood is rotted and weakening due to the harsh treatment it's received from the flooding this rainy season. He requests permission to take it out of commission and repair it. This will take three or four days as they will have to search the woods by the river for appropriate trees, cut them, shape the lumber, and then use it to repair the ferry.

11:00 A detachment of soldiers is waiting impatiently on the other side of the river for a ferry. They will shout and catcall to try and hurry up the process.

Tetkóru will slip into Adlár's room, searching for some hlásh and qírgals to steal.

11:15 Shekkára will arrive from the north. A Sákbe guard will see her hurrying along, all alone, dressed in decent cloth. He will approach Héttukeng about "inspecting" her to get a few hlásh.

If the Sákbe guard bothers her, Shekkára will bribe him with 5 káitars (far too much). She will then start making her rounds to Túrisan, Kotáru, and the cook Gárjak. If she's reduced to trying the cook, she'll snag a servant who will shout for Tetkóru. Tetkóru will be a long time in coming (either taking money back or just getting out of Adlár's room). He'll lead her back and his father the cook will accept the package. Her pretense for seeing the cook will be that she has spices she wants him to sample.

11:45 Tetkóru will slip into the servants' room and steal a Red Moon tunic.

12:00 A merchant caravan going north will stop at the villa to break for the day and take up travel again at night. See NPC section for descriptions of who's in the caravan. Chnésuru will seek out Mnéktu (and Lord Visán if he hears he's here) to try and sell a few slaves. Bejjéksa will set up shop in case someone wants to buy anything. Mápi, the priest, will buy some wine and food from the vendors and lay down to rest in a far corner

in the shade. Orodái will buy something to drink and start looking over the potions and amulets. He's always interested in something that will help with the heat when he has to visit Shényu. The Emerald Circlet people will wander about, chatting and laughing, buying the odd amulet and snack, trying to drum up some interest in a performance.

The servants will all stream to Adlár requesting their last month's wages which haven't been paid yet. They will be pushing for more than usual since they "did extra" during the siege. They'll settle for 5 qírgals each, but want 10. If he won't give them their money, they will become angry.

12:15 If the large ferry is still running, the crew chief will again go to Túrisan and complain about hearing the timbers creak after the last trip.

Tetkóru will slip around to Bejjéksa's area, and carefully snatch one of the now-empty bearer packs.

12:30 There will be a loud commotion from the market square between a Sákbe guard and Orodái. The guard figured out that Orodái must be carrying something valuable since his pouch was so small. After talking him into showing his wares (the flame opals and garnets), he selected a flame opal and then gave Orodái 5 káitars for it. It's worth at least 100 káitars, and Orodái was asking 300 for it. Orodái is furious and will not be quieted. He will demand to speak to the captain, and if he learns Visán is here, he will demand to speak to him.

Ókan will start making the rounds to find out who has the package. He will quite tentative about the process.

12:45 A courier (Chelésh hiZa'éra) will arrive from the north. He's come from the Legion of the Givers of Sorrow with an offer for Kotáru. If Tetkóru sees him, he'll run, assuming he knows about the deserter.

He's already stopped on the way at Purússa and spoken with the elders there (after Zagár had left). Kerdu Korikada hiKurushma has heard of his slaying of Tirrikámu Kágesh in single combat. In one stroke, Kotáru took care of an embarrassment for the legion and proved himself a fine swordsman. The Kerdu is willing to personally pay off Kotáru's debt if he will join the legion. Kotáru would start as Kágesh's replacement, with the rank of tirrikámu, and serve a minimum of 10 years. Chelésh expects Kotáru to leap at the offer. If he doesn't, Chelésh will be displeased, but will give him until morning to decide.

Remind Zagár's player that Kotáru's joining such a high status legion will be a coup for the clan.

This is a very mixed blessing for Kotáru. On the one hand, it erases his debt and gets out of the Villa. On the other hand, he may very well die in the war and will be subjected to discipline, which he hates. He will be in even greater disrepute with the clan if he turns the offer down. He will be able to turn it down if he wishes to.

1:00 A crowd of refugees will come down from the north. If the large ferry is still running, they will all crowd aboard, along with a chlén cart. If only the small ferry is running, they'll attempt to overcrowd it and all fit on together. If Peaceful Water attempts to collect a toll, they will loudly object. They have very few qírgals and nothing to lose. They will also talk loudly of the horrors of the war, how many are dying, how horrible the conditions are, how merciless the Yán Kóryani are, etc.

If they cross on the large ferry, it will be attacked by the feshénga, and the ferry will sink. If they cross on the overcrowded small ferry, the feshénga will attack and drag several overboard. (See the feshénga in the NPCs for the details of the attack.)

None of the refugees can swim. All of the Peaceful Water crew members can. Peaceful Water also carries daggers on them.

The clan who owned the chlén, and the chlén-drivers' clan will want shámtla from someone.

Peaceful Water will need to replace the ferry. Even if Túrisan was the main proponent of keeping it going, he would be wise (and has the right) to go to Ngáya or Lord Visán to get financial help to replace it. (The government has the right to revoke a concession if the ferries don't run.)

At this time, Tetkóru will slip into Peaceful Water's room to try and steal some money and a blanket.

2:00 The N'lüss will arrive looking for Shekkára. See their NPC description for details on how they will conduct themselves.

While these events are happening, hopefully the players will be interacting among themselves, trying to fulfill their goals. Dlamúz will be conducting his investigation, trying to find the item, identify who dropped it off and identity the Red Mountain contact. Kénesz will be attempting to find out who murdered Mígör. Adlár, Mnéktu, Ngáya, Visán and Zagár should be tangled up in arguments over the marriage issue. Hopefully, Hóru will be prowling around, poking his nose into everything.

Be flexible and willing to let the timetable slip if PC-generated activity is going strong. Make occasional Observation checks to see if anyone notices Tetkóru stealing items. If anyone goes looking for something he's taken (Adlár for money or wine, a servant for clean clothes for enjoying the caravan, Bejjéksa for the bearer pack, Túrisan if he goes into the Peaceful Water room at all), they will notice it's missing.

Conclusion

I'm not at all sure how all this will turn out. It will vary greatly depending on what the PCs choose to do.

Perception of the Energies #3

A 'zine for the Visitations of Glory APA

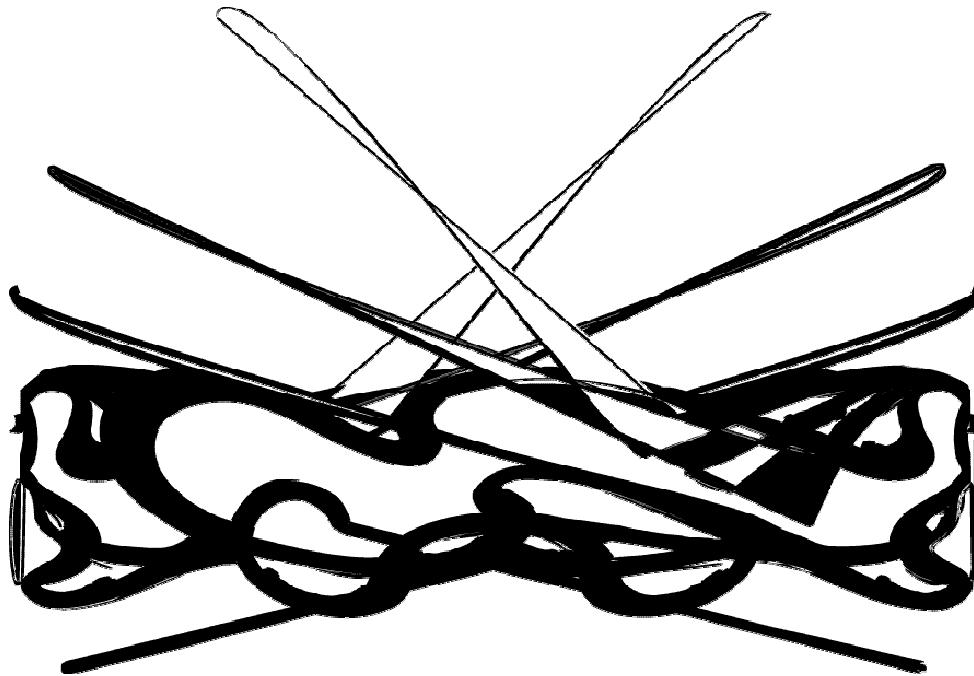
By Robert A. Dushay
December, 2001

DESPERATE MEASURES

COMMENTS AND KUDOS ON VISITATIONS OF GLORY #2

Special thanks to Brad Johnson for stepping in and keeping this thing afloat. It was another great issue, a worthy successor to #1. Mr. Svard's first illustration reminded me of Moebius's work. My printer made his captions come out all but unreadable, unfortunately. Likewise, most of the headers to Malcolm Heath's comments printed as gibberish. Likely the latter is a problem with the printer translating fonts into a symbol font of some kind. Krista, once more, your scenario is a delight. I don't know how easy demons are to summon by accident, but I'd overlook that for such a cool situation. I suppose I've earned my geekdom, because I recognized Chashána's glyph as the glyph of Ever-Present Defense before you introduced it in the text. Brad's and Malcolm's submissions were also fun mood setters, and I'd planned to copy their example for my submission this issue, but luckily I found something suitable that was less work to write at the last minute.

PROGRESS REPORT: The semester has just ended, and it's past time for another submission. Visitations of Glory seems to be turning into a place for scenarios and adventure hooks, and I have little to add here. But, I have a few pieces of old business to deal with. This issue, I deal with one of my more pressing ones.



PUZZLING OUT THE NONHUMANS: I've been interested in the Páchi Léi for some time. From the original EPT on, the Páchi Léi have been described as very close to humans. Yet they are among the least known of the nonhumans outside of those who've played on Tékumel Prime. I wanted to write an article that would explain these beings as the articles for the Shén, Pé Chói, and Tinalfyá did. I never could find a proper voice to frame the article properly. Keep in mind this is a draft, and has not been authenticated by the Professor, of course.

The Páchi Léi is a highly social race. Although they do not form families in the human sense—their reproductive process makes it difficult to base stable relationships on genetic ties—they nevertheless prefer to live in small groups of two to eight intimate friends. A Páchi Léi will pine away and eventually die if isolated, which is why the severest penalty in their forest homes is exile. Some individuals are able to adopt human friends (or friends of other races) in place of their own kind, but these individuals are unusual in other ways as well. A Páchi Léi who has bonded to humans will be incredibly loyal. Their ability to quickly make social connections is one of the reasons they fit so well into human society.

The other reason they adjust so well to humans is the Páchi Léi penchant for imitation and adaptation. They quickly learn to duplicate successful behavior, especially social behaviors. Páchi Léi quickly learn how to function in a hierarchical society, and they are able to gain promotions in human bureaucracies better than any other non-human species.

This sociability and adaptability is grounded in the distant past of the Páchi Léi race. These beings evolved on a planet in the Arcturus system, a world covered by forests and seas. Although not especially technologically advanced when discovered by humans, lacking space flight, for example, yet within a generation they were serving on human starships, and within two generations, they were building their own vessels. The Páchi Léi unit of social organization was the troupe, with a supreme leader and fluid, changing hierarchy below this person. Individuals could leave and join troupes at will, and they quickly learned the rules their Tree Lords set for the troupe. The Tree Lord was an absolute ruler, restrained only by the possibility of mass refusals of his followers to obey commands. This social organization was retained by the Páchi Léi colony on Tékumel, and lasted up until roughly 1000 years ago, when it was replaced by a system of circles and posts copied from human societies.

The Páchi Léi retained several traits from their ancient, pre-intelligent ancestors. They have an inborn desire for social organization. They are highly adaptable, able to copy successful innovations rapidly. Of most interest, however, is the state called "Biyúrh". The ancestors of the Páchi Léi, when faced with mortal danger, entered an altered state of consciousness, a hyper enhanced fighting state akin to the human condition popularly called "running amok." In this state, one would attack a threat with no regard for pain, injury, or self-preservation. The individual would usually perish anyway, but predators would receive such injuries as to make it unlikely that they would attempt such an attack again. In this way, the rest of the troupe would survive, and predators would be deterred. Once the Páchi Léi evolved intelligence and social structures and began to dominate their

world, vestiges of these traits remained. On Tékumel, Biyúrh seems to occur at random, although there is almost no chance of it under normal circumstances. Stress increases the probability of an episode, imperfectly obeying the ancient genetic code.

During the Time of Darkness, at first, the Páchi Léi suffered less than other races. Individuals quickly assumed the role of Tree-Lords, and the sociable and adaptable Páchi Léi rallied around their new leaders. Some Tree-Lords preserved technology in caches and depots, while others used what was available until it wore out or ran out of power and spare parts. Some enlarged their domains outside of the forests, conquering human neighbors, while others enforced a policy of cooperation with the humans. By the time of the Empire of Llyán of Tsámra, the Páchi Léi were no longer able to extend their power beyond the jungles of Pan Cháka, due to the faster reproduction rate of humans. In spite of this, humans who wished to conquer the Páchi Léi in their jungle homes were always defeated, thanks to the superior mobility of Páchi Léi forces in the dense foliage. However, cooperative arrangements between human and Páchi Léi still existed, and Páchi Léi were frequently found in human communities nearby. In fact, the modern city of Butrús had always been cooperatively governed by humans and Páchi Léi (they called the city Bf-chrss, “(large) (deforested) dwelling-place”) until the Tsolyáni conquest of Pán Cháka in the early 700s A.S.

The main motivations of the Páchi Léi are social ones. The Páchi Léi are exquisitely attuned to the nuances of conversation, gesture, poise, and mood. All Páchi Léi are aware of who owes what favor to whom, and where they fit in this web of connections. While in the old days, Páchi Léi gave allegiance to a single supreme leader, they now have the same Circles and posts observed in Tsolyáni society. What confuses the humans of the Five Empires is the utter lack of clan structure or other social status: any Páchi Léi can aspire to any circle, and there are lengthy intrigues and maneuvers to climb the social ladders they have built, all invisible to human sensibilities.

Páchi Léi need society. Without a society to belong to, they lose their will to live, and waste away. It is for this reason that their ultimate legal punishment is exile, rather than execution. No matter one’s deeds, if you are a member of the Páchi Léi community, you are part of the social order. A severe crime is one that contradicts the social order, and the supreme penalty for this is to be expelled. Such exiles rarely find their way back into Páchi Léi society again. The fact of their exile can easily be perceived by other Páchi Léi, and they are reluctant to accept the rejects of other groups. This is part of the reason why non-Páchi Léi find it so difficult to become fully accepted members of the Páchi Léi community.

The reverse is not true. Páchi Léi easily enter and adapt to human culture. They can understand and imitate our relatively crude social structures with ease. It may take time before they truly understand such concepts as “money” or “occupation,” but they imitate the behaviors well enough without understanding that it rarely becomes an issue. Páchi Léi sometimes become restless if the structure they are in is static for too long: they may ask to be reassigned elsewhere, or given new duties, or begin an intrigue simply to make a

change. The longer they have been in human society, the more they are able to withstand a stable position for long periods.

The constant movement of their social status makes Páchi Léi more sympathetic to Change than Stability, although they usually favor non-destructive Change. They see society more like an ocean, with currents and waves that constantly churn the surface, yet leave the body the same. In human societies they favor the temples of Hrü'ü and Ksárul and their cohorts: they are generally disinterested in the destruction wrought by Lord Vimúhla, the slow decay and eternal knowledge of Lord Sárku, or the endless hedonism of Lady Dlamélish.

It is for these reasons that the Mu'ugalavyáni saw the Páchi Léi as unsuitable for assimilation. The changeable nature of their social structures infuriated the Mu'ugalavyáni, who were unable to find any consistent leaders below a single supreme leader, and these underlings had authority at one time, and didn't at another. They were classified as unsuitable for assimilation before the Mu'ugalavyáni discovered how adaptable the Páchi Léi could be.

The nature of Páchi Léi reproductive processes is radically different from the sexed species on Tékumel. They are technically hermaphroditic, both male and female. At certain times of the year, they release their male gametes as spores, and they are fertilized by the resultant clouds of dust. Fatherhood is impossible to determine. On their homeworld orbiting Arcturus, the air was filled with spores all across the planet during the proper times of the year. On Tékumel, there are few places that have enough population density to sustain such clouds. As a result, reproduction is difficult outside of the Páchi Léi enclaves of Pan Cháka or Butrús. In other cities, reproduction requires that the Páchi Léi release their spores in enclosed spaces. They find the practice somewhat perverted and distasteful, and the increased possibility of self-fertilization reduces the number of successful offspring. It would be very unpleasant for them to know the fertilizer of their child, as they feel this would permit another to claim parenthood with their podling, a bond that Páchi Léi instinctively feel is for one parent alone. They understand human reproduction, and approve of the togetherness that human sexual practices offer, even if the concept of fatherhood is somewhat disgusting to them. However, they are unable to understand the other feelings that are associated with sexual behavior, and find the worship of Dlamélish quite incomprehensible (although they are able to imitate it should they choose to join this temple for political, economic, or social reasons).

Páchi Léi are omnivorous, although the bulk of their diet is vegetarian. They prefer to eat roots and tubers, although they eat leaves for flavor and their various medicinal properties. Only the weak, the young, and the sickly subsist primarily on leaves, which is why they dislike the name "leaf-eater".

Similar to the Pé Chói sense of "rightness of action", the Páchi Léi have a sense of "rightness of place", which is why they have not spread outside of their Pan Chákan homes. This also explains why they do not sail far out of sight of land, although they have many useful skills. This is partly a natural phenomenon (similar to bird's ability to detect

magnetic fields), and partly a piece of their psychic make-up. Páchi Léi are able to read water and air currents in a way that only the Swamp Folk can match. From the shape of waves, and ripples, the smell, sound, and temperature of the water, a Páchi Léi knows how fast a current is going, how deep it is in the water, how far it will travel, and what loops and curves it will make. Similarly, they can read the winds and make accurate weather forecasts. Were they not so physically clumsy on the water and reluctant to leave their Pan Chákan homes, where the coast is unsuited to boating, they would be excellent mariners.

One human custom that reliably gives them trouble is money. Páchi Léi do not have any use for money in Pán Cháka. Goods are exchanged according to the same web of favors and status that regulates the other parts of their society. While they can intellectually grasp that money represents an abstract marker of one's labor, clan status, and so forth, they find the need for physical tokens to be laughable and crude. Páchi Léi are frequently careless of money in human society, although they understand at a level deeper than most humans can exactly what changes hands in a transaction, and exactly how strong the relationship between buyer and seller is afterwards.

END

