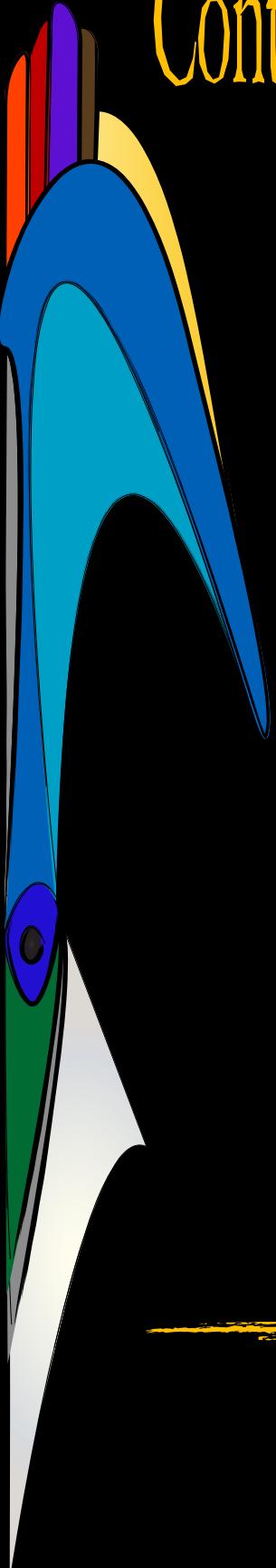


Visitations of Glory

An APA for the World of Tékumel



Issue 12



Contributors From The Clan of Ethereal Ink

These Mean Streets

by Barry Blatt

Pygmy Folk

by Barry Blatt

Book of Crystal Bindings

by Barry Blatt

Thomas Worthington

Cursed by Avánthe

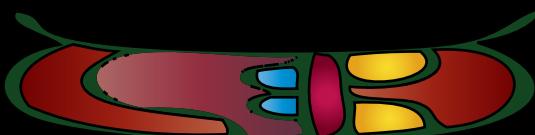
by Krista Donnelly

Various Artwork

by Brad Johnson



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the individual authors and artists who created them,
all of whom acknowledge that none of this would have been possible without:
Professor M.A.R. Barker, the creator of Tékumel.
Chegúkh, Professor. We are all in your debt.**







Introduction

Jakálla Foreign Quarter is tough place, not quite lawless anarchy, but the authorities care little what happens to nakomé scum, foreigners and aliens and only shift themselves to intervene in crime when riots are threatened and inducements offered.

This leaves the field free for ‘freelance’ law enforcement by the inhabitants themselves and opportunities for those down on their luck to haul themselves out of poverty by preying on those even less lucky. Tsolyánu may be a paradise to its citizens, who hymn the Emperor every day for his divinely mandated rule, but is a cruel place to the non-citizen, foreigner and outcast.

Author’s Notes

I have given stats for Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne, The Guardians of Order incarnation of Tékumel abbreviated as **T:EPT** in the text, and for the original TSR Empire of the Petal Throne game, noted as **OEPT**. I apologise to fans of Gardásyal and urge the authors of the d20 Tékumel rules to get them published.

This is fairly straightforward ‘dungeon bash’ at heart, but I have highlighted certain elements I think give an adventure a specifically Empire of the Petal Throne feel. I freely admit to lifting this idea from the Dying Earth RPG (published by Pelgrane Press) which uses a similar checklist to ensure scenarios have a sufficiently ‘Vancian’ feel.

Odd Customs

In the Swords and Glory sourcebooks Professor Barker lovingly describes a whole gamut of peculiar customs and folkways. Using these will help reinforce the feeling that Tékumel’s nations are old, stratified and highly ritualised and challenge the players to break out of their easy going western liberal mindset and adopt the role of someone truly different. The GM could, for example, simply make a point of the various greeting gestures and phrases used by different religions, ethnicities and social strata, describe the peculiar facial scarifications so important in the Kráa Hills, get players terminally embarrassed over Yán Koryáni sexual mores and so on.

Political Shenanigans

The Tsolyáni have a deity dedicated to lying and subterfuge, have institutionalised assassination and a tacit acceptance of peculation and bribery. In any situation at least one person is going to be following a secret agenda and/or hiding their true factional allegiance, perpetrating a scam, doing the dirty on a rival, looking for an opportunity for blackmail and so on and so forth. The Tsolyáni are a deeply honourable people, and don't you ever forget it if you wish to avoid getting involved in a duel, but in the quest to climb the social ladder they are willing to commit any number of dubious deeds.

Punctilious Etiquette

The Tsolyáni are honourable people, they are touchy and liable to indulge in lawsuits and/or violence if they feel that this honour has been impugned and so they are always very polite and correct in their language. This correctness includes talking to lower caste people as if they were shit, and grovelling outrageously to anyone upper caste and doing your damndest never to contradict or disagree with them outright even when they are talking utter rubbish, out of fear of impalement. I suggest in each scenario there should be at least one awkward situation where players have to talk their way out of a sticky social situation with the possibility of death and mutilation for 'rudeness' an ever present threat.

Casual Cruelty

Tékumel is a fun place to visit, but living there would be hell. People are impaled for being rude to arrogant stuck-up pea-brained nobles, there is sexual exploitation of slaves, humans are sacrificed daily, people are born into rubbish jobs like latrine digger and expected to remain such the whole of their miserable lives, there is open racism and subtle sectarianism. At all levels of society you can encounter heartless oppression and cruelty. Make your players uncomfortable by shoving this fact in their face every so often, and if possible require them to participate.

Weird Magic and Obtuse Technology

Tékumel is magical place. People point at stuff and it explodes, they take over each others minds like puppeteers and the dead get up and walk. There are a lot of fraudsters making magical claims they cannot back up too, but once in a while you meet some magical phenomenon that will make your skin crawl and your mind reel. If the players ever start taking magic for granted remind them that it emanates from the mysterious gaps between the universes and mere mortals must be very careful with it lest they lose their very souls.

Tékumel is a scientific place. The whole planet is an artificial environment, its very gravity has been modified by technology, the staple food, dná grain, is a GM crop and there are androids and robots on the loose below most cities, zapping people with laser beams. Once in a while let the players come across a piece of familiar technology in this unfamiliar setting, a trick used by Professor Barker in his novels and in the Adventures on Tékumel series. What would medievally minded folk make of a mobile phone? A beeping flashing idol that lets you talk to god? What use would they make of an Eye of Retaining All Things Forever (a holographic camera)?

Alien Vistas and Ancient Ruins

Tékumel contains animals and plants from at least 14 different planets, has 17 intelligent alien species, not counting the ones that have gone extinct, visit occasionally from other planes or pretend to be semi-intelligent at best to avoid hassle. Your chances of finding a familiar terrestrial type animal or plant on Tékumel is very slim. Remind the players of this regularly with outbreaks of strange alien wildlife and flora; paddy fields of yafa-rice guarded against pests by semi-domesticated polyps, flute-trees which use sound to attract insect pollinators rather than bright flowers, pollinators which are not insects at all but gas-filled aerial molluscs.

Tékumel is very old. The gap between the fall of Éngsvan hlá Gángá and the rise of the Empire of the Petal Throne is 10,000 years, a span of time equivalent to the whole of earthly history from the first permanently settled villages in the hills of the Fertile Crescent to the modern day. The Empire of the Petal Throne is 2300 years old; this is as if the Roman Empire never fell in earthly terms. Players should come across stupendously old buildings on a regular basis with five hundred year old clanhouses made of ever repaired and recycled mud brick a commonplace, a towns 'new' temple being a mere millennium old and an architectural curio decorated with bas reliefs of writhing feshénga and dancing girls in an unknown style and commemorating a king and kingdom long forgotten standing half-buried and used as káika-coop by the local peasants. Shelley's Ozymandias would feel right at home on Tékumel.

Exotic Food and Overstated Costume

The Dying Earth novels are full of descriptions of the fantastic meals and outfits that are the hallmark of its self-indulgent society, and the Professor likewise made great use of outlandish costume and cuisine in creating a similar atmosphere in his Tékumel novels. We should do the same in our scenarios, making the irruption of a temple procession into the world of off-white kilts and loincloths in the back streets of Jakálla a feast for the eyes with plumed masks and embroidered banners, the shaven scalps of the priests painted with icons and hordes of acolytes throwing flowers across the path. No official is properly dressed without his official headdress, covered in symbols depicting his role in the bureaucracy (even if he is supervisor of sewers and latrine pits), and everyone must wear something communicating their clan origin and religious allegiance. Make players describe their characters everyday apparel and ornamentation.

And the food needs some attention as well – feasts are regular occurrence, so what do people eat? On a world where terrestrial-style vertebrates are a bit of a rarity and there are thousands of vegetables and spices from all round the galaxy all kinds of possibilities arise. A favourite starter in lands bordering the Gilraya Forest is wasp-nests; a certain species of wasp makes little nests 5-10cm across which have enough resin in their paper to stand being dunked into boiling water for 30 seconds or so. This poaches their grubs nicely and the nest can be served cut in two and the diner can remove the larvae with a wooden toothpick. Or aprai-melons stuffed with yakí beans? Aprai melons are toxic, yes, but the beans neutralise the toxins, you just have make sure you use enough of them. Cooking and Toxicology are closely related disciplines on Tékumel.

Not every scenario is going to use all of these elements, but adding a few of them will make a simple little job like throwing a gang of squatters out of a run-down building into a true Tékumel extravaganza.

The Situation

Jüggash Korolyágashmu is self-proclaimed ‘Lord’ of the Jakálla Salarvyáni exile community. He claims to be a scion of a cadet branch of the junior line of the Great House of Thireqúmmu, but hides whenever a real Salarvyáni noble is in town. He is pretty ‘in’ with the Flat Peak clan and has persuaded them to let him manage their property in the Foreign Quarter which consists of some rather tumbledown tenement blocks. His contract is of course dependent on providing a good return on minimal investment, and if he does well he will eventually be adopted into the clan and granted citizenship.

Unfortunately one of these blocks is home to a large group of Salarvyáni exiles calling themselves the ‘Ügremish clan’. These nakomé reprobates have been paying no rent for years and have the temerity to dispute the provenance of the title deed and contract papers waved in their filthy faces by Jüggash. They say they rent the building from the last surviving member of the Golden Crab clan, who oddly enough cannot now be found.

Jüggash wants the squatters removed, and the PCs are going to help him do it. How the GM involves the PCs in this unsavoury situation depends on their social status. If they are barbarians just ‘off the boat’ this kind of freelance thuggery is as good an offer of employment as any, and many a Very Low or Low clan member is hard up enough to consider such a job. They may even have their services offered to the Flat Peak by their clan elders as the Ügremish have been annoying some of the very low clans by undercutting their casual labour rates.

Higher clan PCs may be involved as part of the city’s bureaucracy or police force if Jüggash has a bit more money to spend and can afford a few bribes. He might even be able to get the odd legionary or temple guard involved.

Jüggash Korolyágashmu

T:EPT

Str 4 Dex 4 Int 6 Psy 4 Will 4 Cha 6
CV 4 Init 8 HP 40 SV 8 MR 5 Pedh 4 Respect 3

Older 3 (Age 32), Flunkies 2, Friends in High Places 2, Wealthy 2
Greedy 2, Second Class Citizen 3, Secret 1

Skills: Admin 1, Bribery 1, Intimidate Street 1, Knowledge: Jakálla 1, Spk Salarvyáni 2, Spk Tsolyáni 2, Read Salarvyáni 1, Culture: Tsolyáni 1, Etiquette *Low Clan* 1, Streetwise *Jakálla* 1, Brawling 1, Dagger 1, Close Combat

Equipment

Dagger, Truncheon, Fancy clothes (see below), jewellery value 50kt

OEPT

Lev 2 Warrior

Str 45 Int 70 Con 50 PsAb 50 Dex 55 Com 60 Gui 85

Attack + 2 Damage + 1 AC 6

HD 2 HP 9

10% detect unseen danger

Skills:

I Grocer, Merchant

II Scribe/Accountant

III Interpreter Salaravyáni/Tsolyáni

Professional:

Spearman, Mace /Flail, Axe

Equipment

Club, leather armour, small shield, jewellery 150kt, cash 50kt

Jüggash is not an exiled noble, he was junior-most scribe in a noble's chancery in the city of Ajjan and went on the run after committing fraud. After more frauds in the towns of western Salarvyáni and bit of armed robbery in Tsatsayággá he wound up in Jakálla and started getting sensible and looking to the long term. He spends most of his cash on clothes, knowing the first step to being respectable is looking respectable. He wears a fine black Salarvyáni style tunic, edged with red braid and a green and white striped conical cap. His belt is of Tsolyáni style, a set of linked chlen hide plaques stained green and white with a long pendant section in front down to the knees, with the sigil of the Flat Peak clan discretely picked out on the central buckle in black. His hair is the typical Salarvyáni work of art, long and oiled and passed through three linked silver rings at the back (a sign of minor nobility he isn't entitled to), but his chin is shaved in the Tsolyáni fashion, though he often sports a five o'clock shadow. He is invariably accompanied by two slaves and two flunkies. His flunkies are large Salarvyáni gents with the shaven heads of professional wrestlers who add to his ability to intimidate people no end. His manner is ponderous and slow and gestures large, in the fashion of Salarvyáni nobility who expect lesser types to listen to their every word closely.

Alien Vistas and Ancient Ruins: Jakálla in the Rain

Jakálla, The City Half As Old As Time, Green Princess of the Eqúnoyel River, a place whose fame and glory spreads across the known world. Many people from all over the world yearn to see its mighty palaces and glorious temples, the (allegedly) jewelled bridges and beautiful Palace of the Ever-Living Lord. Many people who have lived there for years yearn to see them as well, trapped as they are in the infamous Foreign Quarter, surrounded by high city walls surmounted with impaling stakes and rotting corpses.

Not that they could see much of the rest of the city on a day like this; it is not so much raining as the entire atmosphere has liquefied and is falling upon the steaming city in a never ending avalanche, a monsoon that lasts on and off for three months from Hasanpór to Didóm. Today one of Jakálla's less glamorous epithets, The City on the Yellow Mud, is the most apposite. The streets of the Foreign Quarter run with murky yellow water, and, where the sewers are blocked, brownish things as well. People are still out and about though, the petty market stalls covered with leaky rush matting, the shopkeepers squatting on upturned baskets to stay out of the mud. Barefoot plebeians, clad in loincloths and wide straw hats, wade through the streets towards the docks where they hope to earn a few qirgál shifting goods, the crowd by the Gate of the Black Stair seeking access to the city proper is as thick as ever, men and women squatting on plank benches waiting their turn to dicker and argue with the gate guards. Beggars hold their usual posts on the corners, bony hands held out to all who pass, but as usual receiving little but drops of water.

Much of the yellow mud on the streets comes from the walls of the ramshackle buildings. In places veritable waterfalls flow off the roofs down the faces of the three and four storey blocks, carving gullies into the plaster and revealing the baked yellow clay bricks beneath. The top and bottom floors of such buildings are often abandoned on days like this, the water from the streets flows through the ground floor and the roofs are so leaky you might as well be outside.

The ancient past of the city shows through. There are stubs of buried walls in the more rutted streets, remnants of the last ditlána where the whole city was buried and rebuilt, catching pools of water like little dams. On one corner the whole street has subsided into an alleyway built millennia before, then buried and forgotten.

Some people seem to enjoy the downpour though. A procession of barbarians from some far off island are dancing naked through the streets with bones through their noses and feathers in their hair howling praise to whatever crude aspect of Avánthe they call their own. They shake everyone's hand as they pass, trying to haul them out of their torpor and join their procession. Some people smile, but many recoil and wash their hands of any demon-taint in the muddy yellow water. A few watch the savages pass through circled fingers, a deep insult if only they knew it, and a sure method of spotting any evil demons they may be bringing forth with their mispronounced prayers.

Initial Encounter: Disputation at the Tower of the Red Dome: Punctilious Etiquette

There is a sudden flurry of activity around the Gate of the Black Stair; two gents lounging on palanquins appear with a body of men bearing clubs and two pushing a handcart laden with rakes and shovels. It is the dreaded Supervisor of Labour for the Glory of the Realm and the Lord of Easy Flowings (and their entourage)! (see Haruné and Eikó).

Unsurprisingly many of the crowd by the stair slosh away through the rain as nonchalantly as possible, but an unlucky few are bellowed at by Haruné and marshalled into a line by the armed men. They are marched between the two officials who give them the once over, their names are written down and they are then handed a shovel and fall resignedly into line.

Once the retreating unemployed are round the corner they break into a run and scatter into the alleyways and other refuges including the Tower of the Red Dome, where the PCs are either living or are dragged by the tide of fleeing people. This, it turns out is a big mistake, as these two worthies always make the Tower their first port of call after rounding up the beggars at the stairs.

At this point the PCs are trapped. Haruné yells obscenities in their general direction and a loud voiced Tirrikámu informs them that they have just volunteered to Labour for the Glory of the Realm. If they are of low status they will just have to put up with it, but mid status persons might be able to answer back respectfully and wheedle their way out of a day's hard labour in the sewers. They will of course have to explain to the City Guard Sergeant why they are in the Foreigners Quarter if they are persons of any status, and this may land them in even deeper and dirtier water...

At a key point in the argument (before they are arrested, thumped, or marched off to dig) Jüggash appears. He too needs labour, and anyone who signs up with him has a halfway decent excuse not to dig as they are in effect being sworn in as deputies of the Guard to deal with malefactors against the realm. This will of course cut no ice with Haruné, and Jüggash will eventually negotiate with Haruné (standing under his little waterfall and via the grovelling Arján) The PCs will not know the terms unless they can sneak up and overhear, but essentially Jüggash is selling the Ügremish clan to the Iron Helm clan at a knock down price as slave labourers – not that he owns them (yet).

Overstated Costume and Odd Customs: *Haruné* and *Eikó*

Tsolyáni officials love a nice hat, and these two worthies are no exception.

Haruné hiJuyukkún, a member of the Iron Helm clan and follower of Hrü'u, is Supervisor of Labour for the Glory of the Realm, a post that involves rounding up whatever labour is needed to carry out emergency repairs on the fabric of the city. He is often seen being carted around in his all-weather palanquin during the monsoon season as the sewers inevitably get blocked and sometimes sandbag defences need putting round the government offices and palaces. City dwellers are occasionally drafted to help dig out drainage ditches in the nearby fields or roofs and walls collapse and need to be made safe and cleared away and so on. Theoretically he can conscript absolutely anyone within the city walls, in practice he goes for the nakomé in the Foreigners Quarter, grabs very low clanners but does give them a couple of qirgál or so a day, negotiates with low clans for low price work gangs and borrows slaves from mid and higher clans, if that's OK with them. Those who object to being conscripted are imprisoned and fined; in the case of members of the lowest clans and nakomé this usually means they end up enslaved anyway.

When on duty he wears a white chlén hide headpiece adorned with two curved truncheons supporting a seal of the Palace of the Realm surrounded by a golden sunburst and his wide blue and gold collar is adorned with stylised motifs of builders and labourers and has a pyramid on each shoulder. He also wears a purple and blue robe, gilded workboots with silver studs in the soles, bears an ornamental whip in one hand and a pointed swagger stick in the other, all symbolising aspects of his role. He never gets out his palanquin if he can help it, being very overweight, and summons people to talk to him where the rain running off its peaked roof falls in their faces, just to rub in his authority. He never speaks directly to nakomé or indeed anyone below high clan. He bellows loudly at one of his minions who them bellows the message onwards usually from a distance of mere inches.

Lord Eikó hiFershéna is a member of the Golden Dawn clan and a worshipper of Avánthe. He is Lord of Easy Flowings and responsible for directing the works done to prevent flooding, and to dig out sewers and latrine pits. He has to accompany Haruné to make sure he gets the right number of 'volunteers' and to direct them to his current work sites. He is empowered to enter any premises and inspect its drains and latrines, and actually does so, directly supervising his servants as they rod out drains and closely inspecting the impacted solids they extract from the sewers, using the semi-magical art of geomancy to analyse these substances and locate the key blockages by swinging a magnetic iron talisman over them. This has two faces, one of a constipated demon in tears and one of a relaxed demon smiling happily. He will sometimes inspect potential recruits with this device, asking the demon 'Is this person a good shitter?' This is unusual and eccentric but not rude – the Tsolyáni are peculiar about many things but bodily functions are not one of them.

He is a tall skinny fellow, looming over most people when he deigns to get out of his

palanquin, with permanent look of distaste on his wrinkled face (brought on by smelling so much shit according to his admiring minions). His headdress consists of a blue headband with little silver shovels alternating with ovoids on sticks in bronze. He wears a jewelled amulet shaped like a muck-rake round his neck and he too carries a whip – a real one, and he will use it if he feels his workforce is not taking the blockages seriously enough. Haruné hates him as he is a ‘Lord’ and Haruné a mere Supervisor even though he is far higher social rank, and they address each other only through a long suffering flunky called Arján the Weary who must kneel every time he speaks to Haruné (as he is a noble) and clap his hands three times in the air and hold his nose when speaking to Eikó (as he is supposed to be so dedicated to supervising sewers he needs his attention grabbed and it is polite to imply that he always stinks due to his unending labours on behalf of the city).

This duo always appear with Arján, four palanquin bearers each, two workers with barrows full of tools, a scribe, a miscellaneous flunky with a rush mat on a stick to shield them from the rain should they wish to dismount, another flunky with a wooden step to assist the same, a Tirrikámu of the City Watch with a hand bell to summon assistance if needed, a Tirrikámu of the Legion of Kétl to supervise the removal and incarceration of refuseniks and four lesser ‘clerks’ of the office of Labour in light armour, helms and armed with stout staves for immediate suasion of those who dare to doubt that the Glory of the Realm needs their labour.

The Plan: Casual Cruelty and Political Shenanigans

Having been rescued from a day's highly demeaning and unpaid labour in the sewers, the PCs will no doubt be curious as to what Jüggash has in mind. He ushers his men into the front room of a run down wine shop and explains the deal; evict the Ügremish, a bunch of no good Nakomé scum and he is willing to pay 40 hlásh, 10 up front, 30 on completion of job and bonuses for captives, 5 hlásh for a child under 14, 10 hlásh for a woman, and 12 hlásh for a man. There are 10 men, 12 women and 18 children as far Jüggash can tell.

In the wine shop waits Yuni of the Flat Peak clan, a 3rd circle clerk in the Palace of the Realm who is acting as Jüggash's legal advisor (T:EPT Int 6, Law 1; OEPT Int 75, Class II Lawyer skill, see Appendix 1). He explains that he has obtained a writ from the Foreign Quarter Magistrate to allow the eviction, but there are conditions and limits as to what can be done, and the last thing he wants is the Ügremish to launch a counter suit for 'shámtla', bloodmoney and fines exacted for insults against honour and reputation.

- Any verbal assaults, threats and insults are OK – the Ügremish are Nakomé, have no honour and can be called anything you like without incurring any shámtla.
- Injuries must be limited to minor contusions. Drawing blood or causing harm liable to stop the injured party from working for one full day or more will possibly incur shámtla, even from a nakomé. If this does happen then Jüggash will cover it, but if someone is killed outright then that is your look out. Use clubs, not knives and don't get carried away in the heat of the fight.
- The building itself must not be damaged, and the Ügremish must not be allowed to damage it. Any damage you cause will be taken off your wages, and if it looks like they are going to burn the place down hit 'em hard if you can.
- Jüggash will not pay shámtla to anyone who is injured while in his employ, that is the nature of the job, but will pay out if someone is killed or permanently maimed. This should not happen, these are squatters not killers.
- If the Ügremish do injure you let Yuni know and he will assess the injury and put in a claim for shámtla against the Ügremish on your behalf.

The Ügremish owe some 480Kt in back rent, plus the costs of the eviction and legal fees to a total of 50Kt and Yuni, in his capacity as 3rd class surveyor of Low Clan accommodations will be inspecting the place for wear and tear to add on to this total should it need refurbishment (which of course it will). Yuni and Jüggash also hope that their impromptu bailiffs will get sufficiently knocked about for them to claim yet more shámtla on their behalf. The Ügremish will then be forced to sell some of their family members to Jüggash to cover the bill, who will sell them on at a mark-up to the Iron Helm.

The Attack

The Ügremish have been expecting this kind of assault ever since Jüggash turned up with his rent demand and fake deeds and have posted a couple of kids on the approach roads to the tenement building as sentries. These will run to the building as they spot Jüggash and his thugs coming and they will set about defending it. Four of the men, two of the women and four of the children will be out working – they clan still need to make money to eat – but a child will run round the Foreign Quarter and down to Músa Jakálla Docks looking for them to warn them what is going on. They will turn up at the building in an hour or so.

The plan is simple. The lower floor is occupied by the men who have a barricade to place over the front door. Three will hold this barricade in place while Ösh Ügremish the headman and two others make sure than no one comes through the downstairs windows by bashing anyone who tries on the head from concealed positions by the wall. Ösh will use his talent for being intimidating to promise that anyone who dares attack will be killed.

Upstairs the women and kids keep a continual barrage of bricks and buckets of slops falling on the attackers. If the lower floor is taken the defenders will run up the stairs and make a second defence on the first floor landing, Ösh in the front of the fighting while further rocks are hurled as appropriate.

If it looks like too many attackers (6+) are coming at this point then the women and children will start enlarging a hole on the third floor into the building next door. The walls are pretty weak, being much riddled with Wall-Tongues (see box Alien Vistas: Wall Tongues). This will give them access to the building next door which is inhabited by a few Ahoggyá, who will be so surprised at the intrusion that they will fail to stop any of the fleeing people running down the stairs through their living area and out into the street.

Ösh will hold out until the last moment, keeping his men at the attack using his Command skill (OEPT: Use normal Morale rules, but as long as Ösh is conscious and fighting give the Ügremish +10%). They will flee to the third floor, pushing at an exposed and weakened beam that will collapse the ceiling on their pursuers as they use the escape hole made earlier by the women.

The attackers will consist of the PCs, backed up by Jüggash, and if the GM deems it necessary two of Jüggash's flunkies and possibly a few more thugs for hire. Use the stats for Minor Thug of p234 of the T:EPT rulebook, or use standard Lev 1 Warriors with leather armour and clubs for OEPT. If the players stop and think about it they will be able to use planning and teamwork themselves, but GMs should not remind them.

The Clanhouse

The building lies on the eastern edge of the Foreigners Quarter, very near the city wall. The main entrance lies on the south side of the building on a small street, there is another entrance on a narrow alley to the north.

Scale: 1Sq = 1m



Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



Basement

1. **Kitchen/Main Living Area.** *The room is smoky from the cooking fire and reeks of a mix of boiled vegetables, incense and decaying meat. The floor is damp and there are splotches of mould on the ceiling where water drips through from the rain outside. The kitchen tables are covered in clutter; wooden bowls, utensils, clay jars etc. and a pot of some root vegetable sits boiling on the kitchen fire, which is burning dried chlén-dung, driftwood and a couple of sticks of charcoal. Observant PCs will notice that the smell is worst near the small grilles in the floor.*

The door to the south has been blocked by a large table held by three men, while Ösh and two others lurk between the windows on the south wall. These are 1m wide and 1.5m high and have wooden shutters which are hinged at the top to

allow for ventilation. The barricade can be pushed back by main strength using a battering ram (though it will have three Ügremish behind it pushing back), or chopped through with an axe. (T:ETP 48HP, 1 Armour rating, OEPT 20HP).

2. **Stairwell.** *A very dim area lit mainly by light coming from a hole in the ceiling two floors above. The steps are quite shallow rising 1.5m in each stretch with a small landing halfway between each floor. The back door is only 1.2 m high and opens into a cramped space under the first landing, which is blocked off from the rest of the building by a pile of dried chlén-dung – the back door will not open and anyone kicking it in is in for nasty surprise. Qigékh (see Alien Creatures) scuttle about and there a couple of harmless phosphorescent fungi on the underside of the wooden stairs.*

If the men in area 1 are pushed back they will retreat to the first floor landing and defend from there, while the women in areas 6, 7 and 8 will come to the stairwell and drop their rocks at those coming up the stairs towards the first landing.

3. **Workshop.** *This room is full of smoke. The window shutters are open and black smoke pours out into the alleyway from a smouldering conical heap of hmélu hides on the flagstone floor. There are sacks of some grey powdery substance piled against the south wall, and a low dais toward the west wall is piled with seaweed. Anyone entering the room must save vs. Con or start coughing uncontrollably.*

Further investigation will reveal what is going on. The river estuary is always getting clogged with weeds and one of the ways casual labourers like the Ügremish make a living is by cutting it and selling it to the alum-makers clans, who slow burn it and extract chemicals from the ash. The Ügremish have been trying to make more money by doing this somewhat inexpertly at home. Yuni the lawyer loves this as the fire definitely breaches building regulations and he can get a magistrate to slap a fine of 200Kt at least on the perpetrators for causing a health hazard. Any fighting that takes place in this room is at serious penalties due to the smoke.

4. **Bathroom.** *This house was originally relatively upmarket for the district as it has its own pump linked to the city aqueduct and its own bathroom/washroom. This is a sunken brick recess in the floor with a tight fitting square wooden plug over a stone grille leading to the sewer below. The pump continually drips and has some unpleasant looking slime hanging from it, but for Nakomé this is luxury. A couple of laundry pounding stones sit on the edge of the pool area and there is a pile of half done washing, small greyish tunics worn by the children of the clan.*

This room is very dim, and the window is only 45cm square and blocked by a cemented in wooden grille. This could be knocked out and a Tinalíya or Pygmy Folk could get in, but a human would have to be very small and flexible to use this as access.

5. **Storeroom.** *This room is shut off from the kitchen by a flimsy door with a wooden frame and rush matting panels. Inside it is cluttered with boxes, barrels and half empty sacks. Something scuttles in the darkness.*

The boxes bear the marks of several merchant clans, the Ügremish have obviously been pilfering from the docks. Yuni the lawyer is not so pleased about this, as it means the offended clans will press for impalement of any captives and Jüggash won't get his slaves. If any PCs realise that this is evidence of theft he tells them to hush or they won't get paid. The barrels are mostly empty but one has two gallons of soured héngka beer. The sacks contain slightly mouldy dná grain, and some empty sacks have been nailed to a trap door by way of camouflage. Opening it will reveal a noisome hole reeking of bad meat and cheap incense, a crate at the bottom providing a step of sorts down to the passage below.

The window is small and barred with a grille as in room 4 above and will provide access only for a tiny person. The scuttling is from more qigékh, the ugly spiny vermin common in southern parts of the continent (see Alien Creatures).

6. **Ösh's room.** *This room, like the others on this floor, has a bamboo bead curtain hanging in the doorway. There is one large sleeping mat, much frayed around the edges, and one blanket. There is a shelf with various bits of clutter. And there is a pile of half bricks by the window.*

This room will initially contain three women and three children, one of whom will be chucking bricks out of the window at any attackers, while the others rush about screaming. If the attacking group makes it past the first barricade they will move to area 2 and defend the stairs, then flee to areas 10 and 12

This is usually the private room of Ösh and his two wives. There is little of value here; on the shelf is a bone comb and a small pot of very cheap black lip-paint, the colour preferred by Salarvyáni women, maybe worth a couple of qirgál.

7. **Dormitory.** *This room is strewn with dirty sleeping mats and few items of bedding. Water drips through in some quantity from the ceiling into a large clay pot near the door. By the south window is a pile of bricks ready to be hurled.*

This room has a further four women and six children, who will again shower rocks on anyone who tries to attacks the building as noted above. One of the women is very old, maybe 60, and will be left behind when the others flee. The PCs will find her screaming incomprehensible insults at them and trying to brain them with a brick as they pursue the main body of the clan up to the second floor.

This area is usually inhabited by the married men and women and the smallest children. There is nothing of value here, juts the detritus of the life of the urban poor, a few objects such as clay cups, wooden spoons, a spare loinloth, needle and thread for repairing clothes etc.

8. **Dormitory.** *Another room strewn with bedmats. The walls are painted with crude graffiti and scratched symbols. There is a fireplace on the west wall, but no signs any fire has been lit in it for years.*

This room is used by the unmarried men and older boys, and will initially contain eight boys and girls between 8 and 14 who will chuck bricks down on any attackers before running to the upper floor.

There is again little of any value to be found in the room, a cheap knife, the odd qirgál (copper coin). PCs with reasonable knowledge of the theology of Sárku or Durrítlámish (T:EPT Theology of Sárku skill roll at -2 for difficulty, OEPT Priest of Sárku Lev 2 or above) might recognise one of the symbols painted on the wall as being a symbol of Black Qárqa, a black skull with three eye sockets. Those with similar knowledge of Avánthe or Dlamélish and their cohorts will recognise among the rude pictures a few signs alluding to Shiringgáyi. None of the boys who use the room is literate and no further meaning can be gleaned from the marks. Yuni will add another 30Kt to his running total of fines for the vandalism.

Those who look up the very sooty and dirty chimney will find a hidden bundle. This is made up of what was quite reasonable quality green tunic before it got covered in soot and slashed with some sort of weapon and bled over. It is wrapped round a child-sized chlén hide armlet inlaid with silver wire and lacquered in white and green. This has a sigil of the Green Opal clan amongst the design, and if taken to them will be recognised by tearful clansmen as belonging to a young girl of high lineage who disappeared some months ago. If the players show it to Yuni or Jüggash they will again want it hidden – the Green Opal will want shámtla from the Ügremish at the very least, if not impalement of a few of the captives.

- 9, **Dormitory.** *Another room with bedmats, slightly cleaner and less chaotic than the others.*

This room is used by the younger women and girls of the clan and will not be occupied at the time of the initial attacks by the eviction squad as the Ügremish are not really expecting anyone to use the back alley. Anyone who climbs up who make sufficient noise will attract the attention of the people in room 7 and they will charge in accompanied by the occupants of rooms 6 and 8 to prevent them getting in if possible, or to hurl rocks at close range and raise a general alarm.

The only item of value is a small statue of one of Shiringgáyi's aspects done in green soapstone and placed in a niche in the west wall created by digging out a couple of bricks. This is worth 10Kt, and depicts Shiringgáyi as a pregnant female figure with a head shaped like a squid, the long tentacles curling down around her belly. Jüggash, who is a Shiringgáyi adherent himself, will tell the party it is Hüggi the Mother of Squid, an aspect worshipped in the fishing villages near

Tsatsayágga. If kept and prayed to regularly by virgin females it will bring more squid into your fishing nets.

10. **The Booby Trap.** *There is a large rent in the ceiling at the top of the last flight of stairs and rain pours through onto the floor boards, which are covered in slimy algae. The plaster from round the door frames and joists has been chipped away and some of the bricks removed. A rope has been tied round the door frames and wooden beams in the walls.*

As the Ügremish retreat to area 12 and escape the men and some of the women of the clan will haul on the ropes hoping to cause the roof to collapse on any attackers. (T:EPT: Roll STR saves for each person pulling, add success numbers together – when it reaches a total of twenty the joists break and the roof comes down. OEPT: Roll % dice for each person. If it is below their STR then they have had some effect, five successful saves will bring the house down.) The roof collapse will bring tiles and brickwork down over areas 10, 12 and 14 and the floor will give way in area 10 and the top two flights of stairs will collapse in area 2 crashing through into the lower floor. PCs caught in this will take T:EPT 1d10 x 5 damage, x2 if they save vs. Dex, OEPT 2d6 damage, half if save vs. Eyes.

Give the players a reasonable chance of spotting the danger and an opportunity to disrupt the Ügremish's efforts before they all get crushed.

Jüggash will be pretty irate if this area gets damaged and will threaten to withhold pay; he says it will cost thousands to rebuild. Yuni will be more sanguine; the whole structure is unsafe and Jüggash's contract makes him and not the Flat Peak clan liable to pay for any repairs. This damage will effectively seal the fate of the Ügremish, they will all end up enslaved to defray the rebuilding costs.

11. **Roofless Room.** *This room has no roof at all and the floor is covered in rubble and rubbish, thoroughly soaked by the rain. The wooden beams are mostly rotten with fungus and the walls are infested with Wall-Tongues (*lusátimun*) (see Alien Vistas). The interior wall between this area and room 14 has been demolished to provide ammunition to resist the eviction.*

If the players look around they will find a good bit of timber amongst the rubble about four meters long, a long beam with planks nailed to it to make a kind of bridge or gangplank. There are also bricks removed from the east wall to make handholds, and dislodged tiles on the next door roof show where the Ügremish have clambered across it.

The reason for this will become clear if the players find the body in room 13 – the Ügremish have been crossing next door's roof, and using the bridge to gain access to the Foreign Quarter walls where the impaled bodies of criminals are displayed and stealing them.

- 12. Escape Hole.** *The plaster has been chipped away from the wall and the mortar dug out from between the exposed bricks. A stout piece of wood and a hand axe lay in the corridor ready for any fleeing Ügremish to finish the hole and get through into the next building.*

This is the final retreat of the Ügremish, and they will attack the wall in order to break through and escape. (T:EPT: Make a STR save for each person on the battering ram at +2 and add the totals together, a total of 16 means the breach has been made and people can flee. OEPt: Roll % dice for each person. If it is below their STR then they have had some effect, four successful saves will make a hole large enough to get through).

If the Ügremish managed to collapse area 10 they will almost certainly get out of the building. Anyone investigating the hole after they have fled will meet an annoyed Ahoggyá, who will ask what is going on in very crude and severely accented Tsolyáni, though he will not attack unless met with hostility. .

- 13. The Unfortunate.** *This room smells bad. The source of the odour is immediately obvious, a day old corpse lying under the roofed portion of the half ruined room. Wall tongues hang from all sides, and the floor is covered in whitish mould and is very wet and slippery.*

The heat of Jakálla in the summer means bodies decay very quickly and the number of insects means they quickly acquire a thriving community of maggots and burrowers. Those able to hold their gorge long enough to examine the body will realise that it has a pole inserted in the anus and projecting from the right side of his neck and the face is in a rictus of extreme agony. This person was impaled and left on the wall of the Foreign Quarter as an example to other foreigners and nakomé, only to have the Ügremish chop through the stake with an axe and steal the body during the night.

They intended to move it downstairs to room 15 in the next couple of weeks, once a good part of the flesh had rotted away.

- 14. Collapsed Room.** *The interior and exterior walls of this room have been partially demolished to provide ammunition, the roof is full of holes and there is a sodden sleeping mat lying amongst the filth. Smoke comes up out of the ruined and partially blocked fireplace.*

There is nothing of interest in this room bar the odd Wall-Tongue and scuttling Qigékh.

- 15. Temple of Black Qárqa.** *The passage stinks of incense and rotting meat and is utterly dark, the walls covered in streaks of black mould which trace out peculiar designs incised into the brick. The ceiling is only 1.5m high at the eastern end and streamers of slime hang down from the ceiling. The floor slopes down to a*

chamber 2m high; the smell here is even worse and there is curious sound, like very soft and slow heavy breathing.

As the PCs venture further into the tunnel they will hear the sound of something moving. Torchlight will show little at first then shapes, horrible twitching shambling shapes, will emerge from the darkness and attack.

Grandpa Ággá, Priest of Black Qárqa: Weird Magic

T:EPT

Str 3 Dex 4 Int 6 Psy 8 Will 4 Cha 4

CV 4 Init 8HP 40 SV 8 MR 10 Pedh 6 Respect 0 Energy Pool 36

Older 7 (54 years old), Ritual Magic Ability, High Pedhétí 2, Partially Undead (+2 to resist magic only affecting living targets, 1pt armour skin, +2 intimidation), Tough 1
Poor 1, Second Class Citizen 3, Clumsy 2, Vow 2, Ugly 3 (Partially Undead)

Skills: Hiking 1, Speak/Read Salarváni 2, Speak/Read Bednálljan 2, Ritual Magic 2, Ritual of Black Qárqa 2, Theology of Black Qárqa 1, Energy Management 2 *Human Sacrifice, Resist Magic*, Medical 1, Intoxicants 1, Dagger 1

Spells:

Pestilence Cost 6, Diff Mod -2

Healing (Loud, Inc Effect 3, Repair Undead) Cost 12, Diff Mod -2

Speculum of Retribution Cost 6, Diff Mod -2

Necrofacture (Debilitating, Erratic Preparation, Extended Preparation, Linguistic Requirement (Bednálljan)) Cost 4 Diff Mod -6

Equipment

Threadbare black robes, dagger

OEPT

Lev 3 Priest

Str 25 Int 70 Con 42 PsAb 87 Dex 35 Com 1 Gui 90

Attack + 0 Damage + 1 AC 7

30% Spell failure

10% hit wrong target on miss

HD 2+1 HP 8

Skills:

I Labourer, Fisherman

II Scribe

Professional:

Modern Languages Tsolyáni, Livyáni

Ancient Languages Bednálljan, Engsvanyáli

Light

Detect Evil/Good

Cure Light Wounds

Spells:

I Plague

Equipment

Tattered robes, Club

Grandpa Aqqá is a pretty horrible sight, being most of the way along the road to transforming himself into a Shédra using the Book of Eternal Gratitude (see below). He is shrivelled and black, has no nose, eyelids, ears or lips and has a gaping hole in his forehead partially covered by a black chlén hide patch held onto his skull by corroded copper nails. It will take no mean sorcerer to overcome his magic resistance, and if anyone does cast a spell at him he will use the Speculum of Retribution (T:EPT) or target the enemy mage with Plague (OEPT). As the PCs enter his sanctum he will begin an awful death rattle like dirge waking his four M'rúr allies. One will join the fray per round until all four are in combat, and Aqqá can still fight while they are animating though he cannot cast spells.

Mrúr

T:EPT

Str 5 Dex 3 Int 1 Psy 3 Will 2 Cha 0
CV 4 Init 5 HP 55 SV 11 MR 2 Pedh 1

Tough 3
Ugly 3

Skills: Observation 1, Sword 1, Wrestling 1, Brawling 1

Equipment

Human thighbone Init +1, Acc 0, Dam x1

As an undead Mrúr do need to breathe or eat and any spells relying on mind detection cast on them are at -3. They can detect life within normal visual range, even in total darkness.

OEPT

AC6, HD 1+3 M 6" HP 8, 7, 7, 6
Regenerate in 2 turns unless burned

The Mrúr emerge one by one from a large pile of bones behind the altar and lunge through the shadows towards their prey. They are almost entirely skeletal and have been stained black (a practice common among followers of Black Qárqa) and have the symbol of the Third Eye of the Dead incised into the bones of the forehead. This staining makes them hard to make out in poor lighting (-1 to hit). Anyone who has not seen undead before will be required to make morale check of some kind of immediately flee, gibbering in terror. Attempts to seize control of these undead or to destroy them by magic are opposed by T:EPT Grandpa Aqqá's Ritual Magic skill, OEPT Grandpa Aqqá's priest level.

Once the undead and their horrendous master are dealt with the PCs can make a proper search of the room. Against the west wall is a jumbled pile of black stained bones of all kinds, including a couple of fragments from non-humans, from amongst which the M'rúr emerge. There is the odd qigékh scuttling amongst them, making those of a nervous disposition think that yet more skeletons might be about to animate and attack.

In front of this is a low altar, a simple made up of three stone slabs. Beneath the top panel lie the temple treasures, four leather flasks with pewter fittings, a chlén hide box with incense sticks and cones, two scrolls, both rather stained and worm-eaten, a book of some hundred or so black dyed pages with white writing, and a small pouch.

The flasks contain a very pungent smelling oil, those with knowledge of the rites of Sárku and Belkhánu will recognise it as Thún oil, an embalming agent. Each flask is worth some 30Kt. The incense is of the kind commonly used at funerals and in shrines of Sárku and is of low quality, a mere 5Kt the lot.

The scrolls are more interesting. The longer is in modern Salarvyáni and is a spell scroll with T:EPT Perception of the Energies Inc. Area of Effect 1, Inc. Duration 2, Ward or OEPT I Locate Objects. The second scroll has no title and appears to be a page torn from a book. It is in Classical Tsolyáni and appears to relate to a protective magical diagram, the Sign of Repelling Chitinous Foes. It is worth 200Kt to a temple library even in its damaged state. This same sign is inscribed on the floor in white chalk – Aqqa has been using it to keep the Qigékh at bay as they have a nasty habit of chewing on his necrotic toes when he is meditating.

The book is the prize find. It is called the Book of Eternal Gratitude and is in Bednálljan. It describes along series of rituals, meditations and sacrifices that will, bit by bit, turn the user into a Shédra. The process is long and arduous, involving much time spent sitting in the darkness fasting, drinking ever increasing quantities of embalming fluid and numerous human sacrifices. He must trepan his own skull, cutting a hole in the forehead through to the brain without digging too deep and lobotomising yourself. Eventually at the climactic ritual the user wills his own heartbeat to cease and becomes one of the undead. It could take years to complete the whole procedure and unless one is skilled in Ritual Magic, Energy Management, the Theology and Ritual of Black Qárqa or a similar deity and knows the spell of Necrofacture it is highly likely to fail. Those not following the procedure but merely reading it may gain some knowledge of Black Qárqa and his lore. (T:EPT Roll vs. Theology of Sárku skill, gain success number in skill points to be spent on Theology, Ritual, Scholar: Undead and/or Artisan: Embalming, OEPT Gain 250XP if a good priest or magic user, 500 XP if an evil priest or magic user and 2000XP if a priest or magic user of Sárku or Durritlámish). This is worth at least 1000Kt to any temple, and those of Sárku and Durritlámish will be very keen indeed to take it off your hands, or take off your hands if you don't let them have it.

The pouch contains 27Kt in loose change and a medallion in the form of a thin copper disc incised with four slots. This is a key to the secret door on the north wall, and fits into a very hard to see keyhole near the floor.

Jüggash and Yuni will of course claim the goods in this room are part and parcel of the furnishings of the house and therefore their property. This is bullshit and they know it, and any reasonable argument from the PCs will make them back down and accept a mere 50% share in any proceeds. Jüggash will offer to fence the stuff for them – in which case they will be lucky to see 10% of the true value, but won't realise how badly they have been bilked. Jüggash will give the book to the temple of Sárku for free to curry favour.

The cage on the east end of the room contains two boys about seven or eight years old. Both have been horribly mutilated, with eyelids, ears, nose and lips cut off. One is very near death; the removal of his left eyelid has left an infected wound and is crusted with dried pus. Both are completely traumatised and unable to communicate except in terrified whimpers.

These were to be used as part of one the sacrifices mentioned in the Book of Eternal Gratitude. If the muck is washed off them they will be found to have Livyáni tattoos of the Uyzváz clan, another gang of nakomé refugees living at the Tower of the Red Dome. The family will not be entirely grateful to have them back. They sold the boys as slaves as they could not afford to feed them and needed the money to keep the rest of the family going. They will offer them to the PCs as slaves for the knockdown price of 20Kt each, going down to 5Kt, and then simply refusing to take custody of them and telling the PCs to take them away. The children are too badly mutilated and psychologically damaged to be worth anything as slaves, no slave dealer will take them and they will be nothing but a burden on their impoverished families. If approached directly the Temple of Dlamélish will express some interest, but only offer 50Kt.

This whole room will put Yuni in rapture. Running an unlicensed temple or shrine merits a whopping fine from the Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods and having unregistered undead on your premises is also a serious religious offence (all undead outside the precincts of a Sárku or Durritlámish temple must have proper identity papers, a death certificate from the Temple of Belkhánu, an undeath certificate from the Temple of Sárku and be registered on the proper census along with a living ‘guardian’ who will take responsibility for any brains eaten, blood sucked etc.).

16. **The Sewer.** *This is a typical Jakállan sewer, an old alleyway roofed over in the last ditlána, paved with brick and with the ghostly facades of rubble filled buildings on either side. Here and there names and signs painted on the crumbling mould-stained plaster tell of ancient businesses and lost clans. The secret entryway opens through an old window a mere meter high and wide, large lumps of masonry serving as steps down to floor level.*

There are any number of reasons a semi-undead priest of Black Qárqa might want a secret entrance to a sewer that will connect up to the Tsuru'úm at some point, and any number of nasty things that might inhabit it – the GM will no doubt have his own ideas as to what these are.

The Aftermath

What happens after the Ügremish are dealt with depends on how many and who escaped. If Ösh got away the PCs are likely to find themselves ambushed some dark night by a gang of Salarvyáni thugs out for revenge. If he was caught or killed then the rest of the clan will fade away into the Jakállan underworld, never to be seen or heard of again.

If the party did not find the underground temple then they are in for bigger trouble. Grandpa Aqqá will be able to complete his transformation into a Shédra and will then set about taking revenge on Jüggash, the PCs and finally the Flat Peak. The party may hear of rumours of something very very unpleasant happening to Jüggash, building workers refusing to go near the clanhouse to carry out renovations. If the party have been daft enough to rent the clanhouse from Jüggash at a knockdown rate in return for clearing out the Ügremish then they will find that the place is ‘haunted’, with regular incursions by the undead until the temple can be deconsecrated.

PCs may hear some time later that Yuni and the Flat Peak clan have claimed a 2000Kt reward from the Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods for drawing their attention to the illegal temple and that an ecumenical deconsecration committee has been to the site to expunge any religious influence.

If all goes well then the PCs will have made some useful friends. Jüggash is a bit low rent as a patron, but he does have connections with all sorts of unsavoury people in the Foreign Quarter who will be handy to know if you need someone roughing up or discreetly unload stolen goods. If the party are canny enough to go round Jüggash and offer their captives direct to Haruné hiJuyukkún of the Iron Helm as slaves then they will acquire a much more useful contact. Haruné is a proper noble and is engaged in climbing the ranks within the Palace of the Realm, he will have all sorts of dirty jobs to be done and lots of money.

Disposing of the Book of Eternal Gratitude could also earn the PCs some status and favours. The best route will be to give it voluntarily to the Temple of Sárku or Durritlámish. This will leave them owing a major favour to the party, and if one of them is a priest of these gods he can expect an immediate promotion of at least one circle. Gifting it to other temples will be regarded as a minor favour, but if the Temple of Sárku finds out you had such an item and gave it to someone else they will not be best pleased.

Appendix 1: Legal skills in OEPY

Lawyer is a Group II skill; it gives a character knowledge of what is and is not legal in Tsolyánu and the ability to draw up contracts, handle sales of property, assess probable shámtla and other everyday legal activities.

Magistrate/Advocate is a Group III skill; it enables a person to act on behalf of a client in court, to draw up pleas, apply for writs and handle other advanced legal documents and if the person is promoted to a suitable position in one of the Palaces to sit in judgement either alone or as part of a panel of jurists in legal cases. All of these functions are much enhanced if the person also has the skills of Orator, Scholar: Law, Ancient Language: Classical Tsolyáni.

Alien Vistas: Wall-Tongues and Qigékh

Qigékh occupy the same ecological niche in Jakálla and southern Tsolyánu as the rat and urban fox do in terrestrial ecology. They are shaped more or less like woodlice about six inches long and two wide, have a multitude of short sharp spines on their carapace and long antennae. Unlike a woodlouse they have pairs of legs specialised for different functions; at the back two pairs are thick and paddle shaped and are used for digging and at the front one long pair is viciously spined and kept folded up under the head until deployed to grab prey. The other seven pairs of legs are short and tough with spines and claws. They will eat anything, thriving in rubbish dumps and sewers and burrowing into granaries where they can. They are most fond of other, smaller vermin, and a certain low level presence is tolerated by storehouse managers. Their poisoned spines discourage terrestrial cats from attacking them, but Kurukú and Aschaunë-birds will kill and eat them, picking the flesh from inside their toxic carapaces.

Wall-tongues, or lusátimun, are harmless but unpleasant beasts that colonise run down buildings in hot and damp cities like Jakálla and Penóm. They are a peculiar form of worm which burrows into soft rock or brick using acid, cementing themselves in place with exuded resin. They then evert their intestines which hang down the face of the wall resembling small pink human tongues with tiny red hairs. These hairs are covered in glue and any insect which lands on them is trapped, the tongue withdraws and the food digested. They spread quickly and in a matter of a few weeks a whole building can be fatally weakened by their burrowing. In most districts of Jakálla building inspectors are continually on the look out for them and will fine house-holders who do not take prompt action to remove them.

Ösh Zägremish, clan headman

T:EPT

Str 6 Dex 4 Int 5 Psy 2 Will 6 Cha 4
CV 5 Init 10 HP 70 SV 14 MR 4 Pedh 4 Respect 0

Older 3 (Age 36), Base Cunning 1, Tough 2, Stamina 1
Arrogant 1, Poor 1, Second Class Citizen 3

Skills: Hiking 1, Speak Salarvyáni 2, Speak Tsolyáni 1, Command 1, Intimidation 1,
Occupation: Labourer 2, Teamwork 2, Brawling 2, Decisive Attack: Fist, Weapon Combo: Two
Fists, Dagger 1

Equipment

Tatty peasant garb, chlén-hide knuckledusters (+1 fist damage), cheap knife (-1 dagger
damage)

OEPT

Lev 2 Warrior

Str 65 Int 52 Con 85 PsAb 25 Dex 43 Com 43 Gui 65

Attack + 2 Damage + 0 AC 9

HD 2 HP 12

+1 HP/dice

Skills:

I Labourer, Fisherman

Professional:

Spearman, Mace /Flail, Axe, Sword

Equipment

2h Club (+1 damage), Dagger, 5kt

Ösh is not a huge man, but his heavy brows, broken nose and sinewy arms make him look like someone it would not be wise to mess with, and he has a reputation down on Músa Jakálla docks as a bit of a boxer. In fact he has had an impromptu bout or two for money down among the warehouses and come off very well. He is also no dimwit and has worked out a defence plan (T:EPT gives them 15TP, OEPT gives +1 to any surprise chances for first 10 rounds).

The Zägremish Men

T:EPT

Str 5 Dex 4 Int 3 Psy 4 Will 4 Cha 4
CV 5 Init 8 HP 50 SV 10 MR 4 Pedh 4 Respect 0

Attributes: Tough 1, Stamina 1

Skills: Brawling 1, Teamwork 1, Thrown Weapon 0

Equip: Small Club (x1 Damage, Acc +1, Initiative 1), Thrown Rock (x1 Damage, Acc -1,
Range Str x 3), Tatty peasant garb, Cheap knife (-1 dagger damage)

OEPT

HD 1+1, AC 9, Damage Club (1 dice) HP 5 each

The Zgremish Women

T:EPT

Str 4 Dex 5 Int 3 Psy 4 Will 4 Cha 4
CV 5 Init 9 HP 45 SV 9 MR 4 Pedh 4 Respect 0

Attributes: Tough 1, Stamina 1

Skills: Brawling 0, Teamwork 1, Thrown Weapon 0

Equip: Small Club (x1 Damage, Acc +1, Initiative 1), Thrown Rock (x1 Damage, Acc -1, Range Str x 3), Tatty peasant garb, Cheap knife (-1 dagger damage)

OEPT

HD 1, AC 9, Damage Club (1 dice), Rock (1/2 dice) HP 4 each

The Zgremish Children

T:EPT

Str 2 Dex 5 Int 3 Psy 4 Will 4 Cha 4
CV 4 Init 9 HP 35 SV 7 MR 4 Pedh 4 Respect 0

Attributes: Tough 1, Stamina 1

Skills: Brawling 0, Teamwork 1, Thrown Weapon 0

Equip: Thrown Rock (x1 Damage, Acc -1, Range Str x 3), Tatty peasant garb

OEPT

HD 1-1, AC 9, Damage Rock (1/2 dice) HP 3 each

Scale: 1Sq = 1m



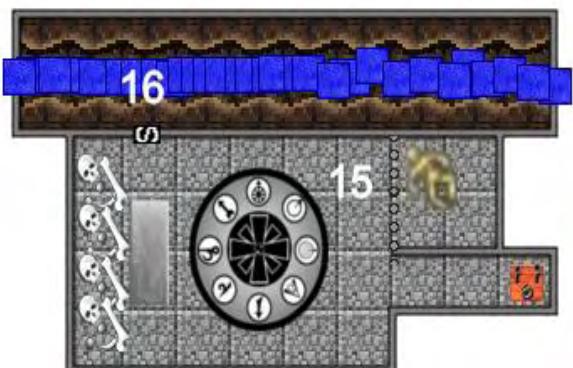
Ground Floor



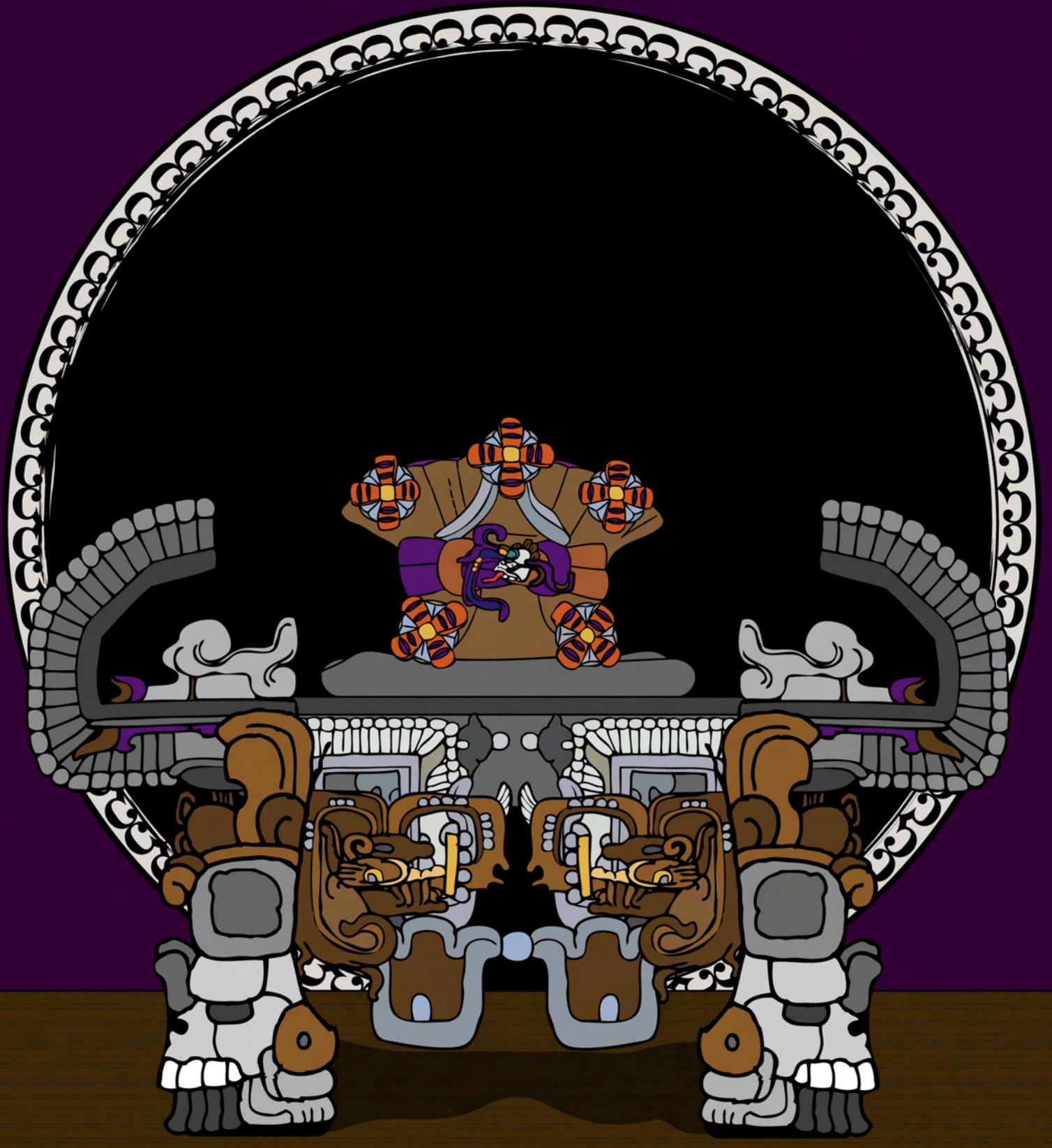
First Floor



Second Floor



Basement



Altar at the Portal of Inevitable Decay



Pygmy Folk

The **Pygmy Folk** are small, averaging a mere 60 cm in height, with sharp featured faces, grey or black fur, hands with four digits and a short tail. They have three sexes, males making up 55% of the population, hermaphrodites 35% and females 15%. They live in an area in northern **Yán Kór** which is honeycombed with their subterranean towns and cities, but are found throughout the **Five Empires** as travellers and merchants. They have excellent hearing and vision and despite their small size they are vicious fighters.

Stereotypes

The Pygmy Folk are infamously avaricious and clever merchants; as the old Tsolyáni proverb has it ‘to bargain with the Pygmy Folk is to throw away your purse’. They are also allegedly utterly without any sense of honour as known to the citizens of the Five Empires, stealing anything not nailed down, betraying anyone, even each other, to gain wealth, and are incapable of keeping a promise or vow made under even the most solemn of circumstances and invoking the most dreadful of demons and deities. They are also bad enemies. The Tsolyáni were ambushed by them many times during the recent wars and claim that they tortured captives for sport and ate them alive. The Yán Koryáni say these tales are exaggerated, but admit that they are masters of ambush and do not follow the age-old rituals of war as known to human nations.

The Reality

The Pygmy Folk have a ‘dog eat dog’ culture and have little regard for each other’s life and property, let alone other species, and cannot comprehend why humans put up with weaklings and idiots to the extent that they do. They are self-centred, but will cooperate with others to mutual benefit. They will argue vehemently over everything, using all kinds of invective and insults among themselves and barely managing to stay on the right side of politeness when dealing with humans, but once an argument is over they quickly forgive and forget any harsh words; it is just the way they communicate. They are not really kleptomaniacs, but if they are sure they won’t get caught then they will help themselves to other people’s valuables without a qualm.

Clan and Lineage

No human clan accepts Pygmy Folk members, and no Pygmy Folk could cope with giving up any of their material wealth to such an organisation. The Pygmy Folk organise themselves by burrow, with each complex being ruled (as far as such a thing is possible) by a council of elder females whose main role is to regulate the cycles of vendetta and personal vengeance arising from the many incidents of violence and theft that occur within the settlement. Females have a social advantage among Pygmy Folk, and are regarded as somewhat more reliable than the males and hermaphrodites.

Religion

The Pygmy Folk have their own religion which involves sacrifice by mob violence. Little else is known for sure by any non-Pygmy Folk observer. Human temples will allow Pygmy Folk to worship if they wish, but always keep a very close eye on them in case they run off with temple valuables and know that any expressions of faith are more than likely a ploy in some kind of scam or plot.

Stats

Strength: Maximum 4, average is 2.

Dexterity: Average is 6 and maximum is 12

Intelligence: As for humans, but see notes on Attributes

Psyche: As for humans

Willpower: As for humans

Charisma: As for humans with modifiers as noted below.

Derived Values

Pygmy Folk have a Pedhétl of 4

Net Cost

Total cost of packages is 3 points.

Attributes

Mandatory Attributes

All Pygmy Folk Characters have the following attributes and must pay for them

Base Cunning Level 1, Cost 1. All Pygmy Folk of whatever intelligence have a +2 bonus in any circumstance where they are under threat. Only Pygmy Folk with an Intelligence of 6 or less may take Base Cunning Level 2.

Decisive Level 1, Cost 2. All Pygmy Folk have quick reflexes and a sharp tongue.

Physical Advantage: Built for Speed Level 1, Cost 1. +1 on running checks and +20% sprint speed. Pygmy Folk are much faster than humans, despite their small size.

Unique to Pygmy Folk

Physical Advantage: Good Eyesight. Level 1, Cost 1. Pygmy Folk get +4 to any stat check involving vision, even at night.

Physical Advantage: Good Hearing. Level 1, Cost 1. Pygmy Folk get +4 to any stat check involving hearing.

Materialist: Level 1, Cost 1. Pygmy Folk gain +1 in rolls for Merchant and Negotiation due to a very acute sense of the value of money and of their own advantage.

Small Level 2, Cost 4. Pygmy Folk are -1 to hit in mêlée and with missiles and gain +2 on any stealth checks.

Modified Attributes

Emotional Control. No Pygmy Folk may have more than 1 level of Emotional Control, they are too emotionally volatile.

Resolute. No Pygmy Folk may have more than 1 level of Resolute, they are too emotionally volatile.

Female: Among Pygmy Folk being female is equivalent to Getting the Breaks level 1 and costs 1 point.

Attractive: Any levels of this attribute apply only to other Pygmy Folk.

Older: The limits on physical stats occur 1 level later, e.g. at Older Level 3 there is not limit, at Level 4 it is 14, Level 5 it is 13 and so on.

Mandatory Defects

Fragile 1BP. All Pygmy Folk lose 10 HP due to their small size, and lose out on endurance, but not on resistance to poison.

Second Class Citizen (Non-Human) 4BP. Pygmy Folk are all regarded as untrustworthy thieves by human societies.

Brutal 1BP. All Pygmy Folk are self-centred and cruel by human standards.

Greedy 1BP. All Pygmy Folk are Greedy. They must save vs. Will/Psy average to avoid taking a risky action to gain wealth.

Unique to Pygmy Folk

Impaired Charisma 1BP. All Pygmy Folk have a -1 Cha penalty when dealing with other species.

Modified Defects

Debts of Honour. No Pygmy Folk can take this defect as they do not recognise such debts.

Vow. No Pygmy Folk can take a Vow and keep it.

Careers

Pygmy Folk do not join the priesthoods, but can be independent scholars, bureaucrats (in Yán Kór at least) and soldiers. The typical wandering Pygmy Folk is a merchant, buying (and sometimes stealing) cheap and selling high.

Skills

Modified Skills

Pygmy Folk language. There is just one Pygmy Folk language and it costs 2 points per level to learn.

Human Languages. Pygmy Folk pay 3 points for any human language, and always have a -1 modifier due to difficulties with some concepts and enunciation.

Stealth. This costs only 4 points per level for Pygmy Folk due to a natural aptitude in sneaking.

Pygmy Folk Equipment

Pygmy Folk can use any weapon noted in the list on p. 99 of the T:EPT rulebook, as long as it has been modified and miniaturised for their use.

This involves -2 on any Str requirement, x0.5 damage multiplier (minimum x1 damage) and -3 from any initiative bonus (minimum 0). Thus a Pygmy Folk Battle Axe requires 2 Str, does x3 damage and has an initiative bonus of 0.

A Pygmy Folk using a weapon designed for a larger being has -1 attack even if the weapon is small enough for them to use and they have the stats required. Such weapons (usually daggers and light javelins) are just not balanced properly for the Pygmy Folk physique.

A human armourer making such a weapon has a modifier of -2 to any skill rolls, a failure resulting in a weapon defect of some kind (see p86-87).

NPCs

Ókh'n the Exhibit

Str 2 Dex 8 Int 4 Psy 2 Will 2 Cha 4

CV 5 Init 13 HP 10 SV 2 MR 3 Pedhétl 4 Respect 0

Base Cunning 2, Decisive 1, Built for Speed 1, Good Eyesight 1, Good Hearing 1, Materialist 1, Small 2, Older 1, Highly Skilled 2

Fragile 1, Second Class Citizen 4, Brutal 1, Greedy 2, Nemesis 1, Secret 1

Skills: Stealth 2, Burglary *Tombs* 2, Merchant 1, Climbing *Structures* 1, Deception *Offensive* 1, Acrobatics 1, Running *Speed* 1, Sleight of Hand 1, Teamwork 1, Sword 1, Deceptive Attack 1, Language: Tsolyani 1, Knowledge: Cities of the Dead 1, Streetwise 1

Ókh'n is the kind of Pygmy Folk that earns the rest their bad name. He is currently residing in a cage in Jakálla Zoo, having been bought as an exhibit from the Torúnal Islán, the Jakálla criminal prison, where he was awaiting trial and almost definite execution for tomb robbery. His whole gang of seven Pygmy Folk are actively sought by the Tomb Police and the Clan of the Nighted Tower as a result of this nefarious activity. If the authorities knew the whole story – that Ókh'n and co didn't just take the goods, but also choice cuts from the fresher bodies to sell to Ahoggyá back in the Foreign Quarter – their lives would not be worth a shirt button, not that anyone wears shirts in Jakálla, or knows what a button is.

After an initial settling-in period, during which he flung faeces at visitors and screamed obscenities all day and all night, he realised that he could be in worse places, like up a sharpened pole. His gang have visited to have a laugh at him, and have promised to break him out if he tells them where he buried his share of the takings from the robbery and butchery business. He isn't daft enough to fall for this scam, but being stuck down wind of the Kurukú cage he is getting desperate to get out. He will try and persuade any humans he can get alone near his cage to help him. He will promise anything, bragging about how much gold he has put by, offering to guide them to the richest tombs in the necropolis, including one with a magic animated Engsvanyáli wall painting, to disclose secrets of the Temple of Sárku, teach spells to repel M'rúr, draw a map of the secret Pygmy Folk tunnels leading throughout the upper layers of the Tsuru'úm and beyond the walls, you name it. How much of this he can really do is anyone's guess, and of course he has no intention of honouring any deal and will disappear at the first convenient opportunity after release.

Gulén the Clam-hunter

Str 3 Dex 6 Int 3 Psy 6 Will 4 Cha 1

CV 5 Init 13 HP 25 SV 5 MR 4 Pedhétl 4 Respect 0

Base Cunning 1, Decisive 1, Built for Speed 1, Good Eyesight 1, Good Hearing 1, Materialist 1, Small 2, Resolute 2, Older 2

Fragile 1, Second Class Citizen 4, Brutal 1, Greedy 1, Ugly 1, Bad Start in Life 1

Skills: Knowledge: Desert of Sighs 1, Wilderness Survival: Desert of Sighs 2, Stealth 1, Polearm 1, Bow 1, Hunting 1, Hiking 1, Observation 2, Culture: Milumanyáni 1, Language: Tsolyani 0, Language: Milumanyáni 0, Language: Yán Koryáni 0

Gulén is that most unfortunate of specimens, a shy Pygmy Folk. (Gulén is a hermaphrodite, but I will use ‘he’ to avoid awkward sentences). In his youth he was mercilessly bullied by his siblings, and was nearly harried and beaten to death on several occasions. He still shows the scars and the ragged bitten-off ears and even humans will recognise him as a bit of a sorry specimen, while other Pygmy Folk know these are the stigmata of a born victim and take what advantage they can of him.

He joined the Yán Koryáni army as a scout, and ended up being left behind in Milumanáya during the war with the Tsolyani. He joined a human nomad band for a while, but could not adapt to their share and share alike ethos and left before he could be expelled. He now lives alone on the fringes of the ‘civilised’ districts near Sunráya where he hunts sand-clams and trades them with the local peasants. Gulén is very good at it, his keen sense of smell and hearing stand him in good stead in locating these tasty morsels buried under the dunes. He will most likely be encountered skulking about in the middle of the night hunting or by day selling sand-clams in a village market, and might even be mistaken for a spy. He is lonely, and might attach himself to a reasonably non-hostile party as a hanger on or try and persuade them to hire him as a scout and desert guide.

He is not particularly good company, being sullen and silent, and is entirely lacking in the boisterous self-confidence humans expect from Pygmy Folk. Acts of kindness or generosity towards him will result in even greater suspicion and expectation of some dreadful humiliation or a beating. On the other hand he does not steal much for a Pygmy Folk, his services come very cheap, and he may be preferable as a desert guide to the eccentric nomadic tribesmen.

‘N’Ékh the Marvellous

Str 1 Dex 9 Int 6 Psy 2 Will 4 Cha 6

CV 5 Init 16 HP 15 SV 3 MR 5 Pedhétl 6 Respect 0 Power

Base Cunning 1, Decisive 2, Built for Speed 1, Good Eyesight 1, Good Hearing 1, Materialist 1, Small 2, Magic Use: Ritual 1, Older 3, Wealthy 1, High Pedhétl 2

Fragile 1, Second Class Citizen 4, Brutal 1, Greedy 1, Arrogant 1

Skills: Ritual Magic 1, Scholar: Ancient Artefacts 2, Language: Tsolyani 2, Language; Engsvanyáli 2, Culture: Tsolyani *Low Clan* 1, Merchant 2, Artist: Shadow Puppets *Performance* 1, Artisan: Jeweller 1, Charm 1, Sleight of Hand 1, Bow 1

Spells:

Light, Inc Effect, Inc Duration (4pts),

Phantasms, Involving, Apparitions, Inc Duration 3 (6pts)

Perception of the Energies, Involving, Inc Area 1, Intentions, Spells, Ensorcellation (6pts)

Web of Kriyág, Involving, Debilitating (6pts)

‘N’Ékh is an itinerant trader and entertainer. He lives in a magnificent chlén-cart, with a gaudily painted mini-palace built onto the back with two Pygmy Folk sized floors, several rooms and even a ‘roof-garden’, a few pots and planters full of sweet herbs, where he lays in his hammock while on the move. He has a human slave cart-driver, Kél, a slow-witted youth who stoically bears his little master’s alien ways. People who see them on the road often smile as ‘N’Ékh pokes his slave with a miniature chlén prod and the slave passes the message on with a proper prod to their lumbering beast.

‘N’Ékh stops in small villages and towns and puts on entertainments of simple conjuring by day and with his magic lantern at night. This is an ancient Engsvanyáli device made of delicately figured brass and carved wood with a large crystal lens on the front and an alabaster cylinder in a compartment at the back. One casts a Light spell on the cylinder and it creates a focusable light like a projector. ‘N’Ékh uses this with a large linen screen and some beautiful old shadow puppets of Pygmy Folk make to put on presentations of comic folk tales, accompanied by Kél on the drum and croatal. He has some human-made puppets for episodes from the Epic of Hrúgga as well, but only does this show when he can get a village elder or epic singer to narrate. His piece de resistance though is his presentation of Engsvanyáli magic lantern slides. These are fragile discs of painted glass mounted in tíu-wood with various little handles to move them and create the illusion of motion; village folk think they are magical, and they impress some more sophisticated types as well with their ancient biremes on stormy seas, Sró flapping across the sky and changing hues of northern forest autumns. ‘N’Ékh has had some new ones made on the old pattern as well, but these are not animated.

He has a few other curios of great age hidden away in his cart; bits of old porcelain, a heavy bronze dagger with indecipherable Ssú letters on it, a pencil sharpener (a real mystery this, no one has used leaded pencils for millennia), statuettes of Engsvanyáli gods and so forth. Another prize item is a Planet Stone of Káshi (see VOG issue 11). This collection is worth several thousand káitars if sold to the right buyer, and he is always on the lookout for more and has sometimes made mini-archaeological digs in areas where such items have been found.

Another item of trade is cheap costume jewellery, chlén hide bracelets and plaques with polished semi-precious stones mounted on them, gaudy and garish. For special customers he has a few gold and ruby rings; however during the sale he will use sleight of hand to switch the real ring for a plated bronze and glass replica, leaving town before the subterfuge comes to light.

Players may come across one of 'N'Ékh's shows and might even trade with him. If they have ancient devices or objects on show he will approach them and make an offer. He may also offer employment for those willing to look in certain graveyards where he suspects ancient Engsvanyáli objects might be hidden, and he sometime gets to see a few heirlooms on display in some temples and clanhouses he cannot afford to acquire by conventional means.

Adventure Seeds

The Pogrom

The city of Usenánu has had enough. There has been a spate of robberies from clanhouses all across the city and the culprits are obvious – the group of Pygmy Folk who moved into the Foreigners Quarter of the city a couple of months ago. The city watch and a mob of disgruntled citizens have gone through the district, but the miscreants have fled into their own tiny tunnels and thence into the Tsuru'úm. The governor has issued a proclamation expelling all Pygmy Folk from the province of Urúsai and has offered a 50Kt reward for any Pygmy Folk found alive and 20Kt for any slain within the province. But were the Pygmy Folk really responsible? Is someone manipulating popular prejudice to divert attention from themselves? Where have the Pygmies gone? Perhaps the Pygmy Folk will start taking revenge, killing people during the night or perhaps they will take hostages, maybe they will do the sensible thing and just flee, relying on stealth and acute senses to move by night through hostile territory. Will Yán Koryáni merchants in the Foreign Quarter and province at large help them or hand them in? Will popular conspiracy theories blame a Yán Koryáni plot, or were they working for someone else, a temple maybe, or that infamous renegade Dhíich'une?

Commandos

Pygmy Folk make excellent scouts, but Yán Koryáni military men have always scorned their abilities as fighting troops. The Mu'ugalavyáni think they could be very useful indeed in this role, especially in Livyánu where they have been having terrible trouble taking Tinalíya built citadels. These are so cunningly designed that it is all but impossible to get to the walls through the overlapping fields of fire from the bastions, and of course once you have made a breach the corridors within are too small for human troops to fight properly. The Redhats have hired a mercenary force of Pygmy Folk; natural tunnellers like the Tinalíya they should be able to undermine the outer walls and make an effective assault on their diminutive occupants. They might also be able to take human fortresses via the often unguarded drains and privy shafts. The officers in charge of the project have reported a few discipline problems, but the masters of the Four Palaces of the Square have high expectations of this new secret weapon.

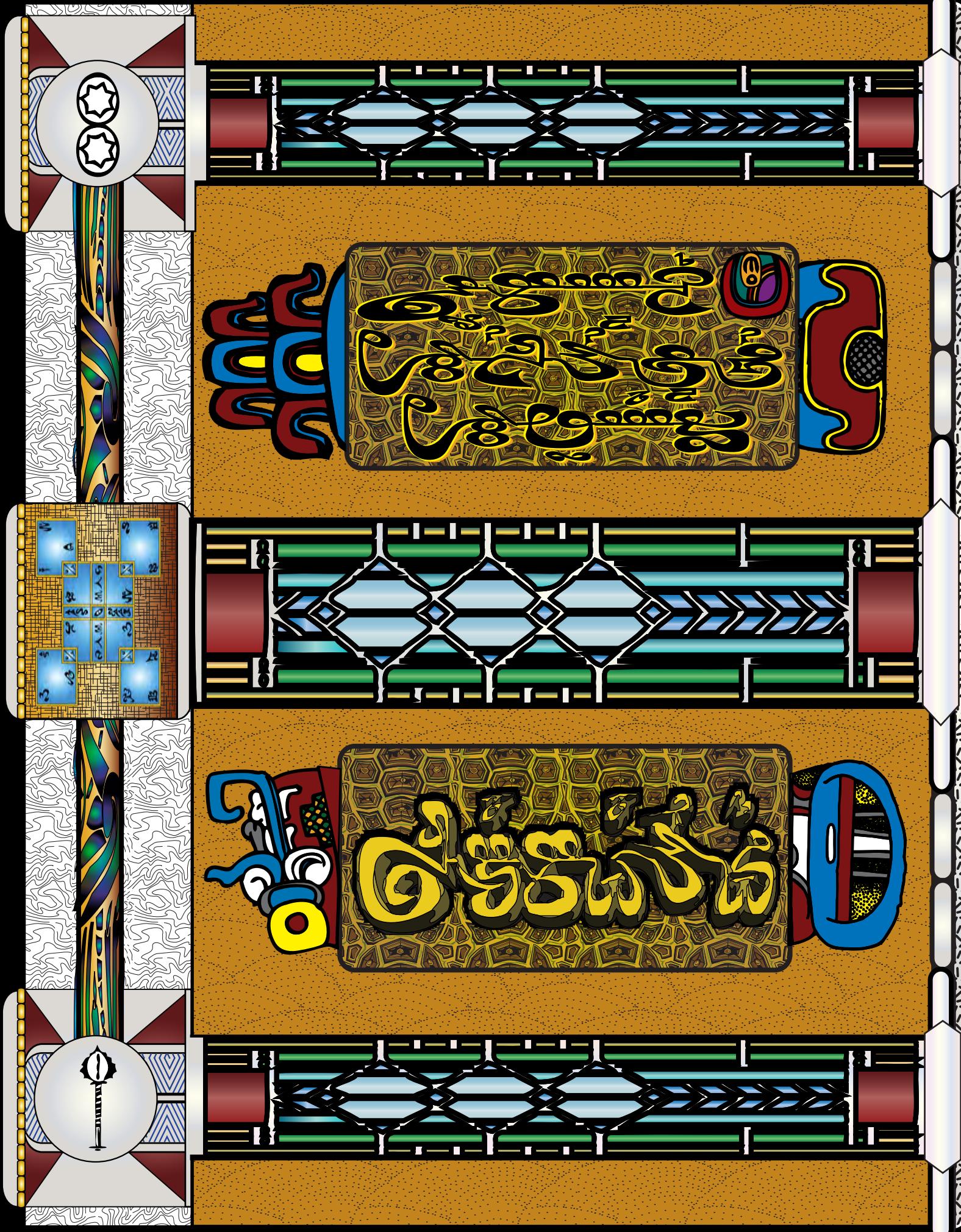
Pygmy Ruins

Out in the hills north of Thri'íl excavations at an old city site have had unexpected results. The battered walls were not the remnants of another lost Engsvanyáli port, but as the network of tiny tunnels beneath the surface show they are a lost Pygmy Folk settlement. Some Imperial researchers hope that they will uncover a Pygmy Folk temple and discover the true nature of their god, others are sure this was a port and want to find Pygmy Folk ships, which are no longer built in their now landlocked territory. Almost all agree that it is imperative that the Pygmy Folk themselves do not find out. They would descend on the site en masse, steal everything and cause no end of trouble. They are a cunning lot though, with a knack for turning up when they are least expected and least wanted. One or two Thúmis priests think this is unfair; after all these are Pygmy Folk ancestral sites they are disturbing, it stands to reason that their scholars will be a lot

more able to interpret the remains than any human and the only way the humans can explore the site is by destroying it, whereas the Pygmy Folk could explore the tunnels intact.









Qón, in the form of Damádh, "The Mighty", visits Durritlámish, in the form of Bázh Akhár, after the Battle of Dórmoron Plain

Warning!

The following text was written from notes taken during the lectures of Lord Sanjésh hiKirisáya at the temple of Qón in the city of Usenánu.

Although certain amicable races of stability demons such as the Heroes of Glory, Entities of Light and Warriors of Scarlet are well known, there are countless others that are obscure, undocumented or undiscovered. The exactness of these particular descriptions is limited by the unworthy skills of this scribe. Extensive study of this subject should be undertaken before any acts such as summoning these creatures is even contemplated! The reader should avoid misusing this material less it lead to unimaginable consequences for the seeker of knowledge and those around him.

The Guild of Those Who Repel the Dark

Book of Crystal Bindings



Harúchamal, The Plovers of the Further Shores

This race of demons is of the Substance of Hnálla and the Essence of Belkhánu and dwell on the Plane of Golden Sands, the first of the Paradises Beyond the Isles of Teretané. They appear as birds with rainbow-hued crystalline plumage, steel-grey beaks and four stilt like legs and their eyes shine golden as the eternal sunset of their home plane.

The exact criteria of how souls end up in the Paradises is a matter of continual argument among the philosophers and extra-planar explorers of the Temple of Belkhánu, but it would seem that in some cases gifted people's balétl, or Spírit-Soul can be washed up in the Plane of Golden Sands by the Tides of Dreams. There they are picked over by the Harúchamal, who eat them and then transport the soul to its appropriate fate, be that immolation in the light of Hnálla, being laid as a spírit egg in the body of a newborn sentient back on Tékumel, or as a being on another plane of existence or within a paradise of a specific god.

They are summoned by priests of Belkhánu who bargain with them for their aid in carrying messages to and from long departed souls, and, if they can, to retrieve specific souls and ensure their rebirth on this plane.

The ritual must be carried out at sunset on the shortest day of the year, beginning as the lower edge of the sun's disc touches the horizon. The summoner, who must be a priest of Belkhánu of at least the 12th circle, stands inside a protective circle drawn in powdered topaz and agate with a choir of fifteen choristers and assistants who chant the sixteenth through eighteenth stanzas of the Hymn of Mórskodel, master of the Harúchamal in endless overlapping cycles.

The light of the dying sun is focused onto a spot on a marble wall in front of the circle through a yellow lens. At the first phrase of the summoning this is made into a nexus point by the use of Visitations of the Other Planes, and the summoner invites the Harúchamal, whose individual secret name he must know, to bargain with him.

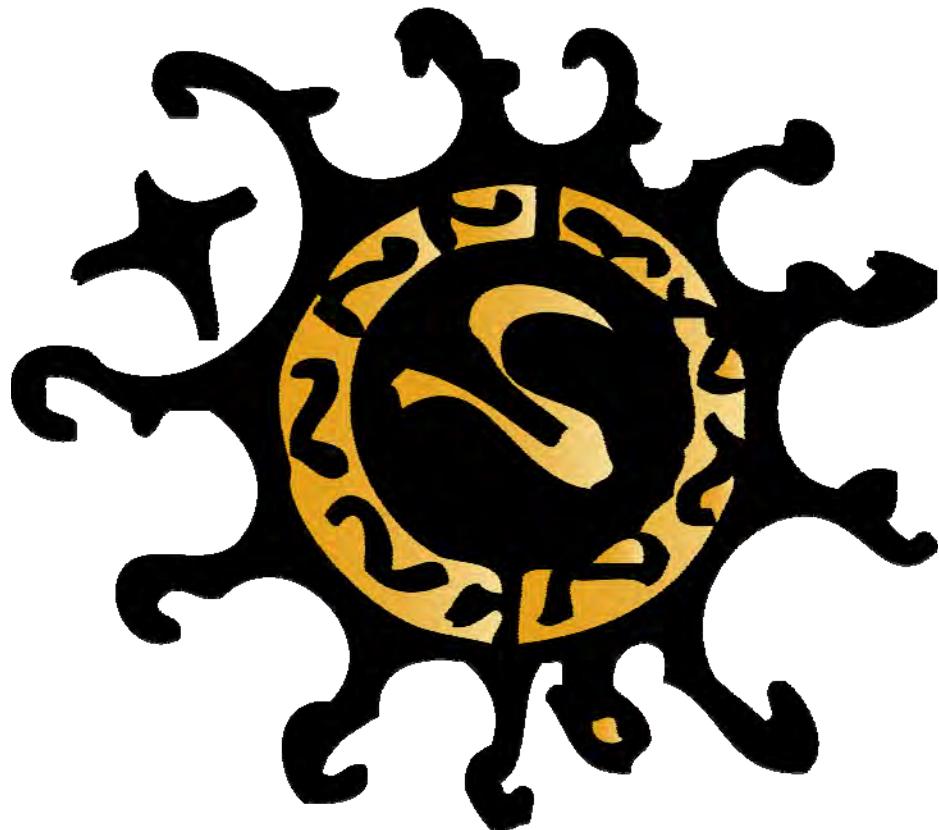
The second phase involves the sacrifice of at least one Mrúr or Shédra by means of the Viaticum of the Yellow Robe, thus releasing its hlákme back into the Tide of Dreams, an act pleasing to the Harúchamal who will eagerly await its arrival at the farther shores.

The last phase is the striking of the bargain. This must be done quickly and efficiently, as the Harúchamal will leave as the final glimmer of light from the setting sun fades away and the bright nexus point closes behind it. These unearthly birds will demand whole logs of white ssár wood carved into spirals for their nests, agates and quartz crystals, and magical items such as Eyes and Talismans. Under no circumstances should one leave the protective circle to remove the diamond studded golden ticks from the Harúchamal's plumage, even if asked, as the bird will grab your balétl and drop it into the Sea of Souls. Once the bargain is struck the bird flies off to search for the departed soul and returns within seconds. Messages to the dead cannot exceed twenty words and their replies rarely exceed ten.

The Harúchamal cannot contact every dead soul. Some are too recently dead and still float among in the seas around the Isles of Teretané. Others have been removed

from the endless cycle of souls by having their corresponding bodies made into undead, yet others have been absorbed into the light of Hnálla or the dark of Hrü'u and yet others walk the mundane planes clothed in new bodies. If it cannot find a soul it will at least inform the summoner why before disappearing with its payment.

There is a binding spell that, it is said, can compel a Harúchamal to act as a steed, carrying the summoner to a specific place within the Isles of Teretané or the Paradises Beyond. Those who use this spell must be aware that time often travels at very different rates within these planes and their journey may take centuries to complete.





Tlá'tana - "The Rod"

Tlá'tana is of an unknown substance and the essence of Drá. The deeper nature of this great demon has eluded scholars at least partly because it is impossible, not to say undesirable, to summon It to any plane other than Its own. This is due to both its nature as a supremely disinterested, enigmatic and inscrutable being and its vast size. In the "Tale of Long Wanderings" there is an account of a party of Stability priests and their entourage, who became lost between the worlds and who, by various accidents and encounters with other demonic races, were brought within sight of this most massive of the servants of the gods.

The unknown author of the tale reported that "It emits an aura of life, yet to the eye is like unto a constructed thing. Within its coral-like body could be glimpsed what our guides called the *Ch'tk'tk*, apparently in imitation of the sounds they make. Through lengthy negotiations and bartering we obtained from the captain of our vessel the means by which these servant demons could be summoned and compelled to perform their particular function for us. Although we had bought this information in return for an arduous and cruel task in the mines of Ó'lek Shem (note: not otherwise known), yet we judged ourselves blessed when once again we found ourselves in the

Emperor's Library in Tumissa, where this sorry tale had begun so many years before."

What the task was in the mines is unknown as it is one of three sections of his story - along with the identity of himself and his companions - that the author never revealed. It is likely from the context, however, that the Emperor mentioned was Dharúmesh MSS I, who reigned from 1501 to 1543 AP and that the author was a senior official of the library.

Although Tlá'tana can not be summoned physically into our world, its breath can, bringing with it its power of GLACIATION. Those who would do so should be of no less than the 15th circle, and aided by a number of priests of no less than 10th, with a total number not less than three.

Each participant must be clothed as if for the coldest of weather on the highest mountain peak in the uttermost north of the world. No patch of skin must be exposed to the coming of this mighty being's breath. All must also be blindfolded and, despite the difficulty it creates with the ritual, ears must also be protected from the bite of frost.

The summoning consists of a chant, each line of which is sung by one of the participants in order around the space into which the breath of Tlá'tana is to be drawn. This chant is long and requires a complex pattern of notes which will almost certainly require female voices as well as male. The song should be begun at midnight and must be completed before daybreak, thus it is not possible to summon Tlá'tana in high summer. (Note: the song itself appears to be lost, but its length maybe judged by this limitation). Any mistake at this point risks removal to the demon's home plane for all, the risk increasing as the chant continues.

It will be seen that each line of the song ends in a partial word, which is completed on the next line and thus by the next singer. As such, each participant must be able to hear and quickly pick up the refrain from the previous. This necessitates that he must be able to hear the priest or priestess who sings immediately before. No other

limitation on the size of the area into which the breath is drawn is known, nor does any preparation need to be made of that area.

As the second-last verse is begun, the breath will begin to gather within the polygon delimited by the priests, and to a great height and depth. At this point, all those involved must have their clothing tightly closed in order to protect them from the deadly cold of this demon's exhalations.

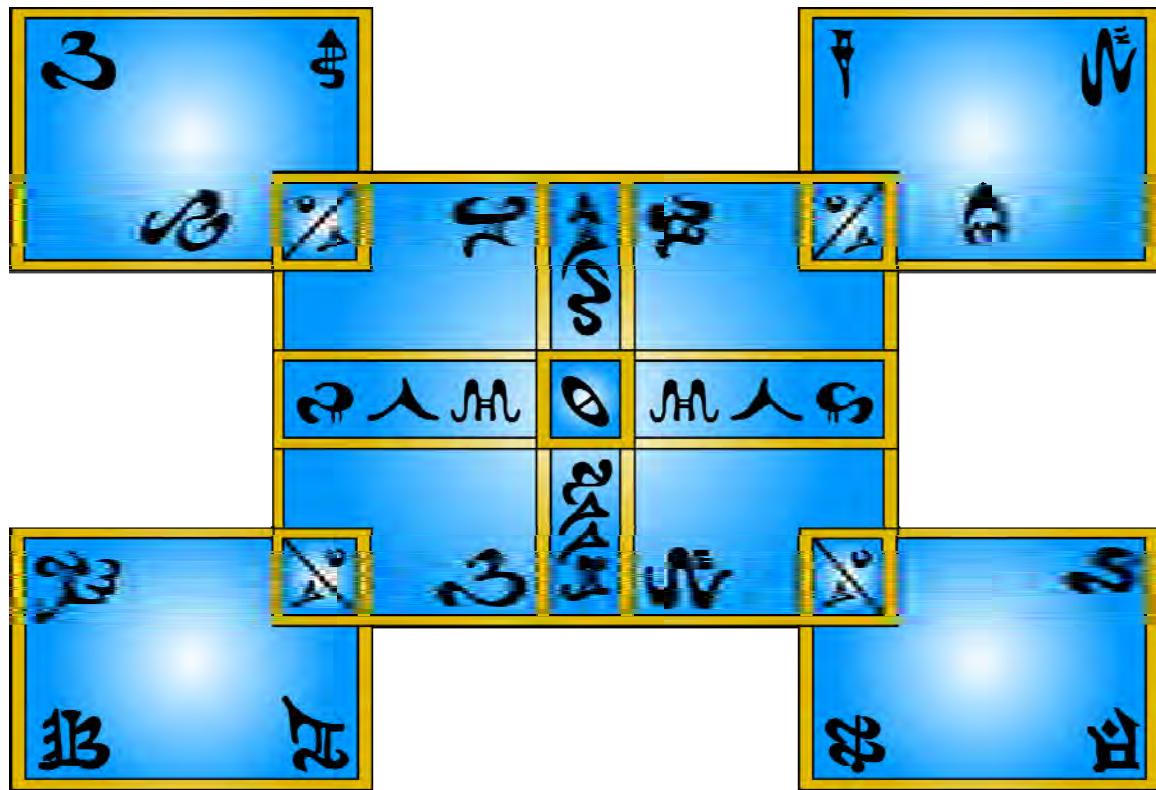
The last verse must be sung in unison by all there present and in fact is a charm to prevent the direct touch of the fearsome cold which has the power to overcome any clothing. If the summoners have done all correctly then, as they sing the last line of the last verse, the coldness will pass and the demon will withdraw from the world once more. Should any make a mistake at this point in their singing, then they too, but they alone, will be affected by the demon's breath.

On removing their blindfolds, those present will find the area within their circle greatly changed. All living things will be transformed into brittle statues of themselves, as will many non-living things. A mace swing will suffice to shatter a warrior or a wooden door or an iron bracket. All liquids will be solid lumps down to their foundations, able to support the heaviest of beasts, legions, or siege engines. Frost as thick as a man's forearm will cover almost the whole space. Only volumes so tightly closed that no air may enter or escape will offer protection, and then only if their walls are such that the hottest summer day would not penetrate them.

The summoners are to be cautioned to beware of pools of moisture from the demon's breath. These will be seen bubbling and emitting thick clouds of steam for a few moments after its withdrawal. It is wise not to touch anything that has felt the cold breath with bare skin, but these pools must be avoided completely lest the reckless augment the number of crystalline statues created. Once these pools are gone, the area may be entered carefully.

As the living matter thaws it will be found to be totally dead, with its structure disrupted but usable as food if needed.

The summoning of this demon is very stressful and drains all present of their vigor, the lead priest most of all. As such it is normal for those who perform this summoning to age visibly. Should this cause the lead priest to actually die during the ritual it will spell doom for all involved.





The Ch'tk'tk

These minor demons serve Tlá'tana. They appear to use their powers of RESTORATION, and EXPULSION to keep the great one's physical body clean, although of what is not clear.

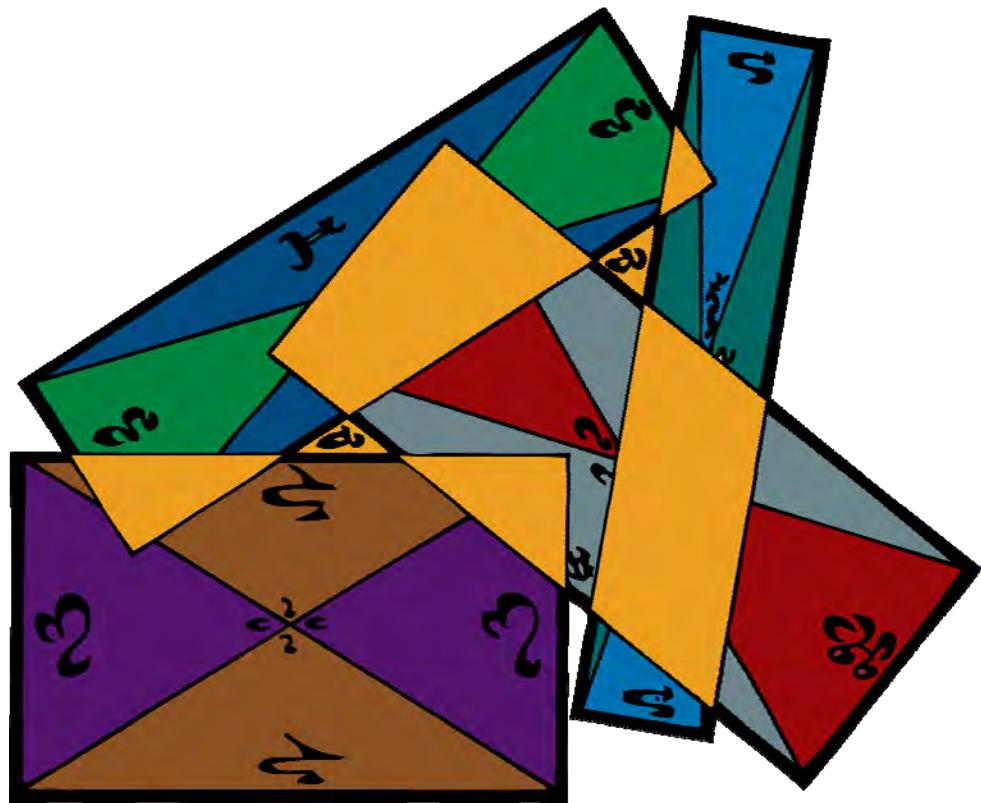
They may be summoned simply by any priest of the 8th circle or above using the Dodecahedron of Entreaty, providing that, in addition to the ten ideograms of Stability (note: now obscure) the two symbols below are inscribed on the tuning faces. (Note: sadly, yet again, the transcriber of this copy was unequipped with the special coloured inks probably required for these glyphs. He left a space for them but seems never to have completed the work). A particular Dodecahedron will function but once to summon one of these demons, and thus the summoning is expensive if not arduous (it will be removed by the demon when it leaves).

The beings themselves somewhat resemble shaggy dri-ants, but of great size. They may be commanded to restore any broken item to its original state, although they can not return life to a corpse, IF all the parts are to hand. They will not perform a partial repair.

Alternatively, they may be requested to remove all traces of alien particles - dirt, sand, even concreted stone and parasites - from around or within an object or creature.

They appear to be quite unable to comprehend any form of limitation on the applications of their powers and will, for example, to remove food from stomachs and waste from bowels. These processes are carried out with alarming speed using the long fibres which emanate from the demons' many joints.

Finally, the demons' ability to restore objects appears to extend to sending them back to their plane of origin. This is probably how the author of the Tale of Long Wandering and his companions were returned to Tumissa but again it is important to note that the demons heed no guidance on this matter. If they are requested to restore an object they will both repair and return it to its plane of origin, sometimes to the surprise of a scholar who was unaware of the nature of the archaeological specimen he was attempting to study!





Cursed by Avánthe

By Krista Donnelly

Author's Introduction

I've used Guardians of Order's Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne (2005) as my rule set. The characters were created using the Middle Way, High Magic option with the default age of the characters changed to 15 to reflect the harsh life out in the hills. Much of the background on the Kúrt Hills comes from Adventures on Tékumel Part Two/Volume Two: Beyond the Borders of Tsolyánu (M.A.R. Barker, Theatre of the Mind, 1993), pp. 16-25, where you go hunting in the Kúrt Hills with your clan-uncle, and from Deeds of the Ever-Glorious: Histories of the Tsolyáni Legions (M.A.R. Barker, Adventure Games, 1981), pp. 55-56 and 72-74. I've taken the basic facts from the legion history and fleshed them out in ways that may or may not be canonical. I've also taken certain revelations from the Adventures book and speculated on what effects this may have had for the Kúrtani involved. The adventure is set in 1064 A.S., two years after Kanmi'yél Nikúma III, Scourge of Vimúhla, ascended to the Petal Throne.

GM's Introduction

The village is suffering from the departure of six of their young men, a blow that leaves them with only 31 adults, many of them widows, to support 17 children. This problem is due directly to the recruiting efforts of a Warrior of the Blue Shield company that's in the area, and the disillusionment suffered by one of the patriarch's sons upon learning that his father intended to live forever through the use of an Eye of Bestowing Life. This loss of manpower is compounded by the fact that the area has suffered from a drought all year long and game is becoming scarce. The scarcity of the game is due partly to the drought as the animals scatter further afield in search of water, partly to the tribe's unwitting competition with the Blue Shield company for food, and partly to the predations of a pair of zrné that have returned to the area. The blame for the drought can be laid directly at Sátu's feet, though he's unaware of the fact.

You should hand out to your players the page entitled, "Recent History of Your Troubles," to bring them up to speed on events. Depending on your players and how much of an information dump they can tolerate, you may also want to hand out the "Village Population" sheet. The handouts are located at the end of the scenario.

Player's Introduction

It's dinner time. The entire tribe is lounging around the communal fire pit, eating the meager meal of roots, grasses and small stringy, pieces of meat. The children cluster in groups behind your backs, avidly watching as each morsel makes its way into your mouth. They will not eat until later. The latest hunting party returned this morning and laid down their puny haul – barely enough to feed the tribe until the next hunting party is dispatched and returns. Disappointment and shame hang in the air as this effort came from the most experienced hunters – the elders Ra'tém and Utém, the dependable Ketán and the normally carefree Ta'á. Upon their return, the patriarch Ka'á called the elders together in his hut for an extended meeting. It's hard to tell the outcome as you glance their way. Ka'á is as unreadable as ever, Ra'tém and Utém look uneasy and Ta'áv is gazing as blankly into the fire as he does into the sun. Finally Liné, the eldest of the widows, turns around and calls the children forward. It's too early in the meal for them to eat, but nobody challenges her breach of etiquette.

Ra'tém and Utém clap their hands to command attention. The chatter dies down as everyone looks to the elders. Ka'á stands but before he can speak, Ta'áv slowly rises. Ta'áv opens his mouth as if to speak, then closes it. He turns, walks away from the fire pit and disappears into the darkness surrounding the huts. Ka'á frowns briefly and then turns back to you and speaks,

"It's clear that we have angered our Lady Avánthe. All this year she has not sent the rains, and our women's crops wither in the fields. She sends the animals away from us, frustrating even our best hunters. We must atone for whatever offense we have caused. There is a way, a ritual, though it is not well known – the Urgent Supplication of Ultimate Devotion. Our priestess Ainé will need to consult with the holy hermit Ainú. And afterwards, we will need to celebrate in a proper fashion. Our young hunters, the future of our tribe, will accompany Ainé and also receive the blessings of our Lady. Then, they will have a successful hunt. The rains will come again, and we will be restored in the eyes of our Goddess. We call upon Ka'ám, Ta'áku, Dái and Sátu to go forth now and serve the tribe in this endeavor."

The Story of the Disappearance

Fa'át and some others went out hunting in preparation for the feasting that accompanies the Intercalary Days. To their great misfortune, they were ambushed by a pack of zrné. They fought hard but their fates looked grim until they were rescued by the Warriors of the Blue Shield. The kási of the company of legionnaires praised their prowess and bravery and invited them to a meal. While they ate, he attempted to recruit them. He stressed that the honor of the Kurtáni and the Lady Avánthe were bound up in the continuance of the legion until a Stability-worshipping emperor again sat upon the Petal Throne and would recall them. Fa'át was intrigued but demurred, citing his obligations to his tribe. In truth, though, he mainly thought about his upcoming elevation to the Council of Elders. With his refusal, the enthusiasm of the others died down. The kási encouraged him to think about it some more and gave him the location where his company was currently camping.

On the last of the Intercalary Days, Fa'át and his brother Ta'áv were inducted into the Council of elders. There the great secret of the tribe was revealed to them. The other two elders, Ratém and Utém, were not their fathers [uncles] but their half-brothers. Their father, the patriarch Ka'á, was not in his 40s, but over a hundred years old. He spun a tale for them about his youth and how he found a legionnaire dying by the side of a pool. On learning that Worm-loving troops had attacked him and stolen a great treasure, they set out in pursuit. They overtook the troops and a great battle ensued. Many men of the tribe died that day, but the Sárku worshippers were slain to the last one. They searched the bodies, and then burned them all. Ka'á found the great treasure – an Eye of the ancients. By accident, he also immediately discovered what it did when he pressed the stub and saw one of the fallen soldiers come back to life, youth and vigor flooding his body. Ka'á hastily cut his throat before he could leap up and start fighting them again.

Up to this point, Ka'á's story was true. From here onwards, it diverged from reality. He said that the remaining Strong Bow hunters decided that this gift should not be wasted, but be used on the elders of their tribe so that the whole tribe would prosper under their continued guidance. But when they returned to the village, the elders feared this great gift and turned them down. Only Ka'á went on to become an elder and then was brave enough to have it used on him when he died. But the offer of the gift is still open to all who join Strong Bow's Council of Elders, including Fa'át and Ta'áv now.

The true end of the story is much darker. The surviving men argued and decided to save the charges for themselves, not even reviving their fallen clansmen. Who knew how many charges were left? Each one might be the last. Over the years, as each man died, the survivors again and again decided against reviving them, hoarding the Eye's charges. When Ka'á grew old, he hid the Eye and spoke with his sister Maliné who had married outside the tribe and lived away from the village. He made her promise to come immediately on news of his death, find the Eye and use it. She did so, though it was a narrow thing, almost too late. From then on, he decided to bring a small circle of relatives in, bound by an oath to revive each other. He began building this circle by bringing in his sons Ratém and Utém as elders, and then not filling other elder slots until sons from his new wife grew old enough to be inducted. With Fa'át, Ta'áv and Ka'ám, his youngest, brought into the leadership, the circle would be complete.

It worked wonderfully with Ratém and Utém who supported him completely when he told them his plans. But Fa'át and Ta'áv were shocked. To Fa'át it was an abomination, an affront to Avánthe's cycle of life and a guarantee that he would never emerge from beneath his father's thumb. The knowledge propelled him to reconsider the kási's offer to join the Warriors of the Blue Shield. Without telling the other men the reason behind his change of heart, he easily persuaded them to join the adventurous and noble life of a legionnaire in hiding.

Ta'áv was not a warrior. He hadn't been hunting with his brother on that fateful day. He shut down on receiving the news of the unnaturally long life of his father. Always a sensitive soul, once Fa'át left, he carved the symbol of Drá into his chest and went into a near catatonic state from which he has not yet emerged.

After several months without hearing from the men, and lacking any trail to follow, Ka'á declared them dead. To provide for and comfort their widows, he immediately arranged their remarriages as second wives to the elders Ra'tém and Utém. They have acquiesced in this arrangement, more or less unhappily.

The History of the Warriors of the Blue Shield

Expunged from the record and declared "a foe of the Imperium" in 1062 A.S. by Kanmi'yél Nikúma III, the Scourge of Vimúhla, the legion believes its fate is revenge for the fact that the Kúrt Hills supported no faction in the civil war at the start of the century, but withdrew into a state of autonomous self-governance. Distrusted by the Change-worshipping emperors that followed Shaíra Sú, both the Blue Shield and the Legion of the Inverted Hand had been stationed at home for years when the civil war broke out. When Kanmi'yél Nikúma I emerged victorious, he came with his loyal legions and began the pacification of the Kúrt Hills, burning villages and killing those who resisted. Both Blue Shield and Inverted Hand rose to the defense of their countrymen and fought him, defending their homeland the best they could. They held out for several months but eventually his force overwhelmed them, and they laid down their arms and pledged their loyalty to him. His reign proved short. His successor, Kanmi'yél Nikúma II, felt the unity of the empire was too fragile to pursue any domestic grievances. Thirty years later, however, Kanmi'yél Nikúma III ascended the throne and flexed his muscles. He built up Flame legions, restoring old ones and creating new ones, and demolished Dark legions, such as the Battalions of the Seal of the Worm. In the midst of this activity, he took the time to disband the two Kúrtani legions that had dared to stand against an emperor. Inverted Hand accepted their disbanding, but Blue Shield was too proud. Remnants of the legion went into hiding in the remote regions of the hills, earning them the label "foe of the Imperium."

Companies are scattered throughout the hills, hunting to survive and recruiting new members from the tribes. They do this quietly, without the tribes' knowledge, in an effort to protect them from the emperor's fury should he learn of their continued existence. In return, they attempt to protect the tribes by hunting the most dangerous of the predators in the vicinity.

Historically, Blue Shield made the wiser choice in the short term. The first Stability-worshiping empress to sit on the Petal Throne after the civil war, Janúle, She of the Blue Goddess, brought the Warriors back and forgave them in 1123 A.S. In contrast, it took several more centuries before

Inverted Hand was restored by Hejjéka I, the Replacer, in 1322 A.S. However, in the long run, their fervent devotion to the Goddess did not serve them well. The next Sárku-worshipping emperor, Dúrumu, the Copper Blade of Sárku, disbanded them “as being of no further service to the Imperium.” In contrast, Inverted Hand survived Dúrumu’s reign, albeit by being assigned to the Chákas and given the most dangerous and difficult tasks.

The Cause of the Drought

The player Sátu is in possession of an extremely powerful artifact, a seemingly humble leather jerkin known as the Embrace of Kurritlakál [see Sátu’s character sheet]. He’s unaware of its true nature, that it’s a portal to another dimension. Whenever a Sárku or Durritlámish worshipper wears the jerkin, they are linked to the Demon Lord Kurritlakál (or perhaps, one of his minions speaking for him – it’s unclear). While the wearer is in contact with the demon plane, he is not just receiving advice and mentoring in spells and suffering from hearing more than is desired from the dead, he is also keeping open a link to Tékumel’s plane. Kurritlakál is taking advantage of this rich source of extra-planar energy and draining it for his own purposes. This regional loss of energy is manifesting as the drought (a Desiccation of the natural ecosystem). It’s so severe this year because of the amount of time Sátu has kept the connection wide open as he learns his spells. In the hands of a powerful magician, this artifact is only worn and utilized under powerful wards to prevent this siphoning off of power.

The drought can be cured by removing the Embrace from Sátu. It can also be cured through the Urgent Supplication of Ultimate Devotion in that Lady Avánthe, in her wrath at receiving a human sacrifice, will send her Spirits of Water to chastise those who offend her so. The Spirits will bring howling storms and rains and sever the link to Kurritlakál’s plane. However, as long as Sátu keeps open the link by learning new spells, the drought can return.

Motivations of Ka’á, Ra’tém and Utém

Ka’á, Ra’tém and Utém have all been affected profoundly by the Eye of Bestowing Life. They feel deeply that the gods of Tékumel are very real and active, even more so than most Tekumelyáni. When he was a young man, Ra’tém resurrected his father. Seeing the dead man come back to life and arise youthful and vigorous put Ra’tém in awe of Ka’á, the Eye and Avánthe. He and Utém (who was at a very impressionable age) feel that just as Avánthe gives life to the natural world around them, she must have given life to Ka’á. They believe that the Eye is merely a convenient way for her to express her will. Nothing will shake Ra’tém and Utém’s loyalty to their father. They trust in him as a mouthpiece of the Goddess.

Ka’á does believe that the tribe has offended Avánthe and must atone. It’s the only thing that explains all their recent troubles to him. However, he does not see his use of the Eye as the source of that offense. Instead, he sees his sons’ rejection of the Eye and the life it offers as the source of the offense. He has interpreted this rejection as evidence that they are both demon-ridden. He lives in fear of Fa’át returning with troops from the emperor to steal back the “great treasure,” or Ta’áv wandering off and spreading the news of its existence to all and sundry. Since he can’t do anything about Fa’át, and so far has hesitated to take action against Ta’áv, he’s convinced himself that

sacrificing the odd Sátu (who also must be demon-ridden – and for once, he's right!) will appease the Lady.

From conversations in his youth with Gayán, an Avánthe priest from Haumá and the brother of the hermit Ainú, Ka'á knows about an obscure Avánthe ritual that originated in these hills many centuries or millennia ago. Called the Urgent Supplication of Ultimate Devotion, he feels it will bring Avánthe's blessing back and cleanse Sátu of whatever demons are riding him. The Urgent Supplication calls for a human sacrifice to be made out in the fields in much the same manner as a normal sacrifice of flowers or fruit would be made.

At the meeting that Ka'á called when his best team (in his estimation) returned virtually fruitless from the latest hunt, he convinced Ra'tém and Utém that it is their duty to rid the village of all that offends Avánthe. He centered his talk on Sátu – the useless, sullen outsider that the widows adopted. He told them about the Urgent Supplication, that it was used in antiquity to end a drought. Sacrificing Sátu in this manner would both cleanse him from offense and benefit the village. Ra'tém and Utém are won over by his argument. Ta'áv remains silent, frowning slightly. Ra'tém and Utém's only caveat is that it is vital that the ritual be performed correctly. Thus, Ainé needs to consult with the hermit Ainú beforehand. Ka'á concurs.

Ka'á's murder of Ta'áv is a spur of the moment decision born out of fear when Ta'áv looks like he's going to speak against his father and ruin everything during the speech at the fire pit. Ra'tém and Utém will immediately suspect Ka'á and attempt to talk with him privately to hear his reasoning after the murder. They will not be hard to convince that it was necessary.

Ka'á

Patriarch, Strong Bow, 114 years old [physical age is 43]

Str 4, Dex 4, Int 4, Psyche 3, Willpower 8, Charisma 7

Initiative 15, Combat Value 4, Health Points 60, Shock Value 12, Magic Resistance 4, Respect 5

Attributes: Base Cunning, Decisive 1, Good Reputation 1, Older 6

Defects: Arrogant 2 (believes Int is a 6), Secret 2 (The Eye), Secret 2 (Betrayal of others over the Eye), Responsibilities 2, Vow 2 (Live forever), Xenophobe 2

Skills

Language (Thu'úsa, Spoken) 2

Language (Tsolyáni, Spoken) 2

Knowledge (Kúrt Hills) 2

Etiquette (Low Clan) 3

Analysis 4

Charm 3

Hiking 1

Hunting 3

Intimidation 3

Medical 1

Observation 5

Planning (Clan) 3

Ritual (Avánthe) 1

Tracking 1

Dagger 4, damage x 2

Short Sword 5, damage x3

Long Bow 3, damage x5

Ka'á's skill levels represent three lifetimes of living to late adulthood. He keeps the Eye of Bestowing Life on him at all times now, in a pouch carried around his neck. He will never give it up.

Events

- **Aftermath of Ka'á's speech**

Have everyone make an Observation or Etiquette roll: When each hunter is announced, there's a polite snapping of fingers and the elders nod approvingly in their direction. However, no elder makes eye contact with Sátu when he's announced.

Give notes to Ka'ám, Ta'áku and Dái: You don't understand why Sátu is part of the group. He's the worst hunter in the tribe and will only be a hindrance.

Give the following note to Sátu: What are the elders thinking? You're the worst hunter in the tribe. This can't end well.

Give the following note to Ainé: You have no idea what Ka'á is referring to. As far as you know, there is no general "atonement" ceremony in the Lady Avánthe's rituals, and you've never heard of the Urgent Supplication of Ultimate Devotion.

Ka'á disappears immediately after his speech. He cannot be found by any player character nor will any NPC know where he has gone. The general response to queries about his location will be: "He's around here somewhere. Have you checked his hut?"

If anyone attempts to question the choice of hunters, in particular the inclusion of Sátu, they'll receive a stern lecture from Ra'tém, Utém or their wives about following the council's leadership and trusting in the wisdom of the patriarch. Other adults will shake their heads, puzzled, but allow that the patriarch must have his reasons. Liné will openly criticize it, and Za'üt will mutter that the boy's hopeless but no one will support disobeying Ka'á.

If anyone goes looking for Ta'áv before sufficient time has passed, go to the Murder of Ta'áv section.

General reactions:

1. Diné will come up to Ainé and beg to be allowed to accompany her. If Ainé turns her down, she'll go to Ka'ám and offer to organize and lead the pack haulers. "You'll need someone to set up a trail head camp, and then haul back all the meat you will kill. With all of you men hunting, it's up to us women to do it. I'll organize everything. Just give me a chance!"

Diné can do as she promises. She'll get all the necessary supplies ready and recruit the other four adult, unmarried women as fellow haulers. This position is generally carried out by the youngest men in the tribe, supervised by an older man past his prime. However, desperate times call for desperate measures.

Diné has ulterior motives, as will be seen later.

2. The widow Liné will search out Sátu. She's always shown the most interest in him. She'll pull him aside and offer advice. "Don't be an idiot. Don't get close to any of those animals. You just let the others do the work and then offer to haul the carcass back to the trail head camp. No sense in taking any chances."

3. The four oldest boys will swarm around Dái and Ka'ám, asking where they will hunt and what they will hunt. They will ask to be allowed to come along, and demonstrate their sword skills. Ra'tém's son will play the "I'm your brother!" card on Ka'ám. They will use as an argument that they demonstrated their knife ability by skillfully skinning and boning the carcasses when they last served as the pack haulers for a hunting expedition.

4. Za'üt will approach Ta'áku. "Keep your eyes and ears open. You'll spot anything long before the others do. Listen to the rényu and trust his instincts. Keep in mind that if we are cursed by Avánthe, you're likely to suffer misfortune until her blessing is restored."

This section will end when the rényu Razhí hears a keening cry from the outskirts of the village. After he chooses to respond, Ma'átu's cry will be loud enough for others to hear if they make a Psyche check. If Razhí isn't being played and no one makes the roll, then La'él, Za'üt's wife will hear him and alert the others. It will not be immediately obvious what the sound is (except to Razhí). Everyone should make an Intelligence check to figure it out. "It's disturbing due to the note of despair and fear in the voice."

• **Murder of Ta'áv**

Immediately after his speech, Ka'á will slip off in the direction Ta'áv went. He will find him standing out among the stunted crops, staring into the forest. Ka'á will try and coax him into conversation. When Ta'áv doesn't respond, he'll swear, "Damn your demon-ridden soul!", grab his hair, pull his head back and slit his throat with his dagger. He'll then let Ta'áv's body drop to the ground, cross out Drá's symbol on Ta'áv's chest with his knife and crudely carve Avánthe's symbol above it. Then he'll clean his dagger off in the dirt beside the body and slip away back to the fire pit.

If anyone tries to follow Ta'áv during or immediately after the speech, they will be intercepted by Ma'átu. He will grab their shoulder, pull them around to face him and lean in closely to whisper intensely to them along the lines of, "You must not disturb him! The gods speak to him, have touched him!" If he succeeds in engaging them in conversation, then Ka'á will have time to do all that's outlined above. If the player shakes him off right away, then he will turn around just in time to see Ta'áv's body slumping to the ground, and a figure disappearing into the darkness. (There are no moons out tonight.) Ma'átu will then rush over and begin keening over the body as described below. [Note: if Razhí is out here, then he will see clearly and know exactly who the figure is.]

If no player tried to follow Ta'áv, then Ka'á will be seen only by Ma'átu. Unknown to him, Ma'átu is in the fields as well. He'd crept away after Ta'áv in the middle of Ka'á's speech, but was too shy to approach and try and talk to him. Witnessing the murder shocks him into momentary silence. When Ka'á disappears from view, he'll rush over, clasp the body and start keening, rocking back and forth.

Depending on the actions of those who hear his keening, everyone will soon rush out to the scene of the crime.

- Ma'átu will not be able to speak for a while.
- The superstitious widow Nulé will accuse him of the murder. She will point out that he was always hanging around Ta'áv. "Trying to work up his nerve to murder him, no doubt."
- Everyone should make an Intelligence roll to see if they remember seeing him during or after Ka'á's speech.
- His sister Diné will defend him. "He doesn't carry around a dagger. He can't bring himself to eat meat – how could he kill another man if he can't even kill an animal?"
- The village will divide into two camps arguing that he's never been right in the head and is capable of anything (Nulé's camp) or that he's never been right in the head and isn't able to do anything (Diné's camp).
- Ketán will point out the Avánthe symbol carved in his chest (if it's there) and ask Ainé what it means.
- Ra'tém and Utém will remain silent and fail to take any action. They are quietly in Diné's camp and suspect Ka'á.
- Ka'á will stay in the background. If the players don't try to investigate or sway the crowd, he'll send Za'üt over to pull Ma'átu off the body and take him away to be confined in the prisoners' hut. He will try to avoid being seen by Ma'átu.

Investigating the murder

- Intelligence rolls will show that there's enough time for anyone to have slipped out after the speech and committed the murder, unless someone can vouch for having conversed with them.
- Only Ta'áku is a good enough tracker to check the approaches to the field that led away from the village to see if someone from outside may have come in and killed him.
- Razhí can make a smelling Observation check to see whose scent he detects if he gets there before the village swarms the area (will detect Ka'á's scent).
- If anyone accuses Ka'á based on Razhí's statement, he'll spin that his scent is on Ta'áv because they spent so much time together today in the meeting (it won't be on Rat'ém and Utém, if Razhí cares to check).
- If a player is investigating the scene, he'll realize that there is no murder weapon.
- If Ainé is asked about the sign, she'll be puzzled by it. This is not a standard part of Avánthe rituals.
- If a player tries to recall who seemed upset with Ta'áv in the past, a successful Intelligence roll will reveal his parents, Ka'á and Liyásá. Liyásá in particular used to hassle him in the early days, scolding him as he lay there and accusing him of behaving ignobly.
- If the players resist having Ma'átu hauled away (Diné will appeal to Ainé for help), and try to persuade him to talk, Ma'átu will say nothing (because of Ka'á's presence) except, "He said his soul was demon-ridden. It's not. It's not. It's god-ridden."
- Sátu can feel Ta'áv's presence, but he's as silent in death as he was in his last months of life. If he starts expending health points to question him, then Ta'áv will speak. Ta'áv will waste time (and Sátu's health points) by questioning how he's doing this and then recoiling in horror once

he realizes Sátu must be a Worm-worshipper. Between all this, he'll answer questions about why he turned to Drá worship and who murdered him. In the end, he'll beg to be allowed to proceed on the Isles of Teretané and not to be raised as an undead thing. [This is to plant the idea that Sátu can do this, if the player hasn't realized it already.]

- If the players can question Ma'átu away from Ka'á, he will haltingly tell what he saw. He'll swear it was Ka'á, but if pressed on the issue will have to admit that he was some distance away.

Questioning Ma'átu Later

Unless the players think of something clever, it will not normally be possible to question Ma'átu until after he's been put into the prison. The prison is a semi-underground hut with a sloping entranceway. The lower parts of the walls are banked earth, and the upper parts are thick logs. The roof is made of sod, which deadens sound. Inside, there's a chamber pot and a sleeping mat.

Za'üt will have been charged with guard duty by Ka'á. Ka'á will explain it along the lines of keeping Ma'átu safe from anyone angry enough to try to kill him and giving him enough time to calm down. He's promised that the council will talk with him in the morning and try to get him help from a Keténgku priest if he's still unable to be coherent in the morning.

Ainé can easily talk her way into the hut to see Ma'átu (don't roll). For Ka'ám and Dái, it's a Charm check with a +2 bonus for being extremely easy. For Ta'áku, it's a straight Charm check. It's impossible for Sátu or Razhí to talk their way in.

Razhí can dig through the sod roof and create a hole big enough for a person to enter.

Za'üt can be distracted away from the door by any reasonable ploy.

Consequences of the Murder

It's not expected that the players will solve the murder. If they do, the revelation will be so shocking that enough people in the village will refuse to believe it so that it won't be possible to take action against Ka'á. It will, however, undermine his leadership and make it less likely that he can gain acceptance of the ritual once its nature becomes known.

The main purpose is to raise suspicion about Ka'á and tension among the players. If they do get convincing evidence, then they've gained valuable knowledge to use against Ka'á when they need it.

This also opens up another slot on the Council of Elders. Given the precedent set this year, the tribe assumes the slots will be filled during the next Intercalary Days celebration. While there's no set number of elders, the assumption is that the two new members will be replaced. This is important to Ka'ám's player and Ainé's player, and it should be worked into NPCs conversations with them that they are likely candidates.

Leaving the Village

Ka'á, or Ra'tém and Utém if he's been too compromised by the events of last night, will insist that the party leave immediately in the morning. They can delay this to some extent, particularly if they're working hard to discredit Ka'á. If they're still trying to find the murderer and are preoccupied by this, give them whatever encouragement they need to leave the village. It's possible to have tribesmen outside of the elders agree that they will take action against Ka'á, or that they will protect and question Ma'átu when he's ready, or to give Ainé a strong premonition that she needs to see Ainú again. In general, the entire tribe has bought into Ka'á's argument and is extremely anxious to see them set off on their mission of salvation.

Unless other arrangements are made by the party, the pack & haulers will follow them to Ainú, receive blessings as well and then follow them until they're told to make camp and stay there. There was no command for them to seek a blessing, however, so they'll (reluctantly) obey orders that send them elsewhere.

Finding Ainú

Ainú does not live in a single location, though she does return to locations she's been in from time to time (see Ainé's character sheet). Consequently, there is no route for Ta'áku to follow. Ainé will need to pray to get guidance on the direction they should travel. Because of her Blessed attribute, she will be able to find the way. Don't bother rolling unless you want to make something up to increase the tension, simply give her descriptions along the lines of, "You feel that you need to head in a northwesterly direction," etc. Assuming there are no interruptions other than the zrné, the players will reach her at the end of the day.

Zrné Encounter

There is a pair of notorious zrné that are on the prowl in this region. This is the same pair that seven years ago maimed Za'üt and killed his brother Ta'üt. They fought back, injuring the zrné enough to escape, though Ta'üt later died from the zrné's poison. Za'üt took out the middle eye of one of the creatures with a lucky blow, and Ta'üt cut off a claw of the other one. This pair is famous in Strong Bow and as soon as anyone is able to see them clearly, they'll know who it is.

The zrné are hunting to kill. The best bet for the players not to be surprised is to have Razhí with them. He gets both his 50% chance at detecting ambushes, and his +4 seeing roll [Observation skill] (if the player's stated that he's being alert during the trip). The zrné are keeping downwind until the last possible moment so there's no chance of a smelling Observation roll. Other players can get an Observation or Psyche roll to sense something's wrong if they're being alert. If anyone has a success, then they can roll for Initiative the first round, otherwise the zrné automatically have initiative.

Since the zrné have been tracking the players, they get the opportunity to make their Analysis roll and add to the pool of Team points. Don't forget to use their team points when making their rolls.

Two-Eyed will attack the leading member of the party, while Lost a Claw will attack the rear. Note that Two-Eyed loses his attack bonuses due to his sight problems, and Lost a Claw does only damage x3 with his rear claws because of his lost claw.

Two-Eyed

Str 7, Dex 8, Int 1, Psyche 2, Willpower 4, Charisma 0
Init 12, Combat Value 8, Health Points 55, Shock Value 11
Magic Resistance 1, Pedhétl 1, Armor Value 4, Team Points 2

Skills: Analysis 1, Observation 2, Teamwork 2

3 attacks a round (all on a single individual):

Bite: -3 to attack, damage x6, poison (victim dies in 1d10 x Strength minutes)
Claws: no bonus to attack, damage multiplier x3
Rear Claws: -2 to attack, damage multiplier x6

Lost A Claw

Str 7, Dex 8, Int 1, Psyche 2, Willpower 4, Charisma 0
Init 12, Combat Value 8, Health Points 55, Shock Value 11
Magic Resistance 1, Pedhétl 1, Armor Value 4, Team Points 2

Skills: Analysis 1, Observation 2, Teamwork 2

3 attacks a round (all on a single individual):

Bite: -2 to attack, damage x6, poison (victim dies in 1d10 x Strength minutes)
Claws: +1 to attack, damage x3
Rear Claws: -1 to attack, damage x6

Help from the Rényu

The zrné are not alone. They've been followed by a pack of wild rényu who are keeping an eye on them, but don't feel comfortable attacking. If the humans look like they are doing well in their fight against the zrné, the rényu will stay in hiding and not help. If the humans look like they might lose, the rényu will jump in and help fight the zrné while they are still preoccupied with their human targets. There are 8 rényu.

Description: "They have a large, dog-like head with upturned ears, dark fur, and human-like arms and upper body. They walk on their hind legs, though they sometimes drop to all fours for extra speed, can speak, and are more than semi-sentient. Their forepaws are not as nimble as human hands, but they can carry things, open doors, and some use specially modified weapons." (Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne, p. 163)

Str 4, Dex 6, Int 2, Psyche 5, Willpower 4, Charisma 5
Init 8, Combat Value 5, Health Points 50, Shock Value 10

Magic Resistance 3, Pedhétl 1, Respect 0, Team Points 3

Skills: Hunting 2, Observation 1, Stealth 1, Tactics 1, Teamwork 3, Tracking 3

Fangs: +2 to attack, damage multiplier x 2

Note that Sátu can make mrúr of both the humans and the rényu. If this hasn't occurred to his player yet, the Voice will start whispering suggestions to him.

Dealing with the Poison

Unless the players are lucky, someone will probably get poisoned by the zrné. As long as it's not Ainé, they're okay. She was foresighted enough to bring along enough antidote to take care of three people. If more than three people are poisoned, she'll need to make a successful Hunting (Gathering herbs) roll to find ingredients. Each time she administers an antidote, she'll need to make a successful Medicine roll for it to be completely effective. If she fails the roll, then she's misjudged the amount needed (or made an error in its preparation). In this case, she's only delayed death by $1d10 \times$ Strength hours. The victim will be able to walk, talk and perform light tasks, but cannot do anything strenuous. If she has more of the antidote, she can try again, but with a -2 difficulty modifier.

If Ainé is poisoned, then she can try to heal herself first. She'll need to make a Willpower check. If she succeeds, she can make her Medicine without a modifier. If she fails, then she's shaken and makes the Medicine roll with a -2 difficulty modifier. If Ainé is killed in the attack, then another character can rummage through her bag and attempt the Medicine roll. In this case, there's a -3 Quite Difficult modifier in addition to the -4 modifier for not possessing the skill.

Ainé is capable of caring for the rényu as well as humans.

Rényu Encounter

The rényu are not from the area. They've migrated to move away from a large group of humans who moved into their den. They can describe the humans well enough for anyone making a Kúrt Hills Knowledge check to realize they belong to the Warriors of the Blue Shield legion. (Sátu gets a +2 Extremely Easy modifier.) Have everyone make another knowledge check to see how much they know about the history of the legion.

The rényu will be grateful if the zrné are killed, and even more grateful if Ainé applies any first aid to wounded rényu. If this is the case, they will relax their guard and be more forthcoming than usual. They wanted to settle in the area, but felt they couldn't with the zrné taking up residence there. They too have felt the effects of the drought. If they are told about the objective of the players' journey, they will offer their help.

If the players wish to be led to the Blue Shield warriors, they will oblige (hoping that one group of humans will drive out another). The Blue Shield warriors are a day's trek from wherever the players first meet the rényu.

There are several females in the group. If Razhí shows an interest in one, it will be reciprocated.

There are no young in the group, and they will be offended if Dái inquires after obtaining one. If Dái simply attempts to befriend one, he will have greater success.

They are open to the idea of teaming up with the human village, however. The humans will probably interpret this as ‘adopting’ the rényu, but the rényu see it as obtaining a measure of protection. They are a small pack and well aware that the odds of survival are stacked against them.

Encounter with Ainú

“Ainú” (actually Aishú)

Hermit Lay-Priestess of Avánthe, Strong Bow, 89 years old

Str 1, Dex 1, Int 7, Psyche 2, Willpower 8, Charisma 4
Initiative 9, Combat Value 1, Health Points 45, Shock Value 9
Magic Resistance 3, Pedhétl 1, Energy Pool 9, Respect 15

Attributes: Older 14, Good Reputation 3

Defects: Bad Start in Life 2, Combat Limitation 2, Low Pedhétl 2, Nemesis 2, Physical Impairment 1 (Lame), Poor 2, Responsibilities 2, Secret 2, Ugly 2, Vow 2

Skills: Language (Thu’úsa) 2, Language (Tsolyáni, Spoken) 1, Knowledge (Kúrt Hills) 4, Hunting (Gathering plants) 5, Hiking 1, Medical 3, Deception (Offensive) 4, Observation 2, Ritual (Avánthe) 5, Theology (Avánthe) 1, Wilderness Survival (Kúrt Hills) 2

Aishú is the daughter of Ka’á’s sister Chiné and an Avánthe lay priest from Haumá. The night Chiné went into labor, her husband Gayán was out with Ka’á and ended getting killed in the battle with the Worm soldiers. Meanwhile, Ainú, Gayán’s sister, attended Chiné during her labor. Chiné received her new-born daughter with open arms only to see with shock that she had blue eyes. While still reeling from this discovery, she received the news of her husband’s death. In a frenzy of despair, she grabbed a knife and slit her own throat. Ainú emerged from the hut, announcing that the baby was stillborn and Chiné had committed suicide. That night, Ainú declared that she no longer had any ties to Strong Bow and left. She secretly took Aishú with her.

Now Ainú was, like her brother Gayán, an Avánthe lay priestess who had traveled widely in the Kúrt Hills. She believed that through prayer and devotion, the demon could be driven out of Aishú. Aishú was raised as a strict vegetarian and steeped in the knowledge of Avánthe. Ainú lived to an old age, finally dying in 1022 A.S. when Aishú was 47 years old. Up to this point in her life, no one else knew of Aishú’s existence. Whenever others of Strong Bow visited, Aishú hid and listened. Ainú developed a great reputation, and would be sought out for advice and blessings. When she died, Aishú decided to assume her identity. The key to this deception was Ainú’s necklace. The centerpiece is a brilliant sapphire set in gold carved in the shape of leafy branches clasping it. Ainú explained that it was sacred to Avánthe and protected all who trusted in her.

Aishú wore it, hoping it would hide her eyes in some fashion and willing to accept death if it did not (what was there left to live for?). It did protect her. No one noticed her eyes, and all who came accepted that she was Ainú. Aishú is now an astonishing 89 years old. Strong Bow believes her to be beyond ancient and possessed of an avatar of Avánthe.

Aishú's Necklace

The necklace is a genuine talisman of Avánthe. It transmits a constant low level Domination spell. All who have friendly intent, whether intelligent or not, are drawn to her. All who would be hostile choose on an unconscious level to avoid her. Her intense self-consciousness about her eyes has added an additional effect of making all who meet her subconsciously avoid looking her in the eyes or noticing their color. The necklace has protected both her and Ainú before her from the dangerous wildlife of Tékumel, allowing them to live as hermits.

Meeting "Ainú"

Ainú will be puttering around her clearing, hanging up herbs to dry when the players arrive. She will greet Ainé in a friendly fashion. Give Sátu's player a note that he feels extremely uneasy in her presence. If anyone has said anything else to make you think they may feel less than friendly toward her, give them the same note. As long as she has the necklace on, no one can attack her. It is possible to remove the necklace if the action is not done with conscious hostile intent.

When someone explains the purpose of their mission, she will grow extremely distressed. She does indeed know all the details of the Urgent Supplication of Ultimate Devotion and is horrified by it. She will confess that she does not understand how such a ritual could belong to so gentle a deity as their Lady. She will muse:

"I confess that over my long years I have pondered upon it. The spilling of blood is part of nature, it is true, yet the Lady has never asked for it herself. The Urgent Supplication is carried out much like any other ritual. You go out into the fields, pray to our goddess, scatter the blossoms about that she loves so well. Then, the one who is the sacrifice, whether it be man or woman, young or old, steps forward and kneels. The priestess then approaches, takes a knife and cuts the throat of the sacrifice. As the life blood pours out onto the ground, the spirit-soul cries out to our Lady for forgiveness. It is said that she will always grant it. This ritual is performed very rarely. I have never seen it done. Who has volunteered to make this act of Ultimate Devotion?"

It is likely that Sátu is aware that he's been chosen for this role. The others are likely to know only if Sátu has shared the knowledge with them. Whether he speaks up or the players have to confess that they don't know, "Ainú" will make up her mind quickly. She will come back with them to see if there is another way. What she does not say is that if there is not another way, she will offer herself up as the sacrifice. She will be very insistent on this matter and withhold her blessing from the hunt. If they agree to bring her, they'll need to create a small palanquin and carry her as she is in no shape to walk. (The pack and haulers can do this.) If they do not agree and leave without her blessings, two of the pack and haulers will sneak away at the first opportunity to take her back to the village.

The Hunt

“Ainú” will direct them to go up higher into the hills where she knows about a hidden spring. When they arrive, there will be a small herd of nráishu grazing in the meadow and drinking from the spring. The players will be downwind from them and so have not been noticed yet. The spring comes up near the foot of a steep rise in the hill so it’s possible to encircle the herd with a half-circle and then let loose the arrows. If the players seem uncertain what to do, simply have them make Hunting rolls and give them suggestions. You can play out the hunt as a full combat, or simply give them the kills as long as the arrows hit. If you play out the combat, then the nráishu will make a run for it as soon as the attack starts, attempting to kick only those who are in their way. The players will have a chance to shoot arrows for three rounds before the nráishu reach the woods and become more difficult targets. Any nráishu reduced to fewer than 15 Health Points or sustaining more than their Shock Value in a round will be unable to run and easy for Dái to reach and finish off with his sword.

Nráishu

"Six-legged, deer-like herbivores, black or dark brown, with long-snouted faces. They see well in the dark, and they are often active at night or twilight. Their front paws are armed with claws. . . . Nráishu meat is edible and almost too sweet in taste." (*Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne*, p. 169)

Str 4, Dex 4, Int 1, Psyche 3, Willpower 3, Charisma 3

Initiative 7, Combat Value 4, Health Points 35, Shock Value 7, Magic Resistance 2, Pedhétl 2

Observation 3, Teamwork 1, Stealth 2

Claws, damage multiplier x 2, Low Penetration

Hooves, damage multiplier x 3, Low Penetration

Encounter with the Fa’át and the Warriors of the Blue Shield

What is not clear until the players start to advance on the dead or dying nráishu is that there are more arrows in the animals than can be accounted for, arrows that they don’t recognize. At the same time that they’re noticing this, five Warriors of the Blue Shield will also be emerging from the woods into the meadow. They will not be happy. One will angrily shout, “This is our kill! We’ve been tracking them!”

As they get closer, have Ka’ám make an Intelligence check, with the +3 Nearly Trivial modifier. Everyone else can make an Intelligence check with the +2 Extremely Easy modifier. Razhí does not need to make a check as the scent is unmistakable. The angry man wearing the insignia of the legion is Fa’át, Ka’ám’s brother who disappeared and is presumed dead. Just as they are making the connection, so does he. Fa’át will stop in tracks, then exclaim in surprise and clasp Ka’ám in a bear hug. The other four soldiers are unknown to the players.

Reason for Disappearance

After expressing his joy at seeing clan brothers and cousins again, Fa'át will grow serious and warn them not to tell anyone in the village. They do not wish to put anyone there at risk. If questioned on this, he will explain their fears about Kanmi'yél Nikúma III's wrath if he learns of the continued existence of the legion. If he is pressed on why he left, Fa'át will be uncomfortable and ask his fellow legionnaires to move out of earshot. He will also ask everyone except the players and "Ainú" to move away (Diné will pretend to comply, but will actually stay close enough to hear). Then he will relate the entire strange tale of his father and the Eye of Bestowing Life. He will end a plea to "Ainú": "It's what's caused all our troubles, isn't it? The drought, the scarcity of game? Avánthe is displeased with him. It's an abomination!"

Ainú will disagree, "Avánthe is the source of all life. The circle of life may be short or long, but she does not begrudge it. What matters is how Ka'á lives his life. Are his actions lán? Does he do what is best for the tribe?"

News About the Drought

Fa'át will agree to give up all the kills to the players if they mention how much they need the meat. He will be puzzled, agreeing that game is very scarce in this area. He'll mention that this is a very localized drought, extending not much beyond Strong Bow's traditional hunting area. Their plan is to move around each year so as not to stress each area too much. They've found it difficult enough to hunt here that he's about to recommend they just leave.

While this conversation is going on, the other legionaries have completely relaxed their guard. Along with the pack and haulers, they are starting to skin and bone the nráishu. If Sátu wishes to try something, he will have complete surprise.

Legionaries

Str 7, Dex 7, Int 4, Psyche 4, Willpower 6, Charisma 3

Initiative 13, Combat Value 7, Health Points 70, Shock Value 13, Magic Resistance 4

Long Sword 3 (target number 10), damage x 4
Long bow 1 (target number 8), damage x 5

The Finale

Obviously much will now depend on how the players react to this information. The main possibilities are returning to the village to:

1. Carry out the Urgent Supplication of Ultimate Devotion

This will bring about a dramatic confrontation between "Ainú" and Ka'á. "Ainú" will reveal her true identity and let the Domination spell drop so that all may see her eyes. She will declare

that her final act of devotion to Avánthe is to sacrifice herself. If possible, she will have borrowed Ta’áku’s blade and will cut her own throat, just as her mother did so many years ago.

If somehow they return without “Ainú,” Ka’á will want to carry out the sacrifice immediately with Sátu as the victim. In the players’ absence, he has talked individually with all the adults in the tribe and brought them all over, more or less, to his views on the matter. Only Liné is protesting, but she is not backing her words up with actions. If the players don’t choose to help Sátu when Ka’á comes for him, then it’s up to Sátu to avoid being sacrificed.

If this ritual is carried out, no matter who is sacrificed, it will call down Avánthe’s wrath in the form of the Spirits of the Water, offended at the lack of water in the area.

There is a crack of lightning, and for an instant the air is filled with wraith-like beings that seem to be wisps of fog. They swirl about you and howl in anger. The atmosphere around you alters so that it’s as if you were at the bottom of a vast depth of cool water. Overhead, golden sunlight radiates down, though the sky cannot be seen. You feel the currents of water rushing about you, and just as you begin to choke, your lungs filling up with water, the vision recedes. You come to lying on the ground as the sky opens up above you and rain beats down in heavy torrents, as if making up for months of being held back.

2. Deposing Ka’á

The players can be returning with quite a large entourage – a pack of rényu, the hermit Avánthe priestess, Fa’át and four other legionaries as well as food for all. They may wish to make a dramatic stand before the village denouncing Ka’á’s secret of the Eye of Bestowing Life and his murder of Ta’áv (if they figured that out). The murder, his imprisonment of Ma’átu and his secrecy are their strongest arguments. They will find that many of the older members of the tribe had some kind of suspicion about Ka’á’s lifespan, but interpreted it as a special blessing from Avánthe (it was only 23 years ago when he was last resurrected). Ainú’s blessing will make all the difference for them. If she supports a new patriarch, the players will be able to persuade the rest of the tribe to go along. Ka’á will not willingly give up the Eye, but it will also do him no good if no one is willing to revive him when he dies.

3. Confiscating the Eye of Bestowing Life

They may wish to not rock the boat politically, but still desire the Eye for themselves. In this case, they’d need to either steal it from Ka’á or fight him for it. He will never willingly give it up. He cannot be shamed by denunciations of his behavior, even if his murder of Ta’áv is thrown in his face.

4. Dealing with Sátu

This will depend greatly on how Sátu is played. If his player is reserved or careful, there may be no way for the other players to find out about the Durritlámish worshiper in their midst. If Sátu makes it through the scenario and keeps all his secrets, then even if the Urgent Supplication is carried out, the drought will reoccur next year. In fact, the longer Sátu continues

to connect with Kurritlakál, the greater the drain of extra-planar energy will be. The effects will progress from simple drought to barrenness among the animals until the landscape will take on a blasted appearance. Relief will only come if Sátu stops trying to use the Embrace, if he dies and someone who doesn't worship the Worm inherits the Embrace, or if someone who knows how to ward obtains the Embrace.

Ainé

20 years old, Strong Bow, Avánthe
 Description: Confident and determined

Character Stats	Combat Values	Magic & Other
Strength: 3	Initiative: 11	Pedhétl: 4
Dexterity: 5	Combat: 4	Magic Resistance: 5
Intelligence: 6	Health Points: 45	Energy Pool: 23
Psyche: 5	Shock Value: 9	Respect: 9
Charisma: 4		Teamwork Pool: 0
Willpower: 6		

Skills	Target Number	Attributes	Defects
Language (Thu'úsa) Spoken 2	8	Blessed 2 *	Responsibilities 2
Language (Tsolyáni) Spoken 2	8	Friends in High Places 1	Nemesis 2
Knowledge (Kúrt Hills) 2	8	Highly Skilled 2	
Etiquette (Low Clan) 1	8	Good Rep 1	
Hiking 1	7	Older 1	
Hunting (Gathering herbs) 1	7		
Instruction 1	7		
Medical (Human, Vet) 2	8		
Poisons 1	7		
Ritual (Avánthe) 3	9		
Theology (Avánthe) 1	7		

* You tend to meet the right people for Avánthe's purposes. You get a critical success on a 9 or a 10 if in an area of her influence (shrine, recent sacrifice). You're lucky (+1 to Gambling).

You are a lay priestess of Avánthe, the first your tribe has had in several generations. When you first expressed your desire to your mother Até, she was puzzled over how to deal with you and consulted with Ka'á, the tribe's patriarch. He proclaimed that he would send you out with Za'üt and Ta'üt, the best hunters and trackers in the tribe. If you could find the holy hermit Ainú, she who is eternally devoted to Avánthe, then you could become a priestess and learn from her. Your heart sank at the news, certain that you would merely come trudging back to the tribe, covered in shame and failure. Many seek Ainú, and only a few find her. But you left with your young head held high. You said a prayer at each forking in the paths and before the sun set that day, you stepped into the clearing in which Ainú lived. (Ta'üt told you later that he'd never seen anyone find her so fast.) Ainú questioned you about your motives and your family. Her voice softened noticeably when you named your father Gayán. You stayed with her for months and began to learn the lore of herbs, which will heal and which will kill. You learned how to make sacrifices to Avánthe and about the nature of the Lady. She then sent you away with instructions to return next year after you'd practiced your knowledge. This pattern continued for many years – you set out with protection, prayed and found your way to her (her dwelling place changed each year), stayed for months and learned from her and then returned home. In this way, you grew greatly in knowledge. Aishú never spoke about herself and never removed the blue veil which she wore always over her head and face, but she was unfailingly kind to you. Finally the day came when she sent you away

not with instructions to return next year, but with words of final parting. You protested that you still had much to learn, there were rituals she'd mentioned that she'd never taught you. Ainú remained silent for a moment. "That is because, my child, some things are dark and dangerous and best left unknown." Then she laid her hands upon you and blessed you. It's been 2 years since you've last seen her.

Your medical knowledge has elevated your status in the tribe greatly. Once your cousin Diné went out berry-picking on her own and ate what she picked. That evening she fell ill with a terrible pain in her stomach. Her mother Liné was frantic and summoned you to their hut. You examined the stains on her hand, the scent on her breath and checked all her symptoms. Soon you determined which poisonous berry she'd eaten and concocted a paste to neutralize it. It took several people to hold her down and get the paste (mixed with hot tea) down her throat, but you saved her life. Your aunt has been grateful to you ever since, and even the elders treat you with respect. It's whispered that you may even become an elder some day. This is possible because you are Aridáni. Once a Palace of the Realm official visited your village, and since you were 14, you declared before him your intention to be Aridáni. You are the first Aridáni woman in living memory in your tribe.

You only wish that your cousin Diné were more respectful of you. She'd always liked to tag along after you, but things only got worse after you saved her life. When you declared Aridáni status, she tried to declare it too. The official just laughed at her because she was only 11 and didn't even have a real name yet. She tries to learn the rituals by watching you and always wants to go out gathering herbs with you. She's an adult now and even refuses to get married because you have not married. Fortunately everyone has stopped caring about this since so many of the young men left.

Goals

1. Ainú is a very old woman. You want to see her again before she dies.
2. Save any who become injured. (You couldn't save Ta'üt when he died from a zrné's poison as he was too far away from the village at the time.)

Dái

17 years old, Strong Bow, Avánthe
 Description: Short, stocky and muscular

Character Stats	Combat Values	Magic & Other
Strength: 7	Initiative: 10	Pedhétl: 4
Dexterity: 6	Combat: 7	Magic Resistance: 5
Intelligence: 4	Health Points: 55	Energy Pool: 22
Psyche: 6	Shock Value: 11	Respect: 5
Charisma: 6		Teamwork Pool: 2
Willpower: 4		

Skills	Target Number	Attributes	Defects
Language (Thu'úsa) Spoken 2	6	Attractive 1	Bad Days 2 *
Knowledge (Kúrt Hills) 2	6	Aptitude (Sword)	Impulsive 2
Etiquette (Low Clan) 1	7	Good Rep 1	Uneducated 1
Hiking 1	5	Highly Skilled 1	
Hunting 1	5		
Charm (Social) 2	8		
Climbing (Trees) – Familiarity	6		
Teamwork (Hunting) 2	8		
Wilderness Survival 1	5		

Weapon	Skill	Target Number	Initiative	Damage	Range	Notes
Short Sword	3	10	3	x 3	0	

* The first time you make a Skill check each day, check to see if it will be a Bad Day. A roll > 6 means a Bad Day. On these days, a 10 is a critical failure, and a 1 is just a normal success.

You are a wonder with the sword. Everyone in the tribe acknowledges your superiority. This makes you a valued member of any hunting expedition. Who cares if you can't be bothered to examine the mud closely for tracks or look for broken twigs as signs of passage – when a maddened zrné attacks, you're the person everyone wants at their side. Afterwards at the feast, you get choice cuts of the meat. The only reservation, which you never speak about to anyone, is that sometimes things just go wrong for you. More than once, you've almost died trying to finish off the beast that the archers wounded for you because you slipped on wet leaves or a snake startled you or the call of a creature distracted you. It's frustrating and more than a bit alarming.

Despite your skill and your easy smile, you've never been terribly popular. Fa'át, the eldest son of the patriarch Ka'á, never included you in his circle of friends. When he put together hunting expeditions, he only included you if there were rumors of zrné in the area. It's possible he didn't want to outshine by you. It's also possible that he coldly remembered the times you laughed at him when he bragged about his prowess. You've always had a hard time keeping your mouth shut when provoked. Life's been easier for you since Fa'át and his friends disappeared. There's

so few young men left that you're as precious to the tribe as a steel blade. Two girls have already been promised in marriage to you.

Goals

1. You want a rényu like Razhí, Ka'ám's rényu, someone who will protect you when things go wrong but not gossip about it afterwards.
2. Dazzle your clan cousins with your sword skill.

Ka'ám

17 years old, Strong Bow, Avánthe

Description: Regal – piercing eyes and a commanding voice

Character Stats	Combat Values	Magic & Other
Strength: 4	Initiative: 8	Pedhétl: 4
Dexterity: 4	Combat: 4	Magic Resistance: 4
Intelligence: 5	Health Points: 40	Energy Pool: 22
Psyche: 4	Shock Value: 8	Respect: 0
Charisma: 5		Teamwork Pool: 1
Willpower: 4		

Skills	Target Number	Attributes	Defects
Language (Thu'úsa) Spoken 2	7	Attractive 2	Secret
Knowledge (Kúrt Hills) 2	7	Got the Breaks 3	Xenophobe **
Etiquette (Low Clan) 1	6	High Lineage 2	
Hiking 1	5	Highly Skilled 1	
Hunting (Forest) 2	6	Resolute 1 *	
Animal Handling (Rényu) 2	6		
Language (Tsolyáni) – Fam	4		
Planning 1	6		
Teamwork (Hunting) 1	5		
Wilderness Survival 1	6		

Weapon	Skill	Target Number	Initiative	Damage	Range	Notes
Short Bow	1	5		x 3	40	Two-handed
Short Sword	1	5	3	x 3		

* +2 to resist starvation, interrogation. +1 to Wilderness Survival checks.

** You dislike and distrust all those outside your tribe.

Some would call your life charmed. You're the third son of the patriarch Ka'á, and the best looking man in the tribe. People naturally listen to you and follow you. Ka'á has clearly been grooming you for an elder's position, in addition to your two brothers. While you don't particularly excel at anything, you're competent at virtually anything. Even when your father gave his rényu (which as a reputation for being difficult) to you, you easily befriended it.

The problem is that you don't want this life. You don't want the responsibility of being an elder and thinking of solutions to everyone's problems. You want to enjoy a quiet, easy life of being just another hunter in the tribe. You used to have a plan for this – after your older brothers became elders, you were going to go to your father and sweet talk him. Explain that you felt the council of elders should represent all the lineages in the tribe and for the good of the tribe, you would sacrifice your position for someone from the Sa'á family or even the Za'á family. In fact, the lay priestess Ainé looked like a prime candidate for your presumptive seat on the council. That plan fell to dust when your oldest brother Fa'át disappeared with the other young men mere weeks after joining the council, and your other brother Ta'áv suddenly stopped participating in

tribal life and devoted himself completely to the lethargy of extreme Drá worship. Though Ta'áv is nominally on the council, you know his poor showing is shaming the family. Your father is looking to you to uphold the family honor.

Fa'át's fate has preyed on your mind. He had always looked forward to his inevitable elevation in status so he was proud and happy at the Intercalary Days feast when he was inducted into the council of elders with Ta'áv. But afterwards, his face was always dark and scowling, and he barely glanced at your father. You tried to ask him what was wrong, but he brushed you aside. Several weeks later, he was gone, along with all his friends.

Ta'áv has behaved equally strangely after the Intercalary Days feast. He retreated into his hut for days and did not emerge. When he finally did, he carried a bloody knife. With it, he had carved the symbol for Drá into his chest. He cast it aside on the ground, walked to the fields outside the village and lay down in the sun. That's virtually all he's done since. You've even barely heard him utter a word.

Goals

1. Find out what happened to Fa'át.
2. Build support for someone other than you to be the next elder.

Sátu

16 years old, Strong Bow, Avánthe

Description: Sullen and portly

Character Stats	Combat Values	Magic & Other
Strength: 4	Initiative: 8	Pedhétl: 7
Dexterity: 4	Combat: 4	Magic Resistance: 7
Intelligence: 7	Health Points: 40	Energy Pool: 40
Psyche: 7	Shock Value: 8	Respect: -5
Charisma: 2		Teamwork Pool: 0
Willpower: 4		

Skills	Target Number	Attributes	Defects
Language (Thu'úsa) Spoken 2	9	Aptitude (Magic)	Bad Reputation
Knowledge (Kúrt Hills) 2	9	High Pedhétl 3	Combat Limitation 2
Etiquette (Low Clan) 1	7	Highly Skilled 1	Ugly 1
Hiking 1	5	Magical Ability 1	Vow
Hunting 1	5	Special Item 2	Secret (Durritlámish)
Magic (Ritual) 3	9	Skein of Destiny	Secret (Magic)
			Secret (Your item)

Weapon	Skill	Target Number	Initiative	Damage	Range	Notes
Short Bow	Fam	1	0	x 3	40	Two-handed
Short Sword	Fam	1	3	x 3		

Spell	Cost	Target	Range	Duration	Notes/Variants
Dessication	3	One	15 meters	Variable	Involving, debilitating
Necromantic Domination	18	Two	50 meters	12 hours	Involving, debilitating
Necrofacture	20	One	Touch	Perm	Creates a Mrúr

* Due to your combat limitation, you also suffer a -2 penalty to defense rolls.

You were born into another tribe, Damp Earth. Damp Earth were Sárku and Durritlámish worshippers, originally from the southwestern Kraá Hills that migrated over the generations to the northeastern Kúrt Hills. You retain a very few childhood memories from your time among them. Your clearest memory is of your last day among your clan. One evening you were eating dinner by the fire pit when the man seated across from you gave a sudden cry and toppled forward, an arrow protruding from his back. In an instant, the air thickened with arrows and falling bodies. Your mother fell over you, her dead body pinning you to the ground. You froze as the attackers came out of hiding and moved among you, kicking the bodies and slitting the throats of all who still moved. You waited for the knife at your throat, but it never came as a warrior simply kicked your limp body and passed you by. They were legionnaires, all bearing the symbol of a blue shield. It took years before you connected that symbol to a name: Warriors of the Blue Shield, a disgraced legion devoted to Avánthe but revealed as a foe of the Imperium by the emperor Kanmi'yél Nikúma, the Scourge of Vimúhla.

When they left the scene of their slaughter, you arose. With dry eyes and trembling hands, you rescued the only keepsake you could, your mother's leather jerkin. You put it on, and it shrank, molding itself to your body. The whispers immediately began filling your head. You sat for days, listening to your dead kinsmen, drinking in their anger, pain and sorrow until their voices died out and another voice, that of the demon Kurritlakál replaced them. Kurritlakál offered practical advice, and you followed it, arising and leaving to find a new home.

In time you came upon Strong Bow. You obeyed the voice and kept secret your allegiance to Durritlámish, pretending to the universal Avánthe worship of the area. You don't quite look Kúrtani – you don't have bandy legs and you're portly rather than wiry, but everyone just attributes it to unfortunate ugliness. The widows of the tribe adopted you as one of their own, and you were initially praised as one favored by Avánthe since you'd survived in the forests on your own. (You made up a story of a pack of zrné killing your tribe.) You grew up among them, yet not part of them. You kept secret your ability to cast spells as the nature of the spells would reveal your falsehood. You also kept secret the magical nature of your leather jerkin. It's grown with you as you've grown, but no one seems to have noticed or questioned it. The longer you've stayed with them, however, the harder it's been. They've tried to train you to be a hunter, but you are worse than useless. You've gotten used to the feel of a bow and a sword, but you freeze in any combat, overwhelmed by your memories of that awful attack. In disgust, your fellow hunters have learned not to rely on you and mock your pathetic attempts. You don't care what they think of you. You're simply biding your time until you can have your revenge on the Warriors of the Blue Shield. In preparation for this, you've made a concerted push this year to get Kurritlakál to teach you a more powerful spell than Desiccation. You've spent a lot of time off by yourself, absorbing the teachings of how to create undead (Necrofacture) and dominate them (Necromantic Domination).

[Your Skein of Destiny, as told to you by Kurritlakál, is that your death will further the designs of the Worm Lord himself, Sárku.]

Goals

1. Get revenge for the murder of Damp Earth, preferably on the Warriors of the Blue Shield. In the end, though, any fervent Avánthe worshipper would do. Turning them into undead would be particularly perfect.
2. Keep your secrets.

The Embrace of Kurritlakál

(a 300 point special item)

Base: 0 (leather jerkin)

Extrusion Entity 2 300 points

Mentor 2 300 points

Area Dependent 1 -100 points [Won't function in low magic areas or when blocked by warding spells. It then takes 1d10 rounds to function again.]

Enticing 1 -100 points [Whether the wearer is attracted to or repulsed by Kurritlakál, a terrible loneliness engulfs anyone who removes the jerkin. -3 Willpower stat check to remove and keep off.]

Psychically receptive -100 points [The wearer can't block his mind to any nearby psychic echoes.]

This “leather jerkin” functions as a portal, a link to the extra-planar entity known as the demon Kurritlakál. [See the Book of Ebon Bindings, M.A.R. Barker, pp. 41-44 for full information on Kurritlakál] Kurritlakál is the most reasonable and affable of the puissant Demon Lords, but he has only been infrequently summoned to Tékumel’s plane, and the knowledge of how to do so is well lost. The powers of Kurritlakál include Gifting (bestowing wealth), Consuming (ingesting the souls of victims), Sundering (tearing into small bits), Communition (utilizing teeth to pulverize into minute particles), and Descrying (perceiving an event or person on this or another plane). It is unclear whether the wearer is communicating with the Demon Lord himself, or with one of his minions who speaks in his name. It is also unclear for what purpose the Demon Lord chooses to communicate with the wearer.

What is clear is the effects of wearing the Embrace. The voice functions as a mentor to the wearer, teaching any with magical ability the spells of Durritlámish, to whom the Demon Lord is allied. If called upon, whether consciously or unconsciously (“for Lord Kurritlakál can perceive every ambition, every yearning, every hidden lust and secret shame which lies within the breast of a man”), the voice will offer advice to the wearer. However, the wearer also cannot block his mind to any nearby psychic echoes. In practice, this means he can hear the dead when in the vicinity of their bodies for up to 30 days after their death. This is true of all intelligent and semi-intelligent species and applies to a lesser extent to non-intelligent species. Thus, eating fresh meat can be an unpleasant experience. With great effort, the wearer can communicate with these psychic echoes, asking them questions. (At a cost of 1 health point per minute, evidenced by bleeding from noses, mouth, ears, eyes, etc. as the cost mounts.)



Ta'áku

19 years old, Strong Bow, Avánthe

Description: You'd be more attractive without the scar on your face

Character Stats	Combat Values	Magic & Other
Strength: 6	Initiative: 12	Pedhétl: 4
Dexterity: 6	Combat: 6	Magic Resistance: 4
Intelligence: 6	Health Points: 60	Energy Pool: 23
Psyche: 3	Shock Value: 12	Respect: 0
Charisma: 3		Teamwork Pool: 2
Willpower: 6		

Skills	Target Number	Attributes	Defects
Language (Thu'úsa) Spoken 2	8	Aptitude (Hunt)	Low Lineage 1
Knowledge (Kúrt Hills) 2	8	Aptitude (Track)	Nemesis 2
Etiquette (Low Clan) 1	7	Highly Skilled 2	Responsibilities 2
Hiking 1	7	Harmony / the 5 Se	Uneducated 1
Hunting 4	10	Older 1	
Stealth (Forest) – Familiarity	5		
Teamwork (Hunting) – 2	7		
Tracking 4	10		

Weapon	Skill	Target Number	Initiative	Damage	Range	Notes
Dagger	Fam	5	2	x 2	0	
Long Bow	1	7	0	x 5	120	2-handed, High Pen
Short Sword	Fam	5	3	x 3	0	

* +1 to Wilderness Survival checks

You're the finest of the tribe's upcoming hunters and trackers. In fact, though the elders don't want to admit it yet, you're likely the best hunter and tracker in the tribe, period. Previously, the best hunter was Za'üt and the best tracker was his brother Ta'üt. That was before their encounter with a pair of deadly zrné that left Ta'üt dead and Za'üt lamed. Though he had a young son himself, old Za'üt came to you one night and bestowed upon you his dead brother's dagger. The dagger is a thing of beauty, inlaid with intricate patterns of blue on the blade. "It is blessed by Avánthe, through her priestess Aishú. All creatures who give up their life's blood to it are favored by the Lady." The honor Za'üt showed to you that day has carried you through many a dark time.

Your life in the tribe is not easy. You've never known how to relate to people and so keep to yourself a lot. Others might say this is because all four of your fathers died during your childhood, but it's not something that interests you. You feel at home in the forest, among the animals. It's almost as if you were one with them. Your natural talent has meant that you are bringing in an ever increasing portion of the tribe's meat. But lately you feel that the patriarch Ka'á and the elders resent how much they are beginning to depend on you. You know that people whisper behind your back, suggesting that surely you must know where the young men went, or at least, why they left. And then there is the fact that with so many young men gone, you are beginning to look like very

good marriage material to many of the young women in the tribe. You just wish they would leave you alone.

Goals

1. Display your hunting prowess (you would love to kill the zrné who murdered Ta'üt and lamed Za'üt).
2. Discover what happened to the young men so that you can end the whispers.

Razhí

10 years old, “owned” by Ka’ám

Description: A fine, muscular specimen of rényu

Character Stats	Combat Values	Magic & Other
Strength: 4	Initiative: 10	Pedhétl: 1
Dexterity: 6	Combat: 5	Magic Resistance: 3
Intelligence: 4	Health Points: 50	Energy Pool: 7
Psyche: 5	Shock Value: 10	Respect: 0
Charisma: 5		Teamwork Pool: 3
Willpower: 4		

Skills	Target Number	Attributes	Defects
Language (Thu’úsa) Spoken 2	6	Highly Skilled 2	Low Status 2
Knowledge (Kúrt Hills) 2	6	Older 2	Second-Class Citizen
Etiquette (Low Clan) 1	5	Tough 2	Secret
Observation 3	8	Good Hearing	
Hunting 3	7	Good Smell	
Running 1	5	See in the dark	
Tactics 2	6	Heightened Awareness	
Teamwork 3	8	Natural Weapon	
Tracking 3	7		

Weapon	Skill	Target Number	Initiative	Damage	Range	Notes
Fangs	2	9	0	x 2	0	High Penetration

+4 to hearing checks (use Observation skill)

+4 to smelling checks (use Observation skill)

You can see in the dark.

50% of the time, you can perceive ambushes, individuals and physical dangers within 10 meter range.

Since you were a young cub, you have lived with this tribe of humans. One day your mother never came back from a hunting trip and alone among your litter-mates, you ventured out to find her. Instead, you were found by the human Ka’á who took back to his home. He treated you kindly, but as if you were a simpleton. When you tried to correct him, he hit you. It was your first lesson in human etiquette. Since then, you have progressed greatly in your understanding of human ways. You found that you have much more freedom when you play along with the humans’ misconceptions. They are your pack now, and you hunt, eat and sleep with them. Several years ago, Ka’á “gave” you to his son Ka’ám with instructions to keep him safe. Ka’ám is not bad for a human and treats you respectfully in his own way, though even he has no idea of your real intelligence.

You are a valued member of your human pack, often able to alert them to obvious dangers that they seem unable to perceive. But lately you have grown restless. A human pack is all very fine and

well, but you would like a mate. You've been extra attentive these last few months when you go out with the hunters, but you've yet to smell a rényu pack in the area. You have not lost hope however, especially since the humans are starting to go further and further abroad in their search for game.

Goals

1. Find a mate.
2. Keep Ka'ám safe.

Recent History of Your Troubles

During the last Intercalary Days, Fa'át and Ta'áv were inducted into the Council of Elders. There was some grumbling about this at the time as it kept all elder positions within the patriarch Ka'á's family. Fa'át and Ta'áv were fine young men, but Ketán and Ta'á were both older and from the burgeoning Sa'á lineage which deserved more say in the tribe's leadership. Now, Ta'áv was easy-going and well-liked so most of the looks and muttered comments were directed towards the more ambitious and forceful Fa'át. It's true, people said later, that Fa'át looked unhappy in the days immediately after his elevation, before the scowls and whispering began in earnest. Old Za'üt claimed that it stopped raining that day too, but the widow Liné remembers the last rain as coming two weeks after that.

"He'd been chatting up the other young men, quiet talks, away from the fire pit. I figured he was making allies, getting' people on his side. Then it rained one night, thundering and lightning like Lord Karakán himself was coming to visit. And the next morning, he was gone. And all those other fine young men too."

The rain washed away their trail, if ever there was one and they weren't just taken by demons in the night. But demons wouldn't take their bows and swords as well. The patriarch Ka'á sent out his best tracker, Ta'áku, to look for them, but he found nothing. After Ta'áku's return, Ta'áv cut the symbol of Drá the Uncaring into his chest and went out each day to lie in the meadow beyond the fields, staring at the sun. He spoke to no one, forsaking all his duties, old and new.

Then, just as the rain and the men deserted the village, the animals seemed to as well. Over the months, the hunting has become harder and harder. You're forced to go further and further afield to find your prey. Without the rain, the women's crops are growing poorly too. There's a growing sense among you that the Lady Avánthe is displeased. In some way, you have displeased her so greatly that she has cursed you, completely and utterly.

Now food is growing scarce, and a sense of desperation is taking hold among you. Something must be done soon.

Village Population

Notables

Patriarch – Ka’á

Council of Elders: Ra’tém, 47, of Ka’á’s family, “Quartermaster”
Utém, 42, of Ka’á’s family, “Head of the hunters”
Ta’áv, 19, son of Ka’á, a Drá worshipper

Old Za’üt (the lame), 46, of Ka’á’s family, wise, trains the youngsters
Liné, 48, eldest of the widows

Ka’ám, 17, last remaining son of Ka’á

Ainé, 20, lay priestess

The remaining men

Ketán, 31, of Sa’á’s family – solid & dependable
Ta’á, 27, of Sa’á’s family – children’s favorite
Ma’átu, 31, of Za’á’s family – simple-minded
Ta’áku, 19, of Za’á’s family – best hunter
Dái, 17, of Sa’á’s family – best swordsman
Sáti, 16, the outsider we (Liné) adopted

The boys

Ta’á’s four boys, 12, 10, 8, and 6 – wild ones
Ra’tém’s boy, 11 – too arrogant
Za’üt’s boy, 8 – quiet, good with his hands
Ke’él’s boy, 6 – a mama’s boy
Ra’ám’s boy, 3 – awaits his daddy’s return

The girls

Za’üt’s girl, 12
Ke’él’s girl, 10
Ketán’s girls, 8 and 3
Ra’á’s girls – 7, 5, and 3
Ra’tém’s girl, 4
Kái’s girl, 2

The widows

Nulé, 47, superstitious gossip
Atané, 41, Ta’üt’s widow
Até, 39, Ainé’s mother
Ke’él, 37

The wives

Liyásá, 38, to Ka’á - proud
Elulén, 35, to Ra’tém
Tanulé, 33, to Utém
La’él, 35, to Za’üt – kind
Ulé, 30, to Ketán
Ta’él, 29, to Ta’á
Rúa, 17 to Kái, now Ra’tém
Ainúl, 22, to Ra’á, now Utém
Balané, 19, Ra’ám, now Utém

The unmarried women

Finé, 19, Atané’s daughter
Diné, 17, “Aridáni”
Ralé, 16, Ra’tém’s daughter
Uté, 15, Atané’s daughter
Ka’él, 14, Ke’él’s daughter

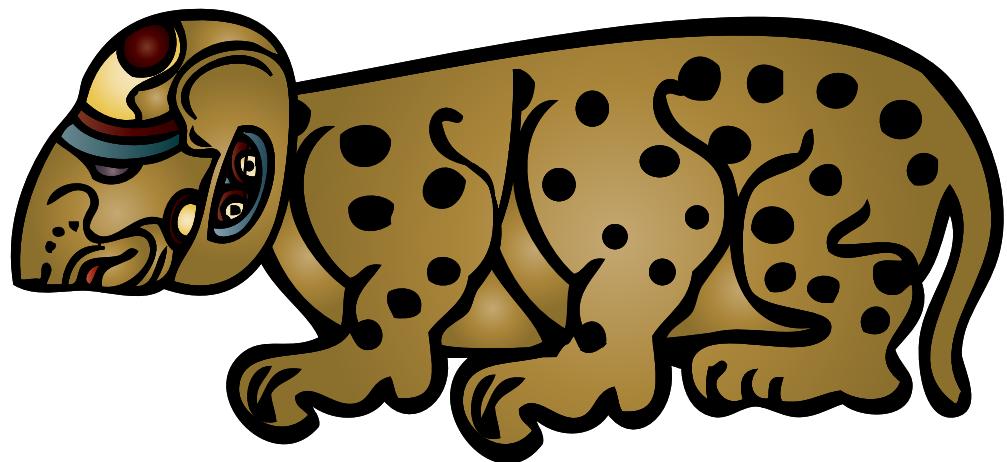
Protocol of the Hunt

If hunting in the deep woods, take along people who can haul the carcasses back to the village. Establish a trail head camp where they stay so that the hunters only have to transport the carcasses back to the trail head.

Skin and bone the animals immediately, either at the site of the kill or at the trail head camp, if it's not too far from the site of the kill. Place the meat in heavy bags that can be lashed directly onto pack frames and carried on your back or attached to a harness that goes over the hauler's shoulder and is pulled out. The method of transport depends on the size and quantity of the meat.

Meat needs to be taken back very soon to the village so prevent spoilage.

Meat that's being transported back to the village needs to be defended from other predators that may want to scavenge it. Usually older men or the youngest hunters will guard the haulers. It's also customary to bring along foul-smelling herbs to rub on yourself to deter predators.





It can't be.....
He couldn't help but wonder if this was the end.
Two years, four months, five days. All for this moment.
Yet, he doesn't feel vengeance.
There has to be more.