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GAME

## Champions of Mystara™

Heroes of the Princess Ark



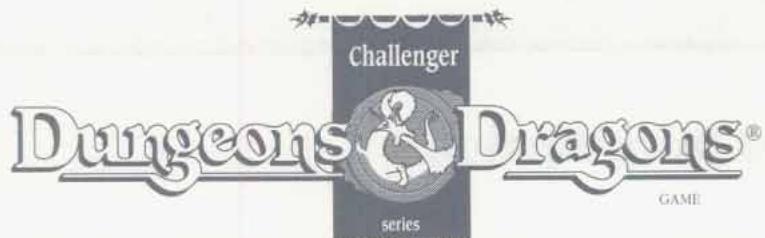
Challenger



# Champions of Mystara™

Heroes of the *Princess Ark*





GAME

# Champions of Mystara™

*Heroes of the Princess Ark*

by Ann Dupuis

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1094XXX1901

ISBN 1-56076-615-8

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# Foreword and Introduction

*Heroes of the Princess Ark* presents the popular *Princess Ark* series from DRAGON® Magazine as an addition to your campaign.

The first two-thirds of this book tell the story of the *Princess Ark*, an Alphatian skyship, in narrative form. "The *Princess Ark*: Exploring Space and Time" summarizes the series' episodes from DRAGON Magazine issue #153 through issue #168. (There simply wasn't enough room to reprint them all in their entirety.) "The Chronicles of the *Princess Ark*" picks up with the episode from DRAGON Magazine issue #169, and includes excerpts from the *Princess Ark*'s logbook from the time she arrives in the Kingdom of Sind to when she finally heads for home—after traveling around the Serpent Peninsula, along the Savage Coast, and around the Orc's Head Peninsula at the mouth of Yalu Bay.

The rest of this book provides the information you may need to integrate the *Princess Ark* into your campaign. The section on "The *Princess Ark*" includes design specifications for the *Princess Ark* to be used with the skyship rules presented in the *Designers' Manual*, deck plans, and a complete key to the skyship's layout. "Heroes of the Skies" covers the major characters found aboard the *Princess Ark*—complete with game statistics so they can be used as player characters or as detailed NPCs—and introduces some minor characters who take care of things while Prince Haldemar and the ship's officers are off having grand adventures.

"Life Aboard the *Princess Ark*" reveals what life is like aboard the skyship. It includes daily routines followed on board, and the rules and regulations enforced by the Alphatian Imperial Navy. "Campaigning with the *Princess Ark*," on p. 88, discusses the roles the skyship can take in your campaign—as friend or foe, and campaign focus or interesting sideline—and how to head off potential role-playing problems before they occur. "Future History of the *Princess Ark*," on p. 90, gives a possible timeline of events to bring Prince Haldemar and the *Princess*

*Ark* through the years of the great war between Alphatia and Glantri (presented in the *Wrath of the Immortals* boxed set) and up to Year 1010 AC, which the *Poor Wizard's Almanac* covers.

"Friends and Foes" provides game statistics and details for a variety of races and creatures encountered in the *Princess Ark* chronicles. And, finally, "The Thothian Enchantment" presents the unique spell Haldemar used to enchant the *Princess Ark*.

## How to Use This Book

As is the case with the other two books in this set, *Heroes of the Princess Ark* is meant primarily for the DM™. You may read the books in any order, as each can stand alone. Each book complements the others, however, and all of them together can open up new vistas in your campaign.

The *Designers' Manual* contains the information you need to use the game statistics provided for the *Princess Ark*, and the *Explorers' Manual* expands the information Haldemar discovers in "The Land of the Maharajahs" and "The Serpent Peninsula Revisited" episodes. On the other hand, the *Princess Ark*'s logbook entries describing Haldemar's impressions of Sind and Yavdlom can be used to add a great deal of flavor to the descriptions you give to your players when campaigning in the Great Waste or on the Serpent Peninsula. The rules and regulations followed aboard the *Princess Ark* can be adapted to any military skyship; and the creatures found in "Friends and Foes" may be met by player characters regardless of whether or not they own a skyship.

If you intend to have your players role-play characters aboard the *Princess Ark*, letting them read the "Chronicles" will serve as a good introduction to the skyship's history and the major characters they can expect to meet (or play!).

You may want to pull out the two large map sheets showing the main decks of the *Princess Ark* when you introduce your players to the skyship. These maps

are scaled for use with 25mm miniature figures or cardboard stand-ups. They show the commander's deck (which is mostly enclosed beneath a crystal dome) and all of the open-air decks on the skyship's main hull. For interior deck plans, see p. 71.

## The *Princess Ark* as a Unique Skyship

The *Princess Ark* is a unique skyship, and does not always follow the rules presented in the *Designers' Manual*. (To begin with, it would be prohibitively expensive to enchant such a large skyship with the multitude of enchantments Berylith brought to the *Princess Ark*.) This is due to two primary factors. The *Princess Ark* was originally conceived as a story, and hence isn't based on game mechanics. Also, she was designed before the skyship design rules were fully worked out.

This isn't to say there's anything wrong with the *Princess Ark*, or that she can't be used in your campaign. This is just a note of explanation for those sharp-eyed readers who are bound to find discrepancies between the information here and the rules presented in the *Designers' Manual*.

In fact, nothing should stop you from designing unique skyships for your own campaign should you so choose. The Thothian enchantment detailed on p. 95 can be used as a basis or model for other flying enchantments researched by PC mages, or by NPC mages you as DM wish to introduce. On a world as magic-rich as Mystara is, powerful spellcasters are bound to find new ways to do things, and the rules won't always cover these situations.

Any time the D&D® rules get in the way of something you want to do in your campaign, feel free to change them, introduce exceptions, or find ways to work around them. Think consequences through, however, to keep the game in balance. If you let the player characters build or find neat new skyships loaded with extra enchantments, make sure their opponents are similarly blessed with rule-bending ships.





# The Princess Ark: Exploring Space and Time

Finally, she is airworthy again! It took no fewer than 35 master crafters and 300 slaves to refit the beautiful skyship. Her five masts stand majestically over her black hull, bearing the sails that will trap the magical wind. One can almost feel a strange life emanating from her as she gently pulls on her mooring lines in her desire to cast off and head into the sky.

—from the journals of  
Prince Haldemar of Haaken,  
Captain of the Ever-Victorious  
*Princess Ark*

## Exploring Space and Time

In the Alphatian year 1964 AY (964 AC), Empress Eriadna granted Prince Haldemar of Haaken permission to re-commission his family's aging flying ship. The newly restored *Princess Ark* embarked from Sundsvall the next year.

The majestic ship's travels took her southwest to the continent of Davania. Flying east along the Jungle Coast, she approached Cape Eriadna and the Pass of Cestia, where an away team stumbled upon some Cestian gobblers (see p. 91).

Turning east and then north, the *Princess Ark* flew over the Isle of Cestia to Oceania. While investigating the island's interior, Prince Haldemar ran afoul of some night dragons (see p. 92). The *Princess Ark* and her crew escaped, regrettably leaving Boltman Ramissur in the clutches of the furious night dragon.

Back at the Isle of Cestia, the *Princess Ark* took some native Cestians on board to supplement losses in her crew. Lady Abovombe came on board as well (see p. 76). As the ship approached the Gulf of Mar, Haldemar took another creature on board—a small, terrified bat that beat against his porthole, and that would later surprise Haldemar and the crew.

Prince Haldemar and his skyship next encountered trouble in the form of a group of Heldannic Knights (see p. 91), a seemingly insignificant clerical order from the Heldann Freeholds. A bit of trickery

and negotiation—involving the mortal remains of the Heldannic Knights' Immortal Patron—ended in Haldemar escaping with his life and his ship, but gaining the enmity of the Heldannic Knights.

The *Princess Ark*'s next stop was the Vulture Peninsula, where Haldemar discovered some interesting secrets of the nagpas (vulture-headed creatures). Just inland from Green Bay, the ship discovered the N'djatwa, a slaver society of elfogre crossbreeds. A bit of diplomacy on Haldemar's part resulted in favorable cultural exchanges and the promise that Alphatians would be protected from the N'djatwa fondness for human flesh. As a gesture of friendship, the N'djatwa clanmaster presented Haldemar with a human slave—a Heldannic Knight who gave his name as Herr Rolf.

As the *Princess Ark* ventured along the southern shore of Green Bay, she encountered several cloud funnels. Haldemar was intrigued by Herr Rolf's reaction to the sight, and determined to discover what the Heldanner knew about these funnels that the Alphatian schools failed to teach. A dangerous experiment—flying straight into one large funnel—revealed that these *tubular breaches* are anti-gravity highways straight through Mystara's Skyshield (see the *Designers' Manual*, p. 30).

Once in space, the *Princess Ark* discovered a hitherto unknown second moon, Myoshima (see p. 93). The moon has a light-bending shield at the edges of its atmosphere that renders it nearly invisible from the outside. The rakasta inhabitants took exception to Herr Rolf's presence—Heldannic Knights are decidedly unwelcome on their world—and demanded his release into their custody in return for establishing ties with the Alphatian Empire. They also provided a monolith carved from Myoshima's light-bending core—a gift which rendered the *Princess Ark* invisible.

When Herr Rolf escaped on a flying sabre-tooth tiger, the Myoshimans kidnapped Lady Abovombe to hold her ransom for Haldemar's assistance in recapturing the knight. Herr Rolf's flight led

the *Princess Ark* down through the Skyshield at the southern pole, where an anti-magic field caused her to crash inside the opening to the Hollow World. Haldemar enlisted the help of a giant snow sloth to tow the damaged ship toward warmth, while the crew fought starvation and deadly cold.

Once the *Princess Ark* escaped the effects of the anti-magic field, her crew set out to explore this strange new world—still in pursuit of Herr Rolf, who had avoided every attempt to recapture him. While flying over Nithia, Haldemar discovered a Nithian priestess named Khufiri in his quarters. She answered many of Haldemar's questions about the lands below while the ship pursued the Heldannic knight. The *Princess Ark* finally caught up to Herr Rolf, flying on the back of a white dragon, in a bank of clouds. Before Haldemar could capture the knight, the *Princess* collided with a floating island hidden in the clouds.

The island, Oostdok, was inhabited by gnomes and dominated by a fortress displaying the black lion emblem of the Heldannic Order. A gnome named Leopold (see p. 79) bumped into the invisible *Princess Ark* and enthusiastically offered the help of the Le Nerviens Family Trust, Inc., in repairing the skyship.

After a nerve-wracking rescue by a gnomish air blimp, the *Princess Ark* was taken to a secret underground dry dock where her crew and hundreds of gnomes set about repairing her. Khufiri betrayed the skyship's presence to the Heldannic Order before repairs could be completed. The *Princess Ark* and her crew barely escaped in time.

With five Heldannic skyships pursuing her, the *Princess Ark* managed to escape through the polar opening and back into space. There, she was met by a large war galley commanded by Herr Rolf. After a raging battle which the *Princess Ark* won by virtue of some "minor improvements" introduced by the gnomes, Khufiri revealed herself as none other than Synn—the ruler of the night dragons encountered during the *Princess Ark*'s first explorations of Oceania.





## Exploring Space and Time

Synn, bent on revenge, snatched Herr Rolf away from Haldemar and lured the *Princess Ark* into a nebular storm that ripped the very fabric of time. When Haldemar and the crew awoke, they were 34 years in the future—Amphimir 26, 2000 AY. To torment her enemy further, Synn returned the now aged and bitter Lady Abovome to the ship.

Haldemar headed the *Princess Ark* toward home, where he discovered he and his crew were no longer welcome in the Alphatian Empire. In the intervening years, Herr Rolf had become High Priest of the Heldannic Order. For reasons of diplomacy and secrecy, Empress Eriadna offered Prince Haldemar a choice between death for himself and his crew or continuation of his initial mission of exploration, with no return to the Empire possible until the matter with the Heldannic Order was somehow resolved.

As the *Princess Ark* left Alphatia, Haldemar accidentally discovered that his pet bat was none other than Ramissur, the boltman left behind in the first encounter with the night dragons! He had been transformed and mind-controlled as a spy for Synn. Together with Talasar's clerical magic, Haldemar managed to restore the boltman.

Following some clues that the *Princess Ark* was more than she seemed—she seemed able to maneuver herself out of danger as though alive—Haldemar set out to discover the source of the Thothian enchantment he had originally used to re-enchant the aging skyship. A terrifying encounter with an ancient Thothian lich resulted in the discovery of a second part to the enchantment.

For the next month, as he studied the ancient Thothian hieroglyphs, Haldemar found himself slipping in and out of strange hallucinations and stranger realities. When at last he invoked the power of the Thothian hieroglyphs, the spell opened a portal to the Plane of Air.

The *Princess Ark* dove through the portal. On that Plane—much like the space surrounding Mystara, but with breathable air between the worlds—the ship and her crew encountered a horde of sky wyrms

(see p. 94). The largest sky wurm, Meryath, sensed the life force of her mother within the *Princess Ark*.

Haldemar discovered that his original use of the Thothian enchantment had bound the life force of the sky wurm Berylith into the *Princess Ark*. Berylith herself appeared before Prince Haldemar, asking that he complete the enchantment and bind her soul as well, making her whole once more.

Completing the enchantment opened a gateway to the Plane of Nightmares. Spectral hounds streamed into the Plane's sky, attacking both the *Princess Ark* and the army of sky wyrms led by Meryath. As Haldemar completed the enchantment and escaped back through the gateway from the Plane of Nightmares, the closing gateway trapped the greatest of the spectral hounds. Immediately, the remaining hounds turned tail and fled.

But before Haldemar could celebrate the completion of the Thothian enchantment, the *Princess Ark* mysteriously began to break up before his very eyes, plunging down to a mound of wreckage on the world beneath them.

## The New Princess Ark

What seemed like the ghost of a great sky wurm rose out of the mound... More of the logs rolled off, revealing an incredible blue structure with windows and silver sculptures. By the beard of Pligzy Gladz! *That was my skyship!* In absolute horror, I recognized parts of my *Princess Ark* lost amid the massive creation... I heard myself scream. "My ship! What have you done to my ship?"

—from the journals of  
Prince Haldemar of Haaken,  
Captain of the Ever-Victorious  
*Princess Ark*

With the completion of the Thothian enchantment, Berylith found herself with complete control over the *Princess Ark*—and the ability to alter the skyship into a vessel that suited her better. She decided to do some redecorating. Unfortunately, she gave no warnings to Haldemar or the crew, who rushed to the life rafts or were rescued by flying sky wyrms as the ship apparently disintegrated around them.

Berylith's efforts took her out of communication for a while, as she and the wreckage of the old ship fell to Hakh (a small world in the Plane of Air). Haldemar couldn't bear to view the wreck, and sent Talasar and Meryath, Berylith's daughter, instead.

When neither had returned three days later, Haldemar and a sky wurm named Fenroth flew down to Hakh to find them. They found the Forest People of Hakh instead—tall goblinoid people with jet black skin decorated with glowing tattoos. The Forest People promptly took Haldemar and Fenroth prisoner, reuniting them with Talasar and Meryath long enough to sacrifice them to a "sky spirit."

The "sky spirit" was none other than Berylith, who recovered from her efforts to rebuild the *Princess Ark* in time to rescue the sacrificial victims. When Haldemar saw what she'd done to his skyship, he nearly fainted.





# The Chronicles of the Princess Ark

*From the Journals of  
PRINCE HALDEMAR OF HAAKEN  
Lord Admiral of the Mightiest  
Empire  
Captain of the Ever-Victorious  
PRINCESS ARK  
Imperial Explorer, etc., etc.*

## Land of the Maharajahs

*In Which the Princess Ark Interrupts a  
Battle and Prince Haldemar Foils a  
Fiendish Plot*

**Tslamir 23, 2000 AY:** It took a day to reach the magical gate that had brought us to the sky wyrms' universe. It was a bumpy flight that took all the skill and prowess of a sky wrym like Berylith to hold the course through the gate's storm. At last, we could see daylight piercing the billowing clouds at the peak of the storm. Everyone was longing for a moment of calm and rest under our golden sun. With a bang, the ship emerged through the gate into our own universe—and we nearly crashed into a desert sand dune!

The gate's exit had moved since we had entered the other universe, apparently by hundreds of miles north-northwest of our previous position. Worse yet, we showed up unexpectedly in the middle of a battle in the desert. Apparently, a smaller force had been surrounded and would have been butchered had it not been for our impromptu arrival.

I ordered Berylith to make her ghostly sky-wrym aura turn invisible, wishing to stay out of what was clearly not our business—but no! Instead, Berylith felt this was not becoming of a true princess. She even roared to make her arrival more grandiose. Myojo hung his head in embarrassment. Xerdon shrugged. And I was too numb to react.

The larger army panicked immediately. Dropping scimitars, shields, and turbans, the soldiers rode off on their camels toward the southwest. As for the smaller force, its men dropped to their knees, bowing as low as they could. There was nothing else to do but make contact.

It took some convincing on my part to have Berylith go invisible. She obviously enjoyed the awe she caused and wanted to remain the heroine of the day. Finally, with the wooden ship alone being visible, I invited the leader of the defending forces to come aboard.

The man was Prince Dharjee, a polite and soft-spoken person. His father, the maharajah of Putnabad, ruler of the southern province of Sind, had sent him on a mission to King Chandra's palace in Sayr Ulan. He was to return with special orders for the king's future visit in the capital of Putnabad. A small army, sent by the rajah of Jaibul, had come close to capturing the prince. Jaibul, I learned, is a small, independent realm on the coast west of Sind, and it has been a rival of Putnabad for centuries.

Prince Dharjee was obviously very impressed with the *Princess Ark*, her magic, her workmanship, and, most of all, her decoration and style. Since the Jaibul force had left his caravan in bad shape, he asked if we could transport him and his servants back to Jahore, the capital of Putnabad. After our undue intrusion into the Kingdom of Sind, the only civilized thing to do was to accept. We picked up his camels, troops, servants, and even the caravan's royal elephant, and we headed south to Jahore, the pearl of Putnabad.

**Tslamir 24:** Berylith's mood was truly dreadful all morning. She complained without end about the elephant pacing from port to starboard all night, and about the camel dung all over the stern deck. She nearly ejected one of the crew for referring to that area as the "poop deck." And we were flying at a snail's pace. I couldn't tell if it was because of the extra weight or Berylith's bad mood.

Talasar was still in sick bay, recovering from his misadventure on Hakh. I left Xerdon in control of the bridge and spent the remainder of the day with Prince Dharjee. He was amazed at the ship's construction, and he had no doubt that a great architect must have designed the plans of this marvel. He assured me his father "would certainly pay a thousand

treasures of emeralds and rubies for the services of the divine genius who conceived such a masterpiece as the *Princess Ark*." I cringed. Berylith heard that—I knew it. Suddenly, the ship flew faster.

**Tslamir 25:** We reached Jahore this morning. The city is a sprawling megapolis on the westernmost branch of the Asanda delta. High, fortified walls enclose the inner city, protecting middle and upper class quarters, merchant areas, and the maharajah's palace. Beyond the walls spread thousands of poor, overcrowded dwellings, a squalid collection of shacks and muddy alleys, occasionally divided by the main roads leading to the inner city gates and the numerous temple compounds. A shabby port occupies the southern edge of the city, allowing light ships to sail the grimy delta up to Jahore. Larger ships remain anchored in a small bay at the mouth of the delta. A few stone bridges span the wide Asanda river within the city, but most of the population uses small barges to cross over.

Oddly enough, it seemed none of the main buildings were erected in a regular fashion. As we came closer, it became clear many of the onion-shaped domes were imperfectly built, the towers being crooked nearly to the point of collapse. Certainly none of the windows or doors showed any symmetry at all. This was totally unlike the usual Sind architecture.

As usual, the arrival of the *Princess Ark* caused quite a bit of agitation among the people and the guard. Seeing Prince Dharjee on one of the *levitating* life boats relieved them. We were immediately brought to the maharajah's apartments.

Ashupta Khan, the maharajah, was very thankful to us for saving his son from the rajah of Jaibul. A great banquet was offered at the palace. Later, during the celebration, the maharajah leaned over to me and asked about the *Princess Ark*. Indeed, his son had described the vessel at length, and I could see a gleam of envy in the maharajah's eyes. I am afraid I disappointed His Highness when I mentioned the ship had been created by the magic of a creature from beyond this world, and that I was only its keeper.





## Chronicles

The maharajah then began to tell me what was happening in Jahore. It was believed that a great curse afflicted the city. Many people were unable to attain the greatness of skill of their fathers. Most of the upper castes were going through an inexplicable decadence and laziness, explaining the imperfect looks of the buildings in Jahore.

Last month, the Black Rajah of Jaibul visited King Chandra in Sayr Ulan, and he joked about the poor state of affairs of the "Pearl of Putnabad." This greatly irritated the king. He ordered a great palace be built there before the end of the year, or the Ashupta family would be stripped of its nobility and possessions. The maharajah's son was on his way to Sayr Ulan to obtain financial aid from the king when the Black Rajah's troops managed to intercept Prince Dharjee's caravan. Ashupta Khan was quite broke; he was totally unable to find a competent architect anywhere in Jahore as well. He was in a sticky position.

Of course, being a foreigner and the "keeper" of an incredible piece of architecture, I could not evade his interest. For my assistance he offered much, including his prized stable, half of his harem, and even the diadem on his turban, none of which I could honestly accept. In time, though, Ashupta Khan was more than willing to offer "preferred client" status to Alphantian merchants in Jahore, with a 1% impost on port trade payable to the Haaken family. At that point, I thought that lending a hand would be a challenging enterprise. Based on this lucrative arrangement, I set forth to build a palace.

**Tslamir 26:** The crew was granted some leave in Jahore after the elephant, the camels, and their owners disembarked. The scene drew a huge crowd of onlookers in the street below, as the large animals dangled from ropes underneath the *Princess*. Widespread betting took place in the streets on whether each animal would make it to the ground safely. The elephant drew record bets when one of the ropes began to give. A little *levitation* spell came handy, and I won that bet (with 79:1 odds).

The officers discussed the palace project with me. Raman and Leo both showed great interest. Berylith was able to attend the meeting after a fashion, reading my mind as the discussion took place. She, of course, said she was skillful in the matters of architecture and would gladly provide her knowledge. She also quietly requested that half of that trade impost be used to embellish the *Princess Ark* through the purchase of objects of art and other ornamental items. Once the details were worked out, Raman, Leo, and I would disembark and conduct the construction, as per Berylith's blueprints.

**Tslamir 28:** It took some time to find the proper site for the construction. It was finally decided to destroy the abandoned city library, which was threatening to collapse into the river. Unfortunately, the Sindian workers proved to be incredibly slow, so slow that I had to use the ship's crew to accelerate the process. There is no telling how long it will take to level the older construction.

Late this night, after the moon had set behind the horizon, I felt the ship move. Berylith had decided to intervene in the construction. She moved close to the library and blasted it with her breath weapon. It created great confusion in the sleeping city, as people thought the monsoons had arrived. Berylith quickly gained altitude and remained hidden inside a solitary cloud until calm returned in Jahore.

**Andrumir 4:** Despite the magic I used to help in the palace's construction, I must admit that the people of Jahore are terribly slow workers. It has been very difficult making them follow a construction plan without erring. Raman and Leo were near nervous exhaustion in their endeavors to explain the work to the Sindians and to avoid catastrophic mistakes.

**Andrumir 8:** I have noticed an increase in construction oversights. Raman and Leo seemed much more indolent and careless today. Worse, the crew has been acting quite sloppily on board, forgetting to clean the decks or to show up for duty. Some crew members did not seem

to care at all. This was too much of a coincidence.

This lazy attitude struck me with its similarity to zzonga addiction, which ravaged our empire some time ago. However, I could observe none of the other symptoms normally accompanying zzonga addiction. It would take quite a bit of magic to affect an entire city—and so far I have not detected any sign of large-scale magic anywhere.

**Andrumir 12:** I found the source of the "curse." The waters of the Asanda River have been poisoned with a rare alchemical substance. It is unlikely it could happen naturally, so I must admit someone has been seeking the doom of Jahore. But who? There was only one way to figure this out. Ashari and I would leave the ship in disguise and blend in with the population. With some luck, we could unveil who was behind all this.

**Andrumir 14:** Of course, someone had to be working upstream to contaminate the city waters. We explored the river banks just north of the Jahore and found several areas well concealed from sight. There I dropped several hardened compounds of my creation that would take several days to dissolve. The solution, when mixed with the water, would immediately reveal any evidence of poison by coloring the water. We could then trace the colored solution back to the spot where the poison had been thrown into the water.

Indeed, we were soon able to trace the solution back to one of the hidden sources. Someone had dropped a sheepskin full of slow-dissolving poison into the river. It came in sufficient quantity to affect most of the population in the city for several days. We even spotted our culprit, a man on a horse. It was time to uncover the conspiracy.

We quietly followed the man back to Jahore. A bit of *invisibility* allowed us to enter his house just moments after him. There we saw him use a magical item that opened a small *gate*. He entered, and we followed closely.

On the other side was a palace—but not quite like the one in Jahore. It was



darker and more sinister. The man walked past a corner and entered a room. Ashari tip-toed up to the door and listened. She heard a discussion between what must have been our spy and his employer, and the sound of money changing hands. The man came back out carrying a goatskin full of poison and returned to the gate. I signaled Ashari to leave; she barely had time to get through before the gate disappeared.

**Andrumir 15, Xerdon:** I fear that something has happened to the Admiral and his escort. Neither he nor First Class Navigator Ashari have returned from their foray into Jahore. I alerted His Highness, Ashupta Khan, who immediately dispatched his guards to search the city.

**Andrumir 15, Haldemar, from a later account:** The sun rose soon after Ashari's return to Jahore. I was able to explore the sinister palace and locate the ruler in his throne room; my spell of *invisibility* still protected me. From the visitors he met in the morning, I could deduce that he was no other than the Black Rajah of Jaibul. He was an old man, with a skin parched from age and the unforgiving sun of the Great Waste. Judging from his stance, I could not fail to recognize an experienced wizard.

The Black Rajah retired shortly after the meetings to his personal quarters, at the top of a high, narrow tower overlooking the town. There, he spent hours going through the bureaucratic paperwork that plagues so many rulers. While looking about, I noticed antique clay tablets bearing the royal seal of Sind and held together with a golden silk ribbon. While the Rajah was busy elsewhere, I quietly took a few pieces of vellum and rubbed them with a bit of charcoal over the tablets, obtaining an imprint of the ancient text. With luck, Raman could decipher the Sindian scriptures later on.

The sound of chains and men-at-arms echoed up the hallway. Soldiers were pulling a prisoner—a Pearl Islander perhaps, judging from the dark color of his skin. He was a bit small, though, with slightly narrow-lidded eyes and gracious facial features. He had a thin, neatly

trimmed beard and wore a long red robe made of soft leather scales. The guards knocked at a door and while they waited, the prisoner glanced in my direction. I could have sworn he saw me, but the guards pulled him quickly into the other chamber.

Intrigued, I followed them. The rajah was there, sitting in a comfortable chair and toying with a small piece of jewelry. It looked like a small flame carved from a topaz. He had the prisoner stripped and waved the guards out. Soon thereafter the rajah uttered a long invocation and brandished the jewel. Translucent flames began to glow on the prisoner's body. I could see the pain in his eyes, but he endured stoically. He remained quiet and immobile while the magical flames grew and consumed his flesh. The rajah was watching intently, enjoying with a sadistic pleasure his victim's pain and agony. I realized then that the prisoner was staring into my eyes, despite my *invisibility*. It felt like he was looking through me. For a brief instant, I saw images of great battles, flying ships, death and pestilence, then a great continent sinking into stormy seas. My senses returned just as the man died.

I noticed a certain perplexity on the rajah's face. He squinted for a moment in my general direction. That would not do, so I ducked behind a curtain. The rajah quickly spoke another spell and looked around him, observing the room and listening carefully. I did not think he saw me, but he certainly suspected something. He quickly scooped up the bone cinders and the few ashes remaining where the prisoner once stood, poured them into a golden crucible, and walked out, swiftly shutting the door behind him. By the time I could safely open the door, the rajah had disappeared behind a corner or, more probably, through a secret door.

This was very strange. I had no clues as to how the prisoner could have seen me or what those visions were. Worse, I knew the rajah would use those ashes—and I suspected his intentions to be thoroughly evil. It wasn't until very late that

night that I located the Rajah and the ashes as well. He was in the palace dungeon, in a chamber that took all my skill to reach. I observed the rajah working at a small brazier. After a litany of incantations, he sprinkled the ashes that had been mixed with another substance. This produced swirls of acrid-smelling smoke with sparks of light. Inside, I was surprised to see the same visions that affected me in the rajah's apartments. The rajah was quickly taking notes with a quill and a piece of parchment. The same battles and cataclysms appeared as in my previous vision, up to a point when the rajah's apartments also materialized in the vision—with me standing near the curtains!

The rajah jumped to his feet and cursed. He dispersed the smoke and had the guard sound the alarm. If he had a doubt, it was now gone. He knew I was in the palace and what I looked like. I would have to be very careful in the future. The old man had many ways of finding me. It was time to skip out of the chamber. It was late, and I was getting very tired and hungry.

**Andrumir 16, Xerdon:** The ship has grown restless, somewhat skittish like a horse. I suspect she senses the disappearance of the Admiral. I attempted to communicate with the ship's entity but failed to obtain an answer. So far, the search by the maharajah's men yielded no sign of the admiral or Ashari. I recovered Chief Raman and Mr. Le Nerviens, both of whom I found in an unclean condition and resting with the other construction personnel during work hours. This inexorably lax attitude before foreign civilians is not permitted for an officer of Her Imperial Majesty's Navy and shall be stopped at once.

**Andrumir 16, Haldemar, from a later account:** I spent the night in a little stable. At dawn, I took a stroll down the streets. The town of Jaibul was as sinister and oppressive as its palace. The town's thugs and cutthroats are rivaled only by the rajah's guard, a brutal and arrogant bunch. The rajah's palace and his army's quarters were located inside



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an imposing citadel. A port opened directly on a small bay. There I noticed the rajah's guards were unloading another prisoner; he looked a bit like the one the rajah murdered earlier. He displayed the same dignity as the other. These people could be powerful seers, perhaps. I was getting horribly curious about their origins.

Aside from the horrible tortures and murders that had been probably taking place for some time, it was clear the rajah was up to something big. I had to return and find out, so I cast a new spell and flew up to the Rajah's tower. There, from the window I could see the rajah sitting in front of a mirror. Instead of his reflection, the mirror revealed a man in black, wearing a hood. The rajah picked up his scroll of notes on the vision and stuck it through the mirror, causing strange ripples through its glassy surface. The man in black nodded, then quietly produced a pen and wrote something on the scroll before returning it. The rajah read the response—then said, in proper Alphatian, "Well, well. Their destruction will be a blessing for us all. How soon, though, is the question, isn't it, my obtrusive friend?" The man in black faded away as the rajah turned toward me. "You didn't think you could fool me much longer, did you?"

**Andrumir 17, Xerdon:** The ship has inexplicably broken her lines and set flight toward the southwest. I suspect she senses where the Admiral is. For lack of results from the maharajah's incompetent search of Jahore, I am allowing the *Princess Ark* to take us to wherever she wishes. I am cloaking the ship to avoid further problems with the local populace.

**Andrumir 17, Haldemar:** I should have been more alert. No recollection of what happened after my last encounter with the rajah came to my mind—that is to say, nothing else than a searing pain in my head. I woke up in the citadel's dungeon, stripped, gagged, and shackled to the wall in a very uncomfortable position. I could not have done a better job of it myself.

The rajah showed up hours past my awakening. He came with a nasty grin and his topaz. "I didn't think you would cooperate, and as a fellow wizard I wished to spare you the commoner's fate," said he, pointing at various instruments of torture across the cell. "The Fire Jewel is far more efficient in revealing someone's inner thoughts. And I am sure you will fully savor the refined magicks of Jaibul." The rajah's sinister laughter echoed in the dark dungeon. He began the Fire Jewel's incantation. I cringed.

Then a heavy cudgel landed on the back of the rajah's turban. He collapsed in a soundless heap. Someone stepped out of the dark. It was Ashari! The dear young woman had followed the rajah's lackey back to Jahore. Seeing that the gate had closed before me, she quickly "terminated" the river's poisoner and recovered the item he used to open the gate. By the time she had discerned its method of operation, I was already elsewhere in the rajah's palace. She had been looking for me ever since. Finally, Ashari had followed the rajah down here, and, as Glantrians would say, "Voila!" A master stroke! And she smirked, "I also, um, accidentally dropped the rajah's poison in the citadel's well." How thoughtful of her. This yeoman was due for a promotion.

After hooking the rajah to his own shackles, I was tempted to try the fiery topaz on him. After all, he, too, had many things to tell us about. Alas, a squad of guard entered the cell unexpectedly. A prompt *reverse gravity* took care of them, except for a runty fellow in the back who ran for help. We ran for the gate, ducking from pillar to corner for some time while men-at-arms rushed down the narrow stairwells looking for us. It was an exhilarating race, although I had some trouble keeping pace with the nimble Ashari as this delightful game went on.

It was during this "dungeonesque escapade" that I located the prisoner I had seen in the port of Jaibul. Ashari defeated the crude lock that imprisoned him with barely two twists of her wrist. Our man bowed slightly and swiftly followed us.

We could hear the rajah's hysterical shouts echoing up the hallways.

It took Ashari some doing to find an exit—a filthy sewer grate in a deserted street. As we wriggled through, it seemed to me that something was amiss. It was high noon and no one was around. As we slipped down the street under the shadows of colonnades, guards suddenly poured out from every corner. We were trapped!

The rajah had recovered his senses more quickly than I anticipated. Within moments, there he was, sitting on a *flying carpet* and hovering above us. "You will suffer for a thousand days and thousand nights, each of you!" said he, pale and trembling with anger.

I grimly turned to my compatriots and noticed, oddly enough, a wry smile appearing on the face of the prisoner we had rescued. Enraged, the rajah raved on. "You will see your skin slowly ripped from your flesh and thrown to the dogs!" he cried.

Now the former prisoner displayed a very wide grin that infuriated the rajah even more. Perhaps he knew something I didn't. "Each of your limbs will be ripped from your body!" spat the rajah. "You—" Suddenly the rajah jerked, his eyes growing very wide, and stopped in the middle of his speech.

"I doubt that very much, your highness!" came a voice behind him in the air. Slowly, the *Princess Ark* became visible just behind the rajah. And at her prow stood Xerdon, with his sword conspicuously jabbed into the rajah's back. The rajah's men fled at once in complete chaos. What wonderful timing.

**Andrumir 18, Haldemar:** With the rajah of Jaibul in our hands, I had no difficulty in retrieving my belongings from the rajah's dungeon—and the antique Sindian tablets. According to Raman, the clay tablets were an old treaty between previous rulers of Sind and Jaibul. It attributed the ruler of Jaibul legal rights to the Province of Putnabad, should the Ashupta family become extinct or be stripped of its nobility due to royal discontent. The



rajab of Jaibul had found a way to discredit the Ashuptas by poisoning the people, thus causing their decadence. Jahore definitely looked like a mess. It was time to return to Jahore and finish a certain construction enterprise—and quickly so, before the king's visit.

As we veered over the port of Jaibul toward Jahore, Ramissur came up to me, holding the rajah by his collar. "Sir, what should I do with him?" Ramissur asked.

This was an unexpected problem. The rajah was too dangerous to keep aboard, and I had a hunch that our new guest, the ex-prisoner Yarani, could shed more light on what had been going on than could the rajah. I told Ramissur to do as he pleased.

Ramissur looked at me for a moment, looked at the rajah, then shrugged and unceremoniously tossed his prisoner overboard. I suppose that sank our diplomatic ties with Jaibul for many years to come. Such is life.

**Andrumir 19, Haldemar:** Back to Jahore. The poison in the river has started

to thin out. Already, positive results can be seen among the population. The building of the palace has resumed, and with a little magical help on my part, construction is literally progressing by the proverbial leaps and bounds. The "Raj Mahal" might be done well within the royal deadline, thus preserving Putnabad's self-rule.

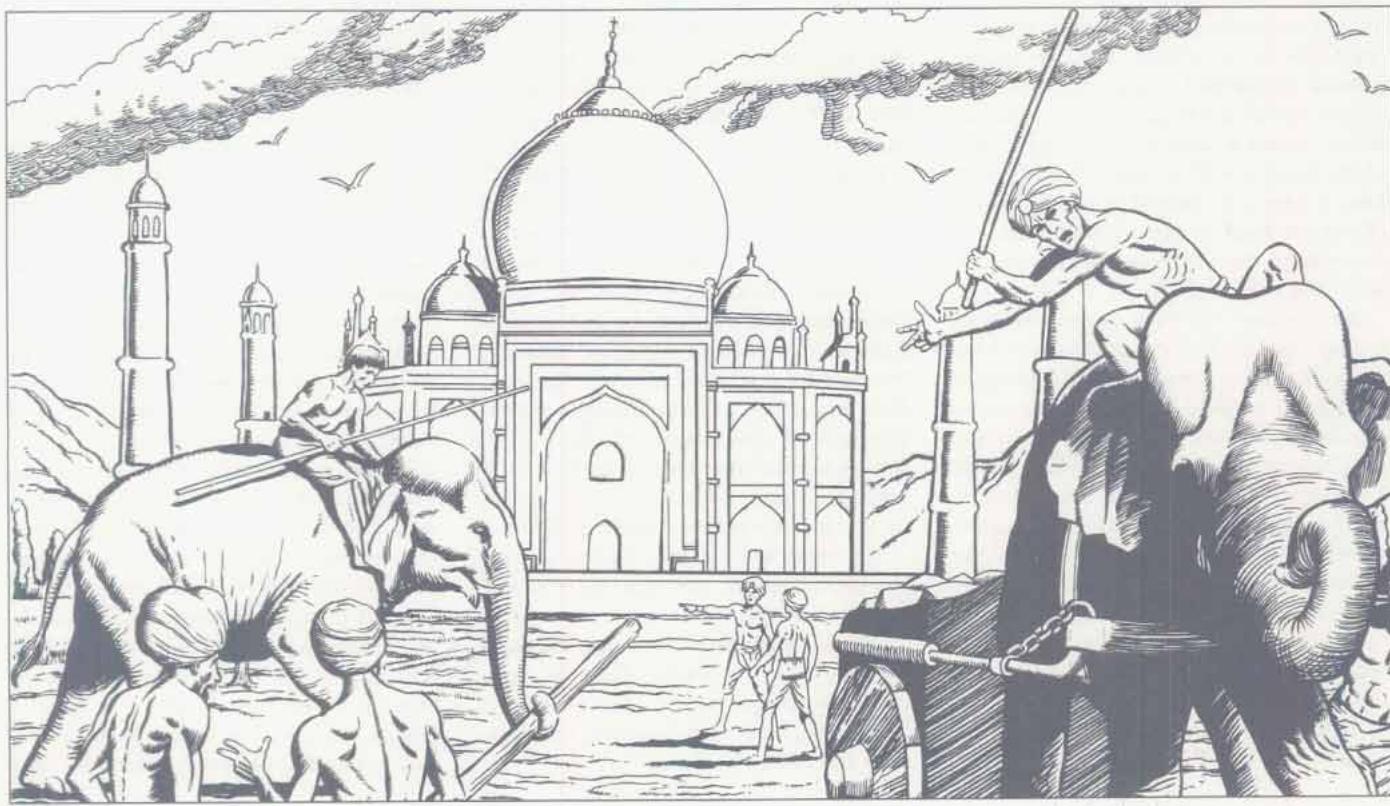
I spent some time with our guest, Yarani. He claimed to be a citizen of the Yavdlom Hagiarchy, far beyond Jaibul. This was one place I'd never heard of. Yarani was a holy man, a noble of sorts. He wouldn't answer my questions regarding his uncanny ability to see invisible things, nor would he comment on the visions I'd had when I witnessed his compatriot's murder at the hands of the rajah. He seemed very concerned, however, and invited the *Princess Ark* to visit the Great Prophet, sovereign ruler of Yavdlom. There, he said, would be many revelations—some good, some bad.

## The Serpent Peninsula Revisited

*In Which Prince Haldemar is Mistaken for an Assassin and Svetanga Nyanga Joins the Crew*

**Cyprimir 12, 2000 AY:** At last, the Raj Mahal's construction in Jahore approached completion. There was nothing left to do that the gentle people of Putnabad could not do for themselves. Talasar had recovered from his wounds and was back on duty at my side. Amid fanfare and fireworks, we bid the maharajah farewell. At sundown, we set a southwesterly course heading for the Most Serene Divinarchy of Yavdlom. Yarani has been kind enough to teach some of us the basics of the Yavdlom language.

**Cyprimir 18:** The Coast of Jaibul and the beaches of the Barren Plain proved so far to be of little interest, being an endless succession of parched grasslands and rocky outcroppings crisscrossed by tribal caravans and desert thieves. At





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night, small raiding parties of orcs and goblins were often active, scouting campsites of caravans and nomadic Urduk herdsmen. No combat took place, however.

Surprisingly, we observed numerous merchantmen that bore Minrothad or Jaibul colors sailing off the sun-baked coast. Their waterlines ran deep under the surface, betraying some heavy cargo, perhaps from the city-state of Slagovich.

Yarani spoke of his nation. It was a realm governed by prophets and its clergy were soothsayers and seers that he described as the Great Watchers, Historians of Humanity. Their power over the people was so great that once their entire nation migrated to the Arm of the Immortals, far to the west, as a tribute to their Immortal patrons. A century later, a new generation returned and retook their ancient lands from the jungle and the swamp. This was a fascinating place that I wouldn't miss for the world!

**Cyprimir 24:** It has been a few days now since we flew past the Western Thanegioth Archipelago. We had reached Thanegia Island, at the southern edge of the Serpent Peninsula. Despite omnipresent jungle and swamp on Thanegia, Yarani revealed villages and small towns hiding under a thick tropical haze. They clung precariously to the sides of steep hills or were surrounded by small patches of pasture land. These were the first settlements of the Yavdlom Divinarchy that we could see.

We reached our final destination just before sunset. There, sprawling before us, lay the Most Limpid City of Thanopolis. Yarani pointed out this was a name Minrothad explorers had given to the city. Native Yavdlom called their capital Tanakumba. It stood on a few dozen small islands among a very complicated network of rivers, canals, and lakes that led to a chaotic delta on the city's south side. Imposing stone buildings dominated the center of each island, while wooden structures stretched out toward the river banks. On the banks, a jumble of light dwellings on bamboo stilts, tiny houseboats, and floating shacks invaded

the murky city waters. Everywhere, crowds of people ran along pontoons and streets, rushing to do their daily chores before nightfall.

The most fascinating features of Tanakumba were the clusters of huge shells sitting in the city's many lakes. These graceful edifices rose from no less than 30' to 100' high. Yarani, his chest swollen with pride, identified these as the Abodes of the Seers. Indeed, we could see hundreds of small windows on each shell, balconies cascading with colorful tropical flowers, and elegant bridges that arched between the giant shells. A ballet of sailboats took place at the water level, ferrying people and their goods between the isles.

This is not to say Tanakumba had no streets, for many paved streets and a few large avenues ran through the small islands. Palm trees swayed in the evening breezes, alternating with neat rows of large potted plants along the malls paved with colorfully patterned pebble mosaics. The important thoroughfares had massive, river-spanning bridges. The roads all converged toward the spiritual center of the Most Serene Divinarchy of Yavdlom: the Great Prophet's palace in the highest city-shell of Tanakumba. Yarani bowed deeply before this national monument.

By nightfall, the *Princess Ark* finally anchored at a large terrace of the palace. Although we noticed crowds of spectators watching from nearby islands, few of the palace's residents seem to care about the massive *Princess Ark*. No guards were to be seen anywhere. Seeing my surprise, Yarani explained "They do not fear you. They know you." He then suggested we stay aboard until invited into the palace, which would probably happen in the morning. Yarani then left the ship, saying he had to meet relatives in the palace.

*The events that follow were entered into the ship's log after the officers' return to the Princess Ark.*

**Cyprimir 25, Haldemar:** At dawn and without notice, a herald of short stature entered the ceremonial deck and elbowed his way up to me past the bolt-men and crew.

"Make way, make way, subjects of little consequence," he trumpeted. Looking around him, the fat little man then negligently waved at me and added, "Yes, yes, we knew you were coming. You, the one who seems to matter—please come along swiftly! The Great Prophet is a busy person." By that, he apparently meant me. I was pleased to learn that I amounted to something!

I quietly followed the prickly squab to the upper levels of the palace. At last, I met the Great Prophet—Yarani! With a kind smile, he waved his disciples out and gestured me to sit on a large pouf. Small cups full of a black, steaming beverage sat on a golden tray next to some ring-shaped pastries. Heavily sweetened, the bitter drink became a delectable treat.

"Of course, you are surprised," said Yarani, between two sips. I had not spoken a word. "I did not mean to deceive you. I simply desired to enjoy a fine journey on a very fine ship without the annoying pomp and etiquette."

I couldn't believe a man of his importance would waste time in such frivolous endeavor. But again, he smiled as I thought those very words and added, "Well, it had always been clear to me that Sésékumbo, my brother, would fall before the rajah of Jaibul. We both knew this would be the end of his path in this world. His fate was to warn you of a time yet to come—a destiny that he has fulfilled well. I came to Jaibul as his final witness."

"But, Your Grace," I began, "How could you have not used your prophetic visions to save your own brother? How could you have risked being captured yourself?"

Yarani poured himself a second cup. "Fate, you see, is the result of Immortal will. And who would I be to meddle with the wishes of Immortals? I was indeed blessed with the power of true sight, but it is wise not to use it inconsiderately. Would you want to incur the wrath of the Immortals? My own destiny is already written in the Annals of Yav, and so is yours, admiral. Our fate was to meet—here or in Jaibul, what difference does



this make? You came, and you safely returned me here, didn't you?"

Although I admired the Great Prophet's style, I could share neither his incredible fatalism nor his blind respect for the Immortals. I am a gambler. If I can't win, I try to make it so that I can't lose, either. I make my own destiny—and to heck with what Immortals think! With a power like Yarani's, I could do amazing things.

The prophet chuckled softly, "Tsk, tsk. Such amusing thoughts! You'll learn however, at your own time and place. But, until then, please listen to my advice and heed Sésékumbo's vision. Great powers are growing in the dark, and you, my friend, have a place in their future. As you so succinctly put it, you will indeed weave your own destiny. But you've yet to discover it."

Yarani would not elaborate on the subject of Sésékumbo's vision. Judging from what I saw of the vision in Jaibul, there was nothing charming about the future. I gazed at length into the prophet's eyes, but all I felt was the burden of a mysterious and terrible fate now on my shoulders. Nations and perhaps whole empires were at stake. This much I could sense. His Grace Yarani bade me farewell, and I was taken to a guest room in the palace.

**Cyprimir 25, Talasar:** Soon after the admiral disembarked, I ordered part of the crew off the ship on a 12-hour leave. Unexpectedly, this created quite a clamor among the native boatmen, who furiously competed for their share of the business, all to the amusement of the remaining crew aboard the *Princess*. Small barges flocked beneath the sky-ship, peddling fresh fruit, shells, flowers, ivory—even including the singular services of ephebes and maidens. Many hopeful faces among the crew turned sober at the sight of Lady Abovombe, hands on her hips, frowning severely, and saying, "Not on this ship you won't, thank you!"

I allowed Xerdon to leave with the crew, to keep an eye on them as well as to see and enjoy this wondrous city. I left Raman in charge of administering common duties aboard while I retired to my

quarters. Thanegia's weather was far too humid for me, as the wounds I received on Hakh reminded me. I needed to meditate on all that had happened these past weeks. Wounds taken on outer Planes are always difficult to heal.

**Cyprimir 25, Xerdon:** The streets of Tanakumba were amazingly busy. After fending off tenacious peddlers and hordes of children, some of us managed to get past the populous mercantile street. Others of the crew remained there, spending fistfuls of Alphatian gold crowns to the joy of the native merchants. Souvenirs, trinkets, and other shiny bric-a-brac changed hands by the bagful, without even a whisper of haggling. Already some of my boltmen, wearing ridiculous feather headdresses—no doubt purchased at exorbitant prices—rode through the cheering crowd on bamboo palanquins. Fools.

Soon, I found myself walking down a narrow street between a row of large stone buildings. People there didn't seem to mind the presence of a foreigner. I could not avoid noticing their strange similarity to elvenkind. These ebony-skinned people, although tall even by human standards, displayed graceful facial features—and, most notably, slightly pointy ears. Among the decorative patterns and colorful paintings adorning their clothes and houses, I discerned a few stylized elven patterns. Even their writing, although clearly unique to the Yavdlom culture, showed traces of elven calligraphy. There must have been a friendly elven presence among the Yavdlom many generations ago.

The hot noon sun hung high in the sky. I stopped at a tavern. Everyone became suddenly silent as I stepped in, staring at me through clouds of pipe smoke. Slowly, they turned back to their own business as I ordered.

I had merely sipped from a buffalo horn of ale when a towering man walked up to me. The white mohawk on his head made him look even taller. "Eh, mohn," he said with easy menace. "Is no markie place for strangers. We make de tasty stew of elves hee!"

So much for the "friendly elven presence." I chose to ignore the insult and was turning away when he slowly pulled out a knife. "How much for ye pointy ears, mohn?" he asked.

Everyone was watching. He made a move toward me, and I jumped to my feet. My sword swiftly came out of its sheath—and just as quickly, knives and staves suddenly bristled in the crowd.

The sound of shattering glass broke the silence. I saw Ramissur near the counter, a broken bottle in one hand and a wand unsheathed in the other, and Leo, nervously fidgeting with a bizarre contraption. Luckily, they'd chosen the same tavern as I. It was not yet an even match, but better now.

The man before me smiled. "Just ye and me, thun!" A bastard sword was tossed to him from the crowd, but I could deal with that. The onlookers formed a circle, and the duel began.

Despite his large size, he was quick and accurate. His crushing strength and humming blade spelled death at every blow. It took all of my skill to fend him off. On the bright side, the man had an equally hard time trying to keep me from reaching him.

Our fight went on. Tables, pots, windows, and most everything on the shelves paid the price of our duel. In a single strike, the man smashed a support for a wooden stairway, which then collapsed under the weight of the spectators on it. This caused my opponent to laugh with a roar. He was clearly enjoying himself. The fight seemed to go for hours.

Then, without warning, he stuck his sword into the floor and wiped his hands. "Is cool, mohn! I be done if ye, too." Something in his manner said he was sincere, so I carefully let down my guard. There was no point in further battle. This man was my equal in combat. He then produced two huge tobacco rolls. "Have a smoke, friend! De name be Swetanga Nyanga."

Nyanga lit the rolls in a candle flame as the satisfied crowd settled down again, and he handed one to me. I took one puff of the thing and knew I was in trou-



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ble. How anyone could smoke this was beyond my understanding. The smell was frightening, and the aftertaste was even worse. And soon it was making me sick.

Heedless, Nyanga roared with laughter again. "If all ye boys be half as good, ye gots me blade, mohn. Be hackin' desert raiders on de northern borders ain' no fun life. So be Tanakumba's, too."

Nyanga had potential. We could use a warrior such as he—and we could trade fighting skills, too. We discussed the pay as I grew even sicker over the nauseating smoke. The last I remembered that day was Ramissur and Leo gravely watching over me, and Nyanga laughing thunderously. I hate smoke.

**Cyprimir 26, Haldemar:** It wasn't long after I had left His Grace Yarani and settled down for the evening that I had a dream. I saw an ugly red mark circling the prophet's throat. He pointed at something behind me, and I woke up abruptly, just in time to catch some movement in the room. Someone was in the dark with me, holding a wire. I could barely see him in the moonlight filtering through the curtains. His intentions were plain. Without delay, I gave him a taste—a rather unpleasant one—of my closest wand. He raised his hands to protect his face at the last second. Alas, there was little to be learned from the thug's sizzling remains.

The dream bothered me. I feared for Yarani. I left quietly, suspecting the presence of other killers, and I was correct. I saw many dead people—all strangled—on my way to the prophet's quarters. There were no guards in the palace; everyone here relied on the prescience of their seers. They should have known ahead of time of any wrongdoing, yet no alarm had been sounded.

My dagger throbbed as I entered Yarani's antechamber, which confirmed my worst fears. Two masked men rushed at me from behind a large porcelain vase, brandishing daggers. Forthwith, more sizzling flesh befouled the palace's marble floor, and I pressed onward.

But I had been too slow. I noticed a shadow slipping out of Yarani's room,

into a secret passage. Yarani lay next to his bed, a wire still locked around his neck. I relieved him of the deadly device. Perhaps Talasar would be able to gain Razud's goodwill and restore Yarani to life.

Suddenly, a woman entered the room and screamed. She was one of Yarani's aides. Before I could do anything, she ran away, screaming "Murder! Assassins!"

I had more pressing things to do than to clear myself of the accusations that would inevitably follow. I entered the secret passage and pulled the door shut. I had to find out who was behind the slaying. A narrow flight of stairs spiraled down as far as I could see.

Much later, I reached an abandoned network of catacombs. Judging from the positions of the mildew-covered bones and motifs in the stonework, this was an elven sanctuary. There was no time to ponder that piece of information. The gallery was partially filled with water, probably from the swamp or the city's rivers. I could hear someone moving ahead, splashing through the water. There was no point in soiling my boots. Flying invisible would be a suitable way to quietly catch up with the fugitive—or, as I discovered, fugitives.

Shortly, I caught up with several masked men. They reached an exit and stepped into a canoe, pulling their masks off. I was surprised to see one of them was a native Yavdlom—a traitor, obviously someone who knew his way in the palace. The traitor snickered. "You should have seen it. The man didn't even fight. I pulled the wire and he died without a prophetic word. Peh, what a wimp!"

I was tempted to fry this happy bunch, but I needed to know more. They paddled down the river to one of the city islands, then got off at a pier that led to an elegant mansion. Soon, the thugs met in a room before a large mirror, just like the one I saw in Jaibul. I landed silently and hid near them.

Danger was close; my dagger throbbed again. A familiar dark figure appeared in the mirror. He exchanged messages with

the traitor, then nodded. I was ready for the dark figure to attempt something, when, suddenly, a dozen men burst into the room and hurled darts at the traitor and his accomplices. I found myself accidentally caught in the volley and felt a burning sting spread through my back. They were using darts with poison, the sort that paralyzes.

Helpless, I could only watch what happened next. While paralyzed, the traitor and his accomplices were coldly executed. The aggressors' leader exchanged messages with the dark figure in the mirror, bowed, and walked away. This would have been all—but, by some rotten luck, one of the men stumbled over my invisible body. These people knew their business, and they promptly tied me to one of the pillars. I spent the night there, unable to sleep or move.

**Cyprimir 26, Talasar:** Common duties aboard were carried out as usual until dawn, when I observed a wave of boats approaching the ship. The boats were crowded with furious citizens toting pitchforks, sticks, and torches. The *Princess* herself grew nervous at the many sources of flame, and she began to pull on her lines. Something terrible must have happened during the night.

There was no sign of the admiral, Xerdon, or the crew on leave. I suspected treachery. I could not allow the mob to seize the ship; they might burn her to ashes. I ordered the *Princess* to take a position above a patch of low clouds while I went below and sought an audience with the prophet.

As I entered the palace, I met a group of armed soldiers. The palace had not been guarded earlier, and I remember thinking that these must have been called in for a crisis. I was apprehended at once and was taken to the herald who came aboard the day before. He was shaking with anger as he sputtered that several High Seers and the Great Prophet had been assassinated during the night. Worst of all, he said that the admiral had been seen strangling the prophet! Haldemar was said to have fled. I could believe none of this.



I was denied an audience with the Regent Seer, since all surviving High Seers were conferring—in a sealed room—until such time they could decide who the next Great Prophet would be. This could take days. I was detained and kept under heavy guard. I decided to wait. Razud would guide my path.

**Cyprimir 26, Xerdon:** Coming out of my temporary weakness during the night, I felt myself roughly carried by two rather loud drunkards. I was hanging between Ramissur and Nyanga, with Leo carrying my gear. Obviously, the two brutes got along well, with kegs of ale helping. I prepared to castigate Ramissur for so contemptuously ignoring Imperial Navy Regulations that specifically prohibited crew members from fraternizing with the natives. Unfortunately, rather than words a shameful gurgle came out, followed by some quantity of undigested substance.

"Eh, mohn," shouted Nyanga happily. "I be thinkin' ye chief woke up!"

I had no wish to expand on the sub-

ject, which was just as well as a vociferous mob came down the street at us at that moment, screaming insults and raising their fists. All four of us ended up in a prison cell, along with the remainder of the crew on leave. Soldiers came several hours later and took Nyanga away. He was subsequently returned (rather, was thrown into the cell), having obviously been beaten up. He said he had been accused of treachery and duplicity with strangers who had killed the Great Prophet. This seemed like a frame-up. We had no idea what was happening.

Soon, the soldiers came back and attempted to drag me out. I supposed it was my turn to be questioned. I feigned sickness—an easy thing, considering my condition—and the crew did the rest. The soldiers were swiftly neutralized, and the other guards surrendered quickly. After recovering our impounded equipment, Nyanga led us out. We escaped through a metal grate opening over the river, entering a forest of petrified tree

trunks supporting this part of the city. There, our group discovered the city's poor, pariahs, and criminals living on urban trash and unhealthy fish. They fled as we seized some of their canoes.

We had hoped to reach the *Princess*, but as we entered the open lake, we observed with horror the ship taking off without us! On our right, a flotilla of angry natives paddling toward the *Princess* now spotted our canoes. We turned around and headed back for the slovenly under-city. We lost our pursuers, but we ran astray as well. We ended up in a maze of tunnels the water had dug into the rock. We soon discarded the canoes and continued on foot. Mud and slime was everywhere. Perhaps we would find a way out of this stench by nightfall and leave the city. We could then signal the *Princess* from some vantage point in the jungle.

**Cyprimir 27, Haldemar:** "We've got the man, sir! We tied him to the pillar after he killed Swetanga Jio." Soldiers spilled into the room. I was rudely lifted



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from the pillar to which I had been tied since the previous day. Every bone in my body ached. The effects of the poison were wearing off, but I could only move the tips of my fingers. Spells were out of the question.

I was taken to the palace. The Great Prophet had been propped up on a dais, in a meditating position. Makeup covered the wounds on his neck. Members of his family and people close to him were quietly mourning his death. One of them was Yarani's aide, the woman who saw me in Yarani's bedchamber. "Is he the one you saw, Yaounda?" asked a soldier. She nodded. The man turned back and hit me in the temple with the hilt of his scimitar. I lost consciousness.

**Cyprimir 27, Talasar:** At long last, an elderly seer came in. She ordered the guard out and sat next to me. "Greetings. It seems an explanation is overdue! Please accept my apology and that of my peers. We should have anticipated your mishap. None of this is your fault. You see, my predecessor knew of his imminent death. There is no bad feeling among the seers about his departure. Unfortunately, it will take our common people some time to get over the error of their ways and their pain. My predecessor was much loved by his people."

The woman, it developed, was the Great Prophet's successor. The decision for his replacement had been made swiftly, by Yavdlom standards. "It seems an old foe of ours has found a way to harm our order," she said. "We are dangerous to him, for we know of his future. Because of this, he desires our end. He knows of you also and will seek your demise. Beware of a man in black."

She covered her mouth and said, "Oh, but I forget—we must go now. Please come quickly!"

**Cyprimir 27, Xerdon:** "At last! The end of the tunnel!" Thanks to Leo, we had found a slope upward to freedom through the back side of a sliding panel, perhaps a secret door. I peeked, but no one was around. It seemed like a rich abode, perhaps a mansion. The sun had not risen, so we risked a quick sortie,

Our little troop sneaked past several guards, ducking from room to room, seeking a way out. This proved a difficult task. Soon, the sun came out—and all became worse. An old servant saw us and sounded an alarm. "The assassins! The assassins are back!"

Assassins? There was no time for questions. We ran down a hallway as soldiers poured out behind us. We rushed into a room—and stumbled into a large group of mourners kneeling before the Great Prophet himself! Worse yet, a soldier was about to behead our admiral, who was prostrated at the soldier's feet. I quickly disarmed the man as guards stormed into the room. The fight was a brutal one. Native soldiers kept pouring in.

Then, suddenly, the soldiers pulled back, and the battle stopped. I ordered likewise. At the door stood Talasar and a lady seer, the soldiers kneeling before her. She somberly gauged the damage and bloodshed in the room, then sighed deeply. After much explanation, the guards picked up their wounded and left.

"Good," said the lady seer. "I see Swetanga Nyanga has decided to join you. Your path will be filled with excitement. This fine warrior is also known as the Bane of Jaibul." Nyanga saluted her praise. "You must leave now," she finished, and waved us away.

Talasar got the admiral to his feet, and soon the *Princess Ark* returned from her position above the clouds.

**Cyprimir 28, Haldemar:** Just before leaving Tanakumba, I paid a last visit to the ruffians who had executed Swetanga Jio—Jio the traitor, that is. But they had already vacated the house. There was no trace of the mirror nor of the thugs' bodies. It was imperative that we find out who the man in black was. Fortunately, I had a good look at the aggressors, especially their leader. My *crystal ball* would be helpful in this quest.

Our new recruit, Nyanga, the Bane of Jaibul, is a swetanga, formerly a noble with power who now remains as a knight errant of sorts. Nyanga explained that this situation was unique to the Yavdlom culture and politics. Some nobles did not

always relish the idea of relinquishing their titles and possessions in the name of destiny. Jio may have betrayed the Yavdlom in response to his recent demotion to swetanga status. Jio indeed had power in the north, said Nyanga, where he commanded a fleet in charge of hunting Jaibul's slavers. Somehow, he fell into the clutches of the man in black. Perhaps he was promised power elsewhere but was ultimately paid back in kind for his evil deed. What more wicked justice?

But Tanakumba was behind us. My *crystal ball* would not yield secrets about the man in black; magic protected him well from prying eyes. We would have to settle for his ruffians, and all indications pointed to Slagovich, a town to the northwest. So be it.

### The Slagovich Affair

*In Which Prince Haldemar and Xerdon Save the Hierarch of Slagovich from a Hulean Plot to Annex the City-State and the Princess Ark Acquires New Wings*

**Hastmir 1, 2000 AY:** I had a visit from Leo this morning. He wanted to show me some plans he was working on—an elaborate series of masts, sails, and rigging that, according to him, would enable the *Princess Ark* to sail more swiftly when the wind was strong. It was an unconventional setup, however. He envisioned three pairs of masts in a V-shaped configuration. The masts would jut out at a 45° upward angle on both sides of the hull, each bearing three sails with complicated rigging to operate them. The concept, although unorthodox, was fascinating. And any speed gain always remained an attractive prospect. Velocity was definitely what I needed now.

I had been observing the swetanga's killers through my *crystal ball*. Once, their leader opened a scroll, the one given to him by the hooded figure in the mirror. It read, "Go to Slagovich immediately and meet Zgozod at the Black Samovar for your reward." That confirmed my suspicions. How kind of them to be so informative!



I had hoped to intercept the killers at sea, but they had a two-day head start on us, and a large water elemental propelled their boat very quickly toward the northwest—probably compliments of our dark friend in the mirror. It would take them at least two weeks to reach Slagovich, but we should be able to intercept them within four days.

There was no time for Leo's plan. The construction would have taken days. And there was no telling what Berylith's reaction would be. I first had to unveil the mystery of the man in black.

**Hastmir 3:** I had a strange dream last night. I saw the Imperial Palace in Sundsvall sinking into raging seas. I could not think of anything capable of causing this in Alphatia. Then the palace seemed to fly in a red sky, and my sister did not recognize me. I would have normally dismissed this nonsense, but I am afraid to admit that my visit to Tanakumba last month put some doubt in my mind about the nature of dreams. Perhaps Talasar could help.

Raman came up later that day with a scroll of spells. It held a series of enchantments that enabled recipients to speak, read, and understand foreign tongues. This wonderful discovery was obviously a must for those in our position. I ordered Raman to prepare more of these scrolls in the future. These would be standard equipment for all landing parties.

**Hastmir 4:** I was unfortunate enough to run into Leo on my way to the commander's deck. In an attempt to explain to me all the refinements he brought to his blueprints, the gnome had planted a small mast on the side of the ceremonial deck. He was perched dangerously at the other end, holding the loose edge of a mockup sail. Unexpectedly, a sentinel sounded the alarm in the middle of Leo's precarious lecture.

Swarms of large insects were headed toward us. The power of the boltmen came into action almost immediately; *lightning bolts* crackled and sizzled through the blue sky, while Berylith's frightening breath charred a huge gap in

a swarm. Hundreds of giant red dragonflies assaulted the *Princess Ark*. The fight became even fiercer as the ship's heavy weaponry finally opened fire. The *light ballistas* turned dozens of the giant insects into instant chaff, while magically webbed creatures fell helplessly into the dark blue sea below.

Many dragonflies got through the ship's defenses, however. I caught a glimpse of crew members bravely jumping off upper decks to take a swing at low-flying dragonflies. Even the halfling cook and his stewards were out, chasing the giant insects with frying pans or butcher knives. Despite the slaughter, the insects came back for more, delivering their fiery breath whenever they could. Soon, crew, boltmen, and officers were all struggling to put out the many small fires on board.

The *Princess* suddenly began a vertiginous dive, leveling out just in time to avoid hitting the surface of the sea. There, Berylith used her last breath to cause a huge wall of water spray ahead of us, through which she flew. That put out





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most of the fires. By then, all the dragonflies were dead, littering the decks. It was clear these creatures had been summoned to slow us down. We were up against a very powerful person who knew how close to the killers we were. It was time to double the guard and halt the *Princess*. There was damage to repair in many places, and crew to heal.

"Hum. Um, sir?" Leo was still hanging from his makeshift mast. "While repairs go on, could we take the opportunity to install the new masts? It can be done."

"No. Don't you dare."

"Please? It won't take more than a week, sir."

"No!"

**Hastmir 5:** After conferring with the other officers, it was agreed we could not afford to lose track of our fugitives. Xerdon and I would go ahead, while Talasar remained behind on the *Princess Ark* to oversee repairs. Talasar was then to set sail to Slagovich and wait for us to make contact. Meanwhile, Xerdon and I would attempt to learn who was behind the slayings in Tanakumba. Raman dug up a number of references on Slagovich that helped me visualize the town through my *crystal ball*. As a guide for teleportation, it was a bit vague, so I chose a spot above the city. We would have to fly down upon our arrival.

We were gone before the end of the day. The arrival over Slagovich was a decent one, though Xerdon almost caused a pelican to die of fright. It would be days before our fugitives would show up. We would have to come up with a plan to intercept them upon their arrival and quietly follow them.

*The following events were entered into the logbook in chronological order after the officer's return to the Princess Ark.*

**Hastmir 10:** Xerdon and I posed as fortune-seeking adventurers. These seemed a common sight in Slagovich. We took a room at the Black Samovar but noticed nothing uncommon there, other than truly dreadful cuisine. With a few days of waiting ahead of us, we went for a reconnaissance tour of Slagovich and its vicinity.

Slagovich was a large town built on a plateau, next to a cliff overlooking the opalescent Gulf of Hule. At the bottom of the cliff opened a large cavern mouth into which ships could sail. At the center of the town was a huge natural shaft connecting with the cavern underneath. For a very high fee, the shaft could be sealed and filled with water to bring ships up to the level of the city. A water lock then allowed the ship to enter an artificial harbor around which the town was built. There was no apparent mechanism for pumping the water into the shaft and keeping it in the artificial port, which led me to believe the people of Slagovich controlled a gate to the Plane of Water.

Indeed, hydraulic mechanisms were everywhere in Slagovich. Sleds pulled by a network of cables carted scores of people up and down the town's steeper hills. Drawbridges, water locks, and portcullises allowed ships to reach deep into the town to unload their goods. At least Slagovich had wonderful engineers.

Despite a bustling merchant business and some rich nobility, it seemed the common population was rather poor. Many of the houses, especially those farthest from the port, were badly maintained. High, well-defended walls protected Slagovich, though not the slums outside the town. Town dwellings eventually gave way to farms and hilly acreage beyond. On a darker note, armed troops constantly patrolled the streets, and there was a harshly enforced curfew after sunset.

Much of the mortar and stonework there had a common reddish-brown color, much like the people. We could certainly not pretend to be natives, our skins being much too pale for this. Judging from the language and the customs of the people, it seemed this area was populated by emigrants from the ancient Traladara era, back in the years of Halav, perhaps. The culture, of course, evolved separately. Much of the region remained unclaimed, except for a few city-states, like Slagovich, controlling territory in their immediate vicinities.

**Hastmir 16:** Day after day, Xerdon and I spied on the central water lock, hoping to see our fugitives' boat. Today, it arrived. The men went straight to the Black Samovar. Standard procedure was followed: Xerdon and I turned invisible, then went to observe the party.

All twelve entered and sat in the tavern. A man in dull red armor entered sometime before sundown; as if on signal, the tavern's patrons quietly stood up and left. The innkeeper and his wench scuttled to the kitchen. The red-armored man coldly gazed at the twelve men and tossed a pouch on their table. "Leech away, maggots!" he said with a sneer.

Four lunged to grab the pouch, pushing and shoving until their leader slammed the tabletop with the flat of his sword. "Sit back, you filth!" He poured the reward on the table, revealing a pile of bright pink coins. With a small cloth, he picked up and gave a single coin to each of his retainers. Some received the coins with their own cloths and stored them in pouches. The others quickly placed their coins inside arm bracelets or the recess of medallions. All this trouble for a single coin each. Odd.

The leader then returned the remaining eight coins to the pouch, which he dropped into his shirt. The men and their leader exchanged ominous glances. One by one, hands on hilts, the men left the tavern, never turning their backs until they were out. Only their leader and the man in the red armor remained.

"Was that you, Master Zgozod, bringing the red swarm the other day?" asked the thugs' leader. Without warning, the man in the red armor—Zgozod, I assumed—stepped forward and brutally slapped the leader across the face. The leader pulled out a dagger—but not quickly enough. Zgozod already held a sword at his throat.

"Never speak my name, ever," Zgozod said. He reached into the leader's shirt and pulled out the scroll I had seen in the *crystal ball*, then held the scroll over the flame of a candle, never taking his eyes from the leader. "Perhaps this will help you get wiser," he added when the scroll was only ashes, and he touched the



leader with his sword. The leader fell to the floor, screaming. His hair turned white and wrinkles appeared on his face. Zgozod walked out.

I looked out the window just in time to see Zgozod silently touch his forehead. He turned into a reddish *gaseous form* and disappeared into the dark. This was no clerical magic, and the man wore armor no wizard would bear. I had no clue as to what kind of sorcery this was.

**Hastmir 17:** Nothing else happened during that night. We recovered Zgozod's retainer and brought him back to our room. He had lost consciousness after being touched by the sword and woke only the next morning, solidly tied up. Xerdon remained invisible while I questioned him.

Other than his name, Pustek, he revealed nothing of interest at first. He obviously lied and made up answers during our conversation, but he turned very pale when I mentioned Zgozod's name. He came close to revealing more, but suddenly became quiet. Finally, I took his pouch of bright pink coins and threatened to keep them—and that finished him off. Whatever these coins were, they seemed quite valuable to him.

Pustek admitted his tie with Zgozod. Apparently, the latter was the commander of the Slagovich army, a ruthless and dangerous personality, second only to the prime hierarch of Slagovich. Zgozod used this thug leader's services occasionally, particularly in "spying" missions in the neighboring city states of Hojah and Zvornik. Pustek was otherwise mere riffraff from the streets of Slagovich, not really worthy of my time.

I could not yet let him go, however. I kept one of his coins and gagged him. Both Xerdon and I left for the hierarch's palace. Heavily armed troops still patrolled the streets and the walls around the city. It seemed like a city at war, or soon to be. We witnessed a number of troops rounding up younger civilians and forcing them into the city's army. Their methods were rather brutal.

An old beggar approached me at one point and discreetly opened his jacket,

revealing a series of small chains, jewelry, and other trinkets. "Eh, care for the true stuff? Yeh, pure and untouched. It'll last years, good man." I figured it was all contraband—or fakes, more likely. The baubles were shining with the same hue as the bright pink coins I took from Pustek. There was definitely something odd about that pink metal. I ignored the man, and he spat in my direction.

I found a deserted street and turned invisible. The palace was near: a large, sinister fortress with metal barbs, stone gargoyles, and other gloomy sculptures guarding the battlements. We decided to wait until nightfall before moving in.

**Hastmir 18, Haldemar:** Last night was all but the quiet night we had hoped for. A fleet of ships sailed to the coast, blockading the cave's entrance and bombarding the city with flaming projectiles. Simultaneously, a land force assaulted the northern walls. Several buildings were soon in flames, and people ran through the streets in panic.

Zgozod now came back into the picture. He led a force of heavy knights wearing the same red armor as he, with golden tabards. The city's defenses seemed ready to collapse under their onslaught when Zgozod led a sortie against the aggressors. The results were simply amazing. Twenty knights charged the light infantry outside the city, trampling and slaughtering at will scores of their foes. They seemed almost invincible, literally plowing through the lightly armored men-at-arms. Nothing seemed to reach the knights. The mass of infantry retreated in disorder under a shower of arrows shot from the city walls. By the end of the battle, only three of the red knights had fallen.

We could hear the people cheering on the walls. The city of Slagovich had been attacked by a joint Zvornikian-Hojahite force, apparently a common occurrence there. So much for the friendly neighborhood!

We chose that time to sneak into the prime hierarch's fortress and find out a bit more about the ruler of Slagovich. We found him before long. The hierarch was

a pale and frail-looking boy, no more than fourteen. He was watching the fight from a barred window. "How long will this go on?" he sighed. "Why can't they stay away?"

Zgozod rudely broke into the chamber, fuming. "I lost three knights in that battle. Every day you refuse to sign the charter, more of your people's blood soils the walls of Slagovich. This is hopeless. You must sign now!"

"But I don't trust him," said the young hierarch. "That priest scares me!"

Zgozod slammed the table with his fist. "You will sign, or there will be no one left to sign for!"

The argument went on a little longer, with Zgozod getting increasingly angry and arrogant. Trembling, the young hierarch huddled in a corner of his room and became totally mute. Zgozod grabbed him by the shirt and yanked him to the window. "Look! They suffer because of your foolishness!" he roared. The hierarch squirmed and dropped to the floor. Zgozod then threw him a scroll and a quill. "Sign or be damned!"

With tears in his eyes, the young hierarch scribbled his name on the scroll and fell to the floor. "At last!" barked Zgozod, and he left the room. I whispered for Xerdon to remain with the hierarch while I followed the sinister red knight.

**Xerdon:** The child-ruler wept until late that night. I noticed the door was locked, probably to keep the hierarch prisoner in his own quarters. Much later, I heard voices behind the door. The two guards and one of the red knights burst in, swords unsheathed. I caught the gleam of murder in their eyes.

I decided to intervene. The two guards died before they realized what happened. The knight was another affair. His eyes turned totally red, as if flames consumed him inside. Each time I struck a blow, it seemed the knight blurred and a red haze flared up around him. Only once did I manage to corner him and get a solid hit. This would have split wide open any other armor. But this red metal proved more resilient than I thought. My blade found his flesh and consumed with





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deception the knight's vital energy. Both horribly surprised and in pain, the knight finally retreated and called for the guard.

The hierarch had awakened and had seen me fight the knight. He was petrified by fear. I had to act fast, since I could already hear guards rushing up the stairs. I knocked the child-ruler out and discharged my *wand of lightning bolts* into the narrow hallway. While the bolt caused horrible damage to the crowd of men-at-arms, I retreated through another stairway with the child-ruler on my shoulder. With luck and the help of darkness, I reached the palace walls. I was forced to dispatch another guard at a postern before I could exit into the city. The trip back to the Black Samovar was a treacherous one. It seemed the entire city garrison was on the march. But I fooled them easily in the dark and safely reached the Black Samovar. No one saw me.

There, I found Pustek dead. His skin was the color of chalk, and his face displayed utter horror. Nothing was missing. He bore no wound, and I had no clue as to his death. I decided to dispose of the cadaver and await the admiral's return.

**Haldemar:** Just past midnight, Zgozod reached his knights. He said to one that the hierarch had signed. The henchman picked up his sword and walked out. "Are they still at Grabana?" Zgozod asked another, who responded with a nod. Zgozod cried, "Fine. Let us march! I want his uncle's head in a bag of salt."

And, indeed, they marched. In the middle of the night, Zgozod and his knights mustered the city's troops and moved toward the north. Just before sunrise, they reached a ridge overlooking the camp of the Zvornik forces. The brutal onslaught that followed was worthy of the most bloodthirsty barbarians. The massive Zvornik infantry was caught unprepared and was inexorably, systematically butchered. Without mercy, fleeing troops and yielding knights alike were slaughtered. Only tattered and burning remains of their banners stood in the morning breeze. Clearly, Zgozod had many more troops than he had led the hierarch to believe.

A knight approached, dragging an older warrior behind his destrier. He then tossed the man at Zgozod's feet. With a wicked smile, Zgozod said, "Good. The pleasure of beheading you, Stavro, will be all mine! Calling upon Zvornik to save your royal nephew was a pathetic move, old fool. And now you die."

Then I grew angry at this knight's arrogance. He reminded me too much of the Heldannic Herr Rolf. Still invisible, I approached and cast a *dimension door* at the old warrior. He reappeared in the safety of thick brush, little over 300 feet away. Despite his astonishment, the old warrior kept quiet and went his way, probably thanking the Immortals for their merciful intervention. Zgozod was not pleased. He cursed and ordered the area searched, then rode back to Slagovich. I, too, began to search for Stavro.

**Xerdon:** With difficulty, I reassured the child-ruler and explained who I was and what had happened. The child-ruler called himself Miosz II of Slagovich. Zgozod was his "servitor," said he. He had Miosz confined to his quarters for his own security ever since his uncle disappeared, fearing someone would make an attempt on his life, too. Miosz said the charter provided the Hagiarchy of Hule with some political power over Slagovich in exchange for protection. Soon after Miosz's uncle disappeared, the rival city states of Zvornik and Hojah allied and marched against Slagovich. Zgozod accused them of killing the uncle, and strongly suggested that Miosz sign the charter to defeat them. Miosz felt uneasy signing any such document without his uncle's advice. But Zgozod had apparently found a way to influence Miosz at last. It took some time to convince Miosz that he was being manipulated and that his life still was in great danger.

The noise of heavy boots and clinking metal interrupted our conversation. Slagovich men-at-arms were after us. As we left through the window, I saw the innkeeper down in the street, pulling Pustek's body out of the barrel where I had concealed him. A sergeant-at-arms was watching, hands on his hips. The inn-

keeper must have seen me and alerted the city watch.

We lost our pursuers after a long chase across the rooftops of Slagovich. Miosz then said he knew someone who would help. It was the old general of the army, whom Zgozod replaced a few years ago. He had been accused of treachery and made to work in the mines.

There was no apparent way to enter the heavily guarded mine. Miosz then thought of setting fire to the smelting works to create a diversion. I am afraid I left a trail of dead guards behind us, despite the diversion, but finally we made it into the mine's gloomy galleries.

An eerie red glow illuminated the galleries. I had thought these were gold mines, but Miosz said they produced *cinnabryl*, a metal more precious than gold. He said it was the source of Slagovich's wealth. He did not reveal more however. I quietly pocketed a small chunk of the ore for later study. It looked a bit like Pustek's bright pink coins.

Hours later, we located a man by the name of Enver, the one whom Miosz sought. Once out of his cell, Enver promptly freed another 12 men and women from their chains. They called themselves the Knights of Halav—a brotherhood persecuted by Zgozod. Their order was almost extinct in Slagovich. Our arrival offered them a chance to regain their honor. Enver directed us to a passage that ultimately led to the palace. His plan was to return Miosz to his throne and accuse Zgozod of treachery. By law, he could still challenge the red knight to a duel.

Guards poured in the instant we entered the throne room. A number of petty nobles with rather perplexed and annoyed expressions followed. The unarmored Knights of Halav bravely formed a wall before their child-ruler, while Miosz ordered the troops out.

Zgozod stepped forward, followed by a man in a long white robe—perhaps a priest. The latter said, with a smile, "I dare say, young man, you seem to be mistaken. You are in no position to give orders, for this land is now part of the

Great Hule. You should know. You did sign the Charter of Protection."

"It was signed under duress," Miosz countered, "and for this, I repudiate the agreement!"

"Now, now. Surely you don't think anyone would believe this, young man?" said the priest. "No one among Slagovich's rightful nobility would attest to this! And as you can see, they are all here to witnesses that justice and order be upheld. Now, please, step down. And Lord Zgozod, would you kindly remove these ridiculous wretches from my presence."

**Haldemar:** I caught up with Stavro eventually and introduced myself. As it turned out, Stavro was the young hierarch's uncle. Zgozod had managed to separate him from his nephew in a conspiracy that could ultimately force Slagovich to become a protectorate of the Hagiarchy of Hule. Stavro opposed Zgozod's growing influence at the court and was nearly killed by Zgozod's men. He was forced to flee. Since then, he had attempted to retake Slagovich with the help of the city states of Hojah and Zvornik, who detested any Hulean hegemony in the region even more than they hated Slagovich's odious mercantile wealth.

From what I knew of Zgozod, I strongly suspected him to have shady ties with Hule—so it was very likely that Hule stood behind the murders in Jaibul and Tanakumba. And now it was happening here. I knew I was getting close to something very big. The only thing left to do was to find Xerdon and the hierarch. Avoiding the many Slagovich search parties that were after Stavro proved a dangerous exercise. All the trails were heavily patrolled.

As we approached the city later that night, we saw an entire city quarter in flames. Stavro said it was the mines' smelting works, but the fire had spread. This offered us a perfect opportunity to enter the city, as the night watch was too busy containing the blaze. Soon we crept into the palace through a secret passage Stavro knew about.

It led to a small balcony in the throne room. It seemed we stepped right into another hot situation. Xerdon was standing next to the young hierarch, along with a dozen half-naked and hirsute people. They were surrounded by Slagovich men-at-arms under Zgozod's command. A man in white robes accompanied him. After hearing what the white-robed man said, Stavro addressed him from our vantage point. "I believe him, Your Grace, as a rightful noble of Slagovich. I also have knowledge of Zgozod's attempt to kill me and his false accusations against Lord Enver! I, Count of Bistr, Hetman of the Knights of Halav, speak against Zgozod's treachery!" For several long seconds, his words hung in the air. We waited for their result.

"Kill him!" roared Zgozod. The troops hesitated. The nobles pulled out their swords, but they looked away from Stavro and instead eyed Zgozod—albeit with considerable nervousness. It was obvious that the tide had turned. Zgozod must have made himself very unpopular with his own troops.

Suddenly, the white-robed priest raised a hand. He looked like a man who has seen his most cherished plans go up in smoke. "There will be no need for violence," he said. Giving Zgozod a burning gaze of blame, he added, "Clearly, I can now see treachery at work." The man then uttered a *word of recall* and vanished.

"You haven't won yet!" snarled Zgozod. A red blur surrounded him, and he disappeared as well. His henchmen, abandoned and surrounded, dropped their swords and kneeled. The Knights of Halav cheered and escorted the young hierarch back to his throne. Perhaps peace and justice would prevail, but nothing was sure with Zgozod at large.

**Hastmir 24, Haldemar:** At last, the familiar shape of the *Princess Ark* materialized in the sky. Familiar? Not quite. It dawned upon me that something unexpected had happened. Huge sails had grown on the sides and bottom of the skyship—the handiwork of Leo. I should have known.

### Hule!

*In Which Prince Haldemar and Talasar Impersonate Heldannic Officers and Meet the Master*

**Hastmir 25, 2000 AY:** This evening, I could hear the hull and the new masts creak faintly with the ship's slow pitch. The wide sails occasionally fluttered in the wind, the sound sharing the darkness with only the night bell. The crew was still learning to work the rigging, but Berylith nevertheless showed satisfaction with her new sails, like a bird with new wings. She enjoyed the sweet feeling of wind filling her sails, and she had maintained a good pace since our departure from Slagovich.

But I could not sleep. The picture of the man in black behind the mirror haunted me. I got up, dressed, and went down to the laboratory, where I examined the strange mirror I had taken from the Rajah of Jaibul. I could push small objects through its glassy surface to the other side—wherever that was. I could not see what lay beyond. Only parchment or papyrus could pass, but I was careful not to let any paper fall completely through. Wooden, metallic, and mineral objects, as well as living flesh, would not go through, for the mirror felt cold and solid to my hand. Neither could air, water, or a candle flame get through.

Magic did get through, but not all magic. Some spells related to vision or detection could sometimes get through the mirror. By chance, a *wizard eye* paired with a spell of *infravision* made it through. It revealed an unlit crypt, a scriptorium with many books, scrolls, and maps. One map displayed the familiar contours of the Great Waste desert. On it, little flags were pinned west of Sind, others very close to Slagovich. Their symbols looked orcish or goblinoid in style. These could have been Hulean-controlled forces.

Then I saw a dark veil on the scriptorium's floor next to the black sorcerer's mirror. I realized in a moment that it was a covering for the mirror. Perhaps it had

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slipped off when one of the pieces of paper I had poked through had disturbed it. I was lucky, for otherwise the *wizard eye* would not have functioned at all. I could not explore further since the scriptorium's door was closed, but at least I could now spy on that room. If another *wizard eye* could not succeed, my *crystal ball* would. At last, I had found a weakness in the dark figure's defenses and had even learned one useful thing: *Keep my mirror covered*. As the sun began to filter through the curtains, I dropped a black velvet cloth of my own over my mirror (fixing it carefully in place) and left.

**Hastmir 26:** At sunrise, we had an unexpected encounter. Just past the city of Raska, a small man-of-war descended from the clouds and veered toward the northwest. A flying warship was reason enough to pay attention, but her banner was even more disturbing: a black lion over a white field. She was a Heldannic Prowler. And I wanted to know why she was here.

I had general quarters sounded immediately. We were at her stern, hiding in the rising sun; her watch was either sleeping or blinded. We got close enough for a warning shot. The light ballistae at the bow quickly shredded the Heldanners' main sail. Despite the surprise, her crew reacted swiftly and competently, returning a volley of arrows in little time. A blinding ray followed, punching a hole into the side of the *Princess Ark*. The wood crumpled and withered away where the ray had hit, and Berylith roared in pain. Berylith responded with a devastating bolt of her own that blew off a large part of the Prowler's hull. The Prowler careened violently, causing her topside crew to fall off screaming into space. Oil spilled over the deck and caught fire, spreading chaos aboard. Almost instantly, the Prowler struck her colors as she began to list severely and lose altitude. Alas, I failed to calm Berylith, and she roared again. With horror, I saw the surrendering vessel break up and crash into the sea.

Infamy! Shame! Even against Heldanners, there were rules of engagement by which all commanders abided. Berylith felt my anger and ceased further attacks. We came as close as we could and rescued what little was left of the Prowler's crew. The captain had drowned, along with many of his officers. The few I could question knew only of their next stop, a port called Boyázka in southern Hule. They could not unveil the reason of their journey this far away from home. Rats.

**Hastmir 27:** Boyázka was in sight early in the morning. Talasar activated the ship's *Invisibility* while I convinced Berylith to fade. For once, she did not argue. Talasar and I landed, while the *Princess* took position above the town. Xerdon remained on board. He looked pale, and Talasar ordered him to stay.

Boyázka was a mean-looking little town. Decrepit and filthy, it harbored no more than two dozen ships. A handful of merchantmen flew Zvornikian or Hojahite banners. Many others displayed unknown flags that Nyanga said belonged to a



series of shady coastal realms southwest of Hule. Among them were a number of heavily armed warships. Perhaps half of the ships mooring at the docks were Hulean, but these were old, rotting merchant or fishing vessels, barely fit for navigation. Hule could hardly qualify as a naval power in these waters; any of the regional city-states fared better in that respect.

The people bore the same reddish skin as those in Slagovich, and they seemed just as poor. We learned that this territory was part of the Dervishy of Uzümir. The High Dervish of Uzümir himself sometimes resided at a small temple in downtown Boyázka, a meridional retreat of sorts. Talasar and I found the temple and posed as Heldannic officers who had survived an unfortunate shipwreck.

Soon enough, a cloistress came trotting to us. "For Hosadu's sake, be quiet! No one is to know of your arrival. Follow me." The elderly lady brought us to our quarters and explained that her superior, the High Dervish, had not yet returned. He was up north, meeting with the Most Holy One.

Both of us scouted the temple during the night. We found the dervish's personal quarters and browsed about, looking for clues on the Heldannic presence. Among his papers was a message from the "Master," addressed to the High Dervish of Uzümir. It ordered him to escort the Heldannic envoys to Darkwood; their ship was to remain in Boyázka until their return. Obviously, the Heldannic Order was conspiring with that "Master." By the same token, this made the "Master" the Most Holy One, Ruler of Hule.

**Hastmir 28:** The cloistress came back in the morning. She said her superior, His Eminence Ismet Atadervis, the High Dervish, could see us. She brought us to a mirror in an alcove of the temple's crypt. It was nearly identical to the mirror I took from the Rajah of Jaibul, but perhaps larger. This one, however, allowed passage. It was a magical *gate* that led to a chamber in a much larger temple—somewhere north, judging from the

cooler weather. Outside the windows spread a dark forest everywhere we looked. The temple itself looked more like a fortified city, with large avenues, smaller temples, huge statues, schools, and sprawling monastic quarters.

A man walked in with a broad smile on his face. "Welcome to Hule! I wished to see my Brother Knights before your meeting with..." He froze in the middle of his sentence, and we stared at him in shock as well. It was Zgozod, the "charming" warrior from Slagovich.

"You!" he cried. "What the—" Talasar's hammer landed on his head before he uttered another word. We promptly tied him, gagged him, and hooked him up to the highest point of the chamber's ceiling—and, for good measure, cast an *invisibility* spell on the scoundrel. We could use him some other time, perhaps.

A eunuch finally came in and led us to the cluttered office of the High Dervish of Uzümir. Another reunion—he was the man in white robes who had appeared at the court of Slagovich with Zgozod. My heart froze in my chest when I recognized him; unlike Zgozod, he could cast spells. Ismet did not seem to react, however. Perhaps I had stood in the dark behind Stavro when I first saw Ismet, so he could not recognize me. The thought of facing him was still unnerving.

Addressing Talasar with a smile, Ismet said, "Please enter, General Strohm, I presume?" Talasar clicked his heels in a perfect imitation of the Heldannic salute. With a slight bow of the head to me, Ismet added, "Your Grace Urqart, my respects. We are so sorry for the delay on the Slagovich affair. We assure you that it is only a temporary setback, and soon the fortress shall be yours. Meanwhile, you are more than welcome to use our ports of Boyázka and Yenigaz."

Talasar cleared his throat. "Ach ja. But your ports need major work, Your Eminenz! Silt threatens to block the main stream, and the state of repair of the docks is a disgrace. And we expected to control Slagovich by now!" I thought for a moment he was overdoing it, but I understood what he was trying to do.

"Yes, yes, of course, general." Ismet was clearly embarrassed at Talasar's rebuke. "I shall obtain new funds to begin improvements right away. Our forces are standing by in the desert east of Slagovich. If need be, we could overrun their puny army."

I intervened. "Well, there will be no need for this. I am sure that you have the situation well in hand. Now, if we could discuss what we came for. It is a long way back to Freiburg."

Reassured, Ismet agreed. He led us to a large map on the wall. With a wink, he said, "We bought this wonderful trail map from the library of Rufus Omnibus in Thyatis. Amazing what these Thyatians can do with a piece of parchment, isn't it?" With a wide gesture across the eastern portion of the map, he added, "Soon, we shall share all of this! As agreed, all coastal areas on the Western Sea of Dawn will belong to the Heldannic Order, and we shall keep the coastal kingdoms from Sind to the Five Shires! Together, we shall smash the Thyatian Empire!"

I nearly choked on that one. "Have you made plans against a possible Alphatian intervention? For this to succeed, we will need major support against their powerful magic."

"Fear nothing. The Glantrian Council is unwittingly working for us. It is in their power to foment major unrest in metropolitan Alphatia, possibly destroying their main skyfleet and perhaps even assassinating Eriadna the Wise, the hag herself. This should delay the Alphatians long enough for us to reach our goals. Your Knights will have to do the rest."

"Naturally." Our recently departed friend Yarani did not jest when he had talked about dark plans. And I was right in the middle of them. I just hoped our masquerade would last long enough for us to ruin these plans.

I thought for a moment. "But we will need Slagovich now."

"We have already stockpiled enough depleted red steel to outfit several of your armies. We could ship these right now at our own cost, provided... that you relinquish your claim on Slagovich's





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port and its mines." Hurriedly, he added, "This would save time in both our plans."

I seized the opportunity at once. I had no doubt we could sink whatever Hule put to sea, thereby denying the Heldannic Order access to the red steel (some superior alloy, probably). At least, it could ruin their plans for some time. "Of course. I came to negotiate this alternative. We want the metal now. Do you have a sample here?"

The dervish sighed in relief and gave me a red, glistening short sword from a shelf. "Very well, then," he said. "Let's sign the treaty now." After scribbling several more lines on a stack of scrolls, Ismet rang a small gong. The eunuch came back. Ismet murmured a few words to the man, and the eunuch left with the scrolls. Our host offered us baklava and some of that black beverage I had with Yarani. This was much worse though, almost syrupy, with black mud at the bottom of the cup. The eunuch returned and whispered in Ismet's ear. "The Master waits," our host declared, rising.

We left the room and entered another chamber. There sat—the man in black from the mirror! Drat!

"Impossstorss!" he hissed—and disappeared before our eyes. If Ismet did not recognize me, the Master made no such mistake. The eunuch shrieked and fled. Ismet followed, but I intercepted him with a *web*. Talasar knocked him out promptly and recovered his scrolls.

We had to leave at once. Already we could hear ominous gongs echoing in the cavernous hallways. I had barely enough time to cast a *travel* spell before hordes of fierce janissaries poured into the chamber. I took both Talasar and the unconscious dervish with me as I returned to the *Princess Ark*.

**Eimir 1:** I ordered a course to the southwest after dropping the Heldanners off in the wilderness. Hule was a wee bit risky for us now. Talasar used his magical scroll to send a long message to his temple in Starpoint. He requested the message be delivered at once to Her Imperial Majesty. Starpoint acknowledged a few hours later and said we could trust the

Temple of Razud. As for myself, I teleported a message to the Maharajah of Putnabad, warning him of a possible invasion from the Great Waste.

Once done with this, I returned to my quarters and observed the crypt through my *crystal ball*. By chance, I saw the man in black, the Master, angrily pulling flags off his maps. I guessed that he would pull back his forces for some time, thus removing any proof of the conspiracy. I hoped Her Imperial Majesty would soon unveil what Glantrian treachery menaced our beloved Alphatia. The stakes were dreadfully high.

Then there was the red steel, which I examined. It had to have come from the mines in Slagovich. It was a mighty metal, hard like true steel yet light like wood. I had a hunch the nations to the southwest held more clues to that fancy metal.

Talasar soon came back with news of Ismet. He was found dead in the brig, apparently from the same causes that did in the ruffian Pustek at the Black Samovar. Talasar tried reaching the man's soul, but failed. Either something held on to it very tightly, or it was no longer in existence. Both of these alternatives sent a chill through my spine. A nasty business this Master was in...

### A Pleasant Interlude

*In Which the Crew Enjoys Some Rest and Relaxation, While Raman Begins a Study of Hule*

**Eimir 5, AY 2000, Raman:** Shortly after the admiral's visit to Hule, it was decided to halt our voyage for a few days. Xerdon has been feeling weak recently. Haldemar and Talasar took him down to a small deserted island for some rest and recreation.

From my vantage point far above them, I could see the officers and several bolt-men enjoying their time in an idyllic cove. Xerdon was resting under a silk tent, sipping through a straw one of Talasar's secret concoctions that he had carried with him from the ship. It must have been a new formula, for I don't recall any

previous drink that required the presence of a pineapple slice, nor tiny Ochalean umbrellas stuck into cherries. Talasar spent his time demonstrating roast pig recipes from his homeland for the crew. I couldn't see Haldemar anywhere, however. I had thought he was swimming, but it must have been someone else. I did spy a boltman courageously standing on a flat piece of wood, riding on top of a large wave. Or was that indeed the admiral? My eyesight is not what it once was.

I sighed and returned to my duties. I had been asked to gather information on Hule and prepare a report before the Admiral's return from R&R. I suppose everyone is entitled to a vacation once in a while. Such children, though...

### The Savage Baronies

*In Which Raman Continues His Studies and Falls Prey to a Ghost's Charms, and Xerdon is Nearly Slain*

**Eimir 7, AY 2000, Raman, from a later account:** After many hours of study, I came to the end of a large, black, leather-bound tome on the origins of Hule. It had unveiled many ties between the incredible age of the Hulean hero of legend, Hosadus, and the discovery of cinnabar. Perhaps his inhuman age was no holy gift, but rather the result of cinnabar usage. The so-called Immortal's favor could have been a lie as well. But there was still no clue to Hosadus' fate, nor any apparent link with today's Master of Hule. It could be, too, that Hosadus had become undead.

A loud, cavernous snore pulled me from my thoughts. It was Nyanga. He had escorted me to this library in a town called Porto Preto, a nest of seagoing riffraff. His Highness the admiral had judged the place somewhat risqué for the likes of me, and he had ordered me to rub red makeup over my face and hands before landing. The admiral also gave me several coins of the shiny pink metal from Slagovich, just in case. Fortunately, the majority of the population was of distant Yavdlom descent—not that they were as



well educated and well behaved as their mighty southern cousins, mind you. Anyhow, Nyanga fit in very well.

Porto Preto's library qualified more as a grossly mismanaged bric-a-brac of literature, probably booty plundered from hapless merchantmen. Indeed, there were volumes of material foreign to this rugged barony. Of course, this was obviously of no interest to Nyanga.

I was turning back to my studies when I noticed a small, slimy, and nasty looking creature crawling up Nyanga's leg. It looked like a tiny red man, gnarled and warty, perhaps some evil mandragora. Then I noticed another one on Nyanga's shoulder, sucking at his jugular vein, and yet another two examining the contents his pouch. I could not help gasping at the sight.

Nyanga woke up. The man-things trotted away with his pouch, chittering and giggling. The tall black man jumped to his feet and ran after them. With horror, I saw him swing his sword at the little creatures, wildly slashing though stacks

of moldy scrolls and carelessly crushing tables, shelves, and other furniture. Soon, Nyanga ran down the stairs, cursing and roaring at his tiny tormentors.

Damp, stuffy, and dark, this remote crypt of the library was no reassuring place. A chill ran down my spine at the thought of staying here alone. I lit another three candles to chase away any suspicious shadows and evil spirits. That's when I saw her: a frail maiden with a pale white face, long black hair, and a sad look in her eyes. Her beauty almost made me forget she was not of this world, for I could still see rows of books through her translucent body. I dropped my candelabrum in surprise, but she raised her hands in a gesture of friendship.

"Fear not, noble sage. I wish you no harm. Please listen to my plight, for I have sought eternal rest so long."

I could not take my eyes off the ghostly maiden. I was too shocked to answer. "You bear the key to my freedom. I beg you to help me end my torment."

After further conversation, I learned

that she was referring to the pink coins with which the admiral had entrusted me. That seemed like very little wealth to offer in exchange for such a deed as freeing her, but she was adamant. "I am fading away into limbo," she whispered at last, "but only you can save me. Come to the Tower of Mercy and seek my grave at the chapel. Please come. On my knees, I implore you." She vanished into the dark.

My heart was pounding in my chest. Her words echoed endlessly in my mind. I had to free my own self from an overbearing sense of grief and guilt. I had no choice but leave at once on a quest to save the maiden in distress. How quaint.

**Eimir 8, Haldemar:** Nyanga and Raman had been missing most of the night until the warrior appeared, alone, just before sunrise. His report to me: "De sage be readin' all day when de little mohn steal me pouch. Eh mohn, I say, give back me pouch. He run away! I be catchin' de little mohn, and then—poof—he go away! Tis' evil magic, mohn. Someone play de trick illusion to keep me





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away. When I be back, ye sage be gone. I be searchin' de crypt, I be searchin' de street. He be nowhere, mohn."

It could be that Raman had been kidnapped. But why? Perhaps giving him the coins hadn't been a good idea. I was tempted to use the *crystal ball*, but Raman was wearing common garb, not his uniform robes. I could not recall any familiar object that the *crystal ball* could focus on. In addition to this, Xerdon showed no sign of improvement from his strange illness. I left Talasar in charge of the *Princess Ark* and left with Nyanga to investigate Raman's disappearance.

**Eimir 8, Raman, from a later account:** It took most of this day to locate the Tower of Mercy. I learned from three drunken miners at a tavern that it stood on the northern border, on the trail north of Porto Preto. It was a fortified guard post, the last civilized spot before the Red Lands. Beyond it lay a desert filled with monsters, but also a haven for miners. In the evening, the three drunkards were to leave for their promised land. Posing as a poet in search of inspiration, I decided to ride with them up to the tower on one of their shabby mules.

**Eimir 9, Talasar, from a later account:** A band of thieves triggered the ship's magical wards last night, several hours after the admiral's departure. They left promptly as the crew investigated, but not before causing great harm to Xerdon. Somehow, they managed to enter sick bay and stab Xerdon several times in his sleep, nearly killing him. By chance, they did not slit his throat altogether. With Razud's will, I healed him.

Although still weak from his unknown illness, Xerdon mentioned a pendant he had that the thieves ripped away. It did not seem to have much value at all, though. It was a small net in which he used to keep small objects. It held a piece of red metal ore he found in the mine under Slagovich. I examined his chest, and I noticed a small red patch on his skin where the rock had rubbed. The thieves took nothing else, except a few items of little value and some petty cash.

The rest of the day was uneventful until later in the evening. I caught Ramissur preparing to leave on one of the lifeboats without permission. He was drunk. He seemed somewhat embarrassed and admitted he had decided to seek out the chief's assailants and settle accounts with them. Although I would not condone his inebriated state or his intended use of violence as a way of gaining retribution, I authorized him to go on. I needed to find out why thieves wanted that piece of ore and how they managed to learn about its existence and the location of the *Princess Ark*. As tempted as I was to join him, I was the last able officer on board and thus had to remain. One condition for Ramissur's nocturnal escapade was that he was entirely on his own, and that he had to return before the end of the next day. Otherwise, I would be obligated to condemn him for his lack of discipline.

**Eimir 9, Haldemar:** In the evening, after a day of scouring the city without success, we returned to the library. At the sight of Nyanga, the old shrew who kept the library went into a frenzy. A crowd of shady-looking fellows came out to observe the scene. The screeching librarian demanded payment for the damage Nyanga had inflicted. There was no point in further discussion, as we had other business to attend. I stared at Nyanga.

Reluctantly, he pulled out his pouch and tossed a coin at the hag. She stopped. She pondered. And shook her head.

There went another coin. Nope.

There went more, followed soon by the whole pouch. To no avail.

This should have covered whatever damage had been done to the shabby establishment. The crowd grew a bit restless. So there went my pouch too. But the truculent termagant then pointed at my cloak and my boots. Now *that* was enough! I nodded at an already fuming Nyanga, who dove head first into the vociferous crowd. The cantankerous crone jumped savagely on his back while I shot a few warning *lightning bolts*. The mob vanished, leaving the annoying nag before Nyanga's humming blade.

It's amazing how fast she spoke—and for free, too. It seemed our lad Raman had been seen with miners heading north toward the desert. Why? She couldn't tell. But perhaps we could catch up. We soon bought two fast steeds and galloped up the miners' trail.

**Eimir 10, Ramissur, from a later account:** Upon my arrival in Porto Preto, I went to one of the shadier taverns in the older part of the town. After some preparation, I found the identity of a notorious band of thieves in the town and their habitual hangout. There, feigning to be drunk, I spread noises about some shiny metal I planned on stealing. It wasn't long before someone whispered to me to come into the back street.

Five hooded people were waiting there. I posed as a deserter seeking revenge and wealth. I told them I had been in charge of security in a ship that had just been raided. For my failure to prevent an officer from being severely wounded, the ship's commander stripped me of my rank. I said I knew how to get past the ship's magical wards and how to reach the chest holding the precious metal. But I needed help in exchange for a fair share of the sake I wouldn't reveal anything more.

They said they would consider the idea and contact me later. I stayed at a tavern called *O Valbacotto* ("The Cutthroat"). One of the men came back later and said his leader was interested. I was led to a crypt inside an abandoned family tomb in the cemetery, where six people were waiting. In colorful language, the leader asked, "Eh, *meu bom* ("my good man"), what tells me this is not a trap?" As I considered clobbering the happy bunch myself, soldiers burst in, to my astonishment—and to everyone else's, as well. In the brief melee that followed, the soldiers slaughtered everyone in the gang, except one—a stoolie. The troops held me at sword point.

With an excited grin, the stoolie pointed to me and said, "He's the one, *Senhor Capitão*. He said they still have the ore on board." The captain nodded and turned to his men, pointing at the stoolie. "Get

him, too," he said. The soldiers brutally knocked out the screaming stoolie. We were both put in chains and promptly taken to the baron's keep by wagon. An hour later, my fiendish companion woke up beside me in the baron's dungeon. The place was poorly maintained, and I discovered that the mortar was crumbling where our chains were secured to the walls. We made a deal: If I could break the shackles, he would pick the locks to the dungeon doors. Although I could not trust him, there was little else to do.

After considerable exertion on my part, the shackles gave and soon I pulled the stoolie free. It was only after a generous thrashing from me that he recovered his nerve and endeavored to defeat the heavy grate's lock. After sneaking about the dungeon, we came to an exit. Two people stood on the stairs there, unaware we had escaped. The baron was there, speaking with a man with a slight Hulean accent. There I learned that an old acquaintance was still interested in our ship and crew. The man said the Master desired that I be put to the sword, and the *Princess Ark* captured at once. The Master's spies had failed to seize any cinabryl during the raid they had conducted on the ship. The Master wanted only the crew, especially the officers, and would pay a generous ransom for them. The ship could remain in Porto Preto. The man added he could help the baron's soldiers reach the ship.

That's when the stoolie started acting up again. He leaped forward and dropped to his knees. "Vossa Alteza ("Your Highness"), I beg your mercy! The foreigner forced me to come with him. Let me serve you better, *Senhor Barão* ("Sir Baron")." Fearing attack, the two men ran away, calling for the guard. I took great pleasure at the sound of the stoolie's bones cracking when I got hold of his neck. I ran down a hallway and jumped through a stained glass window, the only exit. I landed in the keep's front court under a pouring rain. I knocked a guard down and stole his horse, just barely making it past the portcullis. I retrieved the lifeboat and returned to the

*Princess Ark*—without the stolen ore, but with vital information.

**Eimir 10, Haldemar:** A thunderstorm had been plaguing us all day. It worsened when we reached the tower, on top of a high plateau. It was close to midnight then. The muddy trail was very steep in many places, and darkness made our task of following it rather perilous.

The guards at the tower were rather apathetic. When questioned, they vaguely pointed toward an abandoned monastery at the edge of a forest. We found Raman there, sitting inside a dusty crypt. Disappointed and confused, he was biding his time tossing small rocks into a broken urn. He was startled and ashamed when he saw us, but perhaps relieved as well.

"Forgive me, Your Highness," he said, red faced. "I don't know what's become of me. I felt compelled to come here at once after an encounter with a ghost in that library in Porto Preto. So eager was I to go that I omitted to leave proper notice. But perhaps the ghost was just part of a vivid dream I had, for I have waited here a whole day to no avail."

As we prepared to leave, a form suddenly materialized above a tomb. It was the maiden of Raman's description. She stared at us, then motioned Raman to come. She was indeed fascinating, but something inside me cried foul play. Suddenly I snapped out of the trance. "Raman!" I shouted. "Back off, man!"

I was too late. An arc of crimson light fused the air between Raman's pouch and the grave. It sizzled and crackled... and it fizzled out.

The ghost wailed. Obviously in pain, she transformed herself into a ghastly, translucent red skeleton. This monstrosity then leaped at Raman and tore at him. A lightning bolt from my wand seemed to burn through her ectoplasmic matter, causing her to shrivel somewhat. Nyanga charged forward and, with a mighty swing of his deadly magical blade, hacked the fearsome apparition into spectral smithereens.

Raman felt weak and the pink metal in his pouch was gone. "Why, why?" he babbled in tears. Nyanga pried the stone

grave open. "Tis an evil spirit, mohn," he said curtly. "Only de powers of darkness know why it be wantin' ye soul. Open fire be de way of killin' de evil spirit!" He tossed a flask of oil into the foul sepulcher and set it ablaze.

I then cast a *travel* spell back to the ship. We arrived hours after Ramissur's return and found the crew at their battle stations. Talasar warned us of a potential attack from the Vilaverdan army. Indeed, a small flying skiff approached, its lantern flickering in the sky. It made directly for the *Princess Ark*, despite the fact that she was invisible.

The baron's captain of the guard soon stood at the prow and hailed us. "*Senhor Capitão da Princesa!* This is an official visitation! You are transporting illegal metals. We request you turn your ship visible and allow immediate permission to come aboard!" He could obviously see us. I restored visibility to the ship's hull and acceded to the captain's demand.

He carried a small animal with him, like a fat ferret. He dropped it on the deck and it scurried away, sniffing and snorting, while he asked probing questions about our mission and itinerary. The creature came back later, whining and hissing. It had found nothing. The baron must have been after the pink metal from Slagovich. There was none left now. Perhaps that ghost had been of some use after all!

"It seems everything is in order. My apologies, *Senhor Capitão*. But you are requested to keep you ship visible at all times when visiting Vilaverde. *Muito Obrigado, Senhor* ("Much obliged, sir")." The captain of the guard picked up his little beast and left. Whatever were the plans the baron of Vilaverde had concocted, they had just failed. He had probably hoped to delay our departure. Worse, perhaps he had expected to demand the ship be impounded and moored at a common dock. At least I presumed so, since I could not see any threatening force nearby. But there was no point in remaining in such a dangerous place any longer. The baron must have had a secret up his sleeve.



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I ordered an immediate departure, full speed ahead. Already the morning wind filled the sails, and the *Princess Ark* veered on a southwesterly course. In the rising sun, I looked down and saw that dozens of powerful ballistae dotted the farmland below. They had been rigged with ropes and large grappling hooks, some still aimed at the *Princess's* previous position. They must have been pulled into position during the stormy night. Fortunately, the mud had delayed them long enough to allow for our departure. I could see crowds of soldiers and their baggage train slowly heading back toward Porto Preto. Indeed, we had just escaped another treachery.

### Spies in the Night

*In Which Prince Haldemar and Lady Abovombe Attend a Ball and Survive a Plague of Spies*

**Eimir 12, AY 2000:** We had just flown past the coast of Narvaez when a strange incident occurred. A small whirlwind materialized in the atrium where Lady Abovombe and I were taking our morning stroll. Seconds later, a handful of boltmen arrived, having seen the whirlwind from their posts nearby, and they made ready to open fire.

The whirlwind came to a halt, revealing a halfling in a buffoon's garb. Lifting his hat, he cried, "*Hola! Buenos días, Señores!*" Bowing deeply before Lady Abovombe, he added, "*Y Señora.*" He pulled a sealed scroll from his jacket. "I bear a cordial invitation from His Excellence el Baron de Saragón to the annual banquet. His Excellence Don Balthazar will be honored by your visit." Kissing Lady Abovombe's hand, he murmured, "*Ay! Que guapa!*" ("What a babe!")

The buffoon disappeared in a puff of smoke as fast as he'd come, making the boltmen all the more twitchy. Several looked anxiously above, behind, and to their sides. Hands still on their wands, they left only after my dismissal.

The scroll was indeed an invitation. It seemed someone had taken notice of

our little performance in Vilaverde. We had no immediate objective and a friendly stop would do the crew good. But first I had to verify Don Balthazar's intentions.

**Eimir 13:** A quick invisible visit to the Baron's mansion revealed that it was a heavily fortified abode. The place was one that only an experienced wizard could build, judging from its many magical wards and arcane sentries. The arabesques on the walls, the fine colonnades, and the elegant tile works in the atrium reminded me of the style and color used by the Alasyian people. Curiously, classical paintings, furniture, and wrought irons on the windows demonstrated a strong Guardiano influence.

The servants were feverishly preparing a great banquet. The broad fire in the kitchen roared under roasting piglets. Pheasants, stuffed boars, racks of lamb, and other delicacies littered the vast tables. In the main hall the chamberlain debated with the lady of the manor about where to seat the guests at the baron's table. I saw my name and Lady Abovombe's among the chamberlain's small plaques. It was moved many times before the lady of the manor, Doña Teresa de Montejo y Sotto, the baron's wife, made her decision. So far, all seemed normal, so I returned to the ship.

**Eimir 14:** The *Princess Ark* made her formal appearance above Ciudad Matacán's *Plaza Grande*. The crowd was impressive. Although astounded by our arrival, they showed no signs of fear.

Soon enough, a column of guards plowed through the spectators. An officer stood among them, signaling to the *Princess*. A fast lifeboat promptly fetched him. He introduced himself as our escort to the baronial manor house. As a dignitary of Imperial Alphatia with a beautiful lady on an official reception, we took along a proper escort in the person of Myojo Katamura.

Courteous and thoughtful, our guide took us on a tour of the town with a short stop at the flower market. The trip proved enjoyable, despite an all-too-evident escort of Torreón lancers riding

before and behind our carriage. We reached the manor by sundown, where all three of us were provided with ad-hoc quarters for our stay.

Soon afterward, the majordomo announced our arrival in the main hall. A sumptuous crowd of petty nobles and ladies-in-waiting bowed respectfully before us. I was an Alphatian prince, after all. We looked just right. Lady Abovombe was resplendent in a white robe covered with pearls. Myojo had simply outdone himself with a gleaming ceremonial armor that made the Torreón guards pale with envy. So far, so good.

"Welcome to Saragón, Prince of Haaken!" cried Baron Balthazar as he walked up to us. "Your visit honors our modest barony. I hope your tour of the city was to your liking?" We were promptly and formally introduced, and the baron added, "Tales of your famous exploits have preceded you, Señor!"

Almost immediately, the minstrels began to play a fine minuet. Before I could react, a diligent and hopeful troop of hidalgos besieged Lady Abovombe for a dance. The baron won the first. For my part, I enjoyed a few steps with Doña Teresa. The dances went on between the usual court conversations and gossip. Many partners later, I finally gave up keeping track of who was whom.

I grew tired of the reception and so retired to my quarters with Myojo. Lady Abovombe remained, enjoying her time tremendously. It is true that balls are not all that common on the ship. We'll have to work on this.

**Eimir 14, Abovombe, from a later account:** The emotion and passion in the people I met and danced with surprised me. I had grown accustomed to the polite and restrained ways aboard the *Princess Ark* and at my father's court. It was only because of Doña Socorro's help, the *dueña* ("elderly female chaperon") of the baron's daughter that I safely returned to my quarters. It nevertheless remained a delightful night.

No sooner had I snuffed out my candle than rose a sweet melody from the garden. A young hidalgo stood beneath my





balcony, singing a love song under the full moon. Although old-fashioned, it was very charming. Thinking himself in luck, he quickly climbed the vines to my room. Indeed, he was of the romantic, enterprising, passionate, and ultimately tenacious kind—in short, totally lovely. Also very, very difficult to get rid of.

**Eimir 14, Haldemar, later that night:** Foolish was I to believe the evening was over so quickly. I barely had time to pour myself a glass of that sweet Gargoñan sherry when a soft knock came at the door.

A colossal man with handlebar mustaches immediately pushed his way into the room. "Have a cigar, amigo! Sherry is best enjoyed this way." He opened a box full of odorous tobacco rolls and added: "I will meet any offer they made, plus a full cargo load. Well, amigo, have you decided?"

At a loss, I frowned and said, "I'm afraid you are mistaken, sir. Business was not the motive of my visit here."

He seemed disconcerted. "Ay! This is very unfortunate, amigo." I was about to further question this rather insolent character about his identity and the object of his visit when he suddenly pulled out a large knife. But Myojo's talent with a sword proved swifter, and the surprised—and quite dead—assailant fell heavily to the floor.

As the baron's guest, I couldn't possibly get caught with who-knows-who's dead body in my quarters. I thought of returning to the ship with the body, but soon discovered that none of my *travel* spells worked. The mansion was magically locked, it seemed. Drat! Finally, Myojo bound the big man's wound and hooked the body up inside the closet. It would do for the time being.

Someone else then came up at the door, a small, fat fellow. "My apologies, Señor. I hope I am not interrupting. But little time is left, and I must insist. When the third hour strikes—" He stopped speaking and opened his eyes wide.

"Caramba!" he whispered—and fell to the floor. A small dart was stuck in his neck. Alas, too late I noticed a shape jump off the balcony and run away into the garden. Double-drat! Myojo dutifully picked up the new victim and propped him up behind the curtains.

One more visitor knocked at my door. It was an elderly lady this time. "Young man," she said, "you should know that great deeds make great men. For what you are to do tonight, you shall be rewarded in honor and status."

"Milady," I ventured, "might I inquire as to whom you might be?"

"Oh, puh-lease!" she said with indignation. She then motioned to Myojo, as if he should do something. He brought her a glass of sherry, then she continued. "Listen carefully, for it must not be broken. Twist the skull to the—urk!" She choked on her beverage, then went into convulsions as her mouth began to foam. "Que Barbaridad!" she spat, then fell to the floor. Another one!





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Myojo sighed and shrugged, then picked her up and pushed her under the bed. I tossed the deadly beverage and my glass out the window lest someone else be harmed. I heard a scream from below and saw a dark shape run back into the garden, holding his (or her) head.

Despite their sudden deaths, these strange people singularly amazed me. My curiosity was now greatly aroused. Would I have more visitors this evening? I wondered. And, sure enough, another visitor knocked at the door just then.

A Torreón officer fell forward into the room, a dagger stuck in his back. He whispered: "I am dying, Señor. Listen, for many other people have died this night, I can smell it."

Myojo sniffed around him and looked puzzled.

"You are the victim of an odious plot," continued the officer. "You must leave at once. A secret passage exists behind the third barrel in the cellar..." He nearly passed out. "Adiós, Señor. My time has come." Now beyond our help, he slipped to the floor.

I rendered "number four" invisible and sat him at my chair when the door suddenly opened. A servant came in. That was enough! Myojo grabbed the steward and prepared to cut his throat. "Have mercy, Señor!" the man cried, frightened out of his wits. "I am only a poor peón working for the baron. I came to prepare your bed. Please spare my life. I will not disturb again, I swear!" He seemed rather honest. After some fruitless questioning and many repetitions from him of "*Muchas gracias!*" I let him go—only to hear a scream of agony an instant later in the hallway. I refused to go look.

Minutes later, yet one more visitor came up. "Are you all right?" It was Lady Abovombe. She carried a black-eyed hidalgo on her back, dragging our servant behind her. "This one got a bit too daring," she said. "I knocked him out when I heard the scream in the garden. I couldn't possibly leave him behind! As for the servant, I don't know what happened to him. I found him lying in the hallway as I came to check the noise. He's dead."

At last, someone who didn't drop dead on us! After unceremoniously stuffing Lady Abovombe's two into a large chest, we left the room for fear of inheriting another macabre gift. It was time to pay a visit to our baronial host.

**Eimir 15, Haldemar, early morning:**

I did not have much idea about where to go in this vast manor. I decided to follow the late Torreón officer's clue. Indeed, a secret passage existed in the cellar, and it led to a wizard's workroom.

Alchemical implements stood on a large bench, bubbling, puffing, and whistling, as glowing, multicolored liquids dribbled through the glassware and the crystal tubes. On a desk sat a crystal skull with some other bric-a-brac that reminded me of my own office. Rays of faint blue light from the skull's empty eye sockets illuminated a clock in the corner which just then struck three. I tried to reach the skull, but an invisible force kept me at bay. By the second stroke, I dispelled the force, hoping my magic to be strong enough. Indeed, by the third stroke, I quickly turned the skull to the right and hoped for the best.

And the best happened. The two beams hit a golden Oltec sun sculpted on the wall. It shifted, revealing a new chamber. There, sitting in an impressive library, was Don Balthazar, quietly observing us.

With a smile, he began "*Buenos días, Señor!* I am glad to see that you prevailed over my guests. I do apologize for the inconvenience, but a number of spies and traitors had penetrated my court, and I needed a powerful outsider to help me uncover them. I quietly spread the rumor of your arrival among my court. I made them believe you planned on stealing a great artifact from me and would sell it to the highest bidder. Many rulers in the region would give their right arm to acquire such power. It was the only way I could seek them out, and for this I am in your debt, Señor."

I wasn't amused. "Dear Baron, there are better ways of dealing with a prince of the Alphatian Empire. I have other business to which I must attend, and am not interested in your petty dealings."

He stood up and pulled out a smoking pipe. "Ah, Señor! You surprise me! On the contrary, a great adventurer such as yourself should appreciate an evening such as this! Come now, my friend. Your time wasn't lost. I am prepared to make amends and offer Your Majesty's skyships unlimited access to my Plaza Grande—and for you, the usual commercial fee from all merchant deals. The wizards' empire is most welcome in Saragón!"

Indeed, this was one very well-informed wizard. I pulled out my own pipe. "With one condition, then! I dare say that I would love to sample this fragrant tobacco of yours."

Don Balthazar agreed with a broad smile, "...and a glass of sherry. The good sherry, of course!"

After a long and mutually beneficial conversation, we finally took a stroll in the garden. The sun was rising. As we stood before the manor, Don Balthazar wondered about the identities of those who had showed up in my room. He was concerned about an assassin who had stalked him in the dark and was probably still at large.

Just then, a scream came from my apartment. Lady Abovombe's black-eyed lover appeared at the balcony, rather frightened. He probably had just awakened in the chest with a dead man in his arms. As he stood on the balcony crying murder, another body slipped from behind the curtains and bumped against the young hidalgo's back. He screamed again and jumped off the balcony, landing on a thick bush. Almost immediately he stood up and screamed once more. A tall creature in black was hiding there—a gnoll dressed in the garb of assassins. It, too, screamed, and they both ran in opposite directions. Without a moment of hesitation, both Don Balthazar and I pulled out our wands and in a single motion fried the ugly beast.

"*Muy bien, Señor!* Excellent shooting!"

"Not bad yourself, dear Baron!"

I guess that took care of the wizard's night stalker.

**Eimir 22:** We enjoyed a few more days at the manor, while the crew was



granted a much-appreciated furlough. I introduced Talasar and Xerdon to the Baron, who was then given a tour of the *Princess*. He later revealed that he had traveled once to the Court of Eriadna the Wise and learned much about Alphatian ways. He had heard secondhand about my financial arrangement with Her Imperial Majesty, and when news of my visit to Vilaverde had reached him, he naturally thought of inviting me to Ciudad Matacán. The rest then fell into place.

We finally left the Barony of Saragón. With auspicious winds, the *Princess Ark* took a southwestern heading, toward more discoveries and adventures in the Savage Coast.

## Shootout at South Gulch

*In Which Prince Haldemar and His Companions Rescue a Tortle Village from Exploitive Miners; Talasar Steals a Heldannic Warbird's Secret; and Raman Takes Command*

**Eimir 24, AY 2000:** Two days after leaving Ciudad Matacán, I changed heading and veered toward a curious place called Smokestone City. According to gazetteers I had gotten in Saragón, Smokestone City was the capital of a country—or “duchy,” as the locals called it—that seemed very different from the baronies we had recently visited. One of the gazetteers alluded to a source of cinnabryl somewhere south of the capital. I was hoping to acquire a small quantity for study and magical experiments.

Raman returned from a quick inspection. He described the capital as somewhat more rugged than the Guardiano baronies, but otherwise industrious and peaceful to foreigners. So confident was he that he even made reservations for four rooms at a hostel on the main street. The price seemed right and it included a hot bath for each room. Why not?

Raman received my relieved thanks and authorization to return to his books. Meanwhile, I left Talasar in command of the *Princess Ark* as the landing party and

I quietly went down for a visit to Smokestone City.

We found the place Raman had described, the Red Steel Saloon. However, this place was totally unlike anything I had seen before. A dozen tables occupied the main hall opposite a long bar, hosting people playing cards, drinking, and smoking. A charming lady was standing in a corner before a curious spinning wheel, enjoining people to try their luck and bet their money on a random number. Judging from the vast possibilities offered, this seemed like a losing proposition. Nonetheless, half a dozen men were tossing small ivory chips on the numbered carpet, wishing for instant wealth. Some things never change.

I faced an utterly shocking vision as I turned away from the glitz, spinning wheel. Five ladies were dancing and singing in a scandalous manner before dozens of hooting ruffians. To the rhythm of a tortured harpsichord, the wenches suddenly lifted their dresses to reveal their legs, petticoats, and other frou-frou. Lady Abovombe fumed; “I’d better have a talk with Raman!” she muttered. Utterly embarrassed, our group quickly retreated to the front desk.

Our party was divided into four rooms: Ramissur and Leo, Xerdon and Nyanga, Myojo and I, and Lady Abovombe. As we prepared to climb the stairs to our rooms, a thunderstorm rocked the night. Talasar would have to leave the area and head for calmer skies. I had total confidence in the man and knew I need not worry further for the *Princess*’s safety.

Escaping from the heavy rain, a dozen cattle drovers stepped into the main hall. They looked like trouble. By the time we had made it to the mezzanine overlooking the main hall, a brawl had started. One of the visitors had impulsively bet and lost his cattle drover’s salary at the spinning wheel, which quickly ended up around the saloon owner’s head. We paused, taken in by the spectacle and thinking ourselves safe above the fight.

While the brawl raged, the wenches and their insane harpsichord minstrel continued their outrageous show as if

nothing was amiss. The barman dove behind the counter as a bottle crashed into a large mirror behind him. Things were bad until a new man entered.

Cool and quiet, with eyes of steel, he stared down one of the rowdier fellows. The leader of the cattle drovers walked up and stood arrogantly before him. He pulled back the side of his jacket to reveal a tiny crossbow. “Well, what have we here? Another yellow-bellied lawman.” Silence overtook the place as everyone hastily retreated. The steely-eyed man calmly answered, “You have ten minutes to get out of Smokestone City, Baraboo Jack.”

Suddenly the ruffian pulled out his crossbow. But seemingly quicker than his own shadow, the steely-eyed man had drawn his weapon and shot the ruffian dead, hitting him between the eyes. Several troublemakers drew their crossbows and started shooting. Amazingly, the lawman rolled behind a large potted plant while shooting another five times with incredible accuracy! By the time he stood up again, five more men were on the floor, wounded or dead. This was no ordinary fellow. That was no ordinary weapon. This was no ordinary place.

**Eimir 24, Talasar, from a later account:** The watch spotted large black clouds rising at the horizon a few hours after the admiral left with the landing party. I ordered a routine maneuver to climb above the storm. Unfortunately, we would have to remain out of touch with the admiral for some time, but the risk was too great to remain.

**Eimir 25, Haldemar:** After some investigating at the LB Trading Co., I managed to deduce the whereabouts of Cimarron County’s cinnabryl. It was a place called South Gulch. I got only blank stares from the LB Trading Co.’s clerks when I asked about acquiring some of that red metal. Someone must have called their lawman—Sheriff “Wild Tex” Mokum, the Duke of their so-called duchy, I gathered. “Pardner,” said he with a slow drawl, “some questions are best not asked. The next coach out of town leaves at high noon.” I didn’t want



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to make trouble, so I agreed to leave. "Much obliged, pardner," he responded.

Unfortunately, there was no coach departing for South Gulch. The heavy rain had turned the Wrangler's Trail in the south into a muddy mire. The coach official from Zachariah & Peabody Co. pointed out that the rainy season just had started in that region. Judging from the rumblings in the sky, more rain was obviously on the way. The coach would have to take the longer route off the trails, west of Cougar's Bluff, through Little Big Rock, Bushwhack Prairie, Buffalo Run, and then to South Gulch: a four- or five-day ride. Unexcited at this prospect, the seven of us climbed into the coach, and off we went on a long, uncomfortable ride. Rain began to fall again even as the driver whipped the six-horse team.

**Eimir 25, Talasar, from a later account:** An alarm sounded in the morning. Five skyships had been spotted in a break in the seemingly endless clouds beneath the *Princess*. Judging from the reports, these ships were not of Alphatian designs, but were more likely fast Heldannic Warbirds. It would seem the Hulean Master and his lackeys had not given up on us yet—and they knew how to defeat the *Princess's* invisibility.

I needed to learn more about their forces before engaging them. Razud curse this weather! The admiral and Xerdon were sorely needed. Routine maneuvering of the *Princess* was one thing, but engaging in combat was another. I had no way of knowing how the ship would respond to my orders in Haldemar's absence. Perhaps this ordeal was put on my path by Razud to test my faith. So be it. I had the skyship dive into the cover of the thick, billowing clouds. Navigator Ashari would be at her post as usual, listening for approaching vessels. This dangerous game of hide and seek could prove deadly for all with a mid-air collision; lightning and fire were yet another concern. I could sense the *Princess's* reluctance to enter the storm clouds. All went quiet aboard as the hunt began in the eerie twilight of the clouds.

**Eimir 28, Haldemar:** We had been riding in the wilderness since yesterday when the coach turned off Bugle Trail. We were following a bumpy path south when I heard the driver exhorting his horses frantically, whipping and cursing.

"Them desperados are a-ridin' for us agin!" he shouted. "Better get yore shooters out quick an' start a-firin'!" Brigands were riding down the hills, trying to get ahead of us. Judging from their relative sizes, our attackers were goblins on ponies.

Nyanga winked at me and said, "Yo, goblins!" Ramissur responded with a sinister grin, whispering, "No sweat." In a single move, all seven of us pulled out blades, wands, and other implements of war, ready to jump out of the coach.

One goblin jumped on the lead horse and the coach skidded to a halt in a cloud of dust. The rest of the badlanders formed two groups, one on each side of the coach. One pointed a large crossbow at the driver, the weapon so large that the goblin could barely handle it. "Put 'em up, pilgrim. Hey, you in there! Y'all get out with yer hands up!"

Armed to the teeth, our party leaped out of the coach on both sides, howling in our savage attack. I must say, it did surprise the badlanders. Half of their ponies either fell to *lightning bolts* or galloped away, dumping their riders in the process. Those goblins who fought us died. The rest were rounded up with their hands up high above their heads and rather contrite and fearful expressions on their faces.

"We better get a-goin' now!" said the driver. "Them badlanders normally ride by the hundreds." We could already hear the distant rumbling of hooves on the prairie, so we grabbed our prisoners' weapons and climbed back into the coach. As the driver whipped the horses, over 80 badlanders came charging around a hill. A wild chase began, the coach skidding and bouncing down the dirt path. Xerdon and Myojo hung out on the coach's footboards, having a grand time shooting the tiny crossbows we had taken from the badlanders—but not with

much effect, I would say. Occasionally, when a couple of badlanders got too close to the coach, I would let go with a *fireball*, prompting a round of "Ooh!" and "Aah!" from Lady Abovombe and Leo.

There were far too many of these goblins to handle. Nyanga soon climbed out and sat next to the driver, who had been wounded. Ramissur got on the top of the coach, firing his new dart-shooter.

Another wave of badlanders appeared ahead, blocking the way. We thought our last battle had come, but the sound of a bugle tore through the clamor of the chase. It was the cavalry! A column of regular horsemen appeared behind the goblins and bravely charged ahead, lances and sabres forward. Soon the badlanders rode back into the hills.

"Well done, captain!" said Lady Abovombe. The handsome officer in charge saluted briefly and responded, "Seventh Cavalry at your service, ma'am!"

**Burymir 1, Talasar, from a later account:** The thick clouds made it impossible to chart our position. For all that I knew, we were hundreds of miles away from the admiral. I dared not climb above the clouds to sight on the stars, for this would expose the *Princess* to our pursuers.

We now had been playing hide and seek with the five Heldannic Warbirds over four days and nights. These ships seemed to have guessed my moves, at least quickly enough to catch up with the *Princess* before she could effectively break away. I suspected they were using some magical device. Our encounters had been at closer ranges each time; I could sense their grip getting tighter every day.

I decided to somehow get aboard one of the Warbirds. Perhaps I could discover what their secret was and destroy it. I knew I might not survive the attempt, but if I succeeded, the *Princess* would stand a better chance to break loose. I would then have to put Chief Engineer Raman in command, however. The man had never had the charge of a ship, and certainly not in an uneven combat situation. I had to meditate. Perhaps Razud would brighten my path through this darkness.



**Burymir 3, Haldemar:** At last, South Gulch. This mean little village had all the callousness of those greedy places built during a gold rush, except no gold was to be found here—just the deadly red ore, cinnabryl.

From what I could gather, South Gulch was a native turtle village overrun by red-ore miners a decade earlier. Turtles are strange turtle-like people, rather Guaridano in style as an ethnic group. Peaceful and quiet, the turtles offered little resistance to the rowdy miners. Fortunately, most of the miners moved years ago to the mine itself, eight miles northwest. Food shortages were a constant problem here, as bands of miners regularly came down from the hills and take whatever supplies might be in the village.

When the word got around we weren't miners, an old tortle came up to seek our help against the miners. He must have been a sage or a shaman, for he knew that the red ore had brought us here. (Of course, perhaps only those seeking the red ore would *ever* come here.) He said we would never get what we sought, as the mine was too well defended. The miners were notorious for not trading their ore to anyone else but an LB Trading Co. representative. That was the law in this county. Red ore trade was very heavily regulated, and the marshals were prompt to send out bounty hunters after those who acquired red ore illegally.

The old tortle candidly offered us his blessing, his house, and his food if we decided to help him. How could I refuse? I sensed there was more to this old chelonian than his knobby shell, though I had never dealt with his kind before. I could always find red ore some other time. I accepted his kind offer, which provoked a raised eyebrow from Xerdon.

**Burymir 3, Talasar, from a later account:** The dampness of the heavy darkness chilled me to my bones. Ashari quietly stood at the prow of the lifeboat while the *Princess* disappeared into the night behind us.

When I decided to put my plan into action, the small skiff was painted black and covered with a black canvas. When

Ashari heard a ship approaching astern of the *Princess*, she courageously volunteered to come with me. I would indeed need her help to maneuver in the dark around our pursuer and board it.

Indeed, the massive hull of a Warbird passed just above our lifeboat. As Ashari silently fastened our skiff to the ship's claws, I climbed aboard in search of a clue. The deck was busy. The knights had removed their chunky armor and put out all lanterns to avoid attracting the *Princess*'s attention. This darkness would be their undoing, though, for it allowed me to get belowdeck without being seen.

All hands were on the main deck for what seemed an imminent assault. There was no time to waste. I reached the stern of the ship unhindered, where I found a small chapel with an altar. From the icons, I could tell the chapel was devoted to Vanya, a warlike being.

Fastened to the deck was a large censer. Among the silver wisps of smoke I could see five golden sparks surrounding a red flicker. Each spark seemed linked to the other with a thin golden thread of light. It must have been their scrying device. Perhaps if I broke the link the enemy ships would lose their guidance. The contents of my flask on the burning incense seemed to do quite well in that respect.

I would have left then had it not been for a slight glow under the drapes covering the altar. There, I discovered a crystal urn; inside it was a hovering gem that pulsated and hummed as if a power radiated from it. I could feel my skin crawl and a slight tingle run through my scalp, an ominous sensation that great magic was at hand, a great magic that only high clerics understood, and that tapped directly into the Immortals' power. With a quick prayer to Razud, I slipped a glove on and moved toward the gem.

"Stop, you fool!" The warning was shouted from another door; a knight had walked in, sword unsheathed. "You will destroy us all, and you with it!"

There was only one way to ensure this ship would not repair its scrying device. I grabbed the stone as the knight lunged at

me. Suddenly, we were weightless; the Warbird rolled on its side and began a frightening dive. The knight and I tumbled across the room, each screaming in our fear. In seconds, the vessel began to break apart. The room burst, and I began to fall into the black, endless sky.

**Burymir 4, Haldemar:** It wasn't long before a new mob of miners came down the hills. There were 50 of them, screaming and galloping through the village on horseback. One of them managed to catch a slow-moving tortle with his lasso, dragging the poor thing behind his horse. That was enough!

One by one, the miners fell prey to Xerdon's well-choreographed defense, in which we all had parts. Nyanga skillfully dismounted a number of miners, casually striking them aside with the flat of his giant sword. Meanwhile, several young turtles knocked Nyanga's victims out and tied them up into neat piles. Leo had devised several traps to immobilize the miners. His best consisted of a series of four spears mounted on a ballista; when shot, the spears would spread apart, deploying a large net. Lady Abovombe's bolas worked beautifully against the miner's horses, too.

Myojo then led a fine charge against a massive group of miners; behind him ran a mob of tortles armed with pots, pans, pitchforks, and other things. As for Ramisur, he became an ace at shooting the tiny crossbows. I thought he overdid it when he walked across the main street spinning the crossbows around on his trigger fingers each time he hit a target. How he learned to do that—and why—is beyond me.

Eventually, the whole fight came down to the miners' leader and me. "Come out of yer rat hole and face me if yer a real man, wizard!" he roared. He stood in the middle of the street, waiting for me. I couldn't disappoint him. He had his dart-shooter, and I had my *wand of lightning bolts*. Fair enough.

It was high noon. I could barely see his eyes under the brim of his hat. No one moved. A tumbleweed blew across the street. A puff of dust twisted up in the air.

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His mouth twitched. Suddenly, the man reached for his weapon.

I was faster.

His charred remains were buried on Boot Hill by sundown. The tortles paid their respects to his grave, then quietly returned to their chores. The surviving miners left. They knew the tortles would fight them from then on, and they had no stomach for the battle.

**Burymir 4, Talasar, from a later account:** I fell through the blasting wind and thought that Razud had finally severed the thread of my life. But such was not my fate.

The gem I had captured from the Heldannic Warbird had kept it flying. The crystal urn enabled the gem's power to shoot forth in all directions. I had surmised that a number of receptacles to receive this magic had been spread out in the ship, solidly anchored in its hull. Once removed from the urn, the gem kept its magic to itself—and the ship fell.

Of course, the gem did keep me hanging in the air; I desperately clung to it as

the Warbird's remains vanished into the cloudy depths below. Under my weight, the gem slowly dug into my leather glove. In agony, I called for Ashari. At last she showed up, amazed at seeing me hanging in the sunlit morning clouds. Exhausted from the pain in my hand and arm, I finally let go and fell into the life-boat. Freed, the gem shot up into the sky like a rising star. There was no telling where it went. Perhaps it returned to the celestial vault, to twinkle forever among the stars and the Immortals.

**Burymir 5, Raman, from a later account:** I was afraid to think the worst. Commander Talasar had not returned from his mission against the Heldannic Knights. I was the last officer left on board. I could maneuver the *Princess Ark*, but my attempts at communicating with her spirit yielded only sluggish responses. Nonetheless, I was fortunate enough to have pulled a few useful tomes from my library. I located a few pages of tactical hints in the *Imperial Airman's Manual*—these came in handy later on.

At this point, either Commander Talasar had succeeded in his mission or he was dead. Judging from Ashari's absence, I believed the latter to be true. If the Warbirds could still find us here—and they would, sooner or later—we would probably be better off fighting in the open, where the boltmen could see their targets. I managed to get the *Princess* to climb above the clouds. According to the manual, I would at least have the advantage of altitude.

There were no Warbirds there. Suddenly, the spirit of Berylith spotted something. Her spectral head turned down to starboard, allowing me to see what she was looking at. Far below, barely visible in the swirling clouds, was the tip of a mast emerging ever so slightly from the clouds. That could only be one of them.

I must have thought very "loudly" then, for Berylith reacted swiftly. She roared at the target, causing a hail of blue bolts and fiery death to pour over the Warbird's deck. We could hear the horrified screams of her crew. The ship quickly



performed an evasive maneuver and ducked deeper into the clouds. We had become the hunters, and they the hunted. Long live the Empire!

Soon after our attack came another surprise. Somehow, the Warbirds did not seem as coordinated as they had previously. Had Talasar indeed succeeded? Had the Warbirds been deprived of their cunning? The answer to this came in the thick clouds, as the diving Warbird collided with another vessel with an explosive bang. Both went down in flames. The *Princess* followed their flight down and emerged beneath the clouds, into a pouring rain. There, we watched the two Warbirds tumble down and crash into the dark, stormy sea below. In the distance, two other Warbirds dove out of the clouds and retreated at full speed. I knew we had won.

Hours later we recovered Commander Talasar and First Class Navigator Ashari, drifting in the wind and frantically scooping water out of their lifeboat. At long last it was time to retrieve the admiral.

**Burymir 8, Haldemar:** It would have been another week before the coach would return to South Gulch. The tortles kindly led us back to Smokestone City through a forest shortcut. Before we finally parted, the old chelonian came to me again. He thanked me for our help—and our martial training to his people—and handed me a small gift, a token of his friendship.

Later that day, Talasar greeted us back on the *Princess*. Raman was standing by with a broad smile on his face and a small ribbon on his chest: a red stripe with a golden bolt, the ribbon normally awarded after a commanding officer's first combat mission. Raman? Commanding officer? Combat? I then noticed a small bandage around Talasar's right hand. I would have to ask him about that, but first I wanted to check that gift.

It was a skillfully painted turtle egg. Judging from the weight, it felt almost empty. The bottom easily came off, with a simple twist of the hand. Inside, wrapped in velvet, was a small rock. A small red rock. Cinnabryl.

## The Lords of the Forest

*In Which Prince Haldemar Meets the Valiant King of Robrenn Who Scorns His Help; a Great Red Dragon Meets Her Doom; and Talasar and Nyanga Join Druids Against an Orcish Horde*

**Burymir 14, AY 2000:** We had been flying over a previously unknown kingdom west of a small Vilaverdan colony the day before. In the evening, we observed a large city near a forest, probably the capital of this region. Great beauty graced this city's all-wooden architecture, so I decided to have a closer look. Talasar, Myojo, Nyanga, and I landed just before dawn this morning, a few miles north in the forest. The rumblings of a storm echoed in the dark. The *Princess* would remain up in the sky, watching for Heldannic Warbirds among the clouds; since Raman's battle last week, there had been no further sign of them. I put Xerdon in charge, with Raman at his side for in-depth combat training.

No sooner had we had set foot in this misty forest than there arose the sound of a battle. The clang of metal and the mighty roar of a monster echoed through the woods. We hurried to investigate. In a small clearing stood a red dragon, poised to release its fiery breath at a gallant knight clothed in green. The raging storm of fire fell upon the man as he plunged his blade into the beast's crimson-scaled hide. The knight fell to his knees—alive, but just barely. Horrified by the spectacle, we reached for our weapons, hoping to aid the knight. Suddenly, I felt the cold edge of a blade under my throat. "Move not, strangers," spoke a cool voice, "for this is not your battle." I glanced over and saw the warning came from another knight.

Six other knights appeared around us. They all wore the same green garb and armor as the noble warrior in the clearing. We were evidently not to be killed, so we turned our attention back to the fight. The dragon pawed at the sword stuck in its chest, trying to rip it out. It prepared to breathe again. Raising both

hands toward the sky, the knight chanted a vigorous psalm. Lightning suddenly flashed and struck the sword's pommel, driving the searing electricity straight into the wyrm's heart. The dragon coiled and uncoiled in agony. Finally, roaring its pain, the beast fell heavily to the ground.

This knight was not an elf, nor had he uttered a paladin's spell. What magic was this that allowed a knight to strike this dragon so deadly a blow from the skies?

At the moment, a curious character walked up to the knight. Bare-chested, wearing only striped breeches and a red cloak, the newcomer threw a golden braid back over his shoulder and began to play a lyre while reciting a poem, an ode of a sort:

*King Edwix bad but one dread,  
That fell the sky on his head.  
But fall it'll not by 'morrow,  
So fear naught, O Night Harrow.*

Rain suddenly began to fall.

"Will you shut up, you blasted idiot?" roared the wounded knight, whom we took to be the king. "By Cernunn, what is with you? Have you signed a pact with Taranos to drown us all in his rain?" The bard tossed his head and walked away.

Clearing his throat, the knight before me put his sword away and added, "King Edwix does get rather cranky in the morning!" Indeed.

The king finally stood up and returned, wounded and burned, to his knights. He was either a powerful man or very lucky. "Who are you, strangers?" he asked.

"Prince Haldemar of Alphatia, and my escort," I replied.

"Eh? Never heard of it," grumbled the king. "I am tired. Follow me to my camp."

I could not help admiring the workmanship of the king's armor. Tiny leaves and branches were delicately carved into the plates. Then I realized this was no metal armor; it looked more like wood, perhaps petrified or somehow turned into metal. In fact, all these knights wore the same style of armor, and their weapons, too, were made of that odd iron. Dark green cloaks concealed the men well, except for the cloaks' delicate golden trim or the occasional glint of





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armor. Their helms all bore large deer antlers, and in the eerie morning mist the knights looked like surreal creatures of the forest. Without waiting, they and their king all rode away.

The bard alone remained. "They always do that," he said, "but don't let that intimidate you, my lord. They enjoy playing hard to catch. Comes with the antlers. I guess we'll have to walk, then." He added, "Might I compose a sonnet for our journey back to the royal camp?"

"Er, thank you, but no. We've already had our morning ballad, truly."

"Oh," he sniffed, disappointed.

On our way to the camp, our new friend and guide, the bard Voxpopulix, told us more about our bizarre encounter. The king was on a quest. Druidic tradition demanded that he return to the hallowed forest to meet his end should he fail his duty. He had until next summer's druids' gathering to complete his quest. He had to do so alone, without help from anyone, to prove his valor. This was very serious business with the druids. In this case, he was to slay a mother dragon, Greudnax. The one he had destroyed this morning was her daughter. The king was still seeking Greudnax's secret lair.

It soon became clear we were well inside the druids' hallowed forest. This caused great discomfort to both Talasar and Nyanga. My first officer detested treading uninvited upon others' sacred grounds; Nyanga had a great respect for things of nature, especially forest spirits.

A billowing fog suddenly rose from the ground. It was so thick it could only be someone's uncanny magic. Suddenly, a net fell from above. We were captured with ease; within minutes, we and our bard friend stood before the druids.

Angered, the druids were. Bound and gagged, we were brought to the sanctum sanctorum, the heart of the Great Druidess' hallowed grove. As we quickly learned, no one but a druid was allowed to enter the sacred woods. Until late that day, a crowd of druids debated on whether to sacrifice us to the Immortal Breig or the Immortal Cernuinn—by the sickle or by the cauldron. At last the

Great Druidess questioned Voxpopulix. Our situation greatly improved when they learned that the king had invited us to his camp after defeating Greudnax's daughter. Since we had a legitimate reason for being in the forest, they chose to set us free—up to a point, that is.

Talasar and Nyanga—why did it have to be them?—were kept as hostages. Myojo, Voxpopulix, and I were free to leave. We had until the next moon to accomplish our business; only then would the hostages be released. I had no quarrel with the Great Druidess, nor did I desire one. Since druids show only limited respect for foreign nobility, negotiation was of little help, and violence was out of the question. At Voxpopulix's insistence, we left without further argument. He feared for our safety, for the druids could be cruel when offended. Clearly our mere presence was offensive.

**Burymir 15:** At last we made it to the camp—but it was empty. Someone had ransacked it. Voxpopulix pulled a black arrow from one of the tents. "Cassivellonians—a northern orc tribe," he said. "What are they doing here?" It was hard to tell whether the king had been caught.

Their tracks in the wet soil were easy to follow. We had been trailing the orcs for hours when, inexplicably, the tracks ended. There, a small path seemed to wind through the thicket. I suspected an ambush when I heard leaves rustle. I could have sworn someone whispered my name, but it could not have been one of my companions. Myojo readied his great bow, expecting the worst, when a majestic stag stepped out of the bushes. It calmly gazed at us, then sprang back into the brush.

This couldn't be the orcs' doing. We followed. The stag appeared a few more times, always at a fair distance ahead. Oddly, every time I glanced back, I could no longer see the path we had followed. We were being led. Fog rose again, muffling sounds and masking our sight.

Suddenly, in a swirl of the mist, a shape walked by, ignoring us completely. Grotesque and hunched, the figure snorted and cursed in a guttural voice. Myojo was

ready, knee to the ground and arrow cocked. Voxpopulix was nowhere to be seen. Naturally, my wand found its way into my hand.

The fog dissipated somewhat, revealing about 30 orcs and a chieftain crouching behind bushes in a narrow gully, watching the tracks they had left earlier. Their scouts had probably spotted us earlier, and their chieftain had set up an ambush. The mysterious path, however, had lead us to the orcs' left flank, at one end of the gully. We were perfectly set to attack.

Pandemonium and panic ensued as my *lightning bolt* struck their packed ranks. Many of the orcs died instantly. The survivors quickly scattered, running for cover. A deadly game of hide-and-seek followed, with enraged orcs sporadically charging out from hidden spots. They quickly fell to Myojo's arrows or to his swirling silver blade.

I smelled the foul breath of an orc behind me, but it fell dead into my arms when I turned around. With a wink, Voxpopulix wiped his elegant ivory blade on the orc's garb. He had been hiding behind me in the shade of the undergrowth. A curious character, indeed!

Soon enough, the few remaining orcs retreated and vanished into the forest. They left a prisoner behind them—one of the king's knights. His companions had died while delaying the orcs, he said. The orcs had learned of the king's quest and had come to capture him. The king had barely enough time to escape and continue his quest—truly alone this time.

There was no time to waste. I had to find the king. Surely there were more orcs around. It would do no good if the king died now. Voxpopulix and the knight argued against intervening: Almighty Breig would watch over him. In a pig's eye! No Immortal is worth three feet of cold steel and good magic to boot when it comes to orcs. This was war!

**Burymir 15, Talasar, from a later account:** "And what sort of a cleric are you, stranger?" the young druid asked. The apprentice had been observing me for some time, clearly impressed with my hammer. "Do you honor Tuatis?"



I gathered that Tuatis was the local name for Thor, a powerful Immortal in the north, patron of wars. The young druid, Cucurbita (Pepo to his friends), proudly showed me his own wooden war mallet, a rather large one that he had used to crush orcish heads several times in the past.

As we spoke, another druid came running down a path. He brought news of a nearby fire in the woods, obviously the work of Greudnax the dragon. The druids made for the blaze. Neither Nyanga nor I wanted to stay behind, so we joined in the effort. The druids displayed great skill and magic in fighting the fire. Fortunately, my hammer could extinguish flames, too. I had used it to this effect a number of times on wooden ships. Its magic is potent indeed.

This impressed the druids tremendously. Later in the night when the fire was contained, the Great Druidess declared, "Priest of Razud, the iron in your hammer we dislike, but its power to smother fire is a good portent. Your help was precious to us. You and your friend warrior are free to come and go as you please until the return of your companions."

Pepo stood by me, his hand on my shoulder. "He's my friend!" he said proudly. I guess we won't end up being nailed to an oak after all.

**Burymir 16, Haldemar:** The knight, Ariovix, woke me when he jumped from a branch in a tree. "There was fire in the south last night," he said. "It was Greudnax's work, but the druids smothered it. I heard the dragon fly by just after sunset. Her lair could be close. Breig must have guided us here."

Indeed, we found a cavern by sunrise. The ground had collapsed recently, opening an entrance to a deep cave. The dragon must have moved there no more than a few months ago.

Voxpopulix and Ariovix refused to move farther. If the dragon was there, so was the king, and this dragon was the object of the king's quest before Almighty Breig. I could not convince them otherwise. Myojo and I moved on.

We reached a ledge overlooking a deeper cavern. The king was at the bottom. When he saw us, he yanked down the grappling hook he had used to climb down, denying us a way to reach him. Brandishing his sword, he shouted, "Return whence you came, wizard! She's mine!"

As I pondered a way to help, we heard a beastly breathing from the sky. The dragon was flying back from a night of devastation. I hoped she had expended her fire.

Greudnax landed nearby, then crawled and slithered past without noticing us. The king ducked behind a rock. Within moments, Greudnax coiled up in a corner of the cave and fell asleep.

The king left his hiding place and began to move toward the dragon, his sword out. Movement caught my eye then. Above the king, on a ledge, an orc was watching. I saw the humanoid open his mouth to warn Greudnax—but his breath was cut short when one of Myojo's arrows struck him in the head. He slumped silently.

Greudnax snorted, then sniffed. She opened an eye, just enough to see what was happening. From where he stood, the king could not have noticed the dragon's awakening. With a spell of *ventriloquism*, I whispered a word of warning to the king. He responded with an angry look in my direction.

Suddenly, the dragon's head whipped toward the king. The king was ready for her. With his heavy broadsword, he hacked off a piece of the dragon's lip, infuriating the wyrm. Her cavernous roar was a deafening, blood-curdling sound.

Scores of orcs appeared at the ledge, alerted by the dragon. They encountered Myojo and me instead. We barely succeeded in stopping their assault using spells and arrows. The orcs came in waves, indifferent to their casualties. Meanwhile, the king was engaged in a heroic fight against Greudnax. Several times Greudnax nearly caught and swallowed him whole, but always he managed to avoid her lethal bite. He was a true warrior.

In desperation, Greudnax reared back and breathed a vast cone of red flame upon the king. The monster had fire left inside her! The dragon's thunderous laughter shook the cavern as the king, wreathed in flames, cried out in agony. The dragon turned toward us and thundered, "You are next, wizard!" I pointed my wand at Greudnax, meaning to *disintegrate* her ugly head.

"No! Leave her to me!" cried the king. Limping and bearing horrible burns, he dragged his sword behind him as he staggered into battle. "Twas I who slew thy daughter, evil beast! And slay thee I shall, as well!"

The dragon glanced at the wounded king and brushed him away with her tail. Greudnax turned calmly back toward me. "Go ahead, wizard. Use your wand, if you dare! Slay me, and you'll sentence your king to death as well."

What could I do? Either I slaughtered this wyrm and the king would have to die before the Great Druidess, or I didn't—and the dragon would certainly kill the king then. Either way, the king was a dead man. I supposed that I could talk some sense into these superstitious druids later on. So be it.

"Well, old wizard, I want your answer," taunted the dragon. "Hesitating, are we?"

I drew myself up. "It seems my choices are limited, dear Greudnax, but you know—I don't care!" I raised my wand and aimed right at Greudnax's head.

At my answer, the dragon opened her eyes wide in astonishment. Ah, but this was one lucky beast. With horror, I saw my magic strike the monster—then fizzles and gurgle as it liquefied on the dragon's scales, dripping to the ground as nauseating, putrid ectoplasm. My wand should have disintegrated the beast—but she had resisted it. She laughed again and cried, "Now you are mine!"

She took a deep breath, ready to fry Myojo and me, when suddenly the king stood up before her and stabbed his sword into the dragon's neck. Valiantly, the king twisted the blade in the wound and, ripping a gash through her scales, jammed it up to the hilt into the dragon's



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throat. Deep in shock, Greudnax had to release the fiery storm inside her chest. She turned and breathed heavily at the king, but no blaze shot forth. Instead, a few flames hissed and sizzled through her throat wound. Then Greudnax's entire chest exploded; flesh, ribs, scales, and bits of incandescent ichor flew through the cavern.

So died the red dragon Greudnax at the hands of King Edwix I, the Night Harrow.

**Burymir 17, Talasar, from a later account:** I witnessed a strange activity among the druids. Immediately after a messenger arrived, the druids sacrificed a lamb. They spilled its blood into a large cauldron, which the Great Druidess then used as a *crystal ball*. There, in the troubled fluid, she saw the mangled carcass of a red dragon. Beside it stood an orc chief. He dipped his sword into the beast's ichor, raised it, and with ugly cries exhorted his followers to revenge. I assumed that the king had succeeded.

For the next several hours, the druids worked around the cauldron, bringing various ingredients from the forest. When the brew was ready, the Great Druidess blessed it, and all present partook of the beverage. Nyanga and I were invited to join. It gave us strength, so much that I could wield my hammer with unusual ease. The druids planned to battle the orcs, and there would be no survivors among the defeated. We set out at once.

By nightfall, we had reached the savage horde. The battle was brief but deadly. Against us were many hundreds of orcs, ogres, and trolls. The orcs, infuriated by the death of their living idol, showed no fear and displayed great cunning in their tactics. Despite their knowledge of the forest and their powers over the forces of nature, many druids died. Pepo did well with his wooden mallet, and I saw him bash to death an ogre who hadn't seen him coming.

At the height of the battle, something odd happened. The sound of a hunting horn echoed through the forest. Fog rose from the ground, allowing our force to retreat up a small hill. Suddenly, bears,

eagles, stags, boars, wild cats, black wolves, and even clouds of buzzing insects charged the orcs. Leading them was a ghostly knight with antlers.

Buckling before the wild charge, the orcish horde finally escaped down a small trail. I learned later that spirits of the forest had changed the path and led the orcs to a deadly cliff. In the mist, the entire horde met its doom on the ravine's jagged rocks.

**Burymir 18, Haldemar:** Ariovix and Voxpopulix somberly carried their wounded king. He hadn't uttered a single word since his battle against Greudnax. The other two said little more. By luck, we saw no sign of the orcs. We reached the druids' camp this inglorious afternoon.

The Great Druidess was waiting among her entourage. Ariovix helped the king to his feet. "Great Druidess," he said, "the time has come to return to thee my father's sword and shield, for I have sinned in my quest. The beast has died, but fate allowed the hand of strangers to disgrace my endeavor. And for this, I long to embrace the spirit of Breig."

Whispers rose among the druids. "The honor is yours, Edwix, son of Othual. You have done well. The land flourished under your rule, and so will it bloom again. Your wish will be granted, O King of Robrenn."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. How could they part with such a great man? All this clerical mumbo-jumbo irritated me to no end. A horrible feeling of guilt and doubt clutched my heart. Desperate, I stepped forward and cried, "Great Druidess! I must respectfully object!"

Angry muttering rippled through the gathering, but I plunged on. "I ask you, who else but Almighty Breig could have led us to defeat your foes? Was it not She who cleared the way to King Edwix? Was it not She who guided my hand at the heart of the battle? This was Her will. I see no disgrace here!"

The Great Druidess silenced the crowd. "Your intentions are noble, O Wizard, but this is not our way. There are other matters than the death of a beast. All that

lives shall die, and all that die shall be reborn. Indeed, it was Breig who guided your hand—but She desires him who embodies Her land to stand by Her side. You shall take the sword, the shield, and the story of Edwix to his palace at Eyf and present them to the son of the Night Harrow, for he shall be king herafter."

**Burymir 20:** It was with no pleasure that I greeted the rising sun this day. Ariovix led us to the great hall at Eyf, where we met the king's son. Our host knew what to expect when he saw his father's sword and shield.

My actions caused this young man's sorrow, and I was powerless to ease his pain. He took the sword and shield and placed them before the throne. He then gazed into my eyes, looking for a sign, but it was he who bore the sign, for I could see in his eyes the dark, intense look of his father. Truly, the father was reborn.

The young monarch finally left to mourn. I was lost in sad thoughts when I felt a hand on my shoulder. Ariovix stood by me. "Grieve not, my lord. You listened to your heart. You who scorn the Immortals should understand that they weave your fate and wove that of others before you." He handed me a braid of black hair, bound in a golden cap. "He wanted you to have this, and remember. Leave in peace, O Prince."

*At the song of a mage  
She roared all her rage,  
But the daughter of Nyl  
By a king met her blight.*

*As her blood soaked the earth  
A new lord saw his birth,  
For the King of Robrenn  
In Breig's arms shall remain.*

### Of Blood and Steel

*In Which Prince Haldemar and His Companions Are Caught in a Heldannic Trap and Myojo Must Fight a King*

**Burymir 23, AY 2000:** No more than a day after the events in Robrenn were



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concluded, we reached a fortified city southwest of Eyf. According to the Saragon Gazetteers, this was the capital of Eusdria, a pious realm of knights and paladins whose main enemies were the humanoid tribes of Yazak. I sent Raman as an envoy to announce my visit, and he came back before nightfall with a message of welcome from the king.

**Burymir 24:** I ordered the *Princess Ark* visible and approached the city's palace. Lady Abovombe, Talasar, Myojo, and I were to meet His Majesty, King Sigismund. A solid guard of knights awaited us, keeping the crowd away from our lifeboat. They all wore dull red armor with black and gold tabards. The castellan greeted us in the main hall, but as we prepared to enter the king's hall, the knights in red armor turned on us.

There was little we could have done; the knights were too many and too close, and resisting would have certainly cost the lives of my companions. I decided to go along with things for now. Perhaps we would soon discover what treachery this was. We were placed in shackles in the castle's dungeons.

Shortly, our cell was visited by a knight—a Heldannic knight! I should have known. "It seems that what five Warbirds could not accomplish, a provincial ally did all on its own," he said to us. "It is only a matter of time now before you will pay for your villainies against the Order." He turned to Talasar and concluded, "You, among them, will live the longest. You will wish you had died with that Warbird you destroyed. I shall take care of you personally." He slapped Talasar in the face and walked away. Myojo hissed with rage.

There was no point in remaining here. The knights had failed to remove all my belongings; under my cloak, I still had a pouch that contained my *wand of disintegration*. Abovombe was kind enough to kick off her shoes and reach for the pouch with her bare feet. Eventually, she managed to get the wand and lift it to my hand. It pays to have dexterous toes!

The rest seemed easy. The knights expected us to be in this cell, so I had a

chance to find the king and teach him a lesson. Myojo would remain with me while Talasar and Abovombe were to return to the ship.

Unfortunately, the plan was only half successful. Shortly after Talasar and Abovombe escaped through a balcony of the main hall, a squad of guards surprised and captured Myojo and me. These were well-trained guards, although different from our earlier captors. They wore normal steel armor with blue tabards, and they knew nothing about us. Immediately afterward, the knights whom we had first met came in, and an argument developed; there was clearly tension between their two leaders. The captain of the guard arrived and inquired about the commotion. Eventually, it was decided that we were to be kept under guard of the "blue tabards" until a council could be held. The "black tabards" seemed rather angry at the decision, but bore it.

**Burymir 24, Talasar, later that day:** The *Princess Ark* was gone when we escaped from the palace. Three Warbirds swooped over, not seeing us, sailing full speed toward the southwest where we caught a glimpse of the *Princess* turning invisible on the horizon. She was ready for battle, but we could not intervene.

We turned back to rejoin our companions, but it became evident that the admiral and his aide had been captured again. We saw the guards take them upstairs in the keep. Lady Abovombe and I agreed to investigate the situation further and free the admiral from his captors.

**Burymir 25,, Haldemar:** We spent the night in rather spartan quarters in the castle's keep. It was a far cry from our earlier dungeon cell, though. At least we had some hope of discovering what was going on.

In the morning, the captain of the guard came and led us to the king: a kind and impressive man. I could tell he had elven blood in his ancestry. Fortunately, he had heard of our visit in Robrenn.

Among the people in the king's hall were knights of different orders, including the "blues" and the "blacks." I gathered that the "blues" were the king's per-

sonal guard. Several nobles attended the hearing, including a few magistrates and, of course, the Heldannic envoy who visited us in the dungeon.

"Your Majesty," I began, "how is it that a visiting prince from the Empire of Alphatia is treated in such dishonorable fashion? We came in peace and with a message of welcome from Your Majesty."

"Silence, Alphatian dog!" the Heldannic knight interrupted. "You stand accused of piracy and murder!"

The king raised a hand. "Steady, Herr Ulrich. There is the question of the message given to Prince Haldemar—a message that was given in our royal name. We, King of Eusdria, wish this issue to be clarified first."

The captain of the guard stood up and said, "Your Majesty, someone indeed spoke in your name. The royal mayor of the palace received the prince's messenger and arranged for the Knights of Harstal to capture the prince and his retinue. The royal bailiff and the lord of the squires will testify to this."

The king signaled his guards. "Very well. Have the royal mayor arrested at once and brought here for questioning. We shan't tolerate undue use of our Royal Seal." Several nobles muttered in anger as the king postponed the hearings. The king's guard escorted us back to our quarters in the keep. Our sergeant-keeper turned out to be a fine fellow. He explained that his men were both to protect the king against foreigners and to protect us against any foes. It seemed there were long-lasting feuds among many of the factions in the palace. He requested that we swear on our honor to remain in our assigned quarters, and this we did.

**Burymir 25, Talasar, later that day:** Lady Abovombe and I had hidden ourselves on the balcony that led to the Heldannic knight's chamber. In the darkness when evening came, we began climbing the north side of the keep, hoping to find the admiral and that no harm had befallen him. Soon we heard instead the Heldannic knight ranting in his rooms. We listened.

"What an outrage!" fumed the knight. "How dare they even speak against the mayor! I'll have the captain's head for this." We peeked in and saw the knight was addressing the men who had captured us on our first day here. "Once this annoying Alphatian wizard is dispatched," he continued, "be prepared to act. No matter what happens, keep Morgund near the throne. The king must be removed from power for your order to rise. You shall receive more red steel, as we agreed."

This talk of treachery went on for some time. We had to reach the admiral at once. Alphatia had no business in this affair, but anything benefitting the Heldannic Order could only mean trouble for Alphatia.

**Burymir 26, Haldemar:** The hearing started anew this morning. Both the royal bailiff and the lord of the squires testified against the mayor of the palace, who was promptly sentenced to the dungeons. He was dragged away in disgrace, claiming he had been framed by the captain of the guard.

The Heldannic Knight then stood and said, "Your Majesty, these people are notorious pirates. Clearly they have come here to seize Your Majesty's treasure. It wouldn't be above this wizard's ability to forge your Royal Seal or to have the mayor of the palace framed as a way to escape. It is a disgrace to see that the captain of the guard and his cronies are using this opportunity to damage their rival's long-standing reputation of loyalty to Your Majesty and to the Kingdom of Eusdria!"

"We are *not* pirates!" I objected vehemently. "We are a legitimate vessel of Her Imperial Majesty's fleet. We are here only seeking to establish diplomatic relations between Your Royal Majesty and the Empire. We are the ones being stalked and attacked by the Heldannic Knights!"

The knight laughed. "Ha! Listen to this fiend talk! He has become an outcast in his own nation. He has been rejected by the very Empress Eriadna herself and forever exiled from his own empire. He

treacherously attacked a Heldannic Prowler on a mission of peace over the coast of Hule. The Heldannic skyship was mercilessly obliterated after it had stricken its pennants, and all aboard were so murdered! How could anyone trust such a criminal? Your Majesty, I beseech you in the name of the Heldannic Order to have these brigands executed at once!"

The king's face became grave. "Is it true, Prince Haldemar, that you are guilty of such an act?"

I nodded. "Heldannic vessels had been stalking us for a long time. The Heldannic Prowler refused to heave to after our warning shots, and then used a magical power that almost destroyed our vessel. We had no choice but to prevent this magic from being used again. This was indeed a tragic episode, Your Majesty, but in times of war, incidents such as this one are bound to happen."

The king sighed. "We see no evidence of treachery so far. However, since you cannot prove your absolute innocence, you will have to leave this kingdom at once. True justice cannot be rendered today."

The knight stood up and said loudly, "Ah, but it can, Your Majesty! There is a way! The Eusdrian Code of Chivalry allows trial by combat. The Immortals will see that the culprit is punished. I demand a duel by the sword with this pirate!"

The captain of the guard raised a hand. "Your Majesty, His Highness, the Prince of Haaken, cannot possibly defeat a knight by the sword. There would be no honor in this duel!"

The king was solemn. "Indeed. Well, then, the Code of Chivalry allows one who cannot fight to choose a champion! What say you, Prince?"

Of course, I immediately chose Myojo. He would be more than capable in this situation. The king accepted this and postponed the fight until the next dawn.

**Burymir 26, Talasar, from a later account:** It soon became evident that we could not enter what we suspected to be the admiral's quarters. We spent most of the day trying to find a way to get around

the guards in the hallways, but the place was too well guarded. Both the king and the admiral seemed out of reach. At last, we decided to return to the Heldannic knight's chambers. If all else failed, we could capture and trade him for the admiral. We saw the knight leave the castle in the evening, and we followed him.

He went to a tavern where he spoke to a wench wearing a hood, gave her a vial, and left. We attempted to capture him in a quiet street, but he was a good warrior; he resisted my magic and fought well. We wounded but did not capture him. The noise of the fight attracted far too many bystanders, and we had to retreat.

I could only think of one more thing we could do. Razud had no following in these lands, but there were many temples in the city. Perhaps there Razud would show us a path out of trouble.

**Burymir 27, Haldemar:** All parties were at the site of the duel. Skittish horses with jousting lances and bardings were ready for both parties, but the Heldannic knight was nowhere to be seen when the time came.

He arrived a bit later, with some help from a squire. The man bore a bandage around his chest and looked pale. "Your Majesty, I was treacherously attacked last night by followers of the pirate. I am powerless against their poison, and thus unable to fight this day."

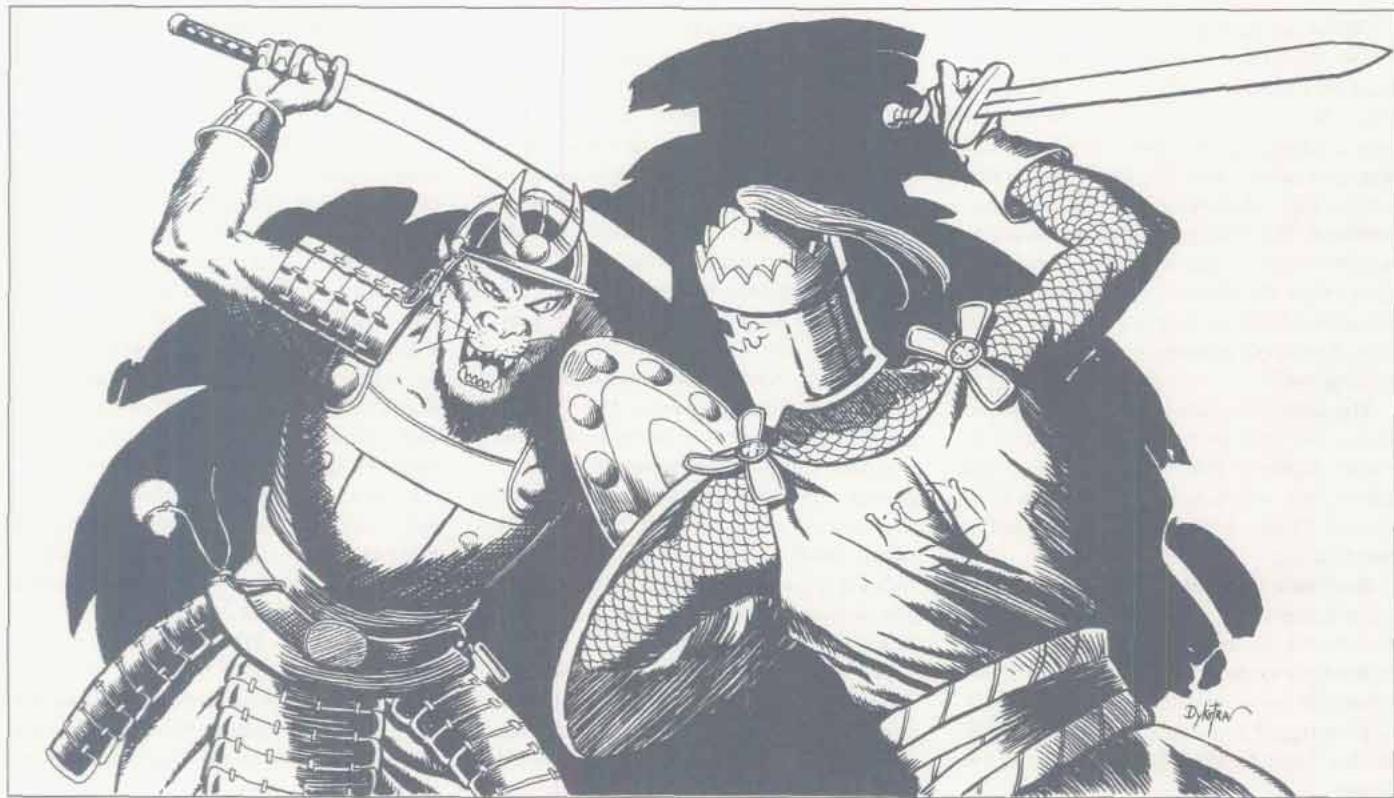
"You must then choose a knight champion," announced the king calmly. "The fight must take place, for today the Immortals watch!"

With a grin, the Heldannic knight responded, "Your Majesty, I see but only one knight here whom I can trust. It is your sword that will bring the truth. I choose you as my champion!"

There was an uproar. The captain of the guard begged the king not to fight, as it would be to the death, but the king accepted. It was a matter of honor. The king spent a moment of peace in his tent so he could prepare for the battle.

Indeed, the fight took place. Myojo was tremendously worried and embarrassed. He could not possibly bow out, yet he was requested to strike a king. The battle





began. The king soon forced Myojo off his horse and continued the combat on foot, where both displayed great swordsmanship. This was a very short fight, though. No more than a few strokes into the battle, the king suddenly dropped his guard and Myojo's blade hit him an inch above the heart. The king fell without a murmur as the crowd roared. The captain rushed to his help, promptly carrying him back to his tent. We quickly learned that the king was dying—the second king whose death would be because of me.

The Heldannic knight smiled tightly at me. "You seem to have won, wizard. What a shame."

A stuttering noble seized this tragic moment to claim his right to the throne of Eusdria. Behind him stood the Knights of Harstal, who wore the red armor. "The K-k-king is dead! I, C-count of Harstal, thereby c-c-claim my right to be the K-k-... my right to the throne!"

"Not so, dear count!" A knight who had been standing on the sidelines since the

beginning of the duel now walked over and stood before the count. He opened his helm. He was the king! What magic was this? How could he have died by Myojo's sword, then stand here in a suit of armor?

The king tried to calm the confusion. "Indeed I died, count, but there are many things in my power. You will have to wait your turn to rule this land. As far as these 'pirates' are concerned, Herr Ulrich, my death warrants their innocence, since it proved you to be wrong. I order you out of my kingdom at once."

**Burymir 28:** When at last I was allowed to see the king at the palace, I discovered both Talasar and Lady Abovombe sitting near him. "Prince Haldermar," he said jovially, "you have two very loyal friends. By chance, it seems, they reached the Temple of Tiuz and revealed what they had overheard in Herr Ulrich's chambers. The temple reached me with a message of warning against Morgund, my servant, who meant to slay me if all else

failed. She was found in her chambers last night with a dagger and vial of blade poison."

He then offered Lady Abovombe and Talasar quarters in the palace where they could rest. I was left alone with the king, and we relaxed as he explained at length what a predicament he was in. King Sigismund was very powerful from his use of cinnabryl, whose potencies he detailed for me. The red metal gave him unusual abilities, such as the one to create an *alchemical ego* that allowed him to dodge death.

Through the Heldannic knights, the king found a steady supply of cinnabryl—but he also suffered an unfortunate dependence upon the knights' services. Worse, the Heldannic envoys were gaining influence among his knights by offering them red steel. If the Empire of Alphatia could provide the king with a cure for cinnabryl addiction, he would gladly outlaw the Heldannic knights within the Kingdom of Eusdria. Otherwise, he could only struggle behind the scenes to

oppose Heldannic influence. His nobles were growing restless, and he could count on only a dwindling number of loyal knights for his defense.

Until such time as I could help him, I was to leave his lands, for he could not guarantee our safety within Eusdria. He was a wise and noble man, this King Sigismund, for he could see how his own thirst for power was leading him to his doom and to the ultimate corruption of his gallant kingdom.

## A Glass of Wine and the Honor of a King

*In Which Prince Haldemar Sees Much More Wine Than He Likes*

**Burymir 28, AY 2000:** After our misadventure in Eusdria, I almost forgot about the arrival of my birthday this year. I would have preferred to celebrate it quietly, but Talasar approached me this afternoon. He was concerned that the crew was a bit gloomy, being so far from home for so long. He suggested that he and Lady Abovombe organize a night of revelry in my honor. Everyone then got very busy, hanging garlands and paper lanterns and setting up tables. A marvelous smell soon wafted up from the galleys, and smiles began to show on some somber faces. By evening, crew members were bantering with one another about my age: was I fifty-five today or eighty-nine? Time warps can be very confusing.

The celebration was indeed memorable. The ship's band played marvelously well, adding a touch of magic to their own talent. Lady Abovombe and I opened the ball, quickly followed by officers and their partners and finally by the crew. By midnight, several barrels of punch accomplished what several days of furlough couldn't. The polite festivities of the evening turned into a cheerful carnival, especially after Leo unveiled a chest full of confetti bags, rolls of streamers, toy flutes, and ridiculous gnomish hats with feathers, pom poms, and other garish things.

They were an instant hit, but they left a horrendous mess on the deck. I myself concentrated on more upscale pleasures, enjoying some wonderful sparkling beverage from Glantri. I discovered that I knew the steps of a square dance I had seen in Cimarron County. Things got a bit fuzzy after that. It was Myojo who kindly helped me back to my quarters, I think.

**Nyimir 1:** The sound of gigantic waves crashing on the deck, as if from a storm, woke me up that day. The roar was unbearable. At the thought of water on the decks of the *Princess Ark*, I jumped up, bumping my head on a joist. It felt like Talasar's mighty hammer falling upon an eggshell.

Forever cursed be thee, Immortal patron of hangovers! I should have never looked at anything Glantrian. That was no storm outside—only the ship's boy sweeping confetti off the deck, as I discovered with a few shouts from my room.

A thunderous knock at the door then rippled through the cabin, shaking the windows and echoing forever in my head. I staggered over to see who dared disturb my agony. "Haaken-san, the city of Louvines is in sight," Myojo said briskly, neatly attired and brushed. After a moment, he added, "You look pale, Haaken-san. Glantrian sparkling wine is no good? Please try ancient Myoshiman hangover medicine." My good friend left, then returned to hand me a tiny glass of his native medicine: saké. Soon nausea was added to my throbbing headache.

Slightly green-faced, I went topside to observe the city Myojo had named. Perhaps fresh air would do me good. I saw two crewmen still snoring their ethyl-induced dreams away, one perched on a mast and the other's lower half hanging out of an empty barrel. I also found Talasar, who looked rather shabby as he rubbed the back of his neck. I couldn't tell anything about Xerdon's condition, as he was bending too far over the railing.

Raman returned from a quick visit to the capital of royal Renardy. "Your Highness," he said, sweating heavily, "King Louis IV is expecting you to visit today at

the palace. He was very excited by our arrival." He looked queasy and added hurriedly, "May I return to my quarters now? I feel a bit fatigued." Without waiting for my answer, he ran toward the head, holding his belly.

No one volunteered for this diplomatic visit, of course, so it had to be Talasar, Myojo, and me. I heard several sighs of relief behind my back as we boarded the lifeboat.

A crowd of Renardois—why is there always a crowd?—awaited our arrival. They cheered. They applauded. We cringed. Some of the Renardois even howled, as hound-men apparently made up the majority of this crowd. I feared for a moment we had run into a werewolf lair, but these dog-people looked friendly. Ah, yes, lupins they were. Good fellows, if only they could yowl more quietly.

Myojo hissed when he saw and smelled the lupins. "Shut up, you!" muttered Talasar under his breath.

At last we arrived at the palace. Great brass horns announced our arrival, the horrendous sound echoing interminably through the courtyard and the hallways. We reached the throne room and the king, feeling barely alive.

"Ah, *cher* Prince!" cried the monarch, arms wide and a broad smile on his lupin muzzle. "*Bienvenue* ("Welcome") to Louvines! *Sacrebleu*, you look so tired! Ah, but of course, eet must be zee navy food. Please honor my table. Our chef, he has prepared zee best banquet for you. *C'est magnifique!* ("It's wonderful!")

There was food. There was wine. Then there was more food and more wine. A bottle of Glantrian sparkling stuff came around again. Much to my surprise, even the king sounded Glantrian—how could that be? The *pièce-de-résistance* finally showed up: a glazed boar with an apple in its mouth, stuffed with marinated pheasant *du chef* and potato-soufflé *à la Barbassone*. We ate as best we could.

The king then stood and proudly announced this year's Boisjolis-Nouveau vintage would be offered to all, an amazing first that overjoyed everyone but



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Talasar and me. Queen Fifrelyne whispered to me this great vintage was normally served only after the Brotherhood of Vintages had determined which wine was the best of Renardy. This Boisjolis-Nouveau was the king's family pride, his true *joie de vivre* (and, no doubt, soon to be my *coup de grâce*). The king was breaking tradition to honor our visit. I knew I should be grateful, but...

The king clapped his hands and called out, "Bring le Boisjolis-Nouveau at once!"

There was a crashing silence.

The king's steward bent down and muttered at the king's ear, too loudly to keep his secret a secret. "*Votre Majesté* ("Your Majesty"), *le Boisjolis-Nouveau—eet is gone!*"

Flaubergasted, the king replied, "*Comment? Plus de Boisjolis-Nouveau! Vite, vite! Retournez à Clairvaux!*" ("What? No more Boisjolis-Nouveau? Quick, quick, return to Clairvaux!")

With astonishment, the other nobles added, "*Morbleu! Quelle horreur! Trabison! Aux armes! A la guillotine!*" ("*Sacrebleu!* Shocking! To arms! To the guillotine!") The royal lupin guards trotted off in all directions. Gongs rang. Horns bellowed. In dismay, the chef threw his cap on the floor. The king walked away, furious, loudly voicing an endless stream of colorful deprecations. Thus ended the banquet in total chaos. We promptly retired to our chambers so that Talasar and I could hide our tortured heads under the pillows.

**Nyxmir 2:** A soft knock at the door woke me, early in the morning while it was still dark out. Queen Fifrelyne entered quietly. "Please forgive this intrusion, monsieur," she said. "I had to speak to you about what happened yesterday. You see, this wine is much more than it may seem. It is a symbol of prestige and power in Renardy. My husband is too proud to see you again after yesterday's humiliation. Worse yet, he fears that he'd become the kingdom's laughing stock if he sent his knights to seek the wine. I can hear the words of the town criers now: 'Royal knights on a quest for the holy vintage!' Only you could find the

wine without compromising my husband's honor. Please, I implore you, find what happened to this wine and who was behind this treachery. I fear this might lead to a dark conspiracy."

How could I refuse? This lupin lady had a way of batting her eyes that went straight to my heart. I agreed to look into the theft, and she left quickly, not wishing to be seen alone with me.

Later that morning, I took a stroll by the king's cellar. There, Mordicus, the royal steward, explained that he had left the cellar locked. The lock had been forced open during the banquet and the barrels stolen. Someone had them loaded on a wagon under cover of darkness, after a load of 13 barrels of Château Médor had just been delivered next door.

Mordicus knocked at a large barrel that sounded hollow. "*Parbleu!* ("*Sacrebleu!*") There eet is! They took all twelve barrels of the king's precious wine instead of zee empty barrels. Eet's terrible! In a few days, the Brotherhood of the Vintages, they will meet again and the king, he will not have his wine. The king, he made a bet with Monsieur le Duc d'Ysembragne that his Boisjolis-Nouveau was better than Monsieur le Duc's Château LaFifi-Trotteschild! If he loses the wager, oh la la... Madame Fifrelyne, she will be very, very angry with him."

Looking around a bit more, I found footprints in the cellar's soft ground. They looked like goblin-style hobnailed boots. In shock, Mordicus gasped, "*Mais Monsieur, comment... Des gobelins, ici? Saperlipopette!*" ("But sir, how... Goblins, here? *Sacrebleu!*")

Indeed, this was very fishy business. So far, I had three suspects: the Duke of Ysembragne, who had something to gain from all this; goblins; and the owner of the Château Médor vineyard, who delivered the wine and stole the barrels. Mordicus said this wine came from a vineyard in Ysembragne, past the village of St. Vézy. We had at least one link!

I needed Mordicus' help as a guide to reach St. Vézy. Mordicus suggested that his younger nephew, Croche-Patte, come with us, as the latter knew many people

in the shadier circles of Louvines. For my own safety, I brought Myojo as well. Myojo hissed upon meeting Mordicus and Croche-Patte, and Croche-Patte growled, but politely so, and he apologized immediately after Mordicus jabbed his nephew in the ribs. Myojo then sniffed, and Croche-Patte snorted. As for Talasar, he had gone off with a group of nobles for a visit to the Great Wall of Louvines. I envied him for a moment. He was getting off easy this time.

**Nyxmir 3:** We quietly went through St. Vézy and found the path to Château Médor. The lord of the mansion, Monsieur Ducroc, received us. He explained his two retainers came back from their trip to Louvines, having been beaten up by dwarves a few miles before the bridge there. The dwarves then stole their wagon, horse, and wine barrels. Monsieur Ducroc was very surprised when he received payment from the royal reeve for receiving the wine shipment.

We questioned the two fellows about the dwarves who attacked them. "Well, *M'sieur le Prince*," said the first, "the dwarves, they were ragged, a bit skinny with a sickly green skin." The second added, "*Oui, oui, M'sieur le Prince*, their beards, too, they looked full of moths!"

We saw none of the king's barrels in the cellar. Without any other evidence, we had to follow the goblin lead. We reached the site of the fight before evening, near the bridge of Louvines.

There, Croche-Patte recognized the odor of the two beaten retainers from Château Médor. He also identified the odor of goblins—not dwarves. The goblins had obviously been wearing shabby disguises. But there was not one set of wagon tracks—there were two, both coming from the general direction of St. Vézy. The first set went no further than the bridge and then doubled back, while the other went on, presumably to Louvines and back, then headed north. There was no way to tell if the tracks had been made at the same time. On the other hand, the tracks were the same depth, which led me to believe both wagons had been loaded at all times. Also very



annoying was the stench of wine spilled on the river bank, near the spot where the second set of tracks doubled back.

What had happened? The extra set of wagon tracks was very suspicious. Presumably, the tracks that went to Louvines would have been the goblins'. But whose was the second set, and why did it come as far as the bridge and then double back? It had to be our two fellows from Château Médor. So they lied, since they obviously returned with their horse and a loaded wagon to St. Vézy. I was beginning to think the goblins and the two fellows had been in cahoots from the beginning. But what did goblins have to do with this? And we still had to recover the wine, which I assumed was in the goblins' hands. And I had a hunch it was not the Boisjolis-Nouveau that had been spilled on the river bank.

**Nyxmir 6:** Mordicus returned to the palace to help prepare the gathering of the Brotherhood of Vintages. Croche-Patte, Myojo, and I went on. Croche-Patte had no difficulty dogging those tracks, which were as clear as if the goblins did not care if they were followed. The wagon tracks crossed the army trail north of Château-Roan and went east to the River of Dreams. Fortunately Croche-Patte had brought a set of herbal masks to protect us from the effects of the Plain of Dreams' amber lotuses. We reached a small camp of goblins just as evening fell.

The few goblins there hadn't a dog's chance of defeating us. They gave only a token resistance and surrendered rather quickly, except a couple who managed to escape on their dire wolves. We had to move on, fast, for these two would be back with reinforcements. Those goblins we interrogated knew nothing.

We discovered 13 barrels nearby. Twelve bore the mark of the King's Boisjolis-Nouveau, which brought a sigh of relief from Croche-Patte, and one had the mark of Château Médor. The latter was empty; however, it had contained wine several days ago, since the barrel wood was still wet with the beverage. Instead, this barrel now held four shabby dwarf disguises, goblins' weapons, and a

large sack of Renardois silver coins. The king's wine was untouched.

Perhaps the thirteenth barrel's contents had hidden the goblin's silver. I had no recollection of any silver having been stolen from the palace. So whose silver was that? Someone must have paid the goblins; was it to steal the king's wine and let them keep it?

"*Scrongneugneu!*" said Croche-Patte, lost in his thoughts. "*Comme c'est bizarre.*" ("Sacrebleu! How bizarre!") We had to leave at once. We hastily loaded the 12 barrels on a nearby wagon pulled by an ox, and off we went.

**Nyxmir 6, Talasar, from a later account:** The admiral had been gone for three days, and we had no news from him. Later this day, I met the duke of Ysembragne, who was visiting the king. He inquired about the admiral and was surprised at my lack of information. He said his troops had reported seeing the admiral cross the border into goblin land. The duke thought the admiral had gone on a private goblin hunt, which was not an uncommon thing among nobility. Seeing this was not the case, he said he would arrange for reliable warriors to help me determine the admiral's whereabouts.

Indeed, by evening, a group of the duke's knights offered me a horse. We rode north toward the spot the admiral was last seen. The knights seemed confident that the admiral and his companions would be found.

**Nyxmir 7, Haldemar:** What I had feared the most was beginning to happen: Croche-Patte's herbal masks were drying up. The substance in the herbs protected us less and less from the *sleeping* effects of the amber lotuses, and Château-Roan was still some distance away. The heavy wagon was slowing us down. Without warning, my horse collapsed, as its mask no longer protected it. Our plan was going to the dogs.

As we debated on what to do next, a howl rose in the distance. The goblins were following the wagon's tracks. It wouldn't be long before they would catch up with us, awake or asleep.

Radical problems demanded radical solutions. We tied the barrels together and threw them into the river. The barrels had the buoyancy of rocks, though perhaps slightly better. We whipped the ox and horses away, hoping to mislead the goblins, and grabbed the barrels. Slowly, we floated downstream. At least the goblins would have a tougher time getting to us.

The plan worked for a few hours. Alas, the masks were truly failing us. Myojo was already deep asleep; Croche-Patte and I were having a tough time keeping awake and holding on to him. Then we saw a large raft downstream. Unfortunately, it looked like a goblin-fortified river barge. We tried to maneuver around it, but I'm afraid I fell asleep just as our barrels bumped into it. I felt dog tired.

**Nyxmir 8, Haldemar:** No goblins here! I woke this morning among a group of large tortles. One of them bowed slightly, holding his hands in the fashion of mystics. These were missionaries sent by the grand abbot of Dunwick on a quest to convert the impious goblins. They belonged to a lawful order of tortle mystics. The raft was theirs. By chance, they had recovered us and the precious barrels. They expected a goblin attack, however, as goblin scouts had seen them retrieve us from the water.

The raft was an interesting device. Within the fortified part of the raft were four oxen. Two were harnessed to a horizontal wheel that drove a paddle-wheel through a series of pinions and shafts, while the two other oxen rested and fed. The bunker protected the oxen from projectiles and the cursed river's plants. Clever, as long as the paddle-wheel worked.

That point made, a burning projectile suddenly hit the back of the raft, setting the straw on fire. Two tortles ran out of the raft's wooden bunker to put out the fire, and several more arrows came down. Amazingly, one tortle demonstrated an incredible ability to deflect arrows with a stick. The rest bounced off the other tortle's shell. As if the goblins were angered with the tortles' performance, a furious

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shower of flaming arrows followed. Both tortles then retreated into their shells, and the arrows bounced off them harmlessly.

The fire was getting worse, though. Soon we lost our steering and ran aground. A pack of goblins mounted on dire wolves quickly charged onto the boat. The tortles fought like none I'd seen before. They didn't run very fast, but they didn't need to: Anything within reach of their legs, arms, or sticks was destined to be bashed, chopped, or thrown into the air. One of the tortles hid within its shell, and each time a goblin or a wolf peered at an opening, a deadly blow would shoot out, followed with a heart-felt scream of "Hay-yah!" "Copycat!" murmured Myojo when he saw this.

A heated battle was on. More goblins rode onto our stranded raft. Suddenly, cheers rose from behind the goblins. There, Talasar and a company of heavily armored lupin knights charged into the goblins' rear, brandishing the banner of Ysembragne high above their crested helms. Losing heart, the goblins retreated.

The paddle-wheel and steering devices were hastily fixed, and off we went, slowly sailing down the River of Dreams, alongside "*les chevaliers du duc*" ("the duke's knights") and my loyal friend, Talasar. We reached the walls of Louvines in the night. Mordicus greeted us at the dock, overjoyed by the recovery of the royal vintage. "*C'est formidable, non?*" ("Isn't it wonderful?") he cheered, "We'll make a wine-stomper of you yet! One of the tortle mystics asked if we would make a donation to the order, obviously eyeballing one of the barrels. Mordicus sighed, "*Ob et puis zut!*" ("Oh, blast it!") Just don't tell anyone." Thus we parted with our tortle saviors.

**Nyxmir 9:** The precious barrels had been returned to the king's cellar just in time, for the Brotherhood of the Vintages was meeting this morning. I, however, still hadn't gotten a clue as to what exactly had happened.

Someone knocked at my door. It was one of the tortle mystics. "Your Highness," he said, "I believe you have been

fooled. Why, this morning, we stopped at a tavern in Louvines and sampled its wine before returning to Dunwick. Lo and behold, its wine was no better than the Boisjolis-Nouveau we had yesterday. Come to think of it, it tasted very much like it. With all due respect to King Louis, this Boisjolis-Nouveau you gave us was not what it used to be. And how could a tavern already have some anyway?"

Mordicus and I rushed back to that very tavern, where we discovered the owners were selling Château Médor wine that they had legally acquired "weeks ago." That's it! It was the missing clue. This Château Médor was the same wine that now filled the king's barrels. Of course, the two "roughed-up" retainers were in cahoots with the goblins, to whom they must have paid that silver. Both parties came together, each with a load of thirteen barrels of Château Médor. The goblins indeed stole the 12 barrels of the king's vintage, then switched barrels. They poured the king's vintage into Château Médor barrels, and vice versa.



For this they needed an empty barrel—thus some wine poured into the river. The goblins then went north with their payment and their *phony* barrels of Boisjolis-Nouveau, while our two fine fellows returned home with the king's wine, marked as Château Médor.

Why? Mordicus knew. Monsieur le Duc d'Ysembragne had probably engineered all of this to win his bet. The trail to the goblins was after all not all that difficult to follow—a bit risky, yes, but not impossible, as we had demonstrated. Monsieur le Duc *wanted* us to find the phony wine and bring it back to Louvines. Château Médor had never won an award from the Brotherhood of Vintages, and it seemed clear it wasn't going to win one anytime soon, as it was rather average. If the jury of the Brotherhood sampled that wine instead of the true Boisjolis-Nouveau, they would surely not give it any award, so Monsieur le Duc would win his bet with his comparatively excellent Château LaFifi-Trotteschild. In addition, the sample marked as Château Médor, which belonged to the Duke of Ysembragne, might even win the award this year, adding insult to injury. *Voilà!*

Of course, it would be best not to involve Monsieur le Duc, since nothing could be proven. We had to rush back to the palace. The Brotherhood of Vintages was in the process of sampling all those wines—including the ones with the wrong labels! We had to act at once!

With horror, I discovered how the competition was set up. Hundreds of anonymously numbered samples sat on a huge table in the throne room. There was no way to tell which sample was whose. The King's servants constantly carried more samples in on trays. I had an idea.

I had Croche-Patte don servant's garb and carry a tray to the table. There, he would sneeze violently, at which point he would tuck a corner of the table cloth into his belt and walk away. Those samples would be ruined, and the competition would have to start over.

While Croche-Patte went to do his worst, Mordicus and I went to the cellar where samples were secretly numbered

by the Brotherhood. We had to get the wines switched back to their rightful barrels—a tough task, since no one but the Brotherhood could now enter the cellar.

*Invisibility* helped us both. Once inside the dimly lit cellar, we rolled two of the mislabeled barrels around, playing hide and seek with the members of the Brotherhood working there. One confused brother saw my barrel at several different spots in the cellar. He looked at that barrel every now and then, walking away muttering and scratching his head. Eventually, we found a quiet spot with an extra empty barrel where we could switch wines. For the moment, one barrel of each vintage would do. Soon after we returned the barrels to their proper spots in the cellar, word came that all the samples had to be redone and renumbered, as some fool upstairs had utterly ruined the current session. Grumbling and growling, the members of the Brotherhood went back to work.

**Nyxmir 10:** And zee winner is... an exquisite although discreet, delicate yet rustic, flowery if mellow, fruity albeit dry, light but not too much so, historical vintage that we unanimously enjoyed and which therefore earned our unequivocal preference without zee shadow of a doubt. And so, eet is our honor, and doggedly so, to award in zis Year of AC 1001, by zee grace of St. Mâtin and Malinois, zee Golden Leaf Award to... Madame la Comtesse de Marmandie's excellent Côtes du Grognes! Other nominees for the Golden Leaf Award will be posted at once."

Monsieur le Duc and King Louis stared at each other in total amazement, then both stood up at once and marched over to the list. Both the Boisjolis-Nouveau and the Château LaFifi-Trotteschild were listed among the other nominees. The king called the archbishop of the Brotherhood of Vintages and demanded to know which of the two wines was best.

"*Votre Majesté*, eet is not customary to rank nominees, as eet is honor enough for a vintage to be listed. In our eyes, we feel all nominees to be of equal quality and enjoyment. You should be pleased to know that your entry, this *je-ne-sais-*

*quot* of amber lotus and ever-so-slight aftertaste of St. Vézy vine stock was absolutely, hmmmm, *délicieux!* This unique and original blend might win you another golden leaf, *Votre Majesté!*"

So ended this day in Louvines. King Louis was satisfied that no bet was lost and that his vintage had come so close to winning. The bet with Monsieur le Duc had not been revealed, and no harm had come from it. Queen Fifrelyne was greatly relieved that the honor of her royal husband was safe, and she quietly rewarded my help by permitting unlimited furlough for the crew and a free load of that excellent vintage, Le Boisjolis-Nouveau. At last, all was quiet in the Kingdom of Renardy—at least until next year.

## To Death and Back

*In Which Raman Dies but Returns from Limbo After Many Trials*

**Nyxmir 18, AY 2000:** Soon after loading several barrels of genuine Boisjolis Nouveau from Renardy into the *Princess Ark*, our mighty ship steered to the southwest. Several days passed as we continued our exploration of the Savage Coast. The term "savage" has little bearing on the people who dwell on these shores, yet their societies have remained very fragile, nevertheless. Massive Hule looms the northeast. Far to the north reign the barbarian hordes. Great tribes of humanoids hold the Yazak Steppes. There is cinnabar, too, the vile substance that gives power but corrupts its user. All this could sweep the coast, brutally returning these budding kingdoms to lawlessness and the darkest barbarism.

As I reflected on these possibilities, Myojo told me that we had reached the southern cape of a kingdom called Bellayne. He was excited, for he had heard this was a nation of rakastas. Surely their queen would have heard of our performance in Louvines. This presented a problem, since the Renardois and the Bellaynish were bitter rivals. We might be perceived in Bellayne as lupin sympathizers, and therefore suspicious visitors.





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So be it. The *Princess* was made invisible and I decided to disembark with Myojo and Raman, going incognito as travelers from Dunwick. We would visit the countryside and observe the people of Bellayne, which would be helpful later should I decide to meet their queen. It wouldn't do to commit an unfortunate faux pas on our first visit there.

I chose an old ruined castle as our landing point. The gloomy fortress stood over a cliff, overlooking the Western Sea in the sunset. The Saragón Gazetteer indicated this to be Castle Malburn. It would be an easy spot for Talasar to find. As we left the ship, I ordered Talasar to keep exploring the coast—and especially to keep moving. There could still be Heddannic prowlers in the sky, looking for an opportunity to lash out at the *Princess*. Talasar was to return in two days. We would spend the night there and begin our visit in the morning.

**Nyxmir 19:** Something terrible happened during the night. We awoke to find our old friend Raman dead, with neither any sign of a fight nor any wound on his body. Had he been killed during his watch? Who could have done this, and why? He had an expression of horror on his face, his eyes wide with fear. He reminded me of the man we found dead in Slagovich—the one called Pustek, if I remember it. We never knew what had happened to him. Was his fate linked to that of our Raman? The Master might have been behind this, but why Raman and not me?

There was little we could have done for our friend. With pain in our hearts, we wrapped Raman's body and his beloved books in his blanket, then placed them inside a large barrel. Once the barrel was covered with stones, we somberly left. We would recover the body when Talasar returned. A few hours after our departure, a farmer on his way to Theeds picked us up on his cart.

**Time unknown, Raman, from a later account:** "Hey, what happened? Where am I?" My words echoed in the dark. I thought I must have fallen asleep during my watch. I'd had a horrible nightmare in

which the ghost I met at the Tower of Mercy in Vilaverde had found me. She attacked me again and again, moaning "Revenge ... revenge ..." I woke up just as she struck the final blow, and a chill ran down my back.

The sun hadn't come up yet. Good, I thought, I had not been asleep too long. I must have somehow wandered away from the ruins. I started to return and check the safety of my two companions, but it was dark and I had difficulties finding my way back.

**Nyxmir 20, Haldemar:** Theeds-upon-Blythe was a city like many others we had seen on our journey. The majority of its people were indeed rakastas. Humans were not uncommon, including polite locals, quiet merchants from Dunwick, brash bankers from Smokestone City, and refined exporters from Boa Mansão. There were even a few elves and dwarves, probably Eusdrians, and a handful of native halflings. The latter seemed perfectly suited to Bellayne's orderly ways.

We entered a small tavern called Ye Olde Shoppe to rest from our journey from Castle Malburn. "'Tis not opened yet, milords!" said the rakasta innkeeper. "The meat pies aren't ready."

"I beg your pardon," I responded, "but we are tired from our journey. We hoped to find rest and refreshment here."

"I'll say!" intervened the serving wench. "You can't possibly send our guests out this way! 'Tis almost tea time, my dear!"

"Great Cats, you're right! Steam the kettle, love. I'll fetch the crumpets at once!" said the innkeeper.

"A cloud of milk, milord?" asked the wench of Myojo. "And where might you be from? I don't know your accent. Dear me, of course, you must be from the Forest Marches, true?"

Wide eyed with confusion, Myojo muttered, "Yes ... yes ... Forest Marches."

"Truly amazing," she went on. "One lump or two? I never met the forest folks. I always pictured them with green overalls and feathered hats, you know. Any kippers? Or a slice of pudding, perhaps?"

"You are annoying our guests, love,"

intervened the innkeeper. "Let them rest, and stoke the fire, please."

The folks of Bellayne seemed a friendly people. The day went on in this way as we visited the city and learned about its people. But nothing could truly ease our hearts after the death of Raman. I could still not understand it. It was so sudden and meaningless. I wished I could still see his face and hear his voice.

**Time unknown, Raman, from a later account:** Something was terribly wrong. The sun had not risen for what seemed an eternity. There was no castle to be found. The cliff was gone, and so was the sea. Could have I wandered so far to be this lost? I kept running into criss-crossing dirt paths and bare rocks. The trees here had nothing in common with what I had seen before. This was too confusing.

"A penny for your thoughts, Raman," said a voice behind me. I turned and saw her, the ghost I had met at the library in Porto Preto. She now wore the leather cuirass of an adventurer and held a serrated sword. Her skin bore the red mark of cinnabryl. "Welcome to my world, old sage," she said with a wicked smile.

"Your world? What world?" I asked.

"Have you not found out yet? You disappoint me. Come now, old sage. This is your last discovery. This is Limbo, my dear, and you are the merest reflection of what you once were. You are mine now."

"You lie, fiend! This is all trickery!" I cried, feeling a terrible sense of coldness in my spine.

"Spare me. You failed me once and now I've come to make you my servant—and serve you will, old sage, for I need your soul to guard my grave." She brandished her sword. Its blade glinted evilly as she turned into a vile crimson spectre.

I screamed in horror and ran. The nightmare would not end. Many times she found me cowering behind a rock or trembling in the shadow of an ethereal tree, but I was lucky and escaped her for some time. So it was true—I was dead, dead and lost in Limbo.

**Nyxmir 21, Haldemar:** Despite our depression, Myojo and I saw that Bel-



layne was a very likable place, except for the food. It seemed no real enmity existed between the Renardois and their feline neighbors, other than a natural dislike of each other. A question of taste, I guess. At least they had common foes in the north, and that alone kept them from the worst. Their queen, Her Gracious Majesty Catherine "The Lioness," is both honored and beloved of her people. She was seen as a strong and wise ruler, which was what I wanted to hear. This place seemed pleasant enough, but it was time to return to the *Princess Ark*, give Raman a decent burial, and then to mourn our loss.

**In Limbo, Raman, from a later account:** In my flight from the red spectre, I discovered a strange place that looked like a city. All was dark and crooked, as if the very forces of Chaos had built its streets and houses. There were people there, many people, the souls of lost creatures like me, all seemingly stranded. Since I was dead anyway, there wasn't much I could lose, so I entered and explored this bizarre place.

Nobody seemed to mind me. Shops sold various baubles, tools, and weapons—but no food. Indeed, I felt no hunger. Like any other city, it came with obnoxious folks, pick-pockets, haughty lords, and beggars who looked shrivelled, as if the light in their souls was fading. One faintly begged me, "Have pity, master. Have pity for one who withers. Please, bestow on me the gift of life, and I'll serve you, my master. A mere shred of your life..." I kept moving.

I found what looked like a twisted hostelry, and I rented a room where I could be quiet. The keeper, probably another lost soul like me or perhaps a deceased innkeeper himself, asked for his dues. I dropped a few coins on the desk; I seemed to have all my old clothing and items, even in death. The innkeeper looked up, surprised. "A newcomer, eh?" He blew on the coins and they dissipated into thin air. "Your wealth is no more in the world beyond. I request your true wealth."

"And what might this be?" I asked nervously.

"A mere shred of your life, stranger," he said, pointing to a vial. "Touch here." I did, and a cold sensation crept up my arm. I felt a bit more tired. So this is what a "shred" was! In this world, only one's lifeforce had any value. I'd better learn quickly how to use it. I went to my quarters.

I was happy to discover I still had my trusted library scroll, and it worked. Perhaps this was a mere reflection of my true books, but I could still browse. How long would it last? I had no way to tell.

I spent a very long time there, alone and quiet, studying what little information I could dig up on Limbo and its laws. The city was a safe haven, but also a backwater, for it led nowhere. Many souls ended up there, afraid of Limbo's wilderness. Those who were strong of heart and faithful to their Immortals could find a way to eternal rest, somewhere beyond this Limbo. Others cowered in the City of the Dead, safe perhaps but stranded until they decided to meet their fates.

Someone knocked at my door. A tall figure stood there, wrapped in a long black robe with a hood. It whispered, "You seek escape, human. I can sense it."

"What do you want?" I inquired.

"I know what you seek, and I know where it lies," it hissed.

"What do you know of what I want? And what does it matter to you? Begone!" This character was truly disturbing.

"Your companions are grieving," it whispered again. "They await your return from beyond."

"No one can leave here. What happened has happened. Now go away."

It slowly shook its head. "Not so, human. There is a way. You can return to your friends, and I know how."

It dawned on me that perhaps this could lead somewhere. "And you'll reveal to me your dark secret if I pay you—don't tell me—a shred of my life!"

"Five, human. Five shreds of your life, or darkness forever," it whispered.

"Prove to me first that you don't lie! I will not let go of my life so easily!"

The gaunt soul breathed deeply, then

whispered, "In the City of the Dead, no one can cheat on a pact. The law of the Immortals binds me to my word."

"So be it. Tell me your secret, and I will pay you."

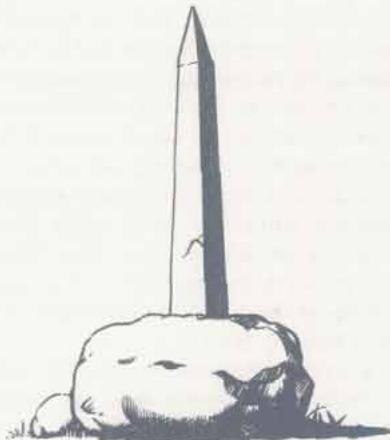
"Seek the rock on which an obelisk stands. Beyond, at the bottom of the fallen bridge, lies a gate. It leads back to your world. Go quickly, for your time now runs faster."

The gaunt creature grasped my wrist with a skeletal hand. I could see spectral flesh materializing slowly on its bones as it drained my lifeforce. Then it left, quietly and mysteriously. I felt very weak, and I could see in a mirror I had faded a bit. This was troublesome. I had to move on. It seemed to me I had been here for over 10 days already.

**Nyxmir 22, Haldemar:** At last we recovered Raman's body and returned to the ship. Consternation overtook the crew at the sad news. Talasar began to prepare the mourning ceremony and the last prayers for Raman.

His remains were brought to the chapel, and incense was lit around them. A few candles were all that brought light to the chapel. The crew entered one by one to pay their last respects to Raman. Later that night, the officers, Lady Abovombe, Myojo, Nyanga, Leo, and I remained for an eve of mourning. Talasar then began the prayer for the dead.

**In Limbo, Raman, from a later account:** At last, here it was—I had found the obelisk! From where I stood, I





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could see a fallen bridge below. I started scrambling toward it when I heard a familiar voice.

"And where do you think you are going, old sage?" The red ghost was there, standing in front of me. "It took you some time to get here. I thought you would never leave that city. Your five shreds of life felt so sweet, old sage! How kind of you to bestow me with something so dear."

This evil soul had lured me out of the city's protection. I had no hope of defeating her now; I was too weak. I knew the pact was still good, but I would have to reach the gate first.

Again she turned into her dreadful spectral incarnation and approached. Other voices then rose in the distance. Faint at first, they grew in strength. I could have sworn I recognized Talasar's voice among them. It was compelling me to move toward the bridge.

The crimson spectre screeched and charged, her sword raised to strike me. Suddenly she stopped, dropped the sword, and fell to her knees, screaming in pain. She had hit a magical barrier around me, like some sort of protection from evil spell.

"Cursed be thee, cleric of Razud! Cursed be all your crew!" croaked the crimson spectre. I had no wish to hear more. I ran to the gate and all became black again.

**Nyxmir 23, Haldemar:** The night of mourning was over. It was time to return Raman's mortal remains to the care of the sea by the light of dawn, as demanded by naval tradition. The crew stood at attention as Raman's shrouded body was placed on the plank. Talasar uttered his last prayer and farewell when Ramissur blew his whistle to signal Raman's final departure, with two long, sad notes.

Suddenly, Raman's body lurched, moaned, and sat up on the plank. Frightened out of their wits, the sailors holding the plank screamed and accidentally dropped the plank overboard—along with Raman's body!

Ramissur immediately dove overboard to recover our friend. By some miracle, Raman had come back to life, barely

avoiding another death—by drowning this time. Pale, exhausted, and visibly shaken, he was brought back to his quarters a mere shadow of himself. After a long rest, perhaps he could tell us whatever it was that happened to him. Until then, Talasar would remain with him at all times. There was no telling what might come from beyond to reclaim his soul.

### In the Eyes of the Cat

*In Which Prince Haldemar and Myojo Enter a Chariot Race, and Myojo Earns the Respect of a Myoshiman Lord*

**Nyxmir 24, AY 2000:** After Raman's return from beyond, I decided to quietly drop Xerdon at the gates of Leominster during the night. I then ordered the *Princess Ark* back to Malburn Castle, where she was made visible again, 300' above a lighthouse. Xerdon would announce my visit at the palace. I hoped that everything would work out well.

**Nyxmir 25:** A Vilaverdan warship sailed by and attempted to attack our vessel. Its ballistae could not reach us, and soon our foe made for the open sea. This short episode surprised me. Here was a foreign warship openly hostile to a visiting ship from a neutral power within waters under Bellayne's control. Even so, the vessel came and went with total impunity, like a privateer.

**Nyxmir 26:** Xerdon returned from Leominster alone, riding a curious creature that was part horse and part cat. He bore news from the queen. He had not met her, but her advisor had told him I was cordially invited to a hunting party tomorrow, at the palace of Uxington.

Xerdon felt a certain suspicion of us on the part of the rakasta establishment, but the hunting party seemed legitimate, since many at the court were chatting about it when he arrived. It was an event, planned weeks ago, that no self-respecting noblecat at the court would miss. I accepted the invitation and steered northwest, inland, toward the royal palace.

**Nyxmir 27:** We arrived late in the morning. Many noblecats, the queen, and

her retinue had arrived the day before. Rakasta ladies played with wool balls on the front yard, and noblecats took lazy strolls in the palace's many gardens, watching the birds in the trees. Others quietly catnapped near the fountains, purring in the warm sun or casually playing with the fishes. An occasional guard patrolled the area. The atmosphere was very relaxed.

I brought Myojo in hopes that his presence would ease the suspicions I expected from the queen. Soon after our arrival, we were shown to our quarters. Hunting horns echoed through the hallways early in the afternoon, and everyone gathered in front of the palace. Servants held the mounts while noblecats mounted. At last the queen appeared with her guards. Hunters brought the dogs, then played a hunting song on great brass horns. Everyone was ready.

The queen rode up to me. "We are pleased to see you among us, Prince," she said, then glanced at Myojo for a moment and frowned. She then looked back at me and added with a smile, "We hope you will enjoy the hunt. The fox has been found."

She then rode toward the other noblecats, and everyone lined up with her. That's when I heard a low hiss nearby. Myojo and I turned around and faced an unexpected problem. There, riding a large sabre-tooth tiger, was a visibly angry rakasta dressed in every way like Myojo. This was no Bellaynish noblecat. It seemed we had just encountered an envoy, perhaps an ambassador from Myojo's homeland, the moon Myoshima. And he obviously recognized Myojo, who was now regarded as a traitor by his people.

The hunting horns bellowed again, and the dogs were released. Everyone rushed after the pack. An old rakasta noblecat, whom I was later told was Duke Purceval of Pawcester, rode at my side for some time. "Her Majesty is in a joyful mood again!" he said, laughing. "Today she decided to hunt the fox. This is meant as a joking insult to the King of Renardy."

"How so?" I asked.



"King Louis's symbol is the fox!" he answered. "This is a bit unexpected, though. Her Majesty usually does this when a Renardois ambassador visits, but I don't see any lupin among us."

Avoiding this latest topic, I asked, "What do you normally hunt?"

The duke turned and gave me a blank stare. "Well, what else? The giant rat! They infest Uxington Woods. That's why the palace was built here."

Of course. Why did I even bother to ask? The hunt went on until I discovered Myojo no longer rode behind me. The Myoshiman envoy was also missing. After riding around the woods with the duke, I finally found them, facing each other with swords poised for a duel. Neither of them paid any heed to my words. The last thing I wanted was to lose Myojo or create a diplomatic incident at the queen's palace. As I considered what magic would stop them both, the queen rode up to the scene.

"It seems we arrived just in time. Now, now, gentlecats. We do not wish to see violence on such a nice day. And we do not permit duels in Bellayne," said she.

"Your Majesty," answered the Myoshiman envoy, "This wretched individual is a traitor in Myoshima. This is a question of family honor. Allowing him to go freely in your kingdom would be an insult to our emperor."

The queen looked at me with inquisitive eyes. I intervened, "My guard Myojo has acted wisely and bravely in a difficult situation. He has remained an obedient and faithful servant of Imperial Alphatia. I see no need for retribution, Your Majesty."

The queen was clearly embarrassed and couldn't make a decision either way. "Well, then," she declared, "You must resolve your quarrel in a civilized manner. It is our wish that you compete in the upcoming Tatterham-Glenswych Derby. He who arrives before the other will decide who must leave."

The brass horns sounded in the distance. "Your Majesty," said the old duke, "we mustn't miss the quarry."

"Very well, very well. Carry on, Milords!"

**Nyxmir 28:** Tatterham lay just a stone's throw from Uxington Palace. A great crowd occupied the center of Tatterham before the race, and many chariots with those strange cat-horse creatures cluttered the streets. Admirers asked questions of their favorite drivers and placed wagers. Every charioteer bore a banner representing his master, including representatives from every dominion of Bellayne as well as Vilaverdans, Texeirans, elves from the Barony of Savaria, turtles from Dunwick, Avarican bards, and participants from Slagovich, Gargoña, and faraway Yavdlom. The queen's team arrived, resplendent with its six-mount turnout and a red and gold chariot.

Our rival, the Myoshiman envoy, arrived just as we applied to enter the race. The whole thing had been organized by the Leominster Tymes, a guild of minstrels interested in creating a new sensation in the kingdom, some sort of traditional event that would take place every year. The grand prize was 500 pounds of gold and a seat at the queen's banquet.

Our first difficulty was to find a chariot and suitable mounts—or so I thought, until a minstrel walked up to us and proposed an arrangement. He represented the Theeds Royal Heralds, a rival of the Tymes. He could make a chariot available provided that we would take him with us on the race. He would act as a storyteller extraordinaire, observing all that happened in order to entertain those who couldn't come themselves (the guilds were not permitted to join the race on their own).

We later received an invitation from the duke of Pawcester to stay at his palace for the night, where we briefly ran into the Myoshiman envoy. Myojo later explained the envoy belonged to the Kitahara clan, which was related to the Myoshiman emperor. The envoy certainly knew all about the history behind Myojo and his defection to a human's service, and our meeting was cold beyond what little formalities were exchanged.

**Amphimir 1:** We found Puttsworth, our minstrel from the Theeds Heralds,

and our chariot. The latter had been freshly painted with the Haaken colors, to which Puttsworth had added those of his guild. I wasn't enthused about the clashing and somewhat disrespectful result, but it was a bit late to do anything about it. All participants gathered at the starting line, early in the afternoon.

We saw Kitahara, his Myoshiman bodyguard, and another rakasta whom Puttsworth described as a lowlife working for the Oldsbury Sun, a rival guild. The bodyguard was arguing vehemently with the "lowlife" about the sun symbol painted over Kitahara's clan colors on their chariot. The envoy was not amused, and I sympathized with him.

Horns echoed in the streets; the race was about to begin. The crowd massed along the route, forming dangerously narrow passages for the chariots. At last, the Tymes official waved the starting flag. The crowd cheered. With wild cries, the chariots lurched forward and raced en masse down Tatterham's main avenue before separating into smaller groups to take the side streets. Fortunately, Puttsworth proved an excellent guide.

Soon we reached the fields outside the town. Puttsworth opted for a northern route through Uxington Woods. It was a dangerous passage because of the giant rats, but it was otherwise shorter than the trip through Wallingford and Theeds. I noticed Kitahara's chariot several hundred yards ahead of us. He, too, had chosen the forest route. This would be a tight race.

Before long, we heard shouts ahead. The Myoshiman team had run into a large pack of giant rats. All three rakastas were tearing through the rodents with their swords, but the rats would soon get the upper hand if we did not intervene. Both Puttsworth and Myojo were surprised when I decided to help our rivals out. But they followed my lead and drew their weapons, and soon the squeaking, crawling mass was reduced to cat food.

With the battle done, Kitahara grunted and bowed briefly. With a haughty expression on his face, he motioned us to pull ahead, his way of being thankful.



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As we drove away, Puttsworth murmured (practicing for later recital, I thought), "And so, in the name of fair play, the noble prince of Alphatia came to the help of his rival, perhaps at the cost of his own victory. In response to this gesture, Lord Kitahara stepped aside to show his gratitude. The race went on."

Rather than doing all that in the name of fair play, I was hoping to gain an edge on Kitahara. He owed us one now. Perhaps this could help defuse our dispute. I had no quarrel with Myoshima, and neither did Myojo. He had not meant to betray his masters by becoming my bodyguard and friend.

We reached the village of Rockburn later that night, where we rested for the evening.

**Amphimir 2:** We left Rockburn early. Late in the day, we finally reached Oldsbury. All would have been fine except for a band of ruffians that grabbed our mounts and attempted to push us off the chariot.

As we fought, Puttsworth shouted these were supporters of the Oldsbury Sun who were going a bit too far to ensure their team's victory. Kitahara arrived about then and brought his chariot to a halt. The lowlife riding with him vehemently exhorted the Myoshiman envoy to move along, but he just stood there, coldly looking at the supporters. They quickly got the message and slunk away.

I guess Kitahara was simply returning our previous day's favor, a debt of honor. Well, then, I could only show the same attitude and motioned him to go on ahead of us. He lifted an eyebrow, grunted haughtily, and rode away with his team without a word or a smile. Nevertheless, I began to understand how to deal with this Myoshiman. He was all honor.

"I say! I can't believe this! How could you?" argued Puttsworth.

"My dear sir, courtesy goes both ways. Bellayne is, after all, the land of sportsmanship—isn't it?" I said.

"Oh ... well, never mind," he answered.

**Amphimir 3:** We were still driving after nightfall when rain began to pour.

Soaked and exhausted, we stopped at an old tavern just past Bromstow. Several chariots were stopped at the front, left there by other competitors who had decided to rest, too.

The old tavern was a large, abandoned structure at the edge of a dark wood. It had a dozen rooms on the upper floor and a single large room on the ground floor. Water leaked through the rotten thatch. Between cobwebs, dust, and darkness, the place bore a truly sinister look. Rumors had warned of the existence of many haunted mansions in Bellayne, which indicated something odd about this kingdom.

An Avarican bard roasted a hunk of wild boar in the fireplace while a Gargan chariot driver played his lute. Several people went upstairs while their teammates remained in the main room. Our small group quietly kept a close watch on each other as the fire dimmed to crackling embers. Lightning soon flashed outside, and the wind howled as a thunderstorm rocked the night. A window shutter rattled. The wooden ceiling creaked. I had difficulty falling asleep, my gaze wandering the room.

Then I noticed Myojo's sudden attentiveness. He opened his eyes wide, his ears pointed up. Other rakastas copied him, staring at something in the air near the chandelier. The Avarican, the Gargan, and I looked at each other. Our daggers slowly came out.

Kitahara's lowlife then leaped onto the table, evidently trying to catch some invisible creature. Whatever it was came near Myojo, who tried to paw it. Kitahara's bodyguard then sprinted across the room, almost running into the front door when he slipped on the wet tiles. Puttsworth, poised to leap with an expression of utter excitement on his feline face, suddenly trapped something on the floor with his paws.

I threw aside my blanket and moved in close to see ... a fly. A fly?

Puttsworth then noticed all three humans watching him. "Oh. Sorry," he said. He released the fly, which pitifully crawled away, and returned to his spot

near the fireplace. Myojo looked away, innocently licking at his paw. The other rakastas looked as if nothing at all had happened.

Cats. I should have known.

**Amphimir 4:** Thanks to Puttsworth's guidance, we avoided Norchester altogether and cut overland toward the Felfolk trail. This allowed us to catch up with the derby's leaders. We reached Felfolk just after nightfall; this was a small village, with a few hundred people at most. All of us ended up at Felfolk's sole tavern. No leaky roofs this time, and at least we would have some decent, warm food. The innkeeper served beer, cider, port, and tea, with milk for the younger rakastas. We enjoyed a far more relaxed atmosphere for dinner than we had at the "haunted" cottage.

The Earl of Penwick had thoughtfully sent men-at-arms from Norchester to ensure the safety of the derby participants and their mounts. This relieved us of the need to watch the chariot and allowed us a good night's rest. The final stretch of the race would take place the next day, so we would have to get up early. Everyone eventually wandered back to their rooms or to a spot near the fire in the main room.

Half-asleep in the middle of the night, I blinked and saw Myojo sit up and watch something intently. "Leave that fly alone, Myojo," I muttered.

He slowly unsheathed his sword, which lay by his bedside. "No, Haaken-San. No fly. Someone creeping in hallway," he breathed. We both got up at once.

He tiptoed to the door, with me close behind, and slowly opened it a crack. Right across the hallway, three rakastas wearing dark outfits and red steel claws were furtively entering Kitahara's room. Myojo glanced at me, and I motioned him to go in. He quickly nodded and went after the nocturnal visitors—who turned and saw him, their blades drawn.

Almost instantly, the sound of the fight awoke the inn's patrons. It was brutally fast, with the three intruders against the two Myoshimans and Myojo. Kitahara's bodyguard was badly wounded, but



Myojo's intervention undoubtedly prevented Kitahara's death. Before I could get off a spell, the three intruders were dead, and Myojo and Kitahara were tending to the bodyguard.

The constabulary arrived almost immediately afterward. The sergeant examined the aggressors and declared these were outcast rakastas, probably spies, from Leãoça, a Vilaverdan colony to the south. These three were wanted in Bellayne for a previous assassination. Why had they attempted to eliminate Kitahara? I suspected Vilaverde's ties to the Heldannic Knights had something to do with this. After all, Heldann and Myoshima were not exactly friends.

Myojo had earned some respect from the envoy. Kitahara would not show it—he couldn't—but I knew Myojo had scored points. The envoy bowed slightly and returned to his quarters. No other event interrupted the night.

**Amphimir 5:** By sunrise, our chariots had begun the last part of the race, thundering down the trail toward Glenswych.

It was a wild dash to get the lead. Chickens, geese, and other small and unwary farm animals were mercilessly trampled on the road. The wild chariot horde raced down the road, a hay wagon ran off the road into a muddy pond—turning the peaceful peasants around it into a furious mob. Whips cracked with growing rage as the town drew nearer.

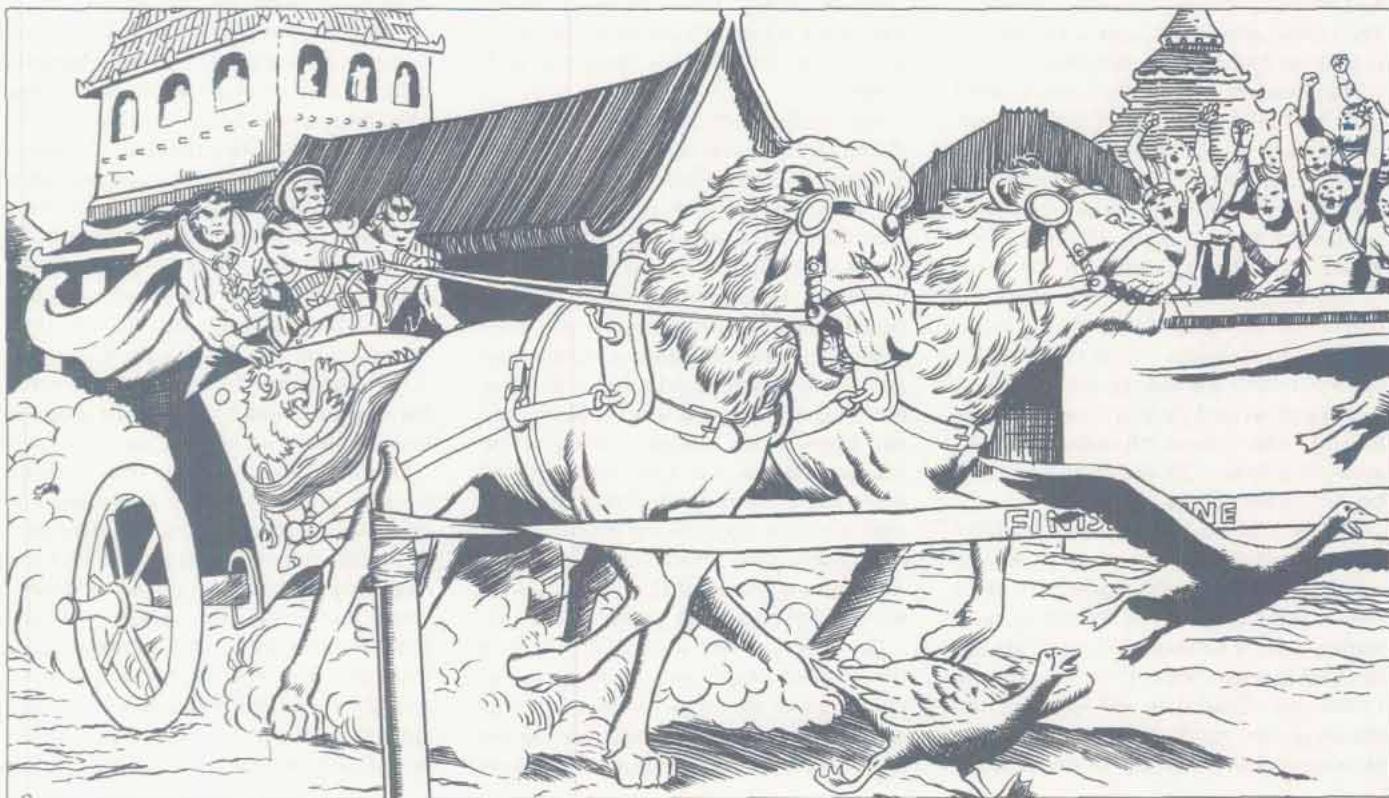
On the last mile, the tortle team cut ahead of my chariot, sending it off on a side path. Before we could get back on the track, our mounts bolted toward a small farm. Thinking we had found a short cut toward Glenswych, Kitahara steered after us.

Our chariot flew over a bump in the path, knocking us all off balance. Out of our control, our mounts headed into a series of large coops, flinging into the air thousands of—mice! We were crashing through a large mouse farm, ruining months worth of the breeding and rearing of fat market mice. A few yards away, Kitahara's chariot created its own wave of destruction, ruining hundreds more of

the fragile cages. In the wake of the horrendous pandemonium, Puttsworth grabbed a terrified mouse that clutched his sleeve. "I say—a Glenswych mouse. What a treat! I'll save it for later." He stuffed the hapless rodent into his pouch.

The good news was that we did indeed open a short cut to Glenswych. The bad news was that Kitahara's chariot took the lead. A few hundred yards away was the finish line. Puttsworth, in sudden fury, whipped his mounts in hopes of catching up with Kitahara. I could hear Kitahara's lowlife exhorting his mounts just as rudely. The rest of the pack appeared around a corner just behind us, skidding on the street's cobblestones and madly jockeying for third place.

Suddenly, a bump on the street crushed a wheel on Kitahara's chariot. It skidded wildly, sending the lowlife hurling into the packed crowd. Kitahara hung on desperately to his uncontrolled chariot. As we rushed past, Myojo grabbed the envoy and pulled him free just before his chariot slammed sideways into a building and





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smashed into kindling. The crowd went wild as we flew past the finish line.

The queen's trumpet sounded the end of the race. Supporters of both the Theeds Heralds and the Oldsbury Sun carried all four of us on their shoulders. It seemed both our teams had won! Kitahara briefly gazed at me, rather embarrassed. The crowd transported us all the way to the queen's stand, in front of the Abbey of Kittings.

"Well, then," she declared solemnly, "we do hereby pronounce both the honorable teams of Alphatia and Myoshima the winners of the derby! Both parties are therefore summoned to the royal banquet this night."

Nice—but this did not resolve our problem. None of us had lost, and so no one could expel the other from Bellayne. I wondered how the queen would solve our little dilemma.

The Leominster Tymes provided Kitahara and me with 250 pounds of gold each. We donated our prizes to the mouse farmer on Kittings Road whose livelihood had been ruined by our crazed passage. The crowd applauded, and we were carried to the lord bishop's residence.

The banquet was served later. I cared little for the boiled slice of stuffed giant rat stomach à la Uxington, a delicacy in Bellayne. The typical social conversations that could be expected at a royal banquet seemed to go on forever. I caught Puttsworth casually toying with his farm mouse between two courses. The local conversation on our side of the table came to a halt when all the noble rakatas began staring at the appetizing rodent, hoping it would perhaps run away—toward them. Puttsworth noticed my disapproving look. "Oh—so sorry," he said, pocketing the animal.

Shortly afterward, the queen raised her hand. "The time has now come to solve a quarrel." The banquet's hurly-burly died out in the background, everyone now staring at both Kitahara and me. "Fate has decided to make both of you the winners of this race. Gentleman and gentlecat, the choice is now yours. You may both leave at once and never return to Bellayne, or

both remain at peace in our kingdom. We shall not tolerate any foreign quarrel within our land. You both have proven your courage and your honor in this memorable race. In our eyes, you are both worthy of our royal respect and welcome."

Rakasta noblecats sitting at the table muttered for a moment, nodding their approval of the queen's approach. It was the only possible decision. Lord Kitahara then stood up and curtly announced, "The presence in Bellayne of the Lord of Haaken is acceptable to us." He bowed ever so slightly in my direction—and in Myojo's, which was most amazing. This meant personal respect from a lord toward a member of lower social standing. By Myoshiman standards, this was almost unheard of.

It was my turn to repay the courtesy. "It was an honor and a pleasure to race by the side of Lord Kitahara's courageous team, and we, the representatives of Her Imperial Majesty of Alphatia, hope that our journey remains a sign of friendly sportsmanship for all. We are satisfied with Lord Kitahara's decision and wish him a pleasant stay in beautiful Bellayne."

Old Duke Purceval raised his cup, "Here! Here! To the victors!"

Despite Kitahara's continued relative coldness, this turned out to be a memorable banquet. I had, at last, managed to speak with the queen about warranties for future Alphatian tradesmen when a certain farm mouse—newly escaped—interrupted our conversation, scampering across the long banquet table. I dare say Her Majesty was somewhat distracted and even took a few royal stabs at the runaway rodent. A hail of forks followed immediately, all the way down the table, until the poor thing leaped from the table and disappeared into a hole in the wall. After giving Puttsworth a stern look, I managed to regain the queen's attention.

Our mission was soon over. We had discovered first-hand the beauty and character of Bellayne. A message was sent to the *Princess Ark*, summoning her to Kittings. We were on our way a few

days later. Without a doubt, that Puttsworth fellow would have a few interesting stories to tell his compatriots after our departure. Perhaps I should have asked for a fee.

### Web of the Wizard-King

*In Which Prince Haldemar Is Determined to Meet the Wizard-King of Herath, and an Arachnid Spy Boards the Princess Ark*

**Amphimir 11, AY 2000:** Our Saragon Gazetteer mentioned something about a wizard's nation, the Kingdom of Herath, southwest of Bellayne. Unfortunately, no capital was shown. I decided to stop at the largest city and send Ashari ahead as my envoy.

She returned a few days later with good news. Although she couldn't reach officials of the royal court, she had met a noble related to the wizard-king, Duke Yaluughu of Ensheya. Ashari had also managed to arrange an audience with the duke at his palace in Sorodh.

Indeed, I did meet the duke, a very austere and somewhat sinister character with whom conversation was often terse. I finally reminded him I was an official representative of Her Imperial Majesty of Alphatia and that I sought an audience with the wizard-king of Herath. That seemed to embarrass him. He eventually revealed that the wizard-king should already be aware of our presence, and if he had wished to see us, we would already know. He later added that the Royal Citadel was located at the center of his domain, a thick forest ("a forbidden land infested with horrible monsters").

For a fellow wizard, this was no friendly welcome. Empty-handed and rather disappointed, I took my leave from the duke and returned to the *Princess Ark*. Judging from the "forbidden forest" hint, I was clearly not to go there. I soon got a confirmation of this from Ashari. She had found that the woods in question, the Forest of the Magus, were indeed strictly prohibited by law to the common population. It was a place only nobility



was permitted to enter, and only with a royal invitation at that.

I found all this rather rude. I was not the representative of some third rate, petty kingdom—like Herath! I was upset and insulted. Well, then, if I could not enter the forest, fine—I would fly over it!

I ordered a northerly route at once. I may not be granted any favors as a result of all this, but, by the Eye of the Newt, I would not be ignored!

**Amphimir 11, Baalboth, from a later account:** His Lordship, Duke Yaluughu, summoned me this evening. I was to board the outsiders' flying ship and find out who they were, unveil their intentions, and retrieve any magical secrets. His Lordship provided me with a magical brooch of spying in which I could store all that I saw and heard. I was to report back to The Watcher with the brooch after my mission.

I began my duty after a quick prayer at the Temple of Enebaan. I cast a spell of invisibility and approached the outsiders' flying skiff. The sailors noticed nothing.

Soon after my arrival, the outsiders' commander returned with his rakasta guard and they boarded the skiff. I followed. We reached the outsiders' flying ship just before nightfall, when I began exploring the large vessel.

**Amphimir 13, Haldemar:** At last, we found the citadel. I didn't want to antagonize the wizard-king further and decided for the moment it would be best to keep the *Princess Ark* visible.

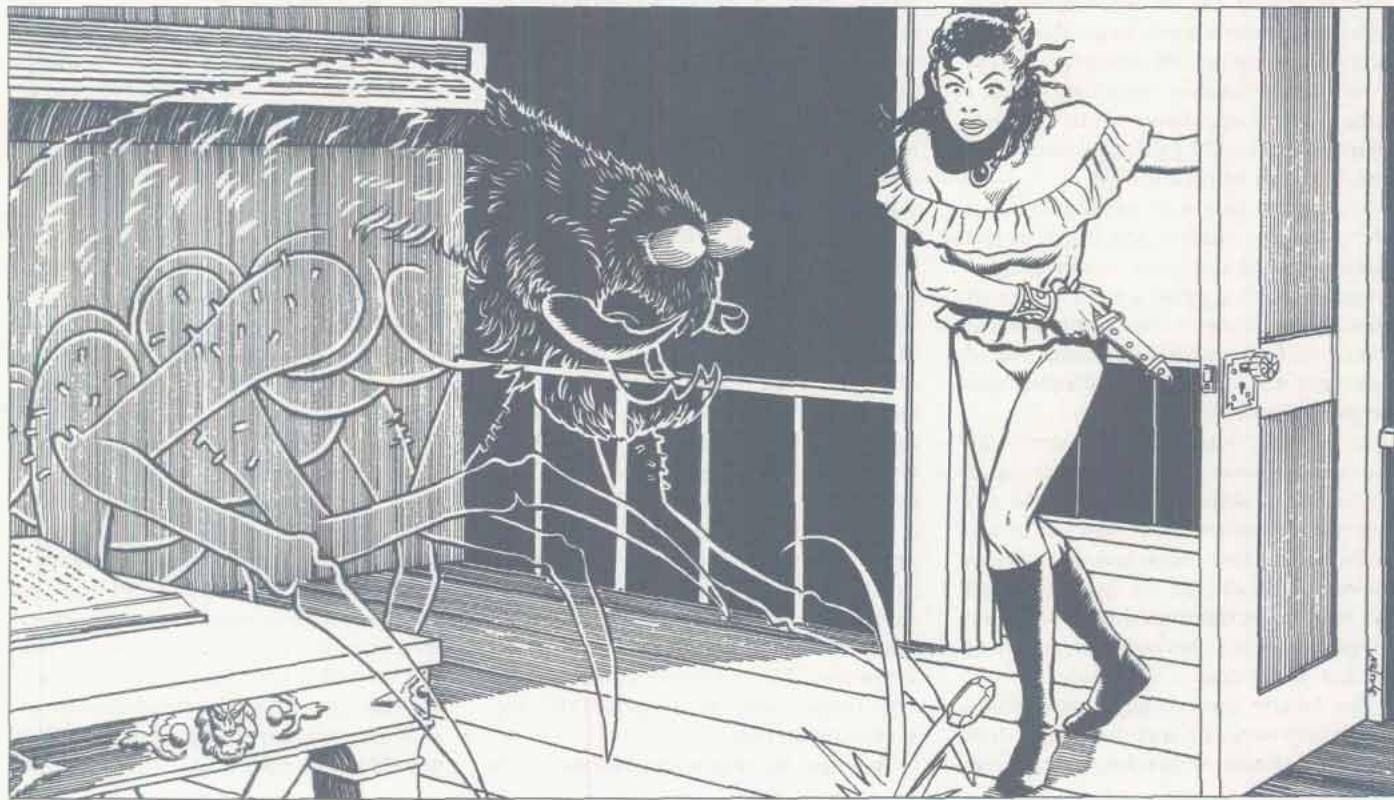
I signaled the citadel's guards I was coming down, and they formed a double line and stood at attention. Their trumpets announced my arrival. The guards all wore high, pointed hoods and sinister black robes that covered their entire bodies. Of all visitors, of course, I would be the least prone to be impressed by such a display. I went on by them.

I met the Viscountess of Berevrom, a lady of great beauty and mind. She was far friendlier than the duke. She apologized for His Majesty, saying he was busy at the time and could not receive me. She showed me to my quarters and verified

that I was comfortably installed until such time I could meet the wizard-king. I saw very few people in the palace other than the hooded guards. A magically animated table knocked at my door, bringing a cup of steaming tea and a few pastries. The viscountess returned later with an invitation to the wizard-king's dinner that evening.

The evening came soon enough, and guards escorted me to the banquet hall. There, three dozen nobles and their spouses sat at a large table, along with the viscountess. They were mostly humans, with a few lupins and rakastas. Strangely, none of the latter seemed the least annoyed by each other's presence at the same table. In fact, a deadly silence filled the room.

The wizard-king arrived shortly thereafter, and everyone rose. He quietly motioned everyone to sit down. Still, no word had been uttered in the entire hall. The queen clapped her hands twice, and a wooden statue came alive, playing a lute. A group of magical, trotting tables





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entered with food and beverages. The high point of the dinner involved the serving of large, plump houseflies, the size of fat chickens. Everyone picked up sharp silver tubes, inserted them into the flies, and, with great delight, began noisily slurping out the juices. Courtesy demanded that I go along with the other guests. Could it be worse than stuffed mice à la Uxington? (It was.)

Still, after no word had ever been spoken, the wizard-king and queen left and everyone returned to their quarters. The magical, trotting tables began cleaning the remains of the feast, occasionally grunting and fighting for leftovers.

**Amphimir 13, Baalboth, from a later account:** This ship is truly wondrous, although it presents a difficult endeavor for spies. I soon learned to stay away from the floors, since they create glowing marks around footsteps. Fortunately, the wooden bulkheads were no match for my eight claws, and I could easily cling to them and to the ceilings and move unhindered. The stairways, also magically protected, forced me to waste precious *dispel magic* spells to get through. I heard the outsiders' officers utter magical words before entering certain areas, and I concluded some doors were also enchanted. I quickly followed them into those rooms I wanted to visit.

After long hours of poring over an immensely revealing log book in the quarters of the outsiders' commander, I examined a big gem, a fiery topaz of great value. Surely, it must be the magical stone mentioned in the entry dated Andrumir 15 in Jaibul. The Watcher will be pleased with it.

An outsider female then unexpectedly entered the room. Surprised, I dropped the precious stone. The female did not see me but noticed the gem fall to the floor. She looked perplexed, then began moving back toward the door. I picked up the gem as she turned back and tried slipping past her, but she caught one of my legs in the door. I screamed.

The female immediately started slashing wildly with a short sword she had quickly drawn, wounding me badly.

Some of my ichor stained the floor, and the female sounded the alarm. I had to flee, triggering almost every magical ward in my way. I then ran into a row of heavily armed outsiders standing on the deck. Next to them was a tall, hairless outsider with a big hammer. I hate big hammers. Seeing my ichor spilling on the deck, the bald outsider cast a spell that negated my *invisibility*. Almost instantly, the other outsiders started firing *lightning bolts* at me.

Fools! Their aim could not match my superior agility. I leaped out of harm's way and clung to the underside of the ship. I immediately secreted a long strand of silk and began descending toward the forest. I had to warn The Watcher that I had been seen.

**Amphimir 13, Xerdon, from a later account:** A monstrous creature was aboard the *Princess Ark* late this night. Lady Abovombe reported she had heard some noise in the admiral's quarters and went to investigate. There she saw an object fall to the floor for no apparent reason, which it seems had been held by an invisible creature. Lady Abovombe wounded it while it was caught in the doorway. The alarm was sounded, but the creature escaped. It appears the creature stole a precious object from the captain's quarters. Nyanga and I are going down into the forest to pursue it.

**Amphimir 14, Haldemar:** At last I met the wizard-king. He pointed out that he was a busy man, but he would do what he could to accommodate me. We discussed that which wizards often enjoy chatting about. He said he was an astrologer by profession and could see in the stars some of the great events of this world. He gazed at me for an instant and added he had seen in the stars the end of a great empress. Treachery from an ancient mountain wizard threatened her rule. He said perhaps I should return to Alphatia to seek out the danger. Then he burst into diabolical laughter. Surely this was a joke. There were no mountain wizards threatening Her Imperial Majesty. There couldn't be.

The meeting came to an end, and I was

asked to leave. The wizard-king needed to work on a complicated problem of astrology, and he required absolute silence and tranquility. The viscountess escorted me back to the tower on which I had originally alighted, and she bid me farewell as I climbed aboard the life boat. The leaving seemed too easy. There was something very odd about the wizard-king's jest. This monarch seemed decidedly too suspicious to me, and I wanted to know more. As the skiff flew back toward the *Princess Ark*, I instructed the sailor to keep going and to ask Commander Talasar to feign a departure and turn the ship invisible. I cast a spell of *invisibility* of my own, and flew back to the wizard-king's keep. I was intent on figuring this wizard out once and for all.

**Amphimir 14, Baalboth, from a later account:** By Yehm, what arrogance! The outsiders have followed me down into the Forbidden Forest. Blasted be this wound that slows me. This will be the outsiders' undoing. I know cousins of the Astafirs have a village nearby. They'll help, I'm sure of it.

**Amphimir 14, Xerdon, from a later account:** The creature left footprints in the forest's soft soil. A *light* spell prolonged our search into the night hours. We were getting closer to our fugitive when we ran into trouble. A magical illusion concealed the terrain before us, which caused both of us to fall into a ravine—or, rather, into a very large spider web in the ravine. Our legs were caught. Three huge spiders approached, while a fourth, wounded, remained aloof. One of them hissed and clicked, "Now you die, outsiders!"

Nyanga glanced at me and asked with a grin, "You be ready, mohn?" His giant blade hummed as he tore a wide gap through the web. We fell heavily into the bushes underneath, as the three spiders reached the gap. Just then I cast a *wall of fire* around the spiders, setting the entire web ablaze. The spiders had no choice but to jump off as well. The rest was standard procedure; the three giant arachnids were soon chopped to bits. The wounded one fled.

Both of us had seen creatures such as these, in the rain forest of Yavdlom and the dark woods of Shye Lawr and Blackheart. Araneas: vile intelligent spiders, deadly creatures. What they wanted with us, I had no idea. But we had to capture the fugitive: alive.

**Amphimir 14, Haldemar, later that night:** I finally managed to get past the hooded guards and the magical wards that defended the wizard-king. Carefully, I snuck into his quarters. There, I discovered a semicircular door about 3' high. It was a secret door that someone had considerably left open.

It led to a spiral staircase to the top of the keep. There, hidden under a one-way mirror dome, was a huge spider web. At its center stood a giant spider, gazing at the stars through a looking glass, or "longview." I cast a *wizard eye* and sent it closer to the spider, which watched through its longview and made notes with little insectlike fingers.

The creature wrote in a language I couldn't read, but I did recognize an old rune. It came from an alphabet once taught to young Alphatian students of wizardry. The rune alluded to Followers of the Fire, ancient foes from Alphatian mythology. More followed, among which I recognized the symbol of Alphatia, the Immortal. I had to unveil this mystery at any cost.

Suddenly the web vibrated like the strings on a lute, but much deeper. The spider hissed and clicked as it put away its longview. Images appeared in the web, near the center. It was Xerdon and Nyanga. What were they doing in the forest? I saw them fall into a giant web, escape, and defeat three large spiders.

The creature I was watching dissipated the image and moved to the edge of the web where I was. I hid in a corner, hoping it wouldn't see me. Indeed, it went out through the open secret door. This was the chance I was hoping for. I crossed the large chamber and reached spiraling stairs at the center, which led up to the web's nexus. There, I stretched up to reach the notes, carefully avoiding the mess of sticky strands. Unfortunately, my

sleeve caught some of the web and caused vibrations to ripple all the way out. The spider reappeared at the door—and then fled!

Drat! It will alert the guards! I shoved the notes into my shirt and ran after it. A door slammed and locked as I crawled back into the other room. The spider was gone, but the wizard-king stood there, holding a key. He cast a spell that ended my *invisibility*. Beside him, 30 guards aimed cocked crossbows at me.

"I seriously advise you not to make a move nor to utter a word, admiral. These guards are very twitchy. You have come here without an invitation and disturbed my research. I have received and entertained you at my court, and you have the gall to return here, like a thief, to spy on my research and annoy my familiar. Worse yet, your men have entered the forbidden forest and harmed my pets. This angers me greatly. I have no concern for what nation you belong to, nor do I care about who you might think you are, admiral. Since you are so interested in Herath, I invite you to extend your stay among us for some time—a very long stay, admiral. Guards, throw this fiend to the dungeons!" I was trapped and defenseless. The wizard-king cast a *web* spell at me, and the guards carried me to the dungeons.

**Amphimir 15, Baalboth, from a later account:** Enebaan the Wise has abandoned me. I've had no rest since my flight from the outsiders' ship. My pursuers haven't halted their hunt, and they are but a few instants behind me. I am exhausted. The death of the Astafir cousins causes me great sadness. They must be avenged. There is still hope for this. I must reach the citadel. I must keep going. The tunnel is close.

**Amphimir 15, Talasar, from a later account:** Late last night the wizard-king's guards treacherously attacked the ship despite our *invisibility*. The wizards must have discovered our presence and directed their troops' fire. I fear the admiral was either discovered or captured.

The attack began just past midnight when the guards began firing globs of

webbing from the highest towers of the citadel, probably in an attempt to pull the *Princess* down. Failing this, giant spiders attempted to climb aboard, running up the silk strands, but we successfully repelled their assault. Unfortunately, the citadel used a magical shield that absorbed the *Princess*'s breath weapon. It proved only marginally effective against the assaulting spiders. The boltmen now show signs of fatigue after this long night of fighting. The sight of so many giant spiders severely tested their nerves.

The aft sight spotted packs of spiders gathering in the citadel. They seemed to be coming from the forest in mass. They must be preparing for a massive assault. Vats of boiling slime from which the webbing shots came have been replenished. With the sun rising above the forest, the crew finally managed to cut off the majority of the web strands that held us fast despite volleys of arrows. We lost several sailors overboard due to the arrows and stray web strands; those who survived their fall were mercilessly slaughtered by the giant spiders. This is perhaps our last chance to leave, for another assault would certainly crush our defenses.

Alas, I've yet received no message from either the admiral or our hunting team. In the face of the grave danger threatening the *Princess Ark*, I am obliged to order her withdrawal to a safer altitude. I pray to Razud that our companions are safe. I will devise a new course of action as soon as the *Princess Ark* is out of danger.

**Amphimir 15, Xerdon, from a later account:** It was fortunate that the sky had remained heavily overcast this night, for we would have otherwise lost track of the fugitive. When my magical *light* had run out, infravision revealed faint spots of warmth on the leaves and on the soil, no doubt ichor from the monster's injury. My experience in tracking the woods of Blackheart had again paid off. By sunrise, the spots of ichor and the footprints had led us to a small cottage. We knew the fugitive hid there.

Nyanga kicked the door open and a woman screamed. There stood a wench



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whom I took to be the wife of a forester. She had almost convinced us she had seen no monster, but said she had heard some noise in the rafters. As I considered her words, Nyanga noticed blood dripping from her hand. Before I could intervene, his blade swung wide, beheading the wench.

"Eh mohn," he said to my horrified protests, "I be sure de monster spirit be inside her. I be taking no chances with de magical spiders." He had a point. The wench's wounds did look like several deep sword slashes, yet there really was no way to tell. She looked very human to me, even in death. This could mean trouble later.

A search revealed a black brooch, a fiery topaz, thieves' tools packed in a weblike net, the remains of a pickled house fly the size of a chicken, and a secret passage leading down to a tunnel. It ran for hours. We finally reached the bottom of a dungeon well, just above the surface of muddy, fetid water. Unidentifiable, putrid flesh bobbed at the surface as we forced the tunnel's rusty grate open. I cast a *dimension door* to reach the top of the well and tossed a rope to Nyanga. Just then, we heard shouting and the sound of people running toward us. Perhaps we had triggered some unseen alarm.

Madly racing down the hallway came the admiral, shouting "Jump back, you fools! Jump!" A few paces behind him followed a crawling mass of huge, repulsive spiders, hissing and clicking furiously. All three of us reached the bottom of the foul pit in no time. Nyanga slammed the tunnel's metal grate behind us.

Choking and gagging, the admiral sputtered out a spell—I thought for a moment that it must fail. But just as the spiders ripped the grate right off its hinges, the *travel* spell took effect. At last, we were back on our way to the *Princess Ark*.

**Amphimir 15, Haldemar, epilogue:** I congratulated Talasar and Xerdon for a job well done, as well as Lady Abovombe, without whose alertness many questions would have remained unanswered today. The ship was safely headed north. Xerdon had retrieved from

the intruder—the creature called Baalboth—the stolen Jaibuli topaz and a magical black brooch. The latter turned out to contain Baalboth's comments, magically etched inside—comments that I have entered into my log book at the appropriate spots. I can only hope it really was Baalboth that Nyanga eliminated. It knew far too much about the *Princess Ark* for my own comfort.

From this and what I had seen in the citadel, I must conclude the wizard-king has allied himself with a tribe of araneas, either by common accord or by coercion. Was the Great Magus an aranea himself? I strongly suspect it but don't have proof. Wizards do have strange ways at times.

More interesting were the notes taken from the spider in the wizard-king's keep. The dungeon's muddy sludge had ruined part of the parchment, but Raman still helped me decipher the runes that survived. There were hints to waves of magical power being sucked into Glantri, a nation northwest of Thyatis. The wizard-king of Herath had scribbled some concerned comment that perhaps this had to do with the overall impoverishment of mortal magic on Mystara, our "Known World." I had no idea what he was alluding to, but the thought was nevertheless worrisome. The wizard-king of Herath seemed neither a prankster nor an incompetent fool. I would have to investigate this myself soon. Perhaps his warning should be brought back to Her Imperial Majesty after all.

### In Pursuit of a Fiend

*In Which Prince Haldemar and His Companions Join a Lizard Woman Shaman in Her Quest to Destroy a Brain-Eating Fiend*

**Amphimir 23, AY 2000:** There was a reference in the Sarigón Gazetteer about some savage kingdoms hidden in the dark forests of the Shady River. We had been meandering above those thick woods for a week and had almost given up hope of finding anything when we discovered some structures below.

Several very large mounds of dried mud had been erected in a small clearing in the woods. At first we thought they were giant termite colonies, but the painting on the mounds and the size of the entrances and windows hinted at humanoid origins. This seemed a large town, considering the number of mounds.

Moving the invisible *Princess Ark* closer, we observed a great activity of lizard men in the woods. Several lizard men carried the body of a dead warrior on a small bier. From our vantage point we clearly saw the eyes were missing from the dead warrior's head. Perhaps this was some ghastly lizard-man custom.

Some lizard men blew auroch horns and others beat drums, while the bulk of the crowd followed, weeping or looking somberly at the ground as they marched toward the burial grounds we'd earlier spotted from our vantage point. There, they dropped the body into an funeral urn made of terra cotta. They then added weapons, colorful feathers, ornamental trinkets, and other personal effects. The urn was then sealed and was lowered with ropes into a hole in the ground, over which a large flat stone was laid down. Finally, a shaman—an old hag of a lizard woman—painted a regular pattern of symbols on the stone while making bizarre incantations with her raspy voice. From this we gathered these lizard men had some sort of written language—quite unusual for lizardkin.

Raman was excited about observing such a ceremony. The behavior of a primitive race of nonhumans was of great interest to our sage, and he wished to obtain one or two of the urns for study. I found that rather ghoulish, but I could see the use of any possible findings.

Later that night, I sent Raman and several of the crew down into the graveyard. We could observe them from aboard the *Ark* and warn them if anyone approached. Fortunately, the lizard men were diurnal—most slept except for several warriors walking the streets around the mounds.

As Raman was loading a second urn onto the lifeboat, a horrible shriek echoed

from the lizard-man town. Raman and his crew quickly repositioned the tombstones onto their graves and hurried back to the ship.

Soon we saw that one of the warriors guarding the streets had been killed. A number of warriors formed a protective circle around his body. They looked terrified. The shaman, kneeling next to the corpse, lowered her torch to reveal a horrible wound on the warrior's face. His eye sockets were two gaping holes. Perhaps some wild beast preyed on the lizard men. I have never seen such a wound before.

**Amphimir 24:** I ordered the skyship to a higher altitude while Raman began his study of the two urns. His library came in handy in the deciphering of the symbols. The urns had prayers written on them, and such words as "Be you blessed, O Warrior Ss'akh, for your defense of our ancient city Ah'roog. May the Mighty Ka'ar keep you safe forever."

Both corpses found in the urns were rather recent—no more than three or four

days. There was nothing of great value inside the urns. Medicinal herbs had preserved the bodies somewhat. Both bore the same facial wounds as the guard. Their brains were also gone, as if they had been sucked out. What manner of monster could have done this?

We returned the two urns to their graves. After Raman had completed all of his observations, it seemed no one had noticed our visit. I then ordered a course to the northwest, toward a large bay marked on our Gazetteer. I had no wish to find out what kind of monstrosity lay behind the gruesome lizard-men deaths.

**Amphimir 25:** The sound of flapping wings drew my attention. Just after nightfall, something came straight at us. I ordered an evasive maneuver, but it screeched and kept turning back in our direction. It was clearly chasing us.

We heard a thud. Something had hit one of our masts and had fallen to the deck. There, rubbing its head, sat a lizard man—actually a lizard woman. It was the old hag, the shaman from Ah'roog. Next

to her lay a giant bat with a broken wing. It was an old thing, with holes and rips in its leather wings. Totally exhausted and suffering from its shattered limb, the poor creature passed away.

A ring of befuddled boltmen encircled the shaman, wondering whether to roast her with their wands or toss her overboard. She began talking in a succession of quick rattles, clicks, snaps, and raspy lizard words. After I performed some spell-casting, I could understand what she said. Then, pointing a gnarled finger at me, she added "You, I know you. I saw you in my dreams. Ka'ar sent you to help us!"

These lizards were truly strange. She went on, "I am Haz'ar, the wise woman of Ah'roog. Ka'ar has spoken to me in my dreams. He told me of you and your wondrous ship. He spoke of the great beasts you once defeated, O Great Hero of the humans."

Immortals speaking of me? To lizard men? Hmm, this did not seem right at all. I invited the wretched creature below





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and further questioned her. She told me some monstrous fiend had begun stalking the city of Ah'roog about a week ago. The lizard men could not catch it. They lost warriors during the nights to the fiend, sometimes one, other times five or six. All bore the same horrible wounds.

Days ago Haz'ar began having her dreams. She believed they came from her Immortal patron, Ka'ar, and in this she seemed truthful. Her dreams showed the four eyes of the monster stalking her warriors, and from them came visions of war. These visions, however, she didn't understand. They showed humans fighting humans, the symbol of an eagle in the sunset, and that of a winged bull against a sunrise. Then followed the image of an hourglass tumbling in the night, and always the gaze of the fiend would appear at the end of her visions, as if they had been sent by him.

I was utterly astonished! A chill ran down my back as I realized the eagle and the winged bull could be the symbols of Thyatis and Alphatia! A war? Again? No, this couldn't be. But what was this hourglass? A symbol of time to come perhaps. Somehow, this fiend was at the center of the puzzle. Surely, it must have been playing tricks on the mind of this old hag. This fiend knew enough about Thyatis, Alphatia, *and me* to fabricate fantasies and get an obscure lizard shaman to find me. Why? What did it want with me? It was too strange. I had to find out who or what was behind all this.

I agreed to help Haz'ar find the fiend. With a wide smile revealing the rotten and broken teeth on her reptilian face, Haz'ar fell to her scaly knees. "Praise Ka'ar! Ka'ar preserve us all!"

**Alphamir 4, AY 2001:** In the days after Haz'ar's visit to the *Ark*, we disembarked and went to Ah'roog. We heard of more slayings occurring near a village called T'lak, and we journeyed north after the fiend. The pattern then continued in the direction of Ryt'takk. The fiend was on the move. Perhaps it sensed we were tracking it. We did several times come close to encountering it, but it always seemed to outguess us and escape

into the dark forest. At best we saw a vague shape vanish in the shadows.

Soon we reached the border of the Kingdom of Cay. Haz'ar described it as a nation of cay-men—small, pretentious people, half-human, half-caiman, and about half as tall as lizard men. Haz'ar's nation, the Kingdom of Shazak, was presently at peace with Cay. Perhaps the fiend thought of entering the other nation to throw off his pursuers. Haz'ar however insisted she wanted to continue the hunt, for the fiend might return. It had to be destroyed. So we marched. Unbeknownst to Haz'ar, the *Ark* flew just above, observing. I found this very reassuring.

**Alphamir 8:** Our trail lead us to Tu'eth, the capital of the cay-men. It seemed that slayings of cay-men hunters had preceded us by a day or so, and they were happening twice as often now. Already, word had come of more hideous murders within the city of Tu'eth. At least we hadn't lost track of the fiend.

A band of armored warriors riding chariots met us at the entrance of Tu'eth. The diminutive warriors stood arrogantly behind their lizard striders, proudly wearing peacock feathers on top of their scaly heads. One of them, waving his puny little javelins at us, said with a strange squealing and wheezing voice, "Strangers, state your business or succumb to the wrath of Cay!"

Seeing my hand slip to my wand, Haz'ar put her hand on my arm and answered, "We come in peace, O Noble cay-lords! We seek to slay the fiend that killed the mighty hunters of Cay!" She bowed deeply.

The leader of the cay-men rode up to me, and, with his fists on his hips, stared up at me inquisitively. "I don't trust them. Let's take them to the Queen! March ahead, strangers!" We complied.

Cay-man guards on the palisade surrounding the Queen's compound sounded their trumpets when we arrived. We were loaded into a large net and hoisted to the other side by a crane. The Royal Guards of Cay escorted us to the Queen's throne, where she brooded. Before her lay the body of someone

important, judging from the jewelry and feathers. His eyes were missing.

"So," she squealed, "You have come to slay the fiend. You are late. He who lies at my feet is my younger brother. He too has fallen before the fiend. He tried to battle the beast and lost. It seems that both Shazak and Cay are suffering from the same plague."

"Your cayful Majesty," I dared, "it is indeed our quest to slay the beast. With your permission, we must be allowed to continue. Many more lives are at stake."

The queen, observing me with suspicion, said, "Why do you wish to help, human?"

"I too seek revenge, your Majesty. The fiend had tasted blood before he harmed your noble subjects. Please, your Majesty. No one is safe. Where was your brother found?"

The cay-men whispered and whistled among each other, glancing often in my direction with distrustful looks. The queen then shook her rattle-scepter and said, "He was found in the Mines of Hwezzah. Go there, human, and take your lizard shaman with you. If you slay the monster, you shall go free. If not, I shall condemn you to work for the rest of your lives in the mines. Leave now."

**Alphamir 9:** Not until the evening did we reach the mines, a terrible place with a single narrow shaft going straight down. We descended and entered a network of tunnels with little cubbyholes dug into the walls that were the resting places of the slaves working there. Most had gone nearly blind from the darkness and screamed in pain at the light of our torches.

A cay-man guard cracked his whip to send the slaves back to work, but most were too terrified to leave their holes. The fiend had indeed been here, judging from the number of slaves' bodies. All work at the mine had come to a halt.

The guards weren't much better. They walked in groups, cautiously looking around. Beyond one point they would not advance further. One of them pointed forward, "He was found there." Then they retreated in good order.

Haz'ar and I walked down a tunnel, bent low to avoid hitting the ceilings with our heads. I heard a clicking sound. "What's that?" I asked.

"My old knees," answered Haz'ar. It was obvious she was almost petrified with fear, yet she continued.

"This is silly. There is no need for us to do this alone," I said. I cast a *travel* spell and returned us both to the *Princess Ark*. Talasar was relieved to see us both safely back aboard. I had to rest and meditate for more appropriate spells. Our next day would be a difficult one.

**Alphamir 10:** I returned to the tunnel the next day with Xerdon, Nyanga, Haz'ar, and Talasar. Nyanga stood in the front, his huge sword strapped to his back—only a small blade would fit in these tight quarters.

The tunnel led to a larger chamber. The light of our torches glinted off the red ore. The cay-men had found a small vein of cinnabryl. Perhaps this is what attracted the creature in this mine.

Suddenly, a large blob of hideous orange flesh appeared from the shadows. It moved fast, as much on its six crab legs as on its dozens of tentacles. Without a moment of hesitation, Talasar, Xerdon, and I let our spells fly at once. Almost instantly, the creature grabbed hold of a pillar and caused the chamber to cave in.

Everyone ducked and scrambled. Talasar, Xerdon, and Haz'ar dove to one side, Nyanga and I to the other. The torches died as billowing clouds of dust filled the chamber. Soon, I discovered tons of rubble separated us from our companions. We were trapped in darkness.

The sound of something fleeing echoed ahead. I cast a spell of *light*, just to see the shadow of the fiend writhing away down a tunnel.

"Come," I said to Nyanga, "We must chase it, the others will follow if they can." We ran down the tunnel which grew narrower with an underground river running down the middle. We could see the creature ahead, swimming away. Several cay-man dugout canoes lay by the side of the river. We jumped into one

and paddled frantically after the fiend.

Much later, when the river had gained dangerously in speed, we could no longer see anywhere to put ashore. Centuries of roaring waters had smoothed out the sides of the tunnel. The water rushed down the passage at a frightening speed, and the canoe shook so much I could not cast a spell to save my life. We both clung to the canoe's sides. Before we realized what was happening, the canoe was sucked into a vicious whirlpool. Everything went dark as my head hit a rock.

**Alphamir 10, Talasar:** It was a trap. The fiend must have known that the pillar supported the chamber's vaulted ceiling and deliberately caused the cave-in. It must have guessed that we were too much for it to fight as a group. We had to find the Admiral at once.

We went down another tunnel trying to find a way around the rubble. At first, all we found was small groups of cay-men guards. They ran from us, but we heard their leaders trying to rally the troops. They were organizing a man-hunt.

It became clear we could not fight their well-organized search parties. Mobs of cay-men guards ran down the tunnels with javelins and nets, hoping to find us. We played hide-and-seek for hours before Xerdon spotted the Admiral's footprints. At least he and Nyanga were still alive. They had gone after the fiend.

Soon afterward, we reached a series of dugout canoes. We could hear cay-men chiefs shouting orders and the sound of war trumpets echoing in the tunnel. We fled in one of the canoes after setting fire to the others.

Paddling downstream, we could see the cay-men guards jumping up and down, and waving their short arms at us. Haz'ar smiled smugly, and as the water gained speed, she said "They want us to come back! Su-ure... well, that's one man-hunt going down the drain!"

**Alphamir 11, Haldemar:** Lucky that Nyanga was there, else I would have drowned. We had been caught in a current bubbling up into an aboveground river. Nyanga managed to swim back to

the canoe, drag me aboard, and then collapse inside, totally exhausted. We drifted downstream most of the night, without strength or paddles.

The sun rose above the fog. The river had entered a swampy region. It was hard to tell where we were. The canoe hit something and stopped.

"Eh, mohn. There be a tree trunk in the way," said Nyanga. Suddenly, he pulled out his giant sword. "That be no tree trunk, mohn. It moved."

"Yo, who you callin' a tree trunk, punk?" A seven-foot-tall creature stood right behind the canoe. It looked like a giant cay-man, but with huge jaws and jagged teeth. Nyanga took a swing at it, or he tried. Another swamp creature rose behind him and grabbed hold of his wrist. Two others rose out of the muck and caught me before I could cast a spell.

"Hey, dey're no lizers'. Whaddya think, Gnarff?" said one.

"Yeh, dat's weird. Dey ain't got no scales. Let's eat 'em!" said Gnarff.

"Nyeh, I dunno. Let's take 'em to Gurr'ash. Maybe the chief'll rewar' us," intervened a third with an eye patch. They tied us, sank the canoe, and swam away carrying us on their scaly backs.

**Alphamir 11, Talasar:** This was indeed a rough ride. The current that spewed us out of the bowels of the cay-men tunnels split our canoe down the middle. We ended up swimming back to the river bank. Beyond lay a realm of swamps. Wild-eyed, Haz'ar said, "We can't go any further. This is the Bayou, the land of the gator men. They're big, they're fierce, and they're always hungry. And they hate lizardkin."

Well, we couldn't abandon the Admiral. Our best chance was to get back to the *Princess Ark*. Of course, she was invisible. But perhaps we could attract her attention. Xerdon cast a *wall of fire*. If the fire didn't catch, at least the smoke would be visible from miles away.

**Alphamir 1, Haldemar:** I landed heavily in a mud puddle when my reptilian captor shook me off his back.

We had been swimming down the Swamplight River, according to Gnarff.





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We reached a spot in a huge lagoon where these giant alligator men crowded the water. Without warning, Gnarff dove underwater and swam down to some cave. Beyond lay a vast complex partially filled with water. Of the three races encountered in this region, this one was the most primitive. No paintings, sculptures, or feathers here. Just filthy, smelly muck. And lots of tall gator men. "You wait 'ere," said Gnarff.

Hours later, an even bigger and meaner-looking gator man approached. He wore a strange armor made of lizard skin and bones, and on his head was a spiked helmet made of crocodile skin. He yanked both Nyanga and me off our feet, and carried us down to a large chamber. From the looks of it, it had to be some temple. There were pits of bubbling mud, cracks in the ground from which rose blue flames, and an 18'-tall statue of a reptilian humanoid with two apelike heads, tentacles instead of arms, and a forked tail. That couldn't be good. Nyanga and I were tied with bamboo strips to a large altar. That wasn't good either. The big gator man then said, "Tomorrow you will be sacrificed to the Avatar of Gorn." That was bad.

**Alphamir 13, Talasar:** Blasted be the swamp fog! We were lucky enough to get the *Princess Ark's* attention, but we haven't been able to find the Admiral so far. I fear the worst.

We've reached an island at the center of a large lagoon. Haz'ar says it is the heart of the Kingdom of Ator, a huge swamp ruled by brutish, cruel gator men. We circled the island several times, but could not see any towns, mounds, or burrows of any kind. Haz'ar suspects the gator men live under the water in subterranean dwellings. Had the Admiral been a lizardkin, they would have killed him instantly. But humans—they wouldn't know what to make of them, according to Haz'ar. Thus, there still is a small chance that he and Nyanga are inside the gator-men's lair, somewhere beneath us, under miles of swamps stretching below the *Princess Ark*. But where?

Well, it seemed a gator hunt was due. I ordered the crew to drop lines with hooks and bait. Perhaps we could force a few gator men to speak.

Indeed, a gator man swam by and stopped near one of the pieces of bait. After observing the bait, he grabbed the line out of the water and saw the hook. He then gazed at the line, following it up to the point where it became invisible.

"Hey, how dat get up dere?" he mumbled while tugging on the line. He started to climb the line. Ramissur was at the other end with a big mallet. That gator man never knew what hit him. When he wakes up, he'll have a long talk with us.

**Alphamir 14, Haldemar:** The time had come. Neither Nyanga nor I had managed to loosen the bamboo strips that held us on the altar. The gator men now filled the chamber, chanting crude incantations. The queen of the gator men appeared and took her place on a throne to one side. Then two gator men cranked up a large bamboo gate, revealing the entrance to a dark cavern.

From behind the gate came gurgling, hissing, and growling sounds. Soon a horrible creature crawled out. The gator men cheered. Suddenly, I recognized the monster—it was the fiend that we had pursued down into the mines of the caymen. It stopped its bizarre noises, and smirked "Oh, so sorry. I didn't know it was you! You didn't believe I was going to eat you, now did you? All I really want is your brain... Hold on a minute."

It turned toward the gator men, roared, and writhed its tentacles menacingly at them. The gator men bowed deeply and quickly left the chamber.

"Now, that's better. The fools believe I am the Avatar of Gorn, the Immortal patron of the gator men. What a crock!" the fiend added.

I couldn't believe my ears. Perhaps the evil creature was just toying with me before killing me. There was nothing I could do, so I decided to find out what he was up to. "Now, what is a fiend like you doing in a swamp like this?"

He looked truly surprised. "A fiend! Me? Oh come now, you don't see any

bat-like wings on my back, do you? Do I wear any horns or a forked tail, hmmm? Can't you tell? I'm a Neh-Thalgu, from the University of Jawwag-Uf. I'm a student in interplanar cosmogonic magic."

Totally baffled, I asked, "Well, in what manner may my brain help you? I know nothing of interplanar cosmogonic magic, whatever it is."

The creature writhed its tentacles. "I didn't think you would. You see, I am studying the cause and effect of the magical drain on the world of Mystara. In order to complete my thesis I needed to acquire the brains of typical wizards of this world. I've already got a Nithian from the Hollow World, a Glantrian, and a Herathian. I couldn't possibly leave without an Alphantian specimen, now could I?"

That was totally bizarre. I still had to know about Haz'ar's dreams, and those symbols. "At the risk of boring you out of your brain my friend, do tell me of those dreams, and what the eagle and winged-bull symbols have to do with all this?"

Several blobs of orange flesh began pulsing on the Neh-Thalgu. "I haven't got a clue of what you are talking about. By Qywattz, don't get weird on me! What dreams would these be?"

I answered, "Well, the ones you sent Haz'ar, the lizard shaman of Shazak, of course!"

The Neh-Thalgu's four eyes squinted. "What hazard, what shaman? Say, wait a minute now. I think I know. You see, I was until recently a prisoner of the Wizard King of Herath. I was captured just after acquiring the brain of one of their noblemen. I became the object of his studies, and then he threw me into his dungeon. Many years later I saw you running down a corridor in the very same dungeon, just past the door to my cell, with hordes of giant hunting spiders after you."

"The next thing I knew, the Wizard King came and visited me, told me of your brilliant mind, cast a series of spells compelling me to feed gruesomely on the saurians for some time—yuck!—and had me released at the edge of the Bayou. Now I understand why."



"He must have done all this to set you up to find me, so I could acquire your brain. That lizard shaman of yours became a convenient tool to get you to hunt me. I do know for a fact the Wizard King had some knowledge of how to send dreams. He tested that on me several times. The Wizard King also knew the kin of Shazak fairly well, since his people trade with them on a regular basis. That lizard shaman must have been someone he knew to be resourceful enough to get in your way—so he must have been the one sending those dreams. What can I say, the man is brilliant! Of course, I don't mind this arrangement at all. Now about that brain..."

I had to think fast. "Hold on for a minute, young man. You said you collected a Herathian brain. Now, wasn't there something odd about that Herathian? I truly must know."

"Like what?" he asked, crossing his crab legs.

"I'm not sure," I ventured. "Something about spiders. Big, ugly, hairy spiders."

The bloated hump that I presumed contained the Herathian brain pulsed and jiggled for a minute. The Neh-Thalgu then said, "Hmm, Wait... Hard to tell with those aliens. Oh yes, that's really odd, never noticed that. What the... Uh, ahh..." The Neh-Thalgu opened wide its eyes as drool dripped from his gaping mouth. Suddenly, he straightened up, haughtily looking down at me with his four yellow eyes. With an imperious voice he then inquired "What are you doing in my presence, human? I am Lord Achym of Ensheya, spider-lord of Shahn!" Then, confused, the Neh-Thalgu hesitated "No, wait."

I could have sworn this was someone else speaking. Judging from his looks, this Neh-Thalgu was going insane. It looked like he was suffering from an acute split-personality syndrome. What could have caused this? Perhaps all those alien brains—must be unhealthy after a while.

The Neh-Thalgu drooled more. "Aha! I know now. I am Lady Aliana Nyraviel of Glantri, Countess of Soth-Kabree,

Dragonmaster of the 2nd circle! And what's with you, Alphatian?"

I risked a last question. "I seek an hourglass tumbling in the night."

"An hourglass? The one I honor is the symbol of the d'Ambrevilles! And why would you care... why would I care? Just who am I?" The befuddled Neh-Thalgu drooled even more. Then suddenly, it began chanting what seemed delirious Thothian incantations, and added "It's breached! It's breached! The Old One comes!" Finally, the Neh-Thalgu screeched horribly, and ran away screaming into the dark.

Good, he forgot his scalpel! Nyanga managed to grab it and free us in no time. We had to get out of there quickly; there was no telling how long the Neh-Thalgu's insanity would last. I didn't know what went wrong with that Herathian brain, but it certainly confused the Neh-Thalgu's wits.

We could not escape with a *travel* spell—I had already used it to enter the caymen mine, days ago, and I hadn't meditated for new spells since. But Nyanga had a brilliant idea. It was rather risky, but it just might do the trick. While I cast a *light* spell, he threw the chamber's torches into a puddle. Then, Nyanga pulled a bamboo mat off the throne, covered it with a thick layer of wet mud, and tossed it on one of the two flaming cracks in the rock. The hissing gases soon blew the mat off, but the flames were already extinguished. He repeated the operation on the other crack. Flammable gases rapidly began filling the chamber. We had to act fast.

Nyanga rang a gong at the chamber's entrance and its echoes drifted down many galleries winding away from us. I then cast a spherical *force field* around us and hoped our plan would work.

**Alphamir 14, Talasar:** The gator man would not speak. Even Haz'ar's tickling act with a feather failed miserably, despite his thunderous laughter. I considered with great reluctance the possibility of more extreme interrogation techniques when Xerdon had an idea. We tied the gator man to a rope and dangled him in

front of Berylith's mouth. We then asked her to become visible. That did it. The gator man sang like a scaly bird.

The problem was that the gator-man's "capital" was nowhere to be seen. The whole thing lay below ground, under tons of the lagoon's muck. We considered using some *water breathing* potions, but we would still have to contend with hundreds of rather large gator men.

This is when a low rumbling came from the water. At first, there were just a few large bubbles, but then the entire surface of the water seem to turn into a volcano, with rocks, flames, and bits of gator men flying in all directions, just barely missing the *Princess Ark*. The brutal eruption ended as quickly as it began, with tons of greenish water rushing back to fill some underground vacuum. Surely, if the Admiral had been down there, he would be dead by now.

But wait! A sphere covered with mud came bobbing up at the surface of the water. The sludge dripped off, revealing the Admiral and Nyanga, sitting inside a translucent sphere, laughing hysterically. We immediately sent a life boat down to recover them.

**Epilogue, Haldemar:** A mystery unveiled only other mysteries. What the Wizard King of Herath had told me during my visit at his palace seemed pure fantasy. Perhaps some warped truth lay behind his words, perhaps not. He knew the dreams of eagles and winged bulls sent to Haz'ar would be of interest to me. Was that only a trick to get me involved?

Yet the creature told of his studies concerning the loss of magic in Mystara. This corroborates the scroll I took from the Wizard King. How could this be mere coincidence? And then, I cannot ignore the Neh-Thalgu's comment about the hourglass of Glantri—information that presumably came from the Neh-Thalgu's Glantrian brain. Who are those d'Ambrevilles? Who is that Old One? These could all have been the delirious words of an insane alien. But what if they weren't?

This uncertainty is eating at me. As soon as I can, I must unveil that which lies in the dark, be it truth or trickery.



## Chronicles

### Lords of Shade and Hue

*In Which Prince Haldemar Becomes Embroiled in a Quarrel Between the Eagle Spirit and the Spirit Mother and is Cursed to Live as a Lizard*

**Alphamir 17, AY 2001:** Three days have past since we left the gator-men's bayou. All that talk of Alphatia and Thyatis was a troubling matter. I found the Wizard King of Herath's ability to send dreams to people extremely disquieting, and I asked my old friend Talasar for a special prayer that would protect us. I could not run the risk of having any of my officers' minds affected in such a treacherous fashion. I was deep in my thoughts when the snap of thunder shook the *Princess Ark*. What now? I heard Talasar sounding the alarm on the upper deck, and squads of boltmen running up to their battle stations. This was no ordinary storm. I rushed topside.

The *Princess* was climbing to get above some big thunderheads when suddenly

three silvery creatures swooped by. I thought at first these were dragons, but the unusual silver color made this improbable. They looked more like wyverns. One of them suddenly released a lightning bolt at us. No, they weren't wyverns either.

Another flew past us and spat a second bolt just before disappearing into the storm clouds. Its bolt shattered a mast and scorched much of the rigging. Luckily, no one was hurt. The boltmen released their anger and their wands at the creatures, but their bolts did not seem to hurt the creatures much. Perhaps they had some immunity to lightning—it would make sense.

More of the creatures attacked. The crew was better prepared now and met the assault with determination. The magical fire of the *light ballistae* traced graceful arches through the dark, forcing the creatures to jink and roll before diving on the *Princess*. One got its wing caught in a *heavy ballista*'s magical web, screeched, and tumbled down into the clouds.

Another vanished instantly as it ran afoul of the *catapult*'s devastating magic. Beryllith defeated several others, but the attacks continued, unrelenting.

It became clear that the attacks were not meant to destroy the *Princess Ark*. The creatures directed their assaults at masts, sails, and other unoccupied areas. Despite damage and utter chaos on deck, no one aboard had been hurt thus far.

I took a gamble and ordered a cease fire. The creatures swooped a few more times, observing, and then disappeared into the dark clouds. I still had no clue as to why the attack took place, other than something or someone wanting to disable the ship. The *Princess* showed damage serious enough that repair was required at once. When the storm ended, we would descend to the land below and mend the masts and rigging.

**Alphamir 18, Haldemar from a later account:** We found a secluded clearing in the forest. The *Princess* slowly descended to the tree tops, and the crew fastened lines to hold her steady. The



plan was to acquire several good quality logs for the masts, but this would expose the crew as they would no longer benefit from the *Princess's* *invisibility*. Xerdon and Nyanga returned after a few hours from their scouting mission. They had seen no one in the woods. All seemed peaceful. Work began immediately.

When I was convinced all safety measures had been taken, I left the ship to oversee repairs. I was best qualified to pick the trees for the masts because I would have to enchant them later. The raucous laughter of a bird echoed strangely somewhere in the forest. Moments later, the crew began cutting down a majestic tree. I sat on a mossy rock next to a pond, as the tree trunk creaked and groaned in its fall.

Some time went by as Raman and the crew examined the log for any splinters or irregularities. Satisfied, he turned toward me and began, "This one's perfect, Your High... Admiral?" He turned around several times, apparently not seeing me. Hands on his hips, he added "Well, by Yiggureth, where is he now?"

How could he not see me? I just sat there, amazed. Then I walked up to him. Strange—he seemed twice as tall as he used to be. Indeed, I could barely reach his belt. Perhaps this place was magic. I tugged on his belt.

"Eh, what's this? Shoo! Out of my way, you, I'm busy," said Raman. He shoved me off to the side, into a bush. "Boltmen," ordered Raman, "sound the alarm; the Admiral is missing."

I tried to call, but only a faint squeak came out. A squeak? I realized with horror that I had somehow transformed into some lizard with a big, scaly frill around my neck. A lizard? Me? Who could have dared such insolent trickery!

The crew stepped aboard the lifeboat. I rushed to get on board, but a boltman grabbed me by the tail and tossed me off the lifeboat. "Hey! Get off, you. Go away, shoo!"

Now what do I do?

**Alphamir 18, Talasar:** I fear the worst may have happened to the Admiral. None of our search parties have revealed his

whereabouts. So far, I've discounted the possibility of wild animals or monsters. No traces of combat were found, nor any remains. I suspect he was abducted. Why, I do not yet know.

Native tribesmen have been sighted leaving the forest, south of our position. They could have had something to do with the Admiral. I sent Xerdon and Nyanga to observe them. Lady Abovombe decided to join their party. I will remain to oversee repairs. I've doubled boltmen patrols in the vicinity. No one is to be alone at any time until this mystery is unveiled.

**Alphamir 18, Haldemar from a later account:** Alas, I had to leave the forest after running into several unsavory critters with cravings for lizard flesh. I discovered I could frighten smaller animals by stretching out my frill and standing up menacingly. This was useful since I couldn't cast any magic in my current shape. I also discovered I could run quite fast as well. I've done a lot of that lately.

I was north of the forest, in open grassland. I must admit I'd lost my way in the tall grass, with no possibility of reaching the ship. This could be trouble.

A sudden noise in the grass got my attention. A tribesman squatted nearby, watching me. He must have had some lizardkin blood, judging from the very fine scales covering his skin. He otherwise seemed almost human. I looked him in the eyes, hoping to communicate.

"Friend... Help..." I tried to think very loudly.

He began aiming his spear at me. Well, that didn't work. Time to run!

I ran and ran until I ended up in a dead end at the base of a large rocky monolith. Drat! I tried to use the frill thing to intimidate my pursuer. The tribesman raised an eyebrow, pulled a curved piece of wood and hurled it at me. It spun in the air and flew right past my head. "Hal" I thought "...missed me." That's when the wooden missile suddenly came back and hit me in the back of the head. That was it, I thought; I was to end up as some tribesman's dinner after all. What a pity. All went dark.

**Alphamir 18, Xerdon:** We followed the small native hunting party. They had no prisoners, nor any way in which to conceal them. We were about to give up the observation when all twelve tribesmen suddenly vanished from the path. They were nowhere to be seen.

Later in the night, the tribesmen returned. They quietly entered our campsite, without any warning. Nyanga, who was on watch at the time, saw no telling sign of their arrival—they just appeared next to us.

Fortunately, these tribesmen were peaceful and simply curious about who we were. They tossed a strange creature's carcass, which they called a *roo*, on to the campfire and roasted it. One of the so-far silent tribesmen spoke after the *roo* feast.

They knew nothing of the Admiral's fate. We were the first people of our kind that they had met. The leader of the tribesmen said he knew some magical place farther south where we could find out about many things. Perhaps the medicine men there would help us. We agreed, and decided to leave the next day at dawn.

**Alphamir 19, Haldemar from a later account:** I woke up with a throbbing headache. I thought it all had been a bad dream, but I had no such luck. I hung from a branch, with my tail tied to a string—how discouraging.

The tribesman sat nearby, fixing embers in his campfire, probably to roast me. Lizard or not, it was time to act. I swung a few times at the end of my tail, leaped, and ended up perched on the branch. That caught the tribesman's attention.

I stood up, pointed a little reptilian finger at my captor, and then down at the offending string still at my tail. The tribesman took a few steps back in amazement. He scratched his head, and then regained his composure. He approached and removed the string, watching me carefully.

He considered me for an instant, and then stirred up his campfire again. Embers crackled and sparks rose above him as he began chanting. This was some



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shaman perhaps, but he knew magic to talk to lizards. He said he was Gagidju, a walkabout medicine man.

"Ooh," he said. "You are gondaman. Barramundje cursed you."

"Who's that, and why was I cursed?" I asked.

"She Spirit Mother of Wallara. She protects land, water in the billabongs, and trees in the outback. Should listen to kookaburra's call when you hear it. You angered Barramundje. Unwise ..." said Gagidju. "Now, you gondaman."

"Well, can you break the curse?" I asked.

"Ooh no. Very unwise. Only great spirit breaks Barramundje's curse. We can go to dreamstone. There, the Eagle Spirit will help," answered Gagidju. He then added, "Maybe."

**Alphamir 20, Xerdon:** We reached a small town in the rocky hills. It looked like an ancient archeological site. Judging from their architecture, the buildings must have been erected centuries ago by some advanced civilization. They had fallen into ruins at some point, and the tribesmen had taken over the site. They tried to rebuild some of the structures, using mud and straw, but it was clear none of the original work was theirs. They religiously cleaned up the older structures and revealed long forgotten runes that their medicine men studied at length.

They called the place Risilvar, the lost city. Our arrival caused some agitation. Medicine men looked at us and said, "Balandas—evil spirits." And from then on, no one would speak to us. Even the tribesmen who had led us here shunned us. We were free to go about Risilvar as we pleased, but everyone kept their distance.

Lady Abovombe had seen this kind of behavior among the tribes in her nation. She believed we had stepped right into these medicine-men's beliefs. They associated us with some ancestral enemy in their mythology. We had to prove our peaceful intentions.

She later found a wounded tribesman in one of the ruins. Fortunately, she had

brought an *ointment of soothing* that she put to good use. A medicine man called Kapurugi was watching and appreciated the act. He later agreed to help to us.

Lady Abovombe explained, "We are strangers in this land, Kapurugi. We never meant harm to anyone here. We are seeking a lost friend. Those who had led us here thought that the mystery of our friend's disappearance could be solved here in Risilvar."

"Many secrets can be unveiled in the lost city," said the medicine man. But first we need a corroboree."

He called a few of his friends and they built a fire in one of the alleyways. They began dancing and chanting around it. Strange colors appeared on their skins, and kept changing as the corroboree went on. Sparks and smoke rose from the fire. In the flames there appeared a fish, and then a strange lizard with a frill. Finally a great eagle appeared and took the lizard away into a mountain.

"Your friend is alive. But he's a gondaman, a cursed one. He roams the outback now," said Kapurugi.

"What do you mean, he's cursed?" asked Lady Abovombe.

"He is a lizard. You must leave him alone. He caused a quarrel between the Spirit Mother and the Eagle Spirit. This is bad. You must leave the lost city now."

This wasn't much help at all. There must have been some mountain somewhere in the grasslands north from here. Perhaps we would find the Admiral—or a lizard—there. This was rather bizarre. We had to return to the *Princess Ark* and report all this to Talasar. Kapurugi met us at the gate of Risilvar. He held three very large, flightless birds. He handed us their reins and then mimicked the position of a horseman. "Take emus. You will need them to travel the outback. Good luck."

**Alphamir 20, Haldemar from a later account:** After a day's march across the outback, Gagidju and I arrived at the Wallabong dreamstone. The great stone monolith rose straight up from the grass. On our way to the top, I noticed several ancient paintings, and finally the entrance to a large cavern with a small billabong.

Gagidju set up camp in a sandy corner. I had ample opportunity to observe this medicine man during our journey. The very fine reptilian scales covering his body had a tendency to change colors slightly, depending on the surrounding or the light, very much like a chameleon. The skin had this shimmering quality that unnerved me several times.

He lit a small fire, and again enlivened the embers. This time he pulled out small chips of opal and played with them for some time. He then tossed hand-sized pieces of painted bark into the fire and began chanting. The ceremony lasted hours, until well after sunset. The flames were casting odd moving shadows against the cavern's vault. At times I could see the shadows of birds among the rocks. Mesmerized, I began seeing images in the shadows, as if I were dreaming. Soon my mind was lost in the pattern of moving dark shapes.

**Alphamir 21, Talasar:** Xerdon finally returned from his mission. At the idea of the Admiral being turned into a lizard, I prayed all night for all manners of removing curses. A long day lay ahead of us. The task of hunting down every frilled lizard in the region was both ludicrous and daunting, but nevertheless seemed crucial. Where could the Admiral be?

I sent out the crew in small hunting parties with nets and bags, and the hunt began. Xerdon, Abovombe, and Nyanga would ride their emus, scouting the grasslands for signs of the Admiral. Meanwhile, I would examine each and every one of those lizards. Perhaps I could discern which was the Admiral.

Hours later, some of the teams began returning with bags full of lizards. Soon the deck was crowded with runaway frilled lizards as well as goannas and other unrelated animals. Later in the night, natives began following the crew to the *Princess Ark*, gleefully selling anything they could lay their hands on, including amazing creatures that delighted Raman. The deck became a racing track for platypuses, spiny anteaters, flying squirrels, dingoes, koala bears, wombats, and kangaroos. This happy

crowd was soon returned to the ground below so I could concentrate on those remaining frilled lizards, at last.

**Alphamir 21, Haldemar from a later account:** Gagidju had gone when I awoke from the magical dreams. Gagidju's dreams were truly amazing. I saw the eagle that he had spoken of.

It had risen from the furtive shadows of the cavern and turned into a man with small flames coming out of his eyes. At his feet sat the silvery "thunderheads," the creatures that had attacked the *Princess Ark* during the storm. They seemed very small next to him. An hourglass appeared in his hand, and he hurled it against the ground, shattering it. He finally said, "Beware of the mountain wizards. They bring the doom of your world." Finally, a fish approached the edge of the cavern's pond. It transformed into an elven maiden with a gem in her forehead. She waved her hand at me and I regained my former human shape. Mist then rose in the cavern and I lost consciousness again.

Upon my awakening, Lady Abovombe appeared at the cavern's entrance, riding a strange bird. I thought for a moment I was still dreaming. After my companions' arrival in the cavern had finally dispelled my confusion, we gathered near the pond and spoke at length about what had occurred. I could have talked at length about all I had experienced lately, but it was clear that we had to return to Alphatia without delay.

Far too many clues about an ominous future had surfaced. They could not be ignored or dismissed as mere coincidences. Nor was there any evidence that my dream of the hourglass symbol and the new mention of mountain wizards—presumably Glantrians—came from the sinister creatures I had met several days ago, namely the Neh-Thalgu or the Wizard-King of Herath. Perhaps I had indeed met with the Immortals. With a chill I recalled the vision of Sésékumbo, the Prophet of Yavdlom's brother, when he died in Jaibul six months ago. The empire was in danger: we had to warn Her Majesty at once.

### The Return Home

*In Which Prince Haldemar Learns of the Nucleus of the Spheres and Returns to Empress Eriadna With News of Ominous Portents; the Princess Ark is Ordered Home*

#### Alphamir 25, AY 2001, Haldemar:

After the strange discoveries of the past weeks, I decided to return to Alphatia and warn Her Imperial Majesty. I couldn't take the time to fly the *Princess Ark* all the way back, nor did I want to take the risk of breaching the Skyshield for a faster journey. The ship still needed repair anyway. So, despite Her Majesty's orders to stay away from the empire, I took along Lady Abovombe and faithful Myojo when I cast a *travel* spell. Talasar would take the *Princess* out of the land of Wallara and seek another repair site.

I had to find a short cut through the outer planes. Soon after leaving the Astral Plane we reached the Plane of Draesten, a cluster-universe of raw energy in the outer planes. There, we appeared to be standing on a high mountain peak. Rainbows of magical might shimmered across the sky all around us. We flew for some time among Draesten's dizzying flashes and bursts of hue and energy when I noticed a flickering silhouette following us. It was so faint I had missed it earlier, but it was there, and it was alive. The silhouette, possibly 20' long, seemed to follow our flight, occasionally coming up to our side.

I spoke to it, but it did not respond. I tried sign language, with the same result. At last, I gambled a *read magic*. Success! The flickering light was sentient and friendly. She stated she'd be willing to carry us to the site we sought, in exchange for a burst of magical energy—mere food for this creature. I suspected curiosity to be her motivation, for this place was filled with all sorts of energy.

As the deal was struck, the three of us found ourselves within the multicolored entity and shot across the sky, hurtling through Draesten like comets in Mystara's firmament. It took little time to reach the

end of our journey in this strange world. The creature—I called her a *flicker*—stopped among a cluster of floating rocks. Floating above one, it created a gate of blue, crackling light.

I cast a minor spell as payment, then we bid the flicker farewell and entered the gate. Alas, I soon discovered it led not to the place we had sought. I had expected to see the Hardball arena in Sundsvall. Instead, we stood in the Ethereal Plane, observing through the wisps of ether a very large and unknown cavern somewhere on the Prime Plane.

The gate faded away behind us. Trapped! The flicker had tricked us. But why? I had no *travel* spells left. So, while I rested and meditated for new spells, Myojo and Abovombe would watch for any activity in the cavern and around us in the Ethereal Plane.

**Alphamir 26, Talasar, from a later account:** Not far from the lands of Wallara, we found a patch of very tall trees towering over the forest. We could see no activity below, save for some unusually large raccoon-faced monkeys casually jumping from branch to branch—nothing to worry about. They'll make a good stew for the crew.

I had the *Princess Ark* hover above a clearing, and sent the crew down to prepare for the ship's landing. Once they were down, I ordered the ship to become visible to ease repair. Work was proceeding at a good pace. Several trees with perfectly straight trunks were soon cut down. Raman and Leo were doing wonders directing operations.

Suddenly, a volley of stings, stones, sticks, spears, and arrows came pouring down on the crew. Sentries were the first to fall, most of them without a word. I saw Ramissur pull a sting out of his arm, take a few steps, and fall flat on his face. Poison! They were using poison. Our attackers were hiding in the bushes and the trees. I could not see them. Feeling a burning sensation on the back of my neck, I turned around and barely had the time to notice a strange, raccoon-faced monkey staring back at me from under the shadow of a large fern. It held a long





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blowgun. The scene blurred and all went dark.

**Alphamir 26, Haldemar:** It appeared the cavern was made of black stone fused by great heat. Approximately 500' in diameter, it had the shape of a sphere except for the flattened floor. A dull-gray structure, almost 200' long, occupied the center. Nearby stood a large statue with an inscription at the bottom: "Alexander Glantri—Still He Protects."

Glantri? Perhaps we had entered a secret crypt somewhere in Glantri. The Draesten flicker clearly had something in mind when it led us here. There must have been someone else behind its actions—someone powerful. Who?

I studied the gray structure and found no way to enter it. The whole object was magical and impervious to my influence, even from the Ethereal Plane. I tried to dispel its fields of magic and to cast a *magic door*, but these attempts and several others proved futile. The mysterious structure either exuded powerful anti-magic or it was an artifact. Considering the size of the structure, either possibility seemed mind-boggling. Even Alphatia could not produce something like this! To think Glantrians concealed such a device sent a chill down my spine.

I had guessed I'd have to deal with some sort of mystery here and had studied my spell of *lore* last evening. The spell revealed the structure was called the "Nucleus of the Spheres." It also unveiled its function: to enhance one's magical prowess while forever draining magic from the world of Mystara.

I felt a ghastly hand clutch at my heart. How could they? The Glantrians were using some sort of evil magical device to destroy the most precious element of our world. Life without magic? Inconceivable!

All I had learned in the past weeks now made sense. The clues about Glantri, Alphatia, and magic being drained, were pulling together. Somehow, I was linked to all this. Perhaps my destiny had already been woven, and it led me to this obscure place. Or else, someone *wanted* me to come here, despite my journeys away from the Known World.

I had to do something about this Glantrian scheme, whatever it was. If there was something like *forbidden magic*, this was it. If I warned Her Majesty, it would mean war. The empire would not ignore this fiendish magical device and would have to march against Glantri sooner or later. Thyatis would, of course, inevitably rise against Alphatia. Thyatians would never allow an Alphatian presence in what they've always considered as their backyard.

What was I to do? I had fought before and knew all too well the savagery and sorrow of war. Many would suffer and die. Should men die for magic to exist? How right was this cause?

My dilemma was eating at me. If I did nothing, magic and all that is wondrous would disappear forever from our world. If I exposed the Glantrian scheme, empires would clash in perhaps the greatest of all wars, bringing misery and darkness to many. What if Alphatia lost the war?

No, I wasn't brought here merely to do nothing. If so, *they* should have chosen someone else instead. I just was not that kind. Perhaps without magic there would be neither man nor world—indeed, it was time to leave this forsaken place. I had seen enough.

**Alphamir 27, Talasar, from a later account:** I awoke to find myself tied to a tree trunk. Next to me was Raman. The remainder of the crew was slowly waking up as well. The entire crew was similarly tied, dangling from branches or tied to masts on the *Princess Ark*. With horror, I realized our assailants had taken over the ship.

They were halfling-sized creatures, more or less like monkeys. They were intelligent. Two of their war-party leaders were arguing, perhaps about what to do next. I asked Raman, "Are you hurt, man?"

"I don't think so. I've been listening to them for some time. I can understand some of their words. If only I could move, I might be able to communicate with them." Raman tried to twist out of his ropes.

I could move one hand. I managed to loosen some of Raman's ropes and they began to give way. The natives began playing drums and a distant echo responded. Good, that kept their attention away from us. Raman eventually freed himself and untied me. Before anything else, I prayed for Razud to bestow upon my companion a blessing to *neutralize poison*. He would need it to approach the natives—soon—as my voice attracted the natives' attention.

Raman stepped forward. He cleared his throat, "Uh, gentlemen, would you please..." and went on chirping at the natives in their strange idiom and making gestures. After a moment of silence, a wave of rage overtook the natives. Raman had perhaps insulted one of the leaders. A cloud of poisoned stings came flying in his direction. A moment later, Raman was still standing there, trying to protect himself while removing the prickly stings. The natives became suddenly quiet.

In apparent awe, they all dropped to their knees and bowed before Raman. "Oh, by the Brow of Smaarad!" said Raman. "They think I'm some sort of forest spirit!" His ability to resist their sleeping poison had truly impressed the natives. They were ready to obey him, up to a point. Raman convinced his followers to untie me, but they refused to free anyone else. Soon afterward, the natives carried us toward their village.

**Alphamir 27, Haldemar:** With the help of a *travel* spell we returned to the location in Draesten where we had last seen the flicker. She was gone, and so was the magical gate. As I suspected, further attempts to return to the Glantrian device through the outer planes failed completely. Without the gate, I was unable to retrace our path to the cavern.

Our journey led us to the Hardball arena in the Imperial capital. It was a game day. The place was crowded and no one noticed our arrival. We entered the palace grounds thanks to my family seal. (Seals are magical items that Alphatian nobility often use to enter or exit the Imperial palace. It gives the Lord of the Guard a convenient way of locking out



unwanted families and checking on who visits the palace.) I was relieved to see that the Haaken seal was still acceptable. The magical door opened after I removed my seal from the recess. We entered.

Palace halberdiers came to attention as we walked down the cavernous main hallway. Noblemen and palace officials politely nodded as we went by, largely minding their business. So far, things were going fine.

At regular intervals, however, stood pedestals with the busts of past rulers and legendary state figures. Unfortunately, they were fitted with *magic mouths* that emphatically announced our arrival, according to the seal I had presented at the entrance. Much to our discomfort, their calls echoed down the long hallway. We would've preferred inconspicuousness to pomp and circumstance just then. After some time, nobles began giving us furtive looks, while people whispered behind our backs.

The Imperial Herald walked up to us and discreetly slipped a note into my

hand. It said that Her Majesty wished to see us at once. At least she had found out quickly enough about my return. Unusually, we met in her quarters in a rather informal way. It appeared that she was more concerned about avoiding public attention than displaying any outgoing friendliness. Fortunately, Empress Eriadna did not bring up the topic of my obligation to stay out of Alphatia.

Empress Eriadna nevertheless enjoyed the presence of Lady Abovombe and even showed some curiosity toward Myojo. She had never seen a rakasta before. Then came the more serious business. I informed her of all that had happened lately, and of the Glantrian device. She considered the information at length.

"I do trust you, Admiral, but I doubt that the Council of Wizards will. You have no tangible proof of these incredible things you just told me. It will take time before I am in a position to back your discovery. Even then, there is dissension among the council. A faction secretly works to split the council, per-

haps conspiring to seize the throne. I haven't yet identified who is behind the treachery. I am convinced that this faction would push the council to discredit you and your discoveries in order to get to me.

"Unbeknownst to the council, I have pursued a quest to unveil that hollow world of yours. I have now received proof of its existence beneath our world, and started establishing a way to reach it more quickly. Some day, that new world will be Alphatian. Should anything happen to the empire as a result of the Glantrian scheme, look toward the hollow world. You might very well find me there.

"You find my words rather gloomy, but I have been suspecting some great evil at work. I have known for some time now that magic is slowly draining from Mystara. The temple priests have spoken of friction among the Immortals, and it seems to have something to do with magic. If this is true, Admiral, someone far greater than even kings and emperors of Mystara has guided your path ever



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since you left the empire. If so, even the whole of mighty Alphatia may not make a difference in the end.

"I will speak to the Glantrian wizard-princes. I will pray that they listen to the voice of reason. Should I fail, a great war will follow. I am not certain we'll win, but I swear this empire will fight like never before. The world will not be the same again."

"Admiral, it is time for you to return home. I want you to stay at your ancestral domain in Floating Ar. You will be safe there. Be patient. I may need your help and the service of your loyal crew in the difficult times to come. You have done well and shall not be forgotten."

**Alphamir 28, Talasar, from a later account:** Some time before arriving at their village, the war party halted the march. Everyone rested from the long, difficult journey through the woods and ate.

Sometime after our meal, both Raman and I began suffering from severe cramps. A shaman had connived to make us drink a magical potion of his making. As a result, we both shrunk to the natives' size. The shaman watched us and laughed, "You not spirit! Not spirit!" That was bad luck.

We eventually reached the village: a place named Cafua if Raman got the name right. The village sat up in the branches of the tallest trees. Precarious, hanging bridges linked a multitude of platforms on top of which sat the natives' huts. They had to haul us up with ropes, since we couldn't climb the tall trees at all. We were allowed some rest in the shaman's hut—a detestable place with all sorts of dried insects pinned to the walls, all manners of snakes and arachnids hanging from the roof, and worst of all, an impressive collection of mummified skulls most of which looked like shrunken human heads.

The shaman showed up with a sly grin. After a rudimentary conversation with Raman, we learned that these were the phanaton people of Jibaru, forest hunters and tree dwellers. It took some doing to convince the shaman that we weren't

from Herath—apparently people they didn't like. He still seemed suspicious. A phanaton warrior entered the hut and motioned us to follow him. The village chief wanted to see us.

He, too, was very suspicious. Then the shaman told Raman to enter a large cage that sat on one of the tree platforms. It was filled with large spiders. I quickly bestowed upon him the same magical protection against poison, but that did not reassure him one bit. He hated spiders. At the sight of what lay in the cage, so did I. There was little choice there. Dozens of warriors aimed their bows at Raman and I. The chief then said "You enter cage, or Ixu make trophy of your head."

Raman entered. The spiders all leaped on top of him. I could barely see his hands and feet sticking out from under the crawling mass, as he screamed in abject terror. The village chief raised his hand and a volley of blowgun stings neutralized the spiders.

Moments later, the phanatons pulled Raman from under the dozing arachnids. It seemed the spiders did not react as expected. The shaman then said "He not man from Herath; spiders attack him." The phanatons quickly applied herbal concoctions to Raman's wounds.

The rest of the day went more peacefully, thank Razud. We learned that the phanatons of Jibaru were spider-hunters and, not surprisingly, had gotten in trou-

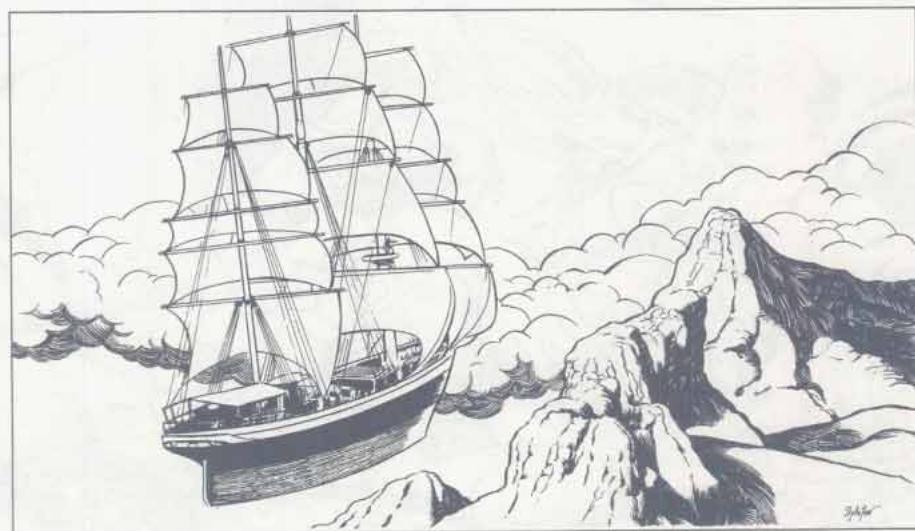
ble with the neighboring Herathians over the years. Not having seen many humans, they thought we too were from Herath. Had the spiders not attacked Raman, by now our heads would be adorning the chief's hut, soon to be followed by those of the entire crew.

Finally, the Jibaru released us and the crew. They brought food (baked spider legs), fruits, nuts, and other forest goods, while the crew worked on the ship. After a night of feasting (everyone with their respective foods), drum-beating, and dancing around a large campfire, we took our leave and returned to the *Princess Ark*. It turned out these phanatons were good fellows after all.

**Sulamir 1, Haldemar:** After another travel spell, we were back aboard the *Princess*. I was pleased to see repairs were on schedule and that everything had gone well. At least *they* had an easy time!

I announced the news of what had happened to the crew. Everyone was stunned and overjoyed. At last we were going back home, for good. I couldn't help thinking about what was to come, though. What did the future hold for the *Princess* and her loyal crew? It seemed that the adventure was over for now. But then, does adventure ever really end on Mystara?

**The End**



# The Princess Ark

## The Princess Ark: Design Statistics —

**Motive Power:** Magic (Primary), Wind (Secondary), Various and Sundry Gnomish Inventions (Tertiary)

**Air Speed:** 360' (120'). She can travel up to 240 miles per day, although her normal cruising speed covers only 120 miles per day. In favorable winds, her unconventional sail configuration adds 10% to her air speed. The *Princess Ark* can also travel under wind power alone if desired, with a normal air speed of 180' (60').

**Maneuvering Factor:** 1. Primary Motive Power is supplied by an enchanted sky wyrms (an air elemental), hence the *Princess Ark*'s Maneuvering Factor is one category better than her size would indicate. Under sail power alone, her Maneuvering Factor is 1/2.

**Length:** 210'

**Beam:** 80'

**Depth:** 50' (main hull)

**Tonnage:** 1500 tons

**Hull Points:** 500

**Armor Class:** 6

**Crew:** 101 (4 officers, 8 NCOs, 60 boltmen, 15 airmen, 10 gunners, 4 support personnel). Also 1d20 mercenaries.

**Lift Capacity:** 2,100 tons

**Cargo Capacity:** 16 tons. The cargo hold (area 802) contains up to eight tons of provisions (enough for four weeks). Various stowage areas can hold another four tons, and there's space available for up to twenty passengers and their gear. The *Princess Ark* can temporarily transport up to 50 tons of cargo and/or passengers on her upper decks, but Berylith will vehemently complain the entire trip.

## General Information

The present-day *Princess Ark* is very unlike Haldemar's family ship. Rather than retaining the familiar ship-like hull and masts, Berylith remodeled the *Princess Ark* into two parts.

The ship's main wooden hull is heavily decorated with sculptures representing cloud patterns, wavy snakes, lions, and

eagles. The main colors of the ship range from azure to night blue, while the sculptures are brilliantly silvered. The decks and the inside of the ship retain a more natural wood color.

Berylith also created a mobile deck, levitating above the fore end of the main hull. This is the commander's deck, from which Haldemar normally controls the ship's course and speed. A nacreous dome covers the commander's deck. Its smooth outer surface acts like a mirror, preventing anyone from looking into the dome.

A magical aura in the shape of Berylith's sky-wurm body surrounds the ship. This translucent envelope has the consistency of pipe smoke, very much like the puffs of smoke some hins from the Shires use to create images in the air when telling their old tales. The aura matches the maneuvers of the *Princess Ark* with appropriate body motions such as flapping its huge wings, moving its head, coiling its serpentine tail, and so on. Berylith may turn this aura invisible on Haldemar's command.

The commander's deck is located within the head of the sky wyrms ghostly aura. It moves with the aura's head, pitching to the left or right when Berylith looks aside, rolling up when she looks up, and so forth. All floors on the mobile deck are enchanted with their own gravity effect, preventing occupants from losing their footing when the deck moves too rapidly.

Unless otherwise noted, the following is true for all of the ship. The lower edge of each stairs' railing ends with a small *continual light*. All windows and port-holes are covered with a mirrorlike nacre, so outside observers cannot see in. Port-holes cannot be opened and are too small for anyone halfling size or larger to get through. The doors are unlocked. The ship is heated or cooled depending on the seasons and can maintain breathable atmosphere beyond the Skyshield. During an emergency maneuver, crew members can hang onto leather straps attached to railings, in passageways, and in personal quarters throughout the ship.

## Ship's Weaponry

The ship is armed with three types of weapons, collectively referred to as the "guns." Despite their common names (ballistas and catapult), these are, in fact, magical devices. Each gun requires a magical jade and gold key in order to be fired. Xerdon (the Chief Gunner) and the Gunner's Mate each have two keys which can be used to activate any of the guns on board. Gunners man these weapons, while boltmen assume individual combat posts on the decks and gangways.

The *light ballistas* have rotating triple-mounted rods capable of firing three bursts of *magic missiles* per round (each burst has three missiles, for a total of 9 missiles per round) with a range of 200'. Interspersed with the *magic missiles* are enough *light spells* to require anyone within the line of fire to save vs. spells or be blinded for 6 turns. Firing a *light ballista* produces spectacular, though harmless, roaring flames at the rods' firing tips, a feature designed simply to scare the enemy.

The *heavy ballistas* have larger twin-mounted rods, each capable of casting a *web spell* up to 300' every other round. The rods look like two over-sized, hissing black snakes, and recoil after each shot.

The *catapult* looks like a large, heavily sculpted wooden tube, similar to a fat medieval bombard, with three red muzzles resembling dragon heads. It can fire a *disintegrate* spell to 400' once per turn.

Berylith retained the use of her breath weapon, which originates at the mouth of her ghostly aura (effects as per the greater sky wyrms description on p. 94). The breath weapon inflicts 40 points of damage for every 100 hull points the *Princess Ark* has remaining (round down). Berylith's aura must remain visible around the ship while any of the magical weapon devices or the breath weapon are used, and during one full turn following their last use. Berylith does not have the other abilities of sky wyrms.

## The Princess Ark

### Magical Wards

Magical wards protect the ship from outside intrusions. They include the following enchantments:

All *wizard lock* spells on doorways aboard ship are cast at 32nd level (the number of Hit Dice that a greater sky wyrm has).

All outside decks and all gangways directly accessible from the outside provide the ship's first line of security. Anyone or anything moving on these surfaces and not registered at the yeoman's office on the crew's roster will leave brightly glowing footprints on these surfaces and anywhere else they go on board until the footprints are dispelled, the culprit is caught, or one turn has passed.

Anyone or anything invisible or using magic to conceal its identity or appearance may not use any of the stairways or the levitation shaft without causing a *magic mouth* to appear and scream "Intruder!" continuously for one turn or until the spell is *dispelled*.

Turning the door knobs or rings on any of the passageways' port and starboard doors (including the ones leading to the brig) or on any of the hatchways, without first uttering the password, causes an electrical shock for 1-8 hp and activates all the *magic mouths* described above.

Causing damage to the structure of the ship (starting a fire, puncturing the hull, etc.) automatically attracts Berylith's attention. This may not be obvious to the culprit. Berylith will inform Haldemar or will take action on her own, such as attempting to slam a door in the culprit's face for 1-4 hp damage or attempting to lock the exits.

### Leo's Improvements

Leopold Le Nerviens loves to make "improvements" to the *Princess Ark*'s design. Here are two of them:

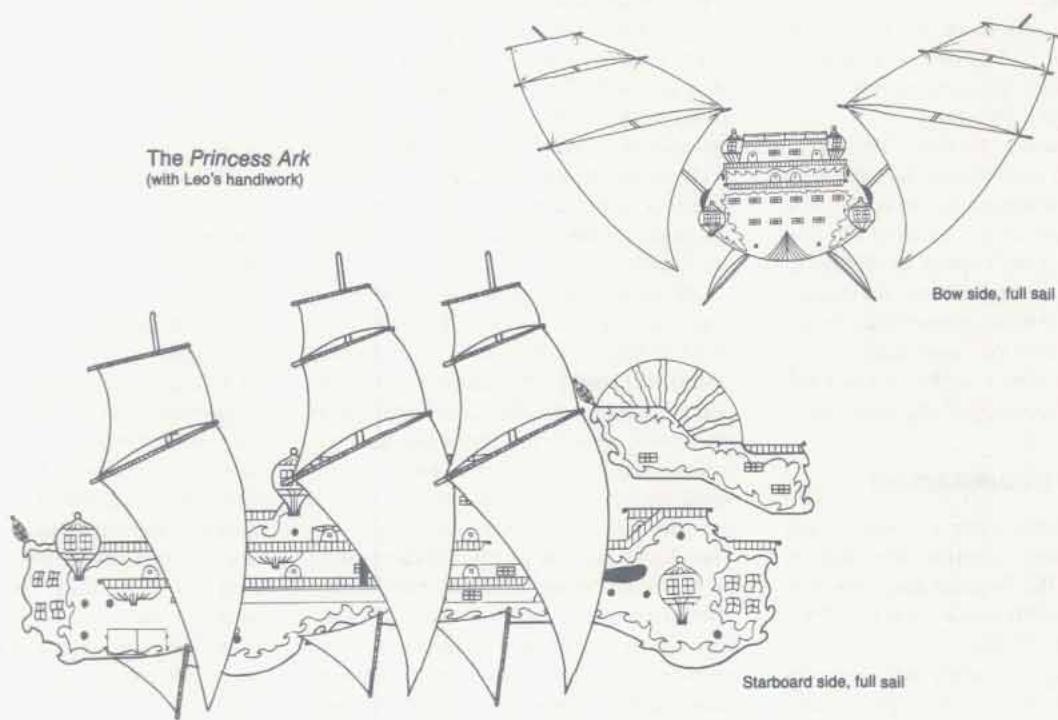
If the *Princess* needs a sudden burst of speed (when attempting to penetrate the Skyshield, for instance), a pair of tubes

will extend from the underside of Deck 7 and expel an alchemical flame jet, doubling the ship's Air Speed for 1d4 turns. It takes Haldemar two weeks, 2,000 gp in materials, and a successful Alchemy skill roll to replace the alchemical substance after each use.

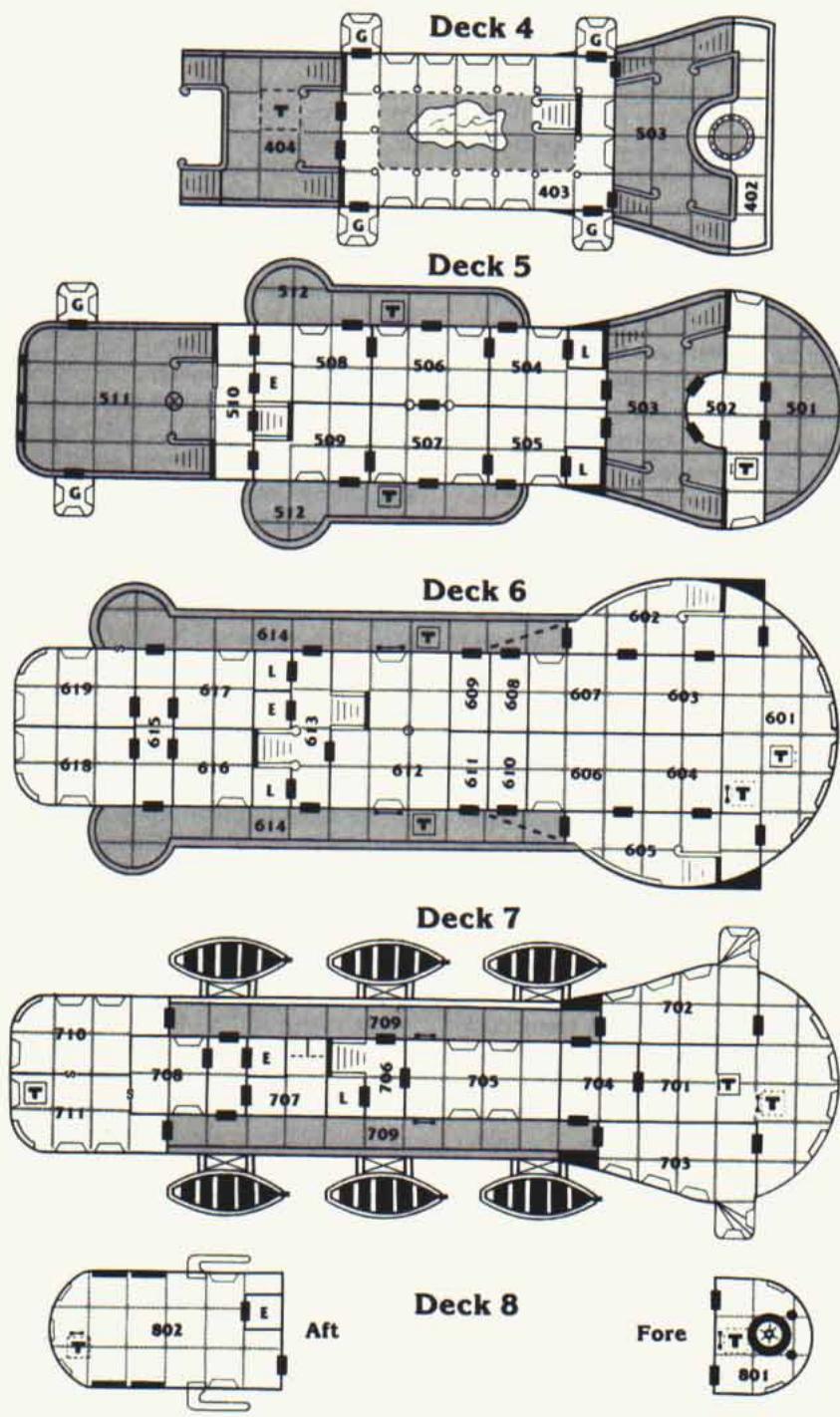
Leo also made an unconventional set of sails, masts, and rigging while Halde-mar's back was turned. Three pairs of masts jut out at a 45° upward angle on both sides of the hull, each bearing three sails with complicated rigging to operate them (see below). In truth, the airmen were delighted with this addition; they had little to do except scrub the decks and polish the *Princess*'s brass fittings when Berylith remodeled the ship.

DMs are free to allow Leopold to incorporate any additional widgets, gadgets, and devices which strike their fancy. These might include such things as automatically-deploying parachutes should the *Princess Ark* suddenly lose her ability to fly.

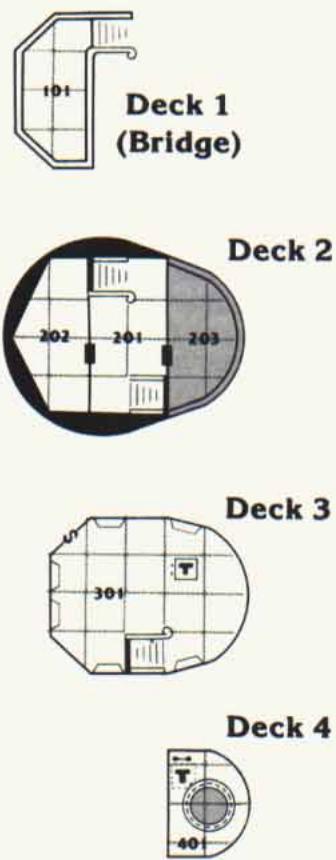
The *Princess Ark*  
(with Leo's handwork)



## Princess Ark Deck Plans



## Commanders' Deck



- Window/Porthole
- Door
- Secret Door
- Hatchway
- Hatchway Overhead
- Ladder
- Overhang
- Stairway
- Wooden Beam
- Railing

Scale: 1 square = 10'  
(Shaded areas are open-air decks)



## The Princess Ark

### Deck Plans Key —

The rooms shown in the deck plans are numbered according to their deck location. The first digit corresponds to the deck number on which the room is located.

**E. Elevator (levitation shaft):** This shaft, enchanted with a *levitation* spell, stretches from deck 8 to deck 4. Anyone stepping in states which deck he wishes to reach, and the spell does the rest. Asking for a deck that does not exist or cannot be reached via the shaft automatically attracts Berylith's attention. Depending on the situation, Berylith may freeze or cancel the levitation effect, or even jettison the intruder from the shaft out through the bottom of the ship or up through Deck 4 (inflicting 2d8 points of damage to the victim and sustaining an equal number of hull points in damage to herself in the process unless she first opens the appropriate trap door).

**G. Guard turret:** These small turrets are always occupied by one boltman. Each turret has a wide view and a horn to sound the alarm. Guards are changed every four hours.

**L. Latrine:** These rooms contain a magical chamber pot that remains always empty, a magical tub filled with warm *ever-cleaning water*, a small table, and wash cloths. Although insufficient for the whole crew by modern standards, ship personnel get by simply by taking water in pans and washing up in their quarters. According to Alphatian Imperial Navy Regulations, each crew member must bathe at least once a week.

### Commander's Decks (Decks 1–3)

**101. Command bridge:** Two wooden seats with red cushions face toward the bridge's front railing. Their wood is carved with strange, intertwining veins like those under the skin of a well-blooded horse. A stand with a small crystalline ball sits between the two seats. Talasar or another officer simply lays a

hand on the crystal to convey simple orders to Berylith. The front railing opens onto area 201, below.

**201. Lower bridge:** Two boltmen often stand guard in this area. The lower bridge is open to the balcony of the command bridge. The door to area 202 is *wizard locked*; the door to area 203 is unlocked. Port-side stairs lead up to the bridge (area 101), while the starboard stairs lead down to area 301.

**202. Commanders' lounge:** All commissioned officers have free access to this room. Xerdon, the Warrant Officer, also has access. Six armchairs face a circular, glowing metal plate on the floor. The plate shows a magical image of either the lands underneath the *Princess Ark* or the constellations above. A small cache under the stairs on the port side hides the ship's more valuable treasures (usually gems and jewelry). The value varies with the ship's fortunes but often comes close to 5,000 gp.

**203. Commander's ballista deck:** This open-air deck is normally unoccupied except for one sentry, usually a forward watch. The door to area 201 is unlocked. The deck has a *light ballista* (see "Ship's Weaponry," p. 69).

**301. Library and Map Room:** Crowded shelves of musty old books and map cases cover much of the bulkheads here. A large varnished table with six leather chairs occupies the center of the room. The table is often strewn with scrolls, notes, and books. Stairs lead up to area 201; a hatchway in the floor leads down a ladder to area 401. A secret compartment lies under the starboard staircase. It contains a rope ladder that can be used to exit through the secret door on the opposite side of the room. The ladder is long enough to reach area 503.

**302. Promenade deck:** This rectangular gangway is part of the main hull, but is on the same level as Deck 3 of the levitating commander's deck. The gangway overlooks the atrium. A sky-blue silk tent covers the gangway and the atrium's skylight. Stairs lead down to the atrium (area 403) and to the midship ballista deck (area 404).

### Deck 4 — Ceremonial Deck

**401. Upper teleporter:** Although at the level of deck 4, this room is part of the mobile commander's deck. It has a magical circle capable of teleporting people to area 402. Teleportation requires the proper password, which is periodically changed. All officers (including NCOs) know this password, and pass it on to individual crewmen assigned to duty on the commanders' decks. Haldeimar and Talasar know several other command words that will lead them directly to other areas of the ship.

**402. Lower teleporter:** This open-air area contains a magical circle linked with room 401. A sentry keeps watch here.

**403. Atrium:** This room contains the Myoshiman monolith that allows the *Princess Ark* to bend rays of light and become invisible. The bulkheads and beams here are ornately carved and decorated. Small wooden busts of previous Alphatian rulers are located at the corners. The top of the monolith sticks out through a rectangular skylight overhead. The port and starboard doors lead to the guard turrets. The forward doors open on the stairs to deck area 503. The stairs next to the monolith lead up to the Promenade Deck (area 302). Other doors lead to guard turrets.

**404. Midship ballista:** This open deck carries two *heavy ballistas* (see "Ship's Weaponry," p. 69). Each ballista can fire at any angle from directly aft their position to 120° forward. (Any other angle will take out the observation mast, a guard turret, or part of Deck 3.) A sliding hatchway reveals the top end of the levitation shaft (see area E). The forward stairs lead up to the gangway (area 302). The aft stairs lead down to deck area 511.

### Deck 5 — Crew Deck

**501. Forward ballista deck:** This open deck holds a *light ballista* manned only during combat. The doors to area 502 are locked except, during combat.



**502. Armory:** This room contains non-magical combat equipment. All the doors are locked, except during combat. The hatchway leads down a ladder to area 601. It's always locked; only commissioned officers and Xerdon (the Warrant Officer) have keys to the hatch.

**503. Briefing deck:** Officers often address the crew from this open-air deck. Ceremonial duties are performed here, with an honor guard standing on the gangway above (area 402) and on the stairways to area 403 and the gangway.

**504. Boltmen's quarters, men:** Ship's personnel live in these quarters. Narrow bunks are stacked three high, allowing rest for up to 33 people. Small chests are located under the lower bunk, while heavy cloth bags hang from the bulkheads. These contain the crew's personal belongings. The forward port door leads to the men's latrine (used by crew members as well as boltmen).

**505. Boltmen's quarters, women:** This room is similar to area 504. The locked. The deck has a *light ballista* opportunity employer. Fraternization, however, is not tolerated aboard ship.

**506. Crew's mess room:** Off-duty personnel have their meals or spend their free time here. Consumption of alcoholic beverages is generally tightly controlled. Crew otherwise use their time here to mend uniforms or equipment, to read, or to play cards, dominos, dice, or darts.

**507. Chapel:** The chapel is nominally devoted to the Immortal Razud; however, Talasar often conducts more generic services to accommodate the remainder of the crew. An unusual enchantment actually causes the room to be larger inside than out—its scale doubles for people inside the room (40' x 60'). The chapel contains rows of benches, a small wooden altar, and small friezes of Razud and his followers carved into the bulkheads.

**508. Crew quarters, men:** This room is similar to area 504, except that some of the space is taken up with barrels and common deck equipment. In the tradition of the Alphatian Navy, sailors often sleep in hammocks. These are hooked to

wooden beams and bulkheads almost haphazardly in these quarters. Up to 21 people can fit in the room (in very cramped conditions). Passengers of low status may share these quarters with the crew.

**509. Crew quarters, women:** This room is similar to area 508.

**510. Alleyway:** A sentry normally guards this passageway. The door to the stairway is *wizard locked*. Only officers and the galley personnel have free passage. The stairs lead down to area 613 underneath.

**511. Aft catapult deck:** This large deck is the largest open area on the ship. A magical catapult occupies the center of the deck (see "Ship's weaponry"). Riggings run up to the top of the observation mast, behind the catapult. A watch remains on top of the mast, observing the *Princess*'s aft for incoming vessels. Two doors lead to the aft guard turrets. Three stern lanterns give off a reddish light during the night.

**512. Upper Gangway (port and starboard):** These open-air bridges allow the crew to reach their battle stations quickly. A *light ballista* (see "Ship's Weaponry," p. 69) occupies the aft edge of each gangway. A sky-blue tent covers the narrow portion of the gangway; the tent can be rolled back for combat. Rolls of rope ladders are tied to the inside of the railing, allowing quick escape to the life boats below on deck 7. A hatchway near the gangway's midsection leads down to gangway 614.

### Deck 6 — Officers' Deck

**601. Wardroom:** Commissioned officers (and occasionally petty officers) dine or conduct meetings in this chamber. It is a well-decorated room, with large window openings on the prow of the *Princess Ark*. A wooden ladder in the starboard corner leads to a hatchway overhead, opening into area 502. Another hatchway, hidden under the carpet, leads down to area 701. Both hatchways are locked (see area 502). A large wooden table and a dozen leather chairs occupy

the center of the room. China and silverware are located in a chest in the port-side corner.

**602. Guest lounge:** Dignitaries often meet in this lounge. A large sofa faces a crystal canopy on the port side bulkhead. Several potted plants and small wooden sculptures of famous Alphatian seamen stand on pedestals in the corners of the lounge. The stairs lead down to area 702 underneath.

**603-604. Guest rooms:** These opulently decorated, comfortable quarters are reserved for very important passengers.

**605. Trophy room:** This area displays a variety of strange and valuable items collected over the *Princess Ark*'s years of travel. Some are magical; others are simply bizarre. Their true uses and actual properties are not always clear, even to the ship's officers. Raman is in charge of studying these items, researching their lore, and cataloging them in his library. The stairs lead down to area 703 below.

**606. Raman's quarters:** This room would be a disgrace to normal navy officers. It is filled with chests, wooden boxes, bulky scroll cases, and books spread about the room in a most disorganized fashion. A few of the items from the trophy room (area 605) can be found on Raman's work table, with piles of notes and sketches. Occasionally, a small cage with a strange creature inside may hang near the window (see area 703).

**607. Xerdon's quarters:** Unlike Raman's quarters (area 606), this rather spartan room is absolutely spotless. The only note of uniqueness consists of a collection of weapons and shields adorning the bulkheads.

**608-611. Petty officers' quarters:** These narrow quarters are shared by the noncommissioned officers. Each room includes a pair of double wooden bunks, chests or bags for personal goods, small tables, and chairs. Occasionally, middle-class passengers may share these quarters. The petty officers double up (four to a room) to vacate one or more of these quarters when necessary.

## The Princess Ark

**612. Galley:** All meals for the crew and officers are prepared in this room. The cook and his two assistants work, sleep, and live here, catering to all needs aboard ship. Food is cooked in a magical oven that requires no flame or combustibles. The galley includes a kitchen and a scullery.

**613. Alleyway:** The aft stairs lead up to alleyway 510. The forward stairs lead down to alleyway 706. The cook's two assistants use either stairs or the levitation shaft to bring food from the galley to the mess rooms (areas 506 and 601) or to sick bay (area 705).

**614. Lower gangway (port and starboard):** These open-air bridges are reserved for upper-class passengers or officers. A sentry is usually stationed at the door on the forward edge of each gangway. Any crew or boltmen assigned duty on this deck can be relieved only in the presence of an officer. A *light ballista* (see "Ship's Weaponry," p. 69) sits on the aft edge of the gangway. A hatchway located near each gangway's forward end leads down to gangway 709. Next to each hatchway is a ladder leading up to gangway 512.

Three magical *clothform* rafts are folded and fastened to the bulkheads by each gangway; these devices are enchanted with the *float in air* spell and magically inflate when unfolded. They're used for emergencies only. Four people can fit on each raft. When released over the side of the ship, the raft sinks to ground (or sea) level at a rate of 30 yards per turn. A raft that lands on water will remain afloat for 3d4 days—although a severe storm will likely sink it.

**615. Alleyway:** Only Myojo, Lady Abovombe, Talasar, or Haldemar can enter this area without causing a *magic mouth* to sound the alarm. When someone is invited to these quarters, he is provided with a small magical coin that prevents the alarm from going off. Anyone entering without the coin is also surrounded by a magical aura that betrays him if he tries to hide. The aura lasts an hour or until dispelled. This aura will trigger every other magical ward on the

ship, where appropriate. However, it does not necessarily attract Berylith's attention.

**616. Abovombe's quarters:** The bulkheads in this room are intricately sculpted, showing episodes of Abovombe's life from childhood to present. The remainder of the room is more humble, with simple curtains over the window, a round carpet in the middle of the room, and flowers in a vase on the chest of drawers near the door. A small table and two chairs stand next to the bed, which is covered with a mosquito net. A levitating crystal globe hovers over the table, providing a soft, opalescent light; it can be dimmed with a black velvet veil that lies on the table.

**617. Myojo' quarters:** These quarters are furnished very much like a Myoshiman room. A tatami (woven mat) covers the floor, while a futon (low mattress) lies in the far corner of the room. Myojo's swords normally rest on a small wooden stand near the futon. A number of fine tapestries cover the bulkheads. Myojo's other personal belongings remain in a wooden chest.

Myojo's pet donshu sits on a perch by the door. Myojo talked Raman out of dissecting the little creature, and he has kept it ever since as his mascot and watchful pet. The donshu has the size and body of a tamarin monkey, with small claws and the head of a cat. It has blue-gray hair and green eyes having neither pupil nor iris. Once per day, it can turn invisible and cast a *telekinesis* spell (at the 1st level of ability). The donshu can pick pockets, move silently, climb, hide in shadows, and hear noise as a 10th-level thief.

**Donshu:** AC 6 (Dx 18); HD 1/2; hp 3; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1 hp; Save Fl; ML 7; TT Nil; Int 4; AL N; XP 20

**618. Talasar's quarters:** The floor, bulkheads, and ceiling in this room are covered with skillfully polished metal plates. All of them are oriented at slightly different angles and act like mirrors. A large number of perpetual candles (enchanted with tiny *continual lights*) glow everywhere in the room. In effect, the room resembles the meditation hall in the

Great Temple of Razud in Starpoint. Talasar's bed is concealed behind one of the reflecting panels. The window is covered with a thick velvet curtain. Anyone using bright light in this area must save vs. spells or be blinded for 1d6 rounds.

**619. Haldemar's quarters:** Berylith took particular care to rearrange Haldemar's quarters the way *she* liked them. Most of the dark brown, varnished floor is covered with unique carpets made from the fluffy, silver hair of sky-wurm manes. The bulkheads have the consistency of soft leather rather than wood and show a variety of blue tints, ranging from deep purple dotted with tiny glowing stars when Haldemar sleeps, to bright azure with shifting cloud patterns, when he's fully awake. A translucent globe of continual light mimics the passage of the sun or the moon across the cabin's ceiling, with all appropriate tints for sunrises and sunsets. Occasionally, a light breeze may create havoc among Haldemar's disorganized stacks of scrolls. The choice of shades and the strength of the breeze depend on Berylith's mood.

Berylith also added to the room quite a bit of what could be perceived by Haldemar as the dreaded feminine touch—including exquisite curtains and charming vases of *ever-resplendent blooms*. The centerpiece Berylith's pride lies in Haldemar's age-old bunk, which she has mercilessly turned into a pink-shaded *levitating* cloud in the middle of the room.

## Deck 7 — Utility Deck

**701. Upper cargo deck:** Common crew equipment and smell items which can be pulled up through the hatchway are stored in this area. The hatchway in the floor leads down to area 801. A wooden ladder in the middle of the cargo bay leads to another hatchway overhead to area 601. Both hatchways are locked; only commissioned officers and Xerdon, the Warrant Officer, have the keys.

**702. Greenhouse:** A *continual light* spell illuminates this large room. A number of small and large plants picked up during the voyages of the *Princess Ark*

have been placed here. One unappreciated vegetable is a specimen of Cestian gobbler (see p. 91), which stopped growing and became dormant due to the room's unfavorable conditions. The carnivorous plant wakes only when touched or presented with raw meat. The greenhouse's caretaker, Azoth, is a zombie that remains inside a large empty jar when done with its chores. Azoth will attack anyone harming the plants. A heavy curtain conceals the stairway on the port-side bulkhead; the stairs lead up to area 702. Another heavy curtain hangs from the ceiling, and can be drawn across the source of the *continual light* to simulate night.

**703. Zoo:** A strong, alkaline smell fills this room. Most of the space is occupied by metal cages, some empty and others containing various animals and small monsters. Some have recently become objects of further study, especially by Raman (see area 606). A heavy curtain conceals the stairway on the starboard side; the stairs lead up to area 605.

**704. Yeoman's office:** This office contains a large desk, wooden chests, and shelves covered with a number of ledgers and scroll cases. Most of the ship's accounting takes place in this room. The crew often stops in this office to receive their pay before leaving the ship. It is also here that passengers and new crew members must register.

**705. Sick bay:** These quarters are mostly filled with bunks, night stands, chairs, chests, and a small altar consecrated to Razud; wisps of myrrh incense slowly rise from small copper censers kept lit on the altar. The beds are covered with fine mosquito nets. The area opposite the door to alleyway 706 can be curtained off from the rest of the room. In the center of that area is a flat wooden table used for surgery, should it ever become necessary, as well as a rack of wicked-looking tools. Talasar more often handles medical problems with clerical spells than with surgery. Occasionally, Raman will use the table to dissect some of the creatures from area 605. The room fills rapidly after a battle.

**706. Alleyway:** The stairs leading up from this area lead to alleyway 613.

**707. Brig:** Only two cells can be used in this area. Manacles are solidly bolted to the wooden bulkhead. One sentry sits at a small table near the exit whenever the brig is occupied. The door is *wizard locked* at all times, limiting access to officers only.

**708. Leo's quarters:** This room is filled with an incredible mess of raw materials, tools, and strange pieces of machinery (Leo's partially completed inventions). There is no telling what these devices may do if tampered with. Leo's bed is a small hammock hanging from the ceiling. Mugs, bags, and other items hang nearby; Leo can reach them with a mechanical arm.

**709. Evacuation gangway:** Lifeboats hang from the side of the gangway here. Pulleys and cranks allow the boats to be pushed away from the deck or pulled back in 1d4+3 rounds. The lifeboats are enchanted with *fly* spells (Air Speed 360' (120'); Maneuvering Factor 1; Length 30'; Beam 10'; Depth 5'; Tonnage 4 tons; Hull Points 2; Armor Class 4; Lift Capacity 8 tons; Cargo Capacity 3 tons). Each may carry up to 12 people and survival gear without ill effect. Up to 18 people could huddle on a lifeboat, but this would exceed its Lift Capacity, causing the lifeboat to sink at 30 yards per round. With more than 18 people aboard, a lifeboat has a 10% per turn of capsizing or beginning a free-fall. *Air masks* (see the *Designer's Manual*) may be needed during an evacuation, since lifeboats and rafts lack *create air* enchantments. The lifeboats are covered with tarpaulins. A ladder halfway down this gangway leads up to an overhead hatchway connecting with gangway 614. The forward-most lifeboats on either side of the ship ferry people on and off the *Princess Ark*.

**710. Laboratory:** Haldemar and Talasar often use these quarters to study magic or alchemy. Shelves cover the bulkheads, displaying huge numbers of crystal vials, copper urns, glass beakers and tubes of various colors, porcelain jars, stone crucibles, ivory and wooden

scroll cases, skulls of various shapes, bizarrely twisted candles, grimoires, and other arcane objects. Haldemar often calls on Leo to help make sophisticated contraptions. The door is *wizard locked*. A secret door leads to area 711.

**711. Workshop:** Leo works in this area, using the facilities and its heavy tools to build his inventions. He is aware of the secret passage leading to his quarters in area 708. The room is filled with work benches, rows of tools, and pieces of broken equipment belonging to the ship or the crew. Chief engineer Raman has long given up this area, reluctantly leaving it to the hyperactive gnome. A hatchway in the floor leads to area 802 underneath. A secret door Leo is unaware of leads to area 710.

## Deck 8 — Cargo Deck

**801. Anchor room:** A few boxes and barrels are stored in this area. In the middle sits a large winch used to lower a ground anchor. At least four people are needed to crank the anchor back up, a process taking 1d6+4 rounds. A wooden ladder leads to a hatchway in the ceiling that connects with area 701. The two doors are *wizard locked*.

**802. Lower cargo deck:** This area is filled with large barrels, crates, chests, and other bulky items. This cargo deck contains mostly food supplies for the crew, with very little in the way of actual merchandise, as the *Princess Ark* is not a merchantman but an exploration vessel. Two very large double doors open on the port and starboard sides of the hull. Two cranes on the outside can be used to bring cargo up when the ship is airborne. The cranes are operated from the inside of the cargo deck with pulleys and levers. All doors are normally *wizard locked*, except for the one leading to the levitation shaft. Scullions commonly visit this area, selecting goods to be taken to the galley in preparation for the next meal. A wooden ladder near the end of the room leads up to a hatchway overhead, connecting with area 711.



# Heroes of the Skies

The *Princess Ark* is a skyship commissioned in the Alphatian Imperial Navy, and has a crew primarily composed of Alphatian Naval officers and enlisted personnel. Her normal complement is 101, including: 12 officers (commissioned and petty officers); 60 boltmen (the Marines of the Alphatian Navy); 15 airmen (who do all the work involved in flying the *Princess Ark* and keeping her shipshape); 10 gunners; and four support personnel (the halfling cook, his two scullions, and the ship's boy).

Due to the nature of her voyages and the fact that the *Princess Ark* was exiled from Alphatian skies for a while, some of her original personnel have been replaced with able-bodied natives from the lands she's visited. She also often recruits mercenaries in times of trouble. Nyanga, a swetanga (knight) of the Yavdlom Divinarchy, is a prime example.

## Berylith

When Prince Haldemar refurbished his family's skyship, he used a unique enchantment developed by a Thothian spellcaster to bind the life force of an air elemental to the ship's hull (see p. 95). The spell caught the life force of a sky wyrm named Berylith, thereby imbuing the ship's wooden hull with the ability to fly. Unbeknownst to Haldemar, this left Berylith's psyche lost in the Plane of Nightmares. It wasn't until much later that he learned what he needed to know to complete the Thothian enchantment, reuniting Berylith's soul with her new body—the *Princess Ark*.

The ship is a material extension of Berylith's immaterial body. She may voluntarily move mobile parts of the ship, such as doors, windows, or other items that are part of the ship's structure. She can sense passengers walking about the decks can be sensed, just as someone can notice ants on his skin. Berylith feels whatever happens on the ship. If the ship is physically damaged, Berylith is in pain as well.

It should be noted, however, that Berylith is no omnipotent genius. Although she is aware of many things, she has to concentrate to pay attention to any one thing. There is a limited number of things she can think about or do at any particular time. And she can see only through her aura's eyes.

In general, Berylith is busy flying, watching what happens ahead, or dreaming. If Berylith wants to slam a door or lock a hatchway by herself, she must succeed at an Intelligence check. Each additional simultaneous action she attempts incurs a +2 penalty to the check. Add another +5 penalty if Berylith is busier than usual that round (if combat or a difficult maneuver is in progress, for example).

She is very sensitive to comments about herself, her taste in decor, or her actions. There is a 90% chance in any situation that she will hear any derogatory comments anywhere on the ship and act upon them in some rash manner.

Berylith communicates telepathically with Haldemar, to whom she is attuned. She may also accept simple commands from Talasar or other duly appointed officers on the commander's deck, but her responses may be sluggish or reluctant. The telepathic link with other officers is never as strong as that with Haldemar.

The Thothian enchantment bound Berylith to Haldemar, as well as to the ship. Should Haldemar die, the *Princess Ark* will be destroyed and Berylith's soul freed. If the *Princess Ark* is destroyed, Haldemar will die and Berylith's soul will be consumed by the forces of the enchantment binding her.

Before being bound to the *Princess Ark*, Berylith was a servant of the Immortals in the Draconic Plane. Her master permitted her to depart to answer Haldemar's conjuration. He told Berylith that if she could accomplish a certain goal in service to Prince Haldemar, she would gain higher status among the Immortals upon her return. He did not, however, reveal the nature of her quest. (This unknown goal should be tailored to the campaign.)

## Major Characters —

The following characters are the major personalities introduced in the *Princess Ark* series in DRAGON® Magazine. They are presented in sufficient detail to be used as player characters if the DM approves (see "Campaigning with the *Princess Ark*," p. 88).

### Lady Abovombe

(*Daughter of Mananjary and Ambassador from Cestia*)

**D&D® game statistics:** 4th-level Fighter; St 14, In 13, Wi 10, Dx 15, Co 16, Ch 16; AC 8 (with Dexterity bonus); hp 28; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 (short sword +1 or bola +2); Dmg by weapon type (1d6+2 or 1d3+2/strangle); Save F4; ML 11; AL L

**History:** Lady Abovombe is the third daughter of Mananjary, the king of Manaraka on Cestia. Raised to become a diplomat, she always preferred the traditional life of dragon hunter. She mastered the techniques of hunting night dragons as a teenager.

Lady Abovombe joined the *Princess Ark* expedition in 1965 AY. Lord Katayama of Myoshima abducted her when she was 27, and she spent 34 years in a Myoshiman dungeon while the *Princess Ark* voyaged into the Hollow World, then was hurled into the future to the year 2,000 AY. Synn the night dragon then brought her back to the ship to torment Haldemar.

**Personality:** Despite the years of hardship on Myoshima, Lady Abovombe is sophisticated and proud. She can quickly draw on her more rugged skills if the situation warrants it. She is equally at ease within a palace as among a party of crude, ruthless warriors. Her passion and hot temper prevent her from succeeding as a diplomat, and have gotten her into trouble when dealing with adversity, such as when she was imprisoned on Myoshima. Her willpower and tenacity allowed her to endure and survive despite her condition. She now despises all Myoshimans.



## Heroes of the Skies

**Disposition:** Goodwill toward Halde-mar, Talasar, Xerdon, and Ashari; Neutral toward Leo, Raman, and Nyanga; Antipathy toward Ramissur and Tarias; Hatred toward Myojo. Lady Abovombe is in love with Haldemar but doubts his true feelings for her.

**Appearance:** Now in her early forties (thanks to two *potions of longevity*), Lady Abovombe is still sensual and elegant despite three decades of captivity. She often keeps her jet-black hair tied in a bun. Her dark skin makes quite a contrast with her steel-gray eyes. Although she doesn't look strong, Abovombe's strength and endurance surprise many. To the crew's delight, she speaks with a charming native Cestian accent.

**Equipment carried:** Lady Abovombe does not normally carry any item of importance when on the ship. She will take along the following objects when expecting danger: a *short sword +1*, *bolas +2*, *bolas of sunlight*, *ointment of sooth-ing*, and a *ring of safety* (2 charges left).

**Languages:** Cestian, Night Dragon (reading only), and Common Alphatian (an Intelligence Skill)

**Skills:** Detect Deception (Wi), Track-ing (Wi), Riding Horses (Dx), Leadership (Wi)

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Basic level in dagger, short bow, and short sword; Skilled level in bola

### Ashari Sunlil

(Chief Petty Officer; Navigator & Yeoman)

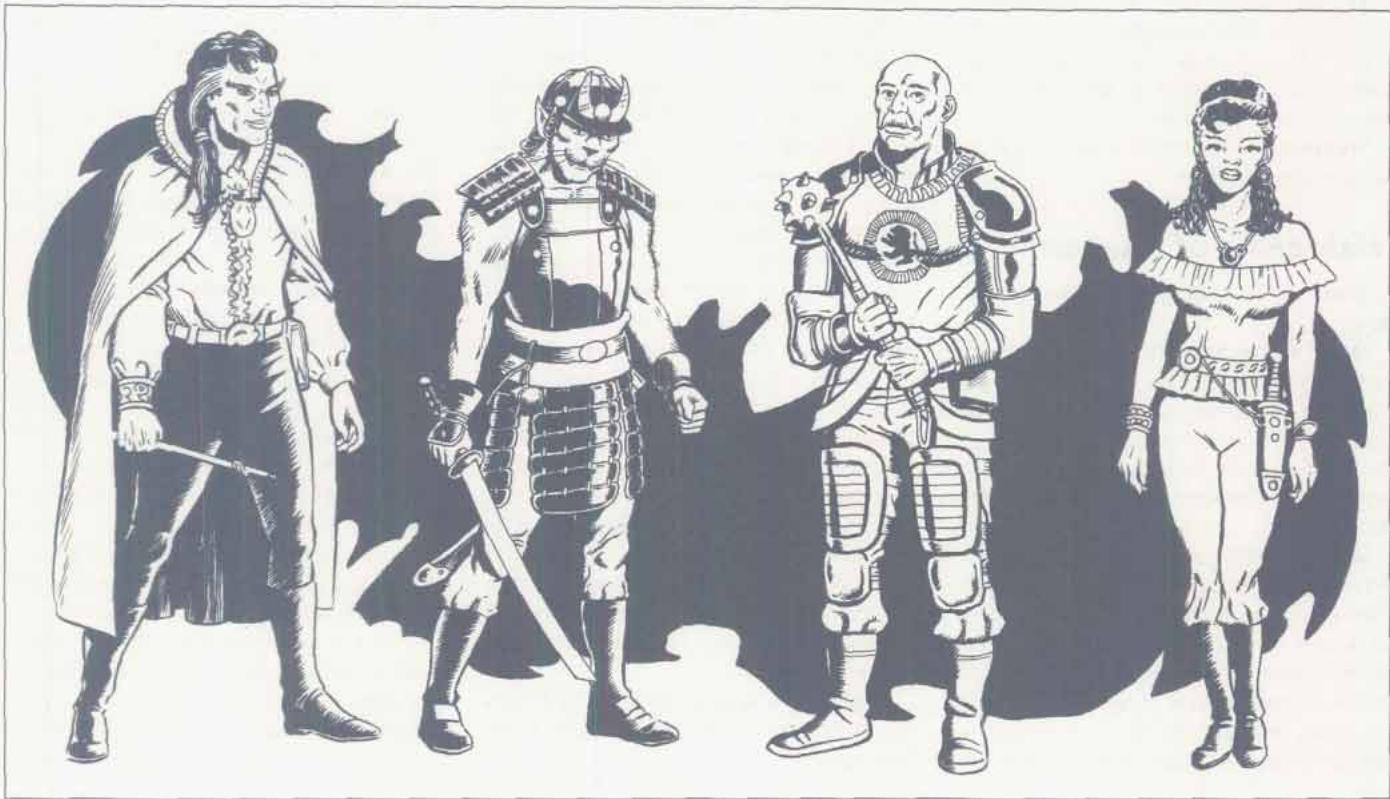
**D&D® Game statistics:** 3rd-level Thief; St 10, In 13, Wi 10, Dx 16, C 12, Ch 17; AC 6 (*earring of protection +1* and Dexterity bonus); hp 10; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon (dagger+1); Dmg by weapon type (1d4+1); Save T3; ML 10; AL N

**History:** Ashari never knew her parents. Her father died before she was born, and her mother, a Heldanner slave, died while giving birth to Ashari. She lived the hard existence of an orphan and homeless beggar in Sundsvall's Pit

Quarter, often panhandling in the aero-dome. There, she dreamed of flying on one of those fantastic ships while in reality she lived a meager existence, scaveng-ing and pick-pocketing. She joined the thieves' guild in Sundsvall and developed her thieving skills.

The House of Arogansa hired Ashari's services several times, and Tarias of Aro-gansa noticed her good looks. As a re-ward for her services, she was granted her wish to enter the Imperial Navy School for basic training. She performed well and served several months on a small Imperial galley as an air navigator. She was then unexpectedly transferred to the illustrious *Princess Ark*.

**Personality:** Ashari is extremely proud of her achievements and is devoted to her duty. Her training taught her discipline and conscientiousness. She is clever and perceptive—except when it comes to Tarias, whom she finds attractive and entertaining. She has also become Lady Abovombe's confidante and companion, and they often gossip about the state of



## Heroes of the Skies

Prince Haldemar's attitude toward Lady Abovombe.

**Disposition:** Goodwill toward Tarias, Haldemar, Lady Abovombe, and Talasar; Neutral toward Xerdon, Leo, Nyanga, and Myojo; Antipathy toward Ramissur and Raman

**Appearance:** Ashari just recently turned 20. She is a captivating blonde with emerald eyes and pouting red lips—the dream of any young serviceman. Her uniforms are always impeccable, even in the worst situations—an uncanny talent that befuddles even the most experienced officers.

**Equipment carried:** Ashari normally carries a (stolen) *earring of protection +1* in addition to her standard navigational equipment: a few navigation tools and manuals that normally remain in her cabin. If leaving the ship, she takes along a *dagger +1* that Tarias of Arogansa gave her. She keeps a complete thieves' kit in her personal effects.

**Languages:** Common Alphatian and Thieves' Cant

**Skills:** Navigation (In), Seamanship (In), Evade (Dx; a successful skill check allows her to slip out of sight long enough to evade pursuers through clever means), Gain Trust (Wi +1)

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Basic level in dagger and long bow

## Haldemar of Haaken

(Admiral, Captain of the Princess Ark)

**D&D® Game Statistics:** 21st-level Wizard; St 10, In 16, Wi 12, Dx 17, Co 11, Ch 15; AC 4 (with *ring of protection +3* and Dexterity bonus); hp 35; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 (*dagger +2* or spell); Dmg by weapon type or spell; Save MU21; ML 10; AL C

**History:** Haldemar was born in 1911 AY, of pure Alphatian blood, in the Kingdom of Ar. He was raised in the tradition of aristocratic spell-casters and spent many years of his childhood with his uncle, a famous skyship owner in Ar. For his tenth birthday, Haldemar received a small flying sailboat, with which he

rapidly learned how to get himself into trouble at every occasion.

As a teenager, Haldemar became the family's accountant. He was brilliant but tremendously bored, and over the years he developed a propensity for investments of a highly speculative nature to spice up his life. One financial venture brought great anger from his elders when he nearly squandered his family's entire fortune on a bad investment. Although not disinherited, he was promptly cast out of his home.

His taste for adventure and gambling brought him aboard a flying casino in 1933 AY, which he managed to acquire from its previous owner on a successful wager. His skill and experience of things aerial enabled him to embark on a career of excellence on his flying casino, where he met a number of very influential nobles. He quickly learned to deal with the Alphatian society's upper crust.

He sold the casino when Emperor Tylion IV granted him the command of a small flying frigate. Haldemar proved to be an outstanding commander during the 1959 war against Thyatis, and he collected an impressive list of treasures. His long career in the Imperial Navy led him to the rank of Admiral in 1961 AY. He retired shortly afterward to avoid a life at the palace and returned to his family tower with his treasure (and his family's renewed blessings).

After studying a mysterious and ancient scroll he had acquired during the war, he used a one-of-a-kind enchantment to bind the soul of a sky wyrm to the hull of the family ship, the aging *Princess Ark*. (See "Berylith," above.) In 1964 AY, he presented his new flying enchantment to Empress Eriadna. She rewarded Haldemar with a commission in the Imperial Fleet and bestowed upon him the mission to explore distant new lands for the benefit of the empire. Empress Eriadna provided him with an official Writ of Endorsement, investing him with full diplomatic powers.

Haldemar is telepathically linked with Berylith, and will die if she's ever destroyed.

**Personality:** Although good-hearted, Haldemar betrays the naturally chaotic attitude prevalent among many Alphatian wizards. Clever and quick thinking, Haldemar is a good judge of character, an effective leader, and a shrewd and tenacious negotiator.

Cosmopolitan and refined, Haldemar is also capable of numerous escapades. His talents as an actor allow him to spontaneously mingle with common folk without betraying his origins, and he enjoys sneaking about as a thief (wearing *eleven boots* and casting *invisibility* on himself).

Haldemar is an imaginative and unpredictable aristocrat who likes to do things with style. A learned man and an adventurer, he seeks to discover the marvels of the world and bring them to his peers.

**Disposition:** Goodwill toward Talasar, Lady Abovombe, and Xerdon; Neutral toward Myojo, Nyanga, Leo, Ashari, Ramissur, and Raman; Antipathy toward Tarias. Haldemar loves Lady Abovombe—as much as an elder Alphatian wizard and hardened bachelor can.

**Appearance:** Haldemar is a typical Alphatian; slim, proud, with long black hair, pale skin, and deep blue eyes. He keeps his hair neatly tied on the back of his neck. A few gray hairs at his temples and slight wrinkles betray his age—55 in AY 2000, due to a 34-year time warp. When on duty on the *Princess*, Haldemar often wears knee-high boots, dark blue pants and cloak, and a white, laced shirt.

**Equipment Carried:** Haldemar's cloak contains a number of secret pockets in which he conceals magical items and miscellaneous objects. In addition to the cloak and a few normal pouches, Haldemar commonly carries a *dagger +2 of warning* in his left sleeve (it vibrates whenever Haldemar is in danger), a small *pouch of security* at his waist (capacity 200 cn—containing an *egg of wonder* and a *wand of disintegration*), a *wand of fire balls* (8d6 hp damage) in his right sleeve, a *wand of lightning bolts* (8d6 hp damage) in his right boot, a *potion of healing* (one dose) at his belt, a *ring of protection +3* on his left hand, a *scarab of protection* on his cloak, a sealed *scroll of creation* in



the cloak's lining, a *talisman of air elemental conjuring* around his neck (it allows him to summon an air elemental, as per the fifth-level *conjure elemental* spell, once each day), a few odd gems, gambling tokens from the Lady Luck Flying Casino (for good luck), and some loose change. Other objects may be found in his cabin on the *Princess Ark*, and even more in his family estate in the Kingdom of Ar.

**Spells Commonly Memorized:**

Level 1—*Detect magic, floating disc, light* (x2), *shield, ventriloquism*

Level 2—*Invisibility, knock* (x2), *phantasmal force, web*

Level 3—*Create air, dispel magic, baste, fly, protection from normal missiles*

Level 4—*Dimension door* (x2), *polymorph self, remove curse, wizard eye*

Level 5—*Animate dead, bold monster, passwall, telekinesis*

Level 6—*Geas, invisible stalker, projected image, weather control*

Level 7—*Magic door, reverse gravity, summon object*

Level 8—*Force field, travel*

Level 9—*Contingency* (20% chance) or *immunity*

At the DM's option, Haldemar may substitute spells of his own invention—to be detailed out by the DM—for any of the above.

**Languages:** Common Alphatian, Ancient Alphatian (for poetry and arcane lore), and the Ambur dialect

**Skills:** Astronomy (In), Finance and Accounting (In+1), Alchemy (In), Gambling (Wi+2), Acting (Wi), Palace Etiquette (Wi), Helmsman/Captain (In), Prestidigitation (Dx: a successful skill roll allows him to palm a small object, or to impress and delight someone by pulling a gold coin or gem out of their ear)

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Basic level in net and whip; Skilled level in staff; Expert level in dagger

### Leo of Le Nerviens

(Civilian Advisor)

**D&D® Game statistics:** 8th-level Sky Gnome with Special Abilities I-VI (see note below); St 13, In 16, Wi 8, Dx 14, Co 17, Ch 10; AC 8 (with Dx); hp 56; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1-4 (unpredictable widgets; randomly pick one die of damage for each new encounter); Save D8; ML 9; AL L

**Note:** Sky gnomes, their experience levels, and their abilities are described in *PC2: Top Ballista*. If you don't have that material, use the *D&D® Rules Cyclopedia* to run Leo as an NPC gnome.

**History:** Leo was born of Le Nerviens kin (a prestigious trading family of the floating isle of Oostdok in the Hollow World). He joined the *Princess Ark* expedition by accident and felt it was so much the better; there was much to be discovered on the outer world, and the *Princess Ark* would definitely need someone of his talent to maintain all the gnomish inventions added to the ship.



## Heroes of the Skies

**Personality:** Leo is of the eccentric inventive-disorderly-nosy alignment. He's a hyperactive perfectionist who never tires and is never satisfied with his work. His incredible naïveté and constant pranks often test his friends' patience. Leo is a peaceful character whose biggest weaknesses are his love of gems and beer. He often seeks the most unexpected solutions to problems.

**Disposition:** Goodwill toward Ramisur, Nyanga, Haldemar, Talasar, Lady Abovombe, Ashari, and Raman; Neutral toward Xerdon; Antipathy toward Tarias and Myojo.

**Appearance:** Leo is a middle-aged gnome with short blond hair, a large handlebar mustache, and a reddish face. His spectacles sit squarely on his protuberant nose.

**Equipment carried:** There is no telling what Leo carries in his pockets; what he has one day can be lost the next somewhere on the ship. Leo constantly tinkers and comes up with various trinkets and gadgets that may or may not function.

**Languages:** Oostdokian, Milenian, and common Alphatian (an Intelligence Skill)

**Skills:** Gemcrafting (In), Shipbuilding (In), Helmsman (In), Memorizing (In), Drinking (Co), Singing (Ch)

## Myojo Katamura

### (Attaché to the Admiral)

**D&D® Game Statistics:** Rakasta; St 16, In 13, Wi 11, Dx 17, Co 15, Ch 10 (14 to rakasta); AC 0 (Myoshiman armor +2, plus Dexterity bonus); HD 2+1; hp 16; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 or 3 (weapon or claw/claw/bite); Dmg by weapon or 1d2/1d2/1d4; Save F2+2; ML 9; AL N

**History:** Myojo's family, the Katamuras, are vassals to the Katayama clan on Myoshima (see p. 93), and Myojo was sent to serve in Lord Katayama's personal guard. While still a teenager, Myojo gained great honor when he deflected an arrow meant for his shogun. Unfortunately, his awe and admiration for a non-rakasta (Haldemar) has made him a pariah to his kin. His two former companions, Kenju Fuurifusu (the shogun's

cousin) and Jiro Tomokato (Myojo's brother-in-law) are now dead, killed in a fight with Haldemar and his crew. Consequently, Myojo is an outlaw in the eyes of the Katamura and Katayama clans.

**Personality:** Myojo is a naturally brave and proud warrior. He was loyal to Katayama until Haldemar awed him by bending a ferocious monster to his will. Myojo is generally hot tempered, arrogant with foes or underlings, and haughty with nonrakasta other than Haldemar. He does not trust Xerdon, whom he senses could be a rival to Haldemar, and considers Leo the gnome an inferior being.

**Disposition:** Goodwill toward Haldemar; Neutral toward Talasar; Antipathy toward Ramissur, Raman, Nyanga, Tarias, Ashari, Lady Abovombe, Xerdon, and Leo (given in order of preference).

**Appearance:** Myojo is a rakasta, a cat-headed humanoid (see p. 92), with short gray fur. A rather good looking male by rakasta standards, Myojo is slim but well muscled, with keen yellow eyes and large pointy ears. Myojo usually wears traditional Myoshiman armor (AC 4) complete with kabuto war helm bearing Haldemar's family colors (gold crescent over a crimson and sable background). Myojo bears multiple scars on his chest, a testimony of his fight against Synn, the night dragon. The scars become very painful in the presence of wights, wraiths, and other powerful undead.

**Equipment carried:** Myojo wears light but effective *banded armor*+2. His favored weapon, a katana, is a very fine sword +1. He also owns a daikyu great bow (treat as a long bow), war claws (metal extensions to his own claws; damage from claw attacks becomes 1d4), a ceremonial wakizashi (short sword), and a small gong of dispelling (12 charges, casts dispel magic, 12' radius at level 10). Myojo sometimes has his donshu with him (a small pet—see area 617, p. 74).

**Languages:** Myoshiman (common and poetry) and Alphatian (an Intelligence skill)

**Skills:** Tracking (Wi), Myoshiman Etiquette (In), Blind Shooting (Dx), and Bravery (Wi)

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Basic level of mastery in katana (normal sword); daikyu great bow (long bow); war claws (see p. 93); and wakizashi (short sword)

## Nyanga, Bane of Jaibul

### (Swetanga, mercenary)

**D&D Game Statistics:** 12th-level Fighter; St 18, In 12, Wi 11, Dx 14, Co 16, Ch 13; AC 3 (with Dx and magical armor); hp 64; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 or two (with multiple attacks option); Dmg by weapon type; Save F12; ML 11; AL N

**History:** Nyanga is a swetanga—a fallen noble—of the Yavdlom Divinarchy (see p. 38 of the *Explorers' Manual*). Born of common parentage and raised in the town of Nyoko-Bonga, he gained acclaim as a fighter by single-handedly slaying a green dragon. At the age of 20, he joined the Yavdlom Navy to help fight off Jaibul slavers raiding the coasts of Yavdlom. At the height of his naval career, he was commander of a small fleet of 10 ships and 1,000 men. This raised him to yobar status (equivalent to a baron). During three years of fighting off raids and leading punitive expeditions against Jaibul slavers, he earned the nickname "Bane of Jaibul." Nyanga voluntarily gave up his command—and the title of yobar—when the Rajah of Jaibul declared a 5,000 gp price on his head. Since then, Nyanga has enjoyed many adventures throughout the Sind Desert, the Serpent Peninsula, and in Yavdlom itself—always one (or two) steps ahead of the assassins and bounty hunters. He sought mercenary service aboard the *Princess Ark*; it offered the perfect opportunity to continue adventuring while getting well out of the reach of his enemies.

**Personality:** Nyanga thoroughly enjoys himself in any fight. He shares his culture's antipathy toward elves (an elf killed Yav, the founder of the Divinarchy), but is quick to set his prejudices aside whenever an individual elf wins his admiration. Nyanga laughs thunderously and often.

**Disposition:** Goodwill toward Ramissur, Xerdon, Leo, and Lady Abovombe;





## Heroes of the Skies

Neutral toward Haldemar, Myojo, Talasar, Raman, and Ashari; Antipathy toward Tarias.

**Appearance:** Nyanga is a towering man with ebony skin and a startling white mohawk. His graceful facial features and slightly pointed ears betray a touch of elven ancestry. He enjoys colorful clothes painted with jungle scenes and decorated with feathers, mother-of-pearl, and similar doodads. For special occasions, he wears a headdress made of brilliant tropical feathers.

**Equipment Carried:** Nyanga wields a *bastard sword +2 of slicing* and a horned shield, and wears *scale mail +2*. He carries a pouch containing spare change and a lucky fetish made of feathers and a strip of jaguar pelt (non-magical), a *ring of life protection*, and a *rod of inertia*.

**Languages:** Yavdlom; Alphatian (with a thick accent; treat as Intelligence skill)

**Skills:** Endurance (Co); Hunting (In); Intimidation (St); Nature Lore (Jungles) (In); Seamanship (Dx); Tracking (In)

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Basic level in spear; Expert level in horned shield; Master level in bastard swords

### Raman, Nabonidus

(Lieutenant; Supply Officer and Chief Engineer)

**D&D® Game Statistics:** 6th-level Magic-User; St 11, In 16, Wi 14, Dx 11, Co 12, Ch 10; AC 9; hp 15; MV 120' (40'); # AT 1 (dagger); Dmg by weapon type; Save MU 6; ML 9; AL N

**History:** Born to a family of horse traders, Raman became a jack-of-all-trades. He raised horses with his elders when he was a teenager, but soon grew bored and left to learn about the marvels of the world. He pursued many careers: soldiering, spellcasting, acting, shipbuilding, archeology, farming, politics, and poetry. He even opened his own library, which eventually burned down in a fire. Nearly penniless, he joined the Imperial Navy as a last recourse.

**Personality:** A snob and a bit pedantic, Raman is the blasé type. He is 50 years old and has an opinion on every-

thing and everyone. Thanks to his education and extensive experience in life, Raman does reasonably well as a sage. He is quiet, rational, and despises disorder and nonconformist thinking (such as Leo's). He loves poetry, literature, and famous quotations, although (much to his consternation) he does very poorly as a writer himself. He tells endless stories about his tribulations that often put listeners to sleep.

**Disposition:** Goodwill toward Halde-mar, Talasar, and Xerdon; Neutral toward Lady Abovombe, Nyanga, and Myojo; Antipathy toward Tarias, Ashari, Ramis-sur, and Leo

**Appearance:** Like many people of the ethnic Ambur background, Raman has copper skin, dark brown eyes, and short black hair. He is small and a bit over-weight. Raman grows a neatly trimmed goatee that he pulls at when lost in thought.

**Equipment Carried:** *Wand of lightning bolts (8d6)* and *Zigomar's instant library* (Raman's pride and joy). This large ivory tube contains a scroll listing a collection of books. A *read magic* spell is required to decipher the scroll. Uttering a title on the scroll makes the corresponding book appear next to the tube. "Keep" is the command word that either returns the book or enters a new one into the scroll's arcane memory. Any summoned book must remain within 30' of the tube or crumble into dust. The scroll memorizes up to 1,000 books. Raman protects the tube with a *wizard lock*.

#### Spells Memorized:

Level 1—*Read languages, read magic*  
Level 2—*Knock, wizard lock*

Level 3—*Dispel magic, infravision*

**Languages:** Common Alphatian, Thothian, and the Ambur dialect

**Skills:** Horse Husbandry (In), Shipbuilding (In), Literature (In), Archaeology (In), Linguistics (In), Ethnology (In), and Zoology (In)

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Basic level in staff; Expert level in dagger

### Ramissur Zumrulim

(1st-Class Boltman)

**D&D Game statistics:** 2nd-level Magic-User; St 17, In 13, Wi 8, Dx 12, Co 16, Ch 10; AC 8; hp 10; MV 120' (40'); # AT 1 (dagger or wand); Dmg 1d4 or 6d6; Save MU2; ML 10; AL C

**History:** Ramissur comes from a family of poor Amburese farmers. Severe drought and disease decimated his family when he was a boy. He was too young to work in the fields and had to be fed, so his folk "donated" him (for a fee) to a local wizard who needed a stable boy.

Although at first illiterate, he got some education as the wizard befriended him. In a few years, Ramissur became his apprentice and learned a few magical tricks but showed little magical skill beyond that. He was out of place as a student; he was meant to be a logger or a professional wrestler.

The wizard died of old age, and Ramissur went to Sundsvall, seeking fame and wealth. He fell madly in love and married a tavern wench, but she left him for a better, more refined wizard. Heart-broken, he joined the Imperial Navy to forget his pain.

**Personality:** Ramissur is a brave boltman who cannot deny his origins, which are rude and crude by wizardly standards. Though a tough and impetuous soldier who thinks nothing of taking on dangerous tasks, he has a pathological fear of darkness since being abandoned to the Night Dragon. He also hates Haldemar, whom he holds responsible for his abandonment. Ramissur has a lot of respect and loyalty for Xerdon. He finds Leo amusing and feels he should protect his little friend. Ramissur's greatest weakness is that he is a heavy drinker and will pick drunken fights with anyone. (This is also why he's still a 1st-class boltman after 20 years in the service).

**Disposition:** Goodwill toward Xerdon, Nyanga, and Leo; Neutral toward Myojo and Ashari; Antipathy toward Talasar, Raman, Lady Abovombe, and Tarias; Hates Haldemar (secretly)

## Heroes of the Skies

**Appearance:** Ramissur is a tall, muscular man. The fact that he is now in his early forties hasn't affected his strength. He has the tanned skin of those who spent many years on the seas and in the skies. Most of his head is cleanly shaven, except for a long black tassel in the back. His thick, bushy eyebrows almost cover his eyes, giving him a somber and gruff expression.

**Equipment carried:** Wand of lightning bolts (6d6 damage, 20 charges) and standard boltman equipment

**Spells memorized:**

Level 1—*Light* (x2)

**Languages:** Common Alphatian and the Ambur dialect

**Skills:** Brawling (St +1), Drinking (Co +1) and Singing (Co)

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Basic level in dagger and staff

## Talasar, Ecbashur

(Lieutenant Commander; Executive Officer)

**D&D® Game Statistics:** 17th-level cleric; St 15, In 13, Wi 17, Dx 10, Co 14, Ch 16, AC 9; hp 49; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 (hammer +3 of extinguishing or spell); Dmg by weapon type or spell; Save C17; ML 11, AL L

**History:** When Talasar was much younger, his name was Yodar Jernog—he was an infamous Minaean pirate. Talasar hides this fact, for many people would still demand vengeance for the rampages of Yodar's Sea Wolves.

Talasar's life changed when he was captured and condemned to slavery. After years of terrible hardship, he was sold to the Temple of Razud in Starpoint, Ambur. The high priest helped Talasar endure unspeakable rituals to atone for his deeds and embrace the Ways of Razud. An honestly reformed man, Talasar obtained a commission in the Imperial Navy, where his skills and wisdom brought him to the eager attention of Admiral Haldemar.

**Personality:** The Ways of Razud changed Talasar, making him a charitable, forgiving, and compassionate per-

son. His tact and diplomacy have served him well aboard the *Princess*. Quiet and keenly observant, Talasar is a great judge of character who has proven many times to be of invaluable help in Haldemar's endeavors.

**Disposition:** Goodwill toward all aboard

**Appearance:** Although in his mid-fifties, Talasar is a tall, powerful man. He keeps his head shaved and bare, according to the precepts of his order. Talasar has a dark complexion, with slightly slanted green eyes. His thin, long mustache—trimmed in the style of Ochalean nobles—has long since turned white.

**Equipment Carried:** Potion of *black dragon control* (including lesser night dragon, two doses left), *earring of seamanship* (the wearer gains the Seamanship skill at a level equal to his Intelligence, and knows everything necessary to sail a wind-driven ship), *balm of ethereality* (as per a potion of ethereality, but must be rubbed on entire body and any equipment the user wishes to carry with him), *scroll of communication* (the other half is at the temple of Razud in Starpoint), *ring of boltiness*, *amulet vs. crystal balls* and *ESP*, hammer +3 of extinguishing

**Spells Commonly Memorized:**

Level 1—*Detect evil, light* (x2), *purify food & water* (x2), *remove fear, resist cold*

Level 2—*Bless, hold person* (x2), *know alignment, resist fire, silence 15' radius, speak with animals*



Level 3—*Cure blindness, cure disease, remove curse, striking* (x3)

Level 4—*Create water, dispel magic* (x2), *neutralize poison*

Level 5—*Commune, create food, cure critical wounds, dispel evil*

Level 6—*Animate object, cure all, find the path*

Level 7—*Skip flight* (10% chance) or *raise dead* (full)

**Languages:** Common Alphatian and Minaean.

**Skills:** Intimidation (St), Swimming (St), Healing (In), Helmsman/Captain (In), Ceremony of Razud (Wi), Guidance/Counseling (Wi), Theology (Wi), Persuasion (Wi), Storytelling (Ch)

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Basic level in bola (Lady Abovombe has taught him); Skilled level in sling; Expert level in war hammer (good enough to throw one); one weapon proficiency slot unused

## Tarias of Arogansa

(Midshipman; Officer of the Port Watch)

**D&D Game Statistics:** 4th-level Fighter; St 13, In 12, Wi 8, Dx 14, Co 11, Ch 15; AC 6 (with Dx and magic); hp 20; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 (short sword +2); Dmg 1d6+2; Save F4; ML 6; AL C

**History:** Tarias is the youngest son of the cousin of the Grand Duke of Arogansa. Bored with life at his family mansion in Shavadze, Tarias has been the source of many scandals. He once threw a grand party where addictive zzonga fruit was so common that some of his guests tossed handfuls out the windows to commoners in the street below. Tarias is an aristocratic brat, a troublemaker, and a complete embarrassment to his family. His father finally ordered him to join the Imperial Navy.

The political power of the Arogansa House is such that, sooner or later, Tarias will become an officer with his own ship command. Tarias made sure some good company would be available during his tour of duty; he used family influence to quietly effect Ashari's transfer to the *Princess Ark*.

**Personality:** Tarias has the outrageous attitude of a young, rich, and pretentious aristocrat who believes he may use, abuse, and carelessly discard anything. He is handsome and dashing but brash and ungrateful to the extreme. Tarias's attraction for Ashari is casual and probably short-lived. Tarias is a lazy, selfish, greedy scoundrel and coward.

**Disposition:** Goodwill toward Xerdon, Ashari, and Lady Abovombe; Neutral toward Haldemar and Talasar; Antipathy toward Myojo, Leo, Nyanga, Raman, and Ramissur.

**Appearance:** Tarias is a 30-year-old, pure-blooded Alphatian. His black curly hair, light suntan, and dark brown eyes go a long way with young, adventurous ladies. Tarias is a tall, well built, and self-assured noble.

**Equipment carried:** A *headband of human control* that he used on Ashari, a flask of zzonga liquor (three doses, illegal on the *Princess Ark*), a *short sword +2 of deceiving* that he "borrowed" from his father's seneschal, a *medallion of protection +2* that he extorted from a magistrate in Shavadze, and a *scroll of equipment* containing, in addition to three random objects, a 1,000-gp gem, and a phony treasure map.

*tection +2* that he extorted from a magistrate in Shavadze, and a *scroll of equipment* containing, in addition to three random objects, a 1,000-gp gem, and a phony treasure map

**Languages:** Common Alphatian

**Skills:** Dancing (Dx), Music (Harp-sichord, Ch), Hip Conversation (Ch+1)

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Basic level with crossbow (light), dagger, short sword, and bola (learned from Lady Abovombe). Tarias is too lazy to fill his remaining weapon proficiency slot.

### Xerdon, Naduk-Sim

(Warrant Officer; Chief of the Guard)

D&D® game statistics: 10th-level Elf; St 16, In 15, Wi 11, Dx 14, Co 13, Ch 12; AC 0 (*buckle of armor* granting AC 3, *armband of protection +2*, and Dexterity bonus); hp 46; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 or 2 (*sword+3*, long bow, or wand); AT Rank D (smash, parry, disarm, multiple attacks); Dmg 2d8+7/drain, 1d8+1 plus magical arrow bonuses, or 8d6; Save as

E10+2 (due to *armband of protection +2*); ML 11; AL N

**History:** Xerdon is an elf from the Kingdom of Shiye Lawr. He is an outstanding hunter and warrior. His early career earned him the rank of General in the Guard of the Lawr and an assignment on the northern border. After successfully destroying many monsters, he began a series of illegal forays into Blackheart, putting a temporary end to the bloody monster incursions by burning down several towers (with their wizards). This caused an uproar at the Imperial Palace. Under Imperial pressure, the rulers of Shiye Lawr publicly "court marialed" Xerdon to appease the powerful Blackheart lobby, then quietly had him transferred to the Imperial Navy.

**Personality:** Xerdon is an effective, professional soldier. A cold and calculating commander, he shows little forgiveness and flexibility to those who fail him. Xerdon confronts adversity with great calm and resolve. Although courageous and disciplined, he is ambitious, seeing



## Heroes of the Skies

in Haldemar a possible obstacle to his career. He disliked Haldemar's decision to leave Ramissur to the night dragon, and feels contempt for Myojo, whom he perceives as Haldemar's lackey and a potentially hostile outsider.

**Disposition:** Goodwill toward Talasar, Ramissur, and Nyanga; Neutral toward Lady Abovombe, Ashari, Raman, and Haldemar; Antipathy toward Leo, Tarias, and Myojo

**Appearance:** Xerdon is a rather tall and athletic elf, bearing a golden tan from his many years of active duty in the Imperial Navy. Xerdon has long, silver hair held back with a leather headband. A scar runs down his left cheek, testifying to his numerous battles with Blackheart monsters.

**Equipment carried:** Armband of protection +2, buckle of armor (AC 3), wand of lightning bolts (8d6), lunar brooch (a silver brooch shaped like a crescent moon which doubles the area of effect of any light or continual light spell cast by the wearer and causes all lycanthropes within the lighted area to assume animal form), sword +3 of draining, normal long bow and arrows, six arrows of penetration, and one arrow of wounding

### Spells memorized:

Level 1—Light, magic missile, sleep

Level 2—Detect invisible, knock, levitate

Level 3—Haste, hold person, protection from evil 10' radius

Level 4—Confusion, dimension door, wall of fire

Level 5—Hold monster, feeblemind

**Languages:** Common Alphatian, Shiye Lawr elven dialect

**Skills:** Military Tactics (In), Military Logistics (In), Tracking (In), Monster Lore (In), Leadership (Wi+1), Horsemanship (Dx), Endurance (Co)

**Weapon Proficiencies:** Skilled level in long bow; Master level in normal swords

## Minor Characters —

The following characters help round out the crew of the Princess Ark. They may be fleshed out and used as player characters if desired.

### Lysander Bradburn

#### (Warrant Officer)

**D&D Game Statistics:** 5th-level Fighter; St 16, In 12, Wi 10, Dx 11, Co 13, Ch 14; AC 9 (he rarely wears armor); hp 25; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; Save as F5; ML 11; AL N

Lysander is an Alphatian commoner who decided to make his mark on the world as a member of the Alphatian Imperial Navy. As the *Princess Ark*'s bosun, he is more involved with the day-to-day sailing of the ship than any other officer on board.

### Barret Galloway

#### (Ship's Boy)

**D&D Game Statistics:** Normal Human; St 11, In 12, Wi 6, Dx 12, Co 9, Ch 9; AC 9; hp 2; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; Save as Normal Man; ML 6; AL L

Barret ("Barry" to everyone on board) is the ship's boy—an enthusiastic, easily awed twelve-year-old who is more than happy to scrub floors, polish brass, run errands, and fetch anything for anyone in return for the exciting honor of being on board the *Princess Ark*.

### Nevin Hollister

#### (Chief Petty Officer)

**D&D Game Statistics:** 5th-level Magic User; St 9, In 15, Wi 13; Dx 13, Co 10, Ch 14; AC 9; hp 14; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon or spell; Dmg by weapon or spell type; Save as MU5; ML 11; AL N

Nevin is an Alphatian magic-user who wants nothing to do with the "pomp and circumstance and all that fiddle-faddle" that goes with commissioned officer status. As the *Princess Ark*'s quartermaster,

Nevin spends much of his time running between the commander's bridge and the lookout on the observation mast, keeping detailed navigational records.

### Traviata Klemens

#### (Chief Petty Officer)

**D&D Game Statistics:** 4th-level Thief; St 14, In 12, Wi 10, Dx 16, Co 14, Ch 11; AC 7 (with Dexterity bonus); hp 16; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; Save as T5; ML 10; AL N

Traviata shares Yeoman duties with Ashari, helping to maintain the ship's roster and assisting the Supply Officer with administrative tasks and procuring supplies. Like Ashari, he has learned the trade of a thief, though he is careful not to break the laws of any port they may visit unless absolutely necessary. He is also the ship's carpenter and a member of the ship's band (playing trumpet).

### Radomil Quinlin

#### (Petty Officer)

**D&D Game Statistics:** 4th-level Fighter; St 14, In 13, Wi 10, Dx 14, Co 17, Ch 10; AC 8 (with Dexterity bonus); hp 25; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; Save as F4; ML 10; AL L

Radomil is the bosun's mate—chief assistant to Lysander. When not busy seeing to the rigging, the sails, the lifeboats, or all the myriad of safety straps and escape ropes on board, he amuses his fellow crew members with his knowledge of hundreds of different knots.

### Rufford Rosenfeld

#### (Landsman and Cook)

**D&D Game Statistics:** 2nd-level Halfling; St 10, In 16, Wi 9, Dx 13, Co 13, Ch 10; AC 8 (Dexterity bonus); hp 8; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; Save as H2; ML 10; AL N

Rufford is the *Princess Ark*'s cook. His son and daughter work as his assistants; each is a 1st-level Halfling.

## Juri Selwyn

(Petty Officer)

**D&D® Game Statistics:** 3rd-level Fighter; St 15, In 12, Wi 11, Dx 15, Co 13, Ch 9; AC 8 (with Dexterity bonus); hp 16; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; Save as F3; ML 12; AL N

Juri's parents were convinced he would become a fantastically powerful wizard, and apprenticed him to six magic-users in succession. Alas, not one of them managed to coax an ounce of magical talent out of the lad. All Juri ever wanted was to see the world and fight monsters. When he was fifteen, his parents gave up on him and allowed him to join the Imperial Navy. He worked as an ordinary seaman for five years before attaining petty officer status and earning a transfer to the airborne corps.

## Amoria Vertullo

(Petty Officer)

**D&D® Statistics:** 5th-level Fighter; St 15, In 12, Wi 8, Dx 13, Co 13, Ch 14; AC 8 (with Dexterity bonus); hp 30; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; Save as F5; ML 11; AL C

Amoria is a good-looking woman with blond hair and a beautiful tan. As gunner's mate, her duties are to assist Tarias in all matters concerning the weapons on board the *Princess Ark*. In reality, she does most of the work herself. Amoria is thoroughly disgusted by the fact that she's a better fighter (and a damn sight better sailor) than her commanding officer. Amoria also plies her skills as armorer and musician (the drums). She blames her lack of progress to Chief Petty Officer status on her big mouth—she tends to tell anyone, including superior officers, just what she thinks of them. So far, she's held her tongue in Tarias' presence, but it's only a matter of time.

## Imperial Navy Boltmen

	Boltman	Chief Boltman
<b>Armor Class</b>	8	4
<b>Hit Dice</b>	MU1 or E1	MU3+ or E3+
<b>Move</b>	120' (40')	120' (40')
<b>No. of Attacks</b>	1 wand	1 wand or spell
<b>Damage/Attack</b>	6d6	8d6 or by spell
<b>No. Appearing</b>	1 squad (1d6 + 6)	1
<b>Save as</b>	MU1 or E1	Per class/ level
<b>Morale</b>	10	10
<b>Alignment</b>	Any	Any
<b>XP Value</b>	20	150+

The Alphatian navy commonly uses troops armed with *wands of lightning bolts*. These experienced troops are well trained in the arts of aiming and firing such weapons, and they understand the limitations and risks involved in using such magic. They neither use it inconsiderately nor without orders.

The wands typically contain six charges each and can be recharged, normally by a navy magist after a battle. If a warship hasn't engaged in battle for several days, it is likely that the boltmen's wands are fully recharged as per navy regulations.

Boltmen are usually 1st-level magic-users or elves. Each wears knee-high boots, white knickerbockers, a laced shirt, a red padded jacket with epaulets, and a black velvet cloak. A boltman wears leather headgear and carries some equipment on his belt in a leather case. His equipment normally includes one or two daggers, a score of darts, his wand, food, and other minor field equipment (rope, hooks, spade, bandages, water-skin, torches, etc.).

Chief Boltmen (Chief Petty Officer rank) are higher-level spell-casters who use wands having more charges and causing more damage than normal bolt

men's wands. Chief Boltmen wear magical headgear made of very thin metal over leather. This does not provide physical protection, except perhaps from the sun, but does provide magical protection granting a +2 saving throw against any magical attack.

Each Imperial boltman squad usually has its own Chief Boltman. Each boltman has a different word to activate his wand, and has sworn never to reveal this word. However, many boltmen who have fought together know each other's magical words. Chief Boltmen ensure that these words get changed, especially after a major battle. In addition to the Ordinary Boltmen, there are Able-Bodied Boltmen (MU2 or E2) and Lead Boltmen (MU3 or E3, but not yet qualified for NCO status).

In addition to the boltmen, various specialized troops may be added to the squad. They have the same game statistics as those of the standard boltmen but use different magical items. Dispel wardens use wands with six charges of *dispel magic*. Protection wardens use wands with six charges of *protection from normal missiles*. Light marines use wands with 20 charges of *magic missiles* (1d6+1 damage/round). Heavy marines are not commonly seen; these are low-level fighters complete with chain or plate armor and bastard swords. Heavy marines are used only during large-scale battles.

Although enlisted personnel, boltmen are paid better and have a few more liberties than non-spellcasting crew members.

## Imperial Navy Crew

Non-spellcasting troops handle more menial tasks, especially in the navy (sailors, carpenters, KP personnel, etc.). Most are Normal Humans, or first- or second-level fighters, thieves, or other non-spellcasting character classes. Crew members who are of 3rd level or higher often become non-commissioned officers.

# Life Aboard the Princess Ark

## The Mission

The *Princess Ark* was commissioned in the Alphatian Imperial Navy as an exploratory vessel. Although banished from Alphatian skies until recently, the *Princess* remained in commission as an Imperial skyship. Prince Haldemar bears an Imperial Writ of Endorsement that designates him as a diplomatic agent with full power to enter into agreements between the Empire and the rulers of foreign nations. The Writ also entitles him to receive a personal excise of 1% of all trade which comes about as a result of any treaties he enters into—for 10 years from the date of the treaty.

There is another side to the Empress' instructions for the *Princess Ark*. Knowledge of the Hollow World and of worlds beyond the Skyshield is deemed too dangerous to fall into the wrong hands—Prince Haldemar and his entire crew are sworn to secrecy in these matters. For this, and because numerous enemies still pursue the *Princess Ark*, the skyship rarely remains anywhere long.

## Regulations

As a naval vessel, the *Princess Ark* and her crew are subject to the rules and regulations of the Alphatian Imperial Navy. These include the trappings and traditions of a complicated military organization—ranks, uniforms, salutes, and ceremonies.

## Navy Ranks

Commissioned ranks in the Alphatian Imperial Navy are: Admiral, Vice Admiral, Rear Admiral, Captain, Lieutenant Commander, Lieutenant, and Midshipman. Midshipmen are junior officers-in-training and must serve in active duty and pass stringent exams before attaining commissions as Lieutenants.

Non-commissioned officers do not have authority to give orders. Non-commissioned ranks are: Warrant Officer, Chief Petty Officer, and Petty Officer. At the bottom of the hierarchy are the Bolt-

men, Gunners, and Seamen (Airmen on skyships). Raw recruits are Apprentice Boltmen (or Apprentice Gunners, etc.), while those with at least a year of experience and some measure of competence are Able-Bodied Boltmen. Experienced personnel who have not yet made Petty Officer are called 1st-Class Airmen.

Large ships also carry Landsmen—civilian specialists—to provide ships' services. Hired mercenary bands usually have their own leader who answers directly to the ship's captain. Individual mercenaries report to officers according to the agreement they made upon signing on.

## Officers' Positions

On board ship, the commanding officer (regardless of rank) is referred to as "Captain." The line officer next in rank is the Executive Officer, who is in charge of all personnel matters and on board routines.

Other positions filled by commissioned officers include: Medical Officer, Navigating Officer, Gunnery Officer, Damage Control Officer, First Lieutenant, Watch Officer, Supply Officer, and Spiritual Officer. As the *Princess Ark* has only four commissioned officers (including Tarias, the midshipman), each must assume the duties of multiple positions.

**Haldemar:** Captain and Navigating Officer

**Tafasar:** Executive Officer, Medical Officer, Spiritual Officer, and Watch Officer for the Starboard Watch (see p. 87). He also assumes the duties normally delegated to the First Lieutenant, ensuring impeccable appearance and efficiency of men and ship.

**Raman:** Supply Officer and Damage Control Officer (responsible for keeping track of all accounts, including payroll, and all supplies; ensuring the cooks have sufficient stocks and the galley and mess halls are kept clean; and for supervising maintenance and repair on the *Princess Ark*)

**Tarias:** Gunnery Officer and Watch Officer for the Port Watch. Tarias is not very popular with the men. He's also not

technically qualified for the position of Gunnery Officer, and isn't at all conscientious in his duties—Xerdon quietly goes about taking care of many of Tarias' responsibilities.

## NCOs

The real work of the ship gets done by the enlisted men, under the supervision of the NCOs (non-commissioned officers). Positions held by NCOs include Boatswain ("bosun," in charge of the rigging, sails, anchors, lifeboats, etc.); Gunner (in charge of the ballistas, catapult, and all weapons on board); Yeoman (assigned clerical duties); Coxswain ("coxsun," steersman for the ship's boat); and various skilled positions such as Carpenter, Barber, Cook (although the cook aboard the *Princess Ark* is a landsman), Armorer, and so on.

**Xerdon:** Warrant Officer; Chief Gunner and Chief of the Guards

**Lysander:** Warrant Officer; Boatswain

**Nevin:** Chief Petty Officer; Quartermaster (in charge of keeping detailed navigational records and assigning bridge watch duty)

**Traviata:** Chief Petty Officer; Yeoman (in charge of clerical duties such as maintaining the ship's roster and assisting the Supply Officer with administration), Carpenter, and Musician

**Ashari:** Petty Officer; Navigator's Mate and Yeoman

**Radomil:** Petty Officer; Bosun's Mate

**Amoria:** Petty Officer; Gunner's Mate, Armorer, and Musician

**Juri:** Petty Officer; Coxswain and Barber

## Rules (and Punishments)

There are some basic rules all members of the Imperial Navy must follow: always obey superior officers, show respect to seniors, and be on your best behavior at all times. Naval vessels must have crews willing and able to live and work closely together without hesitation or slacking off—especially in combat. This requires discipline, and anything interfering with

that discipline is harshly discouraged.

The captain may assign punishment for minor offenses—usually in the form of demotion, solitary confinement for up to one week, fines, restriction of liberty, or revocation of privileges.

If the captain thinks a crew member's infraction warrants harsher punishment (flogging, extra duties, loss of pay for up to one month, discharge, etc.) he may call a deck court composed of all commissioned officers aboard.

Serious offenses (treason, wilful disobedience resulting in accident or injury, etc.) usually call for a general court-martial involving the commander in chief of an Alphantian fleet. As Haldemar bears the rank of Admiral, he is authorized to head a general court-martial if a superior officer is not available. Punishments range from dishonorable discharge or loss of pay, through imprisonment at hard labor, to death (the latter allowed only in treason cases).

Actual punishments depend on the guilty party's previous record, the nature of the offense, and the personalities and moods of the officers presiding at the trial.

**Neglect of Duties:** This includes improper or lazy completion of an assigned task as well as more serious mistakes or oversights which result in accidents on board or—the Immortals forbid!—collision.

**Wilful Disobedience:** Deliberately ignoring or violating a regulation or an order is a very serious breach of discipline and usually merits a similarly severe punishment.

**Unauthorized Absence from Duty:** Failure to report to work—or stretching shore leave a few hours or days past the allotted time—are frowned upon no matter what the excuse. Unauthorized absences longer than two days are often punished with flogging.

**Desertion:** Deserters who are caught are subject to court-martial.

**Theft:** Being caught in possession of anything belonging to another person puts an enlisted man under suspicion of theft, regardless of how he came to pos-

sess the item. Even gifts or borrowed clothing can cause trouble. Being caught in possession of anything belonging to an officer means real trouble—especially if it's valuable!

**Treason:** Betrayal of the ship or any naval personnel to an enemy carries the death penalty.

## **Daily Routines —**

Whether hovering in port or cruising through the air, the *Princess Ark*'s decks are always bustling with activity. Even during the relatively quiet midwatch (from midnight to 4am), boltmen, aimen, and an Officer of the Deck are on duty. The latter—usually one of the Watch Officers—is the officer currently in charge of all personnel on deck.

### **Watches**

The non-commissioned personnel aboard Imperial naval vessels are divided into two watches: Port and Starboard. They rotate their duties around the clock, each watch spending four hours on deck and four hours off. During drills and maneuvers calling for "all hands," both watches assume their positions on deck. After any four-hour all hands stint, the Port and Starboard watches rotate their duty schedules. This ensures that neither watch is always stuck on deck during the dawn watch (4 A.M. to 8 A.M.), shivering in the chill air while the rest of the crew enjoys a hot breakfast below decks.

Duties within a watch rotate as well; not all crew members of a watch are needed on deck during normal cruising flight. All Airmen, Gunners, and Boltmen are kept busy throughout the day, even when their watch isn't on deck. There are sails and rigging to mend, decks and railings to scrub, metal fittings to polish, weapons to clean and sharpen, and any other tedious task the Watch Officer can possibly think of.

### **Daily Schedule**

The *Princess Ark*'s daily schedule remains essentially the same in port and in flight. Crew members rise at the crack of dawn, go about the daily business of maintaining the ship in perfect working order, and (if they're lucky) turn in at 9 or 10 P.M. for six to eight hours of sleep. Night watches (8 P.M. to Midnight, Midnight to 4 A.M., and 4 A.M. to 8 A.M.) require minimal crew, as the *Princess Ark* practically flies herself. Only the officer of the deck, a lookout on the observation mast, a boltman in each guard turret, and the bosun or his mate (or an experienced Airman) are required. Other personnel are called to duty as needed.

There are three meals a day. Officers, including warrant and petty officers (contrary to normal Imperial naval practice), eat in the Wardroom (area 601). All other crew eat in shifts in the crews' mess room (area 506). When in port, crew members may be granted shore leave in parties of 10 to 20. In flight and under sail, the airmen have their hands full trimming sails and hauling on lines.

#### **Normal Schedule (Military Time):**

0200—Relieve lookouts and guards.

0400—Ship's cooks called to duty. Change of the watch; relieve lookouts and guards.

0500—Reveille (morning bugle call); call all hands. Hammocks and sleeping gear stowed. Crew members wash up, scrub clothes on deck and hang them on lines (weather permitting), and get ready for the day's work.

0530—Sweepers called to sweep all decks.

0600—Breakfast. Relieve lookouts and guards.

0730—Morning Muster and inspection. Orders of the Day posted. Sick Call (all ill personnel must report to sick bay or their commanding officer).

0800—Both watches on deck. Turn to ship's work (deck scrubbing, polishing, etc.). Relieve lookouts and guards.

0900—Officers called to meeting.

0930—Drill of the Day (may be any one or two of the following: gunnery

## ***Life Aboard the Princess Ark***

drill, fire drill, collision drill, abandon ship drill, man overboard drill, battle drill.)

1000—Relieve lookouts and guards.

1130—Retreat from drill; take down scrubbed clothes (if dry); sweep down; main meal for oncoming watch; "captain's mast" (the captain hears any requests or reports from anyone desiring his attention, but they must be reasonable and important).

1200—Change of the watch; relieve lookouts and guards; main meal. Smoking lamp lit (to regulate the use of fire and smoking on board, all pipes and other smoking implements must be lit from this lamp). No smoking below decks.

1300—Afternoon Muster. Smoking lamp out.

1330—Afternoon drill (if ordered).

1400—Relieve lookouts and guards.

1430—Retreat from drill.

1540—Take down scrubbed clothes (if still up).

1600—Change of the watch; relieve lookouts and guards.

1630—Sweepers called; knock off ship's work.

1730—Clear up decks (all gear stowed).

1800—Supper; relieve lookouts and guards. Smoking lamp lit.

1900—Band concert.

1930—Evening reports. Hammocks shaken out.

2000—Change of the watch; relieve lookouts and guards; officers' meeting.

2100—Smoking lamp out.

2200—Relieve lookouts and guards.

2400—Change the watch. Relieve lookouts and guards.

to explore and gather information. In some cases, these activities must be carried out in secret—to avoid conflicts with Heldannic forces, for instance. In any case, stopping at a port of call nearly always leads to some sort of adventure. If she stays long, the *Princess Ark* runs the risk of attracting unwanted attention from thieves or enemies.

## **Campaigning with the *Princess Ark* —**

There are three major roles the *Princess Ark* may take in a skyship campaign. The ship can be the campaign's focus, with player characters being crew members or officers aboard her; she can be a friendly force that shows up periodically to involve the characters in exciting adventures Prince Haldemar needs help with; or she can be a dangerous foe. The latter role is most likely if the PCs are allied with Thyatis or the Heldannic Knights in the war that breaks out in AC 1005, or have otherwise made themselves enemies of the Alphatian Empire.

## **Role-playing the Major Characters**

The characters presented in "Heroes of the Skies" may be used as PCs, provided your players don't mind role-playing characters with already well-developed backgrounds and personalities. DMs may want to keep Haldemar as a non-player character in order to retain more control over the campaign's direction.

## **Bringing New Characters Aboard**

Existing player characters may come aboard the *Princess Ark* as mercenaries, guests, or landsmen providing ships' services (armorer, enchanter, carpenter, etc.). If they're Alphatian citizens, they may enlist as crew members. Alternatively, players can create characters specifically for a *Princess Ark* campaign. These may be landsmen, lowly crew members, non-commissioned officers, or

even commissioned officers (assisting or even replacing the major characters presented in "Heroes of the Skies").

You, as DM, should assign PCs' ranks. Most commissioned officers are of 8th level or higher. Petty officers should be at least 3rd level. Enlisted men are rarely above 3rd level. Mercenaries and guests may be of any level, but they don't get an official rank. Only members of the Alphatian Imperial Navy have ranks—but Haldemar and other officers may enlist recruits or offer commissions as Midshipmen to particularly worthy characters.

## **Potential Problems (and Their Solutions)**

Whether your campaign centers around the *Princess Ark* and her voyages or the skyship merely makes an occasional appearance in the course of the player characters' adventures, here are some potential problems you may have to deal with.

**Character Levels:** Obviously, the *Princess Ark*'s crew includes characters of experience levels ranging from Normal Human to 21st-level—and possibly higher! This makes it difficult to balance encounters for the disparate character levels. The easiest solution is to make sure the player characters are all within three experience levels of one another. (They may all be 1st-level boltmen, 8th-level mercenaries, etc.) Xerdon, Nyanga, and Leo are good matches as player characters, with a couple of petty officers thrown in if you have more than three players. Ashari, Tarias, and Ramissur might likewise make a good team.

If you and your players are willing, it's possible to have a campaign using highly disparate character levels. Running three sets of characters and alternating among their adventures is one possibility. One party may consist of commanding officers, another have mid-level mercenaries and petty officers, and a third have low-level boltmen, airmen, and grunts.

You can try running disparate character levels in the same party, as well—if you plan the adventures carefully to ensure

## **Ports of Call —**

When in pursuit of knowledge and trade wealth, Haldemar directs the *Princess Ark* along whatever course seems most promising, following rumors of hitherto unknown (to Alphatia) nations and other interesting places.

Along the way, the *Princess Ark* must periodically stop to replenish supplies, make repairs, or to send out away teams

no one gets left out of the action or placed in an impossible situation. Prince Haldemar's life has been saved more than once by low-level characters such as Myojo and Ashari. But a campaign of this type poses its own problems: potential frustration or jealousy among your players, low-level characters overwhelmed by the odds, or high-level characters bored by encounters that are too easy.

**Rank:** Another potential source of friction between players is the rank system on board the *Princess Ark*. Unless the player characters are all of the same rank, low-ranking PCs will have to follow the orders of higher-ranking PCs. Players unused to this style of role-playing may resent being told what their characters should do. Unless you're sure this won't cause a problem in your group, avoid having player characters of different ranks, regardless of character levels.

### Where to Begin

One question you need to answer before you start a campaign revolving around the *Princess Ark* is: Where to begin?

**From the Beginning:** If your players haven't read the *Princess Ark* series, you can "replay" episodes from the Chronicles. With a bit of work, you can expand any episode into a complete adventure by assigning statistics to the major NPCs encountered, mapping out the general areas described in the episode, and tailoring the plot to the specific player characters in your campaign.

The resulting adventure should be a great deal of fun, even if things don't happen the way they were originally written. A word of warning: The PCs are almost guaranteed to do something unexpected which will take them off the path followed in the "official" version of events. That's okay, as long as you're prepared to go with the flow. In fact, one of the worst things you can do as a DM™ is to try to railroad the player characters into a set sequence of events. The *Princess Ark* episodes are best used as inspiration and guides, not as scripts.

You can even "replay" *Princess Ark* episodes with players who are already familiar with the series, provided your players are able to separate what *they* know from what their *characters* know. You should introduce some unexpected twists into the adventure to catch your players off guard—an NPC who was originally villainous may be a friend instead, or vice versa.

If you do decide to base an adventure on a *Princess Ark* episode, you may wish check the issue of DRAGON® Magazine in which the episode first appeared. Most of the series' articles include useful information about the episodes' settings—information which is not reprinted here.

**From the End:** You may begin your *Princess Ark* campaign from the point where the written episodes leave off: when Prince Haldemar announces the Imperial orders to return home. This is an excellent starting point for a continuing campaign.

Prince Haldemar would wish to return home as speedily as possible, and would set a high-altitude course to fly in as straight a line as possible from the Yalu Bay area to Alphatia—over the heart of the continent. Even assuming full speed ahead, favorable winds, and no delays, the journey would take about forty days. Throw in problems evading Heldannic prowlers, the need to stop for supplies, and Dungeon Master™ whim, and the trip is sure to be eventful. In fact, devious DMs may never let the *Princess Ark* make it back to Floating Ar!

**From a Different Beginning:** If you like the idea of centering your campaign around the *Princess Ark* but don't want to use the original crew members as characters, there are a number of ways you can begin. You can simply use the deck plans and game statistics of the *Princess Ark* for another ship (most likely another Alphatian ship which was also created with the Thothian enchantment), give it a different name and crew, and take it from there.

Or you can arrange to have the *Princess Ark* herself fall into the hands of the player characters—minus her original crew. This requires a bit more explana-

tion, especially as the Thothian enchantment created a link between Berylith and Prince Haldemar that can only be broken by death. One explanation could be that, upon Prince Haldemar's death (whatever the cause), Berylith's soul was freed but chose to remain in the *Princess Ark* in order to accomplish the quest laid on her by her patron Immortal (see p. 76).

Another explanation would require Prince Haldemar to be prisoner somewhere (on another plane, perhaps), with Berylith "unconscious" (although the ship could still fly like a more conventional ship). Or Berylith herself could seek out a new crew to help her find and rescue her captain.

If the PCs find the *Princess Ark* and decide to claim her for their own, they're likely to inherit her enemies as well.

### Adventures with the *Princess Ark*

Although many adventures can take place in the lands the *Princess Ark* visits, try not to let the skyship become just transport from one place to another.

Involve the ship in some adventures. Aerial combat between the *Princess Ark* and flying opponents—dragons, Heldannic warbirds, herds of griffons, and so on—is always exciting, regardless of the level of PCs on board. Superior officers direct the ship's combat maneuvers and coordinate attacks by the gunners and boltmen. Repelling boarders keeps everyone busy, from the cook and his assistants on up to Prince Haldemar. And swinging through space from the *Princess Ark* to a grappled enemy skyship challenges first-level boltmen and their commanding officers alike.

You can also set adventures on board the *Princess Ark*. Guests cause endless trouble—usually accidentally ("I just wanted to see what this rope did..."). Uninvited guests are worse, causing trouble by design. There may be mysteries to solve (who poisoned the cook's assistant?); intruders to track down and ferret out; spies, saboteurs, and assassins to defeat. Doppelgangers, anyone?





## Life Aboard the *Princess Ark*

### Future History of the *Princess Ark*—

On Alphamir 1, 2001 AY—the first day of the year as Alphatians keep time—Prince Haldemar orders the *Princess Ark* on a course for Alphatia. They're half a world away from his home in Floating Ar, on the northeastern edge of the Alphatian continent. From the Trident Bay area (the eastern extension of Yalu Bay), they must cross all of Brun—a journey of seven thousand miles.

Although Prince Haldemar will keep his ship at high altitudes as much as possible (to avoid trouble), the trip will be dangerous. Heldannic skyships still stalk the *Princess Ark*, and Haldemar has other enemies as well. He will try to keep his course over areas he and his crew have already explored along the southern coast of Brun—but there are some nations he must avoid. Herath, to the south of Trident Bay, is a dangerous area for the *Princess Ark* to fly over; as is Hule, at the southwestern end of the Black Mountains.

Once he passes the Kingdom of Sind, Haldemar must either swing north along the Kurish Massif or south over the Sea of Dread to avoid the Thyatian Empire. The latter course would be best, as it remains as far from the Heldann Freeholds as possible. On the other hand, Haldemar may decide to do a bit of investigating in Glantri on his way home.

In any event, the *Princess Ark* will reach Alphatia by the end of the year 2001 AY. The war between Glantri and Alphatia is still three years away, but forces on both sides are already in motion. For a while, the *Princess Ark* will remain fairly idle in Floating Ar (at Haldemar's family estate). But Empress Eriadna is bound to need Prince Haldemar and his skyship for occasional (and highly dangerous) missions in the years leading up to the war. The *Princess Ark* will not remain grounded for long.

### Possible Adventures

The following events are suggestions for Haldemar's future. You should decide what happens according to how you want your campaign to go, especially if it centers around the *Princess Ark*.

**Building a Fleet:** Empress Eriadna recognizes that Alphatia will desperately need powerful weapons and experienced adventurers to have any hope of winning a war of the scale the portents foretell. While Prince Haldemar is in Floating Ar, she will ask him to lend his experience (and that of his crew) to building, enchanting, and manning a fleet of new skyships. Part of his duties will include researching an improved version of the Thothian enchantment (see p. 95)—one that's simple to cast and not likely to drive the enchanter mad.

Meanwhile, Talasar and the other experienced members of the *Princess Ark*'s crew will be put to work choosing and training candidates for the new fleet. Once the new skyships are built, there will be test flights, simulated combat maneuvers, and mock war games to play out in preparation for the *real* action.

The shipyards of Floating Ar are bound to come under attack from spies working for Glantri, the Heldannic Knights, or the Empire of Thyatis—or from other spellcasters, Alphatian and otherwise, who wish to steal the new enchantment techniques for themselves. Eventually, Haldemar may decide to move the shipyards to a more secret and easily defended area.

**Spying for the Empire:** Empress Eriadna may need Haldemar's experience in gathering information. Some missions might require the *Princess Ark*'s ability to fly invisibly into territory otherwise difficult to reach. Others would involve Prince Haldemar and his companions apart from their skyship. All would require the utmost in discretion, secrecy, and cunning. Haldemar's talent for diplomacy could also prove useful, perhaps even gaining new allies in unexpected places for Alphatia.

**Explorers Extraordinaire:** Eriadna is looking toward the Hollow World as a potential conquest (and as a last resort should the worst happen to the Alphatian Empire in the outer world). The *Princess Ark* may very well receive orders to return to the Hollow World to help establish an Alphatian presence there.

**Sky Warriors:** Of course, the *Princess Ark* will also be called into duty as a weapon and military vessel. The war will provide untold opportunities for battles with other skyships or warriors on flying mounts. And air support for ground troops is always welcome.

### Staying Official (or Not)

The D&D® game world is a dynamic, ever-changing setting, with events set in motion by the **Wrath of the Immortals** product and carried through succeeding years in the **Poor Wizard's Almanac**. This means that Prince Haldemar and the *Princess Ark* are likely to show up in other D&D game products.

More than likely, the official (i.e. published by TSR) version of the *Princess Ark*'s future will differ from the events you play out in your own campaign. In some cases, you may be able to integrate the official events into your own adventures. In others, your *Princess Ark* simply won't be in the right place at the right time (or have the right crew) for you to match the skyship's published activities.

Don't let this worry you. Any future events that may appear in products for the D&D game world are only suggestions for you to use or alter as you see fit. If you wish a particular official event to occur in your campaign but can't find a way to match your own *Princess Ark* to the event, substitute another Alphatian skyship for the *Princess Ark*. The purpose of the **Poor Wizard's Almanac** and other D&D products is to provide you with a fun and exciting campaign setting—not to lock you into any official series of adventures or events.





## Friends and Foes

### Aranea

Armor Class:	7
Hit Dice:	3** + 1 HD per leg
Move:	180' (60')
Web:	120' (40')
Attacks:	1 bite or weapon or spell
Damage:	1-6 + paralysis or by weapon or spell
No. Appearing:	1-3 (1-6)
Save As:	MU3
Morale:	7
Treasure Type:	D
Intelligence:	14
Alignment:	Chaotic or Neutral
XP Value:	65

These intelligent giant spiders are as large as small ponies and greenish-brown in color. An aranea can be distinguished from other giant spiders by the massive, odd-shaped lump on its back that houses its large brain. Aranea are webspinners and their bite is poisonous.

An aranea's front limbs have flexible digits used to grasp prey and manipulate simple tools. In addition, the aranea can cast spells as a 3rd level-magic user; they spend most of their time in magical research.

The araneas of the Savage Coast have developed into a separate breed with a remarkable culture. They secretly rule Hérah, disguising themselves with inherent shape-shifting abilities.

### Cestian Gobbler

Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	3-6** (L) (1 HD per tentacle)
Move:	Nil
Attacks:	1 per tentacle + 1 cluster of tendrils
Damage:	Entangle and paralysis; 1d12 per round
No. Appearing	N/A
Save As:	F3-6
Morale:	Nil
Treasure Type:	V
Intelligence:	0 or 2d6 + 1
Alignment:	Neutral

XP Value:	125 (3 tentacles); 225 (4 tentacles); 550 (5 tentacles); 950 (6 tentacles)
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The Cestian gobbler is a tropical, gray-brown plant with a hollow trunk, 3 to 6 tentacles spaced evenly around a sphincter mouth, and a cluster of small tendrils that can protrude from the mouth. Gobblers never grow within 60' of each other.

A gobbler attacks with its tentacles, surprising prey on a roll of 1-2 on 1d6. Tentacles reach lengths of 12' plus 3' per Hit Die. The gobbler can attack as many victims as it has tentacles, but the gobbler only senses creatures on the ground within 30' of the plant's trunk.

A successful attack entangles the victim, who must save vs. poison or be instantly paralyzed. An unparalyzed victim trying to pull free must pass a Strength check with a -1 cumulative penalty for each Hit Die the gobbler has and -1 for each tentacle holding the victim. A roll of 1 always succeeds; a roll of 20 always indicates failure. Paralyzed victims must be pulled free; the paralysis wears off after 1d6 rounds.

The gobbler needs a full round to pull a victim toward its mouth. There, on a successful to-hit roll, a cluster of tendrils attaches itself to the victim and begins drawing blood. The tendrils cause 1-12 hp damage at the end of each subsequent round until the victim dies or is rescued, or until the plant is slain. A dead victim is swallowed whole into the gobbler's trunk, where it is eventually digested. Various treasures belonging to previous victims may be found at the bottom of the hollow, fluid-filled trunk.

Cestian gobblers of 6 HD size have a 10% chance of developing an Intelligence score of 2d6 + 1. These creatures may use bait to attract their prey (paralyzed animals, treasures, fluttering rags, etc.). A gobbler reproduces once a year by shooting 2-8 spores from its mouth. Spores are hurled 30-300' away. Each spore has a 25% chance of landing in good soil and sprouting; it then needs six months to grow into a 3 HD gobbler.

### The Heldannic Knights

	Knight	Officer
Armor Class:	3 (plate)	2 (field)
Class and Level:	C2	C5
Move:	90' (30')	90' (30')
Mounted:	120' (40')	120' (40')
No. of Attacks:	1 sword or lance	1 weapon or spell
Dmg/Attack:	By weapon	By weapon or spell
No. Appearing:	1 Banner (2d6 + 6)	1 per Banner
Save As:	C2	C5
Morale:	11	11
Alignment:	Chaotic	Chaotic
XP Value:	30	425

The Heldannic Order is a grim brotherhood of fierce, warlike knights. The Order's quest and each knight's devotion is the unification of the barbarian freeholds north of the Kingdom of Vestland. The Heldannic Knights, most of them powerful clerics, are extremely loyal to their order and are the embodiment of the concept "rule by the strong." They have no mercy for the weak. These enigmatic knights ally themselves with Glantri and Thyatis against Alphatia in AC 1005.

A Heldannic Knight is recognized by his dark, dull-gray plate armor; his long white tabard with its black, upright lion; and his full-face great helm topped with the ominous upright lion that makes him appear much taller than he really is. These are heavy cavalry knights with fully barded war horses. They normally march to battle brandishing dozens of very large banners, standards, and pennants bearing the order's coat of arms.

When a great cavalry charge is possible, Heldannic Knights are likely to use heavy cavalry lances. Otherwise, half use large shields and bastard swords, while the remainder use two-handed swords. (As followers of the Immortal Vanya, Heldannic Knights do not have the usual clerical restrictions in weapon usage. If you do not wish sword-wielding clerics in your campaign, half of every force of Heldannic Knights will be fighters armed

## Friends and Foes

as above; the rest will be clerics wielding maces and war hammers.)

A Banner of Heldannic Knights (from 2 to 12 men) typically all cast *protection from evil* before combat. Their officer, the Knight Banneret, is likely to also cast a *blight* spell and remain at the center of his troops during the battle. The officer's two remaining spells are often *cure light wounds* and *hold person*.

Lower-level clerics of the order are students who reside at the various strongholds of the order, or else act as squires or men-at-arms during conflicts. The Heldannic Order as a whole is said to have up to 2,000 knights and officers (Knights Banneret, Lieutenants, and Captains), and 5,000 students. Twelve High Priests (C12) under the authority of the Great Knight of the Order (C25) rule the knighthood from the Fortress of Freiburg in the Heldann Freeholds.

Countless other troops and units exist in the Heldann Freeholds. These include barbarian hordes, town militias, and mercenaries opposed to the Heldannic Order.

## Night Dragon

	Lesser	Greater
Armor Class:	0	-5
Hit Dice:	9**** (L)	20***** (L)
Move:	90' (30')	150' (50')
Flying:	240' (80')	360' (120')
Attacks:	Up to 7	Up to 7
Damage/Attack:		
Breath Cloud:	50'x40x30'	50'x50x30'
Breath Effect:	Darkness	Darkness
No. Appearing:	1-4 (1-4)	1 (1)
Save As:	F9	F36
Morale:	9	11
Treasure Type:	H	Hx2, I
Intelligence:	12	15
Alignment:	Chaotic	Chaotic
XP Value:	4,400	18,500

Night Dragons are chaotic dragons that have become the undead servants of Immortals in the Sphere of Entropy. They are sometimes sent to the Prime Material Plane on missions for their masters. For example, after the destruction of Oceania, Synn (a greater dragon) was allowed to remain and guard an ancient secret in

her lair. Night dragons look like the shadow of a dragon, totally black, except for two eyes that glow slightly. Very faint dark blue or purple shimmers reveal some of the dragon's physical features, such as scales and muscles. Night dragons are solid on the Prime Material Plane.

Night dragons are masters of guile and treachery. They feed on the sorrow they inflict upon their victims. They torment a foe rather than destroy it. Physical combat is not viewed as a means of achieving their goals; lies are far better.

The breath of a night dragon takes the form of a billowing cloud of absolute darkness. Any living being in the area of effect must Save vs. Breath Weapon or fall unconscious. The darkness dissipates in 1d6 turns. The breath cannot be used in windy areas.

Night dragons can enter the Plane of Entropy through any area of absolute darkness. In most cases, the dragon uses its breath to cause darkness, then disappears into the other plane. Likewise, it may reappear only from a dark spot.

A greater dragon can wrap its wings around an unconscious foe and trap the victim's life force in the Plane of Entropy. The dragon then takes over the body, which retains its intellect and memories and becomes a fanatic follower of the dragon. Minor foes often are transformed into bats which are used as spies. A telepathic link between a night dragon and its followers allows it to see and hear through them (except in the Hollow World).

Greater dragons (like Synn) are granted one *wish* per century they spend on the Prime Material Plane in addition to their spells. (Night dragons use wizard spells.)

**Lesser dragon spells:** four 1st level, four 2nd level

**Greater dragon spells:** five 1st level, five 2nd level, four 3rd level, three 4th level, two 5th level

Synn, as an example of this species, often has the following spells: *charm person* (x2), *read languages*, *shield*, *ventriloquism*, *continual darkness*, *detect invisible*, *ESP*, *invisibility*, *phantasmal force*, *clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *baste*,

*protection from good* 10' radius, *curse*, *polymorph self*, *wizard eye*, *magic jar*, *teleport*.

A lesser dragon inflicts 3d10 hp damage with a bite and 1d6 + 1 hp damage with its claws. A greater dragon inflicts 4d8 + 8 hp damage with its bite and 1d12+2 hp with its claws. A successful blow from any night dragon is similar to the touch of a ghoul (*elves are immune*), requiring a Save vs. Paralysis.

Both lesser and greater night dragons can only be hit with at least +1 magical weapons. Night dragons are particularly vulnerable to light and spells affecting undead. A *light* spell causes 1d10 hp damage to the monster. A *raise dead* will destroy a lesser dragon or inflict 3d10 hp damage on a greater dragon. Direct sunlight from the Outer World sun will destroy any of these dragons.

A cleric can turn a lesser dragon as a vampire, and a greater dragon as a night-shade (see the D&D® Rules Cyclo-pedia, p. 15). These dragons cannot be turned within 10 miles of their lairs or on the Plane of Entropy.

## Rakasta

Armor Class:	6 (or by armor)
Hit Dice:	2+1 (M)
Move:	90' (30')
Attacks:	2 claws/1 bite
Damage:	1-4/1-4/1-4
No. Appearing	0 (3d10 with 1d8 sabre-tooth tigers)
Save As:	F2
Morale:	9
Treasure Type:	M (special)
Intelligence:	12
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	25

The rakasta are a proud race of intelligent, cat-like humanoids. They walk upright but are covered with soft, tawny fur and have feline heads. They are fierce fighters who employ special metal "war claws" fitted over their natural ones (without these, rakasta inflict only 1-2 points of damage with each claw attack).

Certain rakasta ride sabre-tooth tigers. Only the bravest and strongest of the

rakasta warriors can hold the respect of the sabre-toothed tigers. The sabre-tooth tigers are controlled with knee pressure and heavy riding crops, and are fitted with special saddles that do not hinder their fighting abilities. These saddles also allow the rakasta to leap up to 20' from their mounts and attack in the same round. The "tame" sabre-tooths are normally too ferocious to be ridden by any creature other than a rakasta warrior.

Rakastas have the ability to use their superior perception sense (a combination of smell, hearing, and instinct) that allows them to *detect invisible* within a 10' radius. They also have infravision good to 60', and the ability to hear (listening at doors, etc.) as a thief of the same level.

**Rakastas as PCs:** Rakastas can be played using human character classes, including druids, paladins, and mystics. Add +2 to Dexterity when the character is created, up to a maximum of 18. Rakastas start with 2+1 HD at first level, using the type of dice corresponding to the chosen character class, and a one-time penalty of -2,200 XP that must be overcome before any of the class abilities can be used. The rakasta suffers a permanent -30% penalty (rounded up to the nearest 100 XP) on all experience points gained thereafter during adventures. For example, a 1st-level fighting rakasta (such as Myojo) gains an extra 1d8 in addition to his initial 2+1 HD when reaching 2nd level; he must have first gained 2,200 XP to qualify for a first-level fighter's four weapon proficiency slots, then 2,800 XP (-30% penalty = 2,000 XP) for 2nd level. Rakasta PCs retain the use of their natural claw/claw/bite routine in combat (1-2/1-2/1-4) or can use one weapon other than war claws in a single attack per round.

**War Claws Weapon Mastery:** Rakasta warriors use these steel claws to increase the damage of natural claws to 1d4 hp each; they cost 12 gp each (120 gp if silvered), with an encumbrance of 20 cn each. War claws can neither be used with a shield nor thrown. Weapon mastery statistics are as follows:

Level	Damage	Defense
<b>Basic</b>	1d4	—
Special Effect: No off-hand penalty		
<b>Skilled</b>	1d6	M: -1AC/2
Special Effects: No off-hand penalty		
Double damage* (20)		
<b>Expert</b>	1d8	M: -2AC/3
Special Effects: No off-hand penalty		
Double damage* (19-20)		
<b>Master</b>	P: 1d10+1	M: -3AC/3
Special Effects: No off-hand penalty		
S: 1d8+1		
Double damage* (18-20)		
<b>Grand Master</b>	P: 1d12+2	M: -4AC/4
Special Effects: No off-hand penalty		
S: 1d10+2		
Double damage* (17-20)		

P: Primary target (P=M: either a monster using natural attacks such as claws or an opponent caught with a missile weapon in his hands)

S: Secondary target (opponents with hand-held weapons)

\*: Double damage (with unmodified required hit scores given in parentheses) only applies to unarmored opponents

## Myoshima (Patera)

Mystara has a second moon, known to its inhabitants as Myoshima and to the Immortals as Patera. The moon can't normally be seen by anyone outside its Skyshield, due to its unusual light-bending properties. Light rays hitting Myoshima's atmosphere are deflected back to the surface or off into space. Ultraviolet and infrared are unaffected by the shield.

Myoshima is small, with a circumference roughly equal to 3,000 miles. Its central core is extremely dense and magical, allowing a gravity comparable to that of Mystara. Myoshima revolves once around Mystara every three days and twelve hours (two revolutions per week). It follows an exact polar orbit, and viewers on the opposite side of Myoshima (called Farside) never see the world they orbit. The pattern of day and night cycles on Myoshima is very complex. The sun appears to wobble back and forth across

the sky over a 3 1/4-day period as it also appears to travel around the Myoshiman globe along a great cycle every 336 days, Mystara's year. Mystara's axial tilt provides Myoshima's seasons. Nearside usually receives a small amount of light reflected from Mystara. Myoshiman inhabitants have no fixed cycle of wakefulness.

Full daylight on Myoshima is not as bright as on Mystara, being more like twilight. The sky changes color during a "day," ranging from fiery tones at noon to tamer red and purple hues at dusk or dawn. The dim light is another effect of the moon's light-bending core.

Most of Myoshima is covered by steaming jungles and earthquake-prone volcanic mountains that surround three freshwater seas. Rain clouds cover a third of Myoshima at all times, and precipitation is abundant. The two polar areas of the moon offer at worst a temperate climate. The vast majority of the sentient population is made of various breeds of rakasta.

Myoshima is divided into three major political blocs. The largest and potentially most aggressive is the Empire of Myoshima itself, a nation of feudal provinces controlled by daimyos, with a single emperor who rules them all.

Next is the nation of Rajahstan, made up of twelve allied realms. Each realm is a sovereign state ruled by holy gurus (who handle law, education, religion, and internal politics) and maharajahs (who handle the economy, military, and foreign politics). Together these form the Spiritual Council which run all Rajahstani affairs.

The third bloc consists of many loosely allied petty kingdoms and principalities. Among the more prominent territories are Kompor-Thap (a valley of a thousand hidden temples), Selimpore (a mercantile matriarchy), Malacayog (a nation of head-hunters), and Surabayang (fierce island pirates). These territories are politically aligned with placid Rajahstan against imperial Myoshima—when they are not fighting each other.



## Friends and Foes

### Sky Wurm

	Lesser	Greater
Armor Class:	-2	-10
Hit Dice:	16**** (L)	32***** (L)
Move:	60' (20')	60' (20')
Flying:	360' (120')	360' (120')
Attacks:	3 or special	3 or special
Breath Area:	nil	300'x100'
Breath Effect:	nil	Stun + <i>lightning bolt</i>
Damage:	1-8/1-8/ 1-12	2-16/2-16/ 2-24
Whirlwind:	3-24	10-80
No. Appearing:	I-4 (1-2)	1-2 (1)
Save As:	F16	F32
Morale:	9	11
Treasure Type:	Px20, I	Rx100, I, M, N
Intelligence:	12	15
Alignment:	Neutral	Neutral
XP Value:	8,450	48,000

The sky wrym is a very large elemental from the Plane of Air. The front half of the lesser sky wrym is a wildcat with two powerful claws. Two large feathery wings protrude from its back, while the other half of the creature is a long, coiling serpent's tail. The greater sky wrym has the paws and head of a lion with a thick mane, being otherwise like its smaller relative. All sky wyrms are made of shimmering clouds and living air, pearl-colored with light green shadings.

Sky wyrms are highly intelligent and magical. They can create a whirlwind like that of a conjured air elemental, but may instead use the claw/claw/bite combat routine. Lesser sky wyrms can *predict weather* and *summon weather*, *control winds*, and use *weather control* at will. They can also cast the following spells once per day: *cloudkill*, *dimension door*, *explosive cloud*, *ice storm*, and *invisibility*. They are immune to electrical attacks.

Greater sky wyrms have all of these

abilities, as well as the normal spell-casting abilities of a 12th-level wizard. They can also spit a *lightning bolt* three times a day. This bolt is immediately followed by a thunderous roar that causes all creatures within a 300'x100' cone to save vs. paralysis or be stunned for 1d6 rounds. The damage inflicted by the lightning bolt equals the sky wrym's current hit points. This breath weapon cannot be used simultaneously with any of the sky wrym's other attacks.

Sky wyrms are rare, even in the Plane of Air. They sometimes serve as mounts and companions of greater djinn, but always of their own free will. Sky wyrms do not get along well with aerial servants and elemental creatures. Lesser sky wyrms hate spectral hounds and hell hounds, and at best dislike all other dog-like creatures. Greater sky wyrms are marginally more tolerant of canine-kind. Sky wyrms are otherwise good-willed although neutrally aligned.



# The Thothian Enchantment

## The Thothian Enchantment

**Spell Level:** 9 (Magical) or 7 (Clerical, Thothian priest only)

**Range:** Special

**Duration:** Permanent

**Effect:** Binds the life force of a powerful mortal being to an object, imparting the being's magical abilities to the object.

This spell conjures and binds the life force of a powerful, mortal being in order to confer a large object with intelligence and some magical abilities akin to that of the conjured creature. The object becomes attuned to the thoughts of the caster. The spell was originally written to bind a greater sky wyrm to a ship, but it could be modified to affect other types of creatures or items.

There are two parts to the Thothian Enchantment. The first part invokes the life force of the creature, sealing its magical abilities within the object. The second part binds the creature's psyche to the object, conferring the bound creature's ability to think upon it. This second part is by far the more difficult to master, because the sigils used by the spell's creator are both sophisticated and cursed. Haldemar of Haaken acquired some papyrus sheets bearing the first part of the spell in 1959 AY and the rest of the spell in 2000 AY. It is not known whether other copies exist elsewhere.

When using the second part of the spell, the caster temporarily becomes a gate between the Prime Material Plane and the Plane of Nightmares. While casting the second part of the spell, the enchanter also gains a limited prescience (related *only* to casting the spell) that enhances his psychic perception. This improves the caster's understanding of the spell's hieroglyphs and aids comprehension of other languages. However, the caster cannot use any other spells, magical items, or magical abilities during the time of the enchantment.

Since the caster becomes super-sensitive to emanations from the Plane of Nightmares, Intelligence checks (or Wisdom checks for clerics) are needed every

2d12 hours. Failure results in temporary insanity lasting 1d4 hours. Assume a failed check wastes half a day of work. Also, each time the caster fails an Intelligence check, his Intelligence score drops one point. Three consecutive failures mean that the enchantment is spoiled, and that the enchanter phases into the Plane of Nightmares and goes insane. Only a *wish* or a *cure all* spell can cure the insanity if the caster is retrieved from the Plane of Nightmares. The caster may recover Intelligence at the rate of one point for every five successful Intelligence checks. The caster also gets a +3 bonus on Intelligence checks if he is sleeping or deliberately not working on the enchantment at the time of the check.

Completion of the spell requires 30 days of work (assume the caster can work for 12 hours each day) minus a number of days equal to the caster's initial Intelligence score. The caster may interrupt the work for any length of time, but must keep checking against Intelligence until the enchantment is completed. The spell is successful if the caster hasn't become permanently insane by the end of the enchantment time.

Upon completion, the spell binds the caster's and summoned creature's life forces to the enchanted object. The creature may alter the shape of the object in the process, and the caster gains the ability to mentally control the object through the bound creature's mind. The creature can physically move any original part of the object that is mobile (e.g., doors, levers, windows, traps, and other mechanical parts). If the object was capable of movement, the creature can control its path. Conflicts of personality may occur between the creature and the caster, just as with intelligent weapons.

If the object is destroyed, the caster dies instantly and the creature's soul is consumed. If the caster dies, the creature's life force is freed and the object loses its powers. Unless the enchantment begins to decay (see below), it is permanent and cannot even be broken by a *wish*, the most powerful mortal magic.

## Use In Play

The Thothian Enchantment is a *very* powerful spell. If the DM™ allows the spell, he may later find that the item enchanted with it can easily overcome any foes and has become a campaign breaker. If this happens, there is a way to break the Enchantment's power and get the campaign back under control.

The Enchantment may conveniently begin to decay when the DM feels it has become a liability. The creature bound to the ship may become unhappy or mutinous, disobeying orders or behaving whimsically at the most inopportune moments. The ship may become unreliable, with a 30% chance each day that either a magical enchantment or a mundane part of the ship may not work or may break in use. Accidents on board become more frequent and dangerous.

The original enchanter and anyone else trying to communicate with the creature bound to the ship will realize that the Enchantment is failing, and will also realize that nothing can save the ship.

A decaying enchantment can be broken with a *wish*. The bound creature's life force is freed—it may simply leave or, if it was mutinous or ill-treated, it may round on the characters. The ship or item may remain intact or break apart at the DM's discretion.



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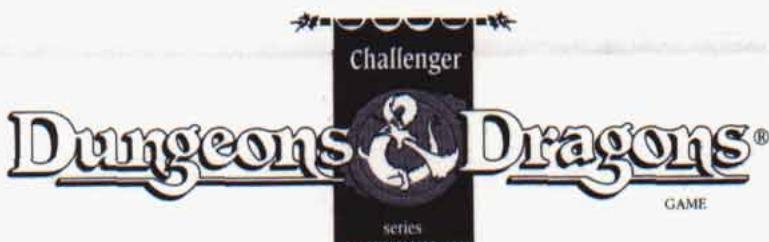
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## Champions of Mystara™

Designer's Manual



# Dungeons & Dragons®<sup>TM</sup>

## Champions of Mystara

### Designer's Manual

### by Ann Dupuis

#### Credits

**Design:** Ann Dupuis

**Original Concepts:** The skyship construction and aerial combat rules presented in this *Designer's Manual* are based on rules appearing in *PC2: Top Ballista* and the *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set. The guidelines presented in "The Economic Setting" resulted from numerous conversations with Bruce A. Heard; I am indebted to him for sharing his work and ideas, and the D&D® team at TSR for their support.

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1094XXX1902



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ISBN 1-56076-615-8

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## Introduction

The winds of Mystara have played about the hulls of many flying ships. Best known are the skyships of Alphatia, as that empire—ruled by wizards well-versed in the magical arts—keeps a fleet of flying vessels. These Windriders look and handle like seagoing windjammers. But Alphatia is not the only nation with flying ships. The Heldannic Knights have a fleet of Warbirds, some of which have penetrated Mystara's Skyshield to explore the Void of space. And the Master of Hule has deployed a number of flying ships as crucial pieces in his plans to expand Hule's borders. Elves carefully guard the secrets of their *lightships* and exquisitely graceful *swanships*, while halflings try to hush up the very existence of their *moonships*.

This *Designer's Manual* has all the information you need to introduce flying ships—skyships—into your D&D® campaign. It lists the ship styles and features to choose from when designing a skyship, offers a step-by-step guide to the construction process, and gives detailed rules for aerial maneuvering and combat. Charts, tables, and record sheets at the back of the book make the process easier.

**Note:** Since a skyship is a huge magical item, the rules for skyship construction are based on the rules for creating magical items (pp. 250–255 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*). Review these rules before a PC or NPC enchanter begins work.

If Mystara's skies don't offer enough challenge, characters can fly through the Skyshield and into the Void among the planets. They can visit Myoshima, the invisible moon, or discover unknown worlds—"Worlds Beyond" discusses some of the endless possibilities as well as gravity, the perils of space, and travel through the Void.

The "World Maker's Guide" can help the DM create new settings for characters to explore. It discusses geology and geography; trade; the various institutions of government, law, and commerce; and more—everything a DM needs to construct a realistic, workable setting, whether a tiny village on Mystara or a whole new world.

## Designing and Building a Skyship —

Skyships are very complex things. Every element of a skyship's design affects both the building process and the finished skyship's capabilities. For example, a vessel's size and shape affect her construction costs and maneuverability, as does the choice of Motive Power that will make her fly. Every decision made about what the skyship will look like and how she will be equipped affects her: how much material must go into building her, how many crew she needs, how much cargo and how many passengers she can carry, how swift and maneuverable she is, etc.

Here is an outline of the skyship construction process.

1. Before a character can begin to build a skyship, the player or DM must design the ship in game terms down to the last detail. This means determining and calculating the skyship's statistics (equivalent to a character's attributes, see p. 4) Within the context of the game, a character must also go through a design and preparation stage. This means consulting with and paying salaries to NPC specialists and engineers, unless the PC has the appropriate general skills—Architecture, Engineering, Fantasy Engineering (see p. 18), Shipbuilding, or whatever the DM deems necessary. The NPC specialists help the character calculate the ship's statistics: her flight speed, maneuverability, and so forth—all statistics that are vital for characters, players, and DMs to know. (This first chapter contains all the information needed for the design phase.)

2. The character, possibly in conjunction with the NPC specialists, determines all the rare components and materials necessary for the enchantments to be cast upon the skyship (see page 250 of the *Rules Cyclopedia*). The character must then collect all the necessary spell components—this should require a bit of adventuring. Wise enchanters try to collect more than they think they'll need. If they run into failures in the enchantment process, they may run out of materials!

3. The character must prepare for the skyship's construction by hiring all the laborers, specialists, and extra spellcasters necessary for the actual construction (if the DM likes, the hiring process can involve quite a bit of role-playing). The more people working on the project, the faster it can be completed—at least that's the way it's supposed to work!

4. The character and any hired spellcasters now construct and enchant the skyship's frame. The ship's frame must be made with the results of *form* spells (*woodform*, *stoneform*, *ironform*, or *steel-form*), so only magic-users can create a flying vessel's frame. The hired specialists must also guide the enchanters' efforts during the construction process—enchanters do not usually have the required Engineering knowledge. Spellcasters must also enchant the completed frame with any spells that are to apply to the entire ship, such as *fly* or *float in air*.

5. The hired laborers next construct the ship's mundane interiors (decks, cabins, etc.) and any other non-magical accoutrements the designer's plan calls for. At this step, the enchanters also create magical or mundane weapons, cast *climate control* on the finished cabins, create enchanted masts that can withstand the stresses of flight, and so on.

6. Take her for her maiden flight!

## Restrictions —

Skyships come in many shapes, sizes, and styles. Some are built and powered entirely by magic. Others involve both mundane and magical engineering. Except for contraptions such as hot-air balloons and gnomishly complicated mechanical craft, most skyships need magic to keep them aloft or to move them once they're in the air.

For game balance, the rules for constructing huge magical items such as skyships are designed to make the process difficult, costly, and time consuming. Mystara would otherwise be crawling with huge magical Meks, skyships the size of small moons, and similar examples of overkill.



## Designing a Skyship

Jarita Maruti of Sayr Ulan carefully opened the cracked and ancient leather tome. If she had deciphered the journals of Tayib Loknath of Nag-puri correctly, this book should contain the key she sought. The pages threatened to crumble at her lightest touch. She muttered a quick appeal to Himayeti, the Preserver, to keep them intact long enough for her to...

There. That sketch in the margin; a ship in full sail. She'd only glanced at it before, not realizing the significance of what she saw. Peering closer, Jarita could barely make out the faded lines that portrayed something no sailing ship should need—short "wings" protruding from the hull. Tayib was right; Girish Sarojun *had* known the secret of flying ships.

Jarita murmured the words that would allow her to read the magic hidden beneath the mundane writing. Slowly, the black ink faded to reveal faintly glowing silver words...

One way the rules limit construction is requiring that all skyships be made of the results of *form* spells rather than mundane building materials. As these are magic-user spells, the rule requiring the frame to be made with *form* spells restricts frame construction to magic-users—clerics need not apply. The rule also prohibits spellcasters from simply enchanting pre-existing ships or other constructions.

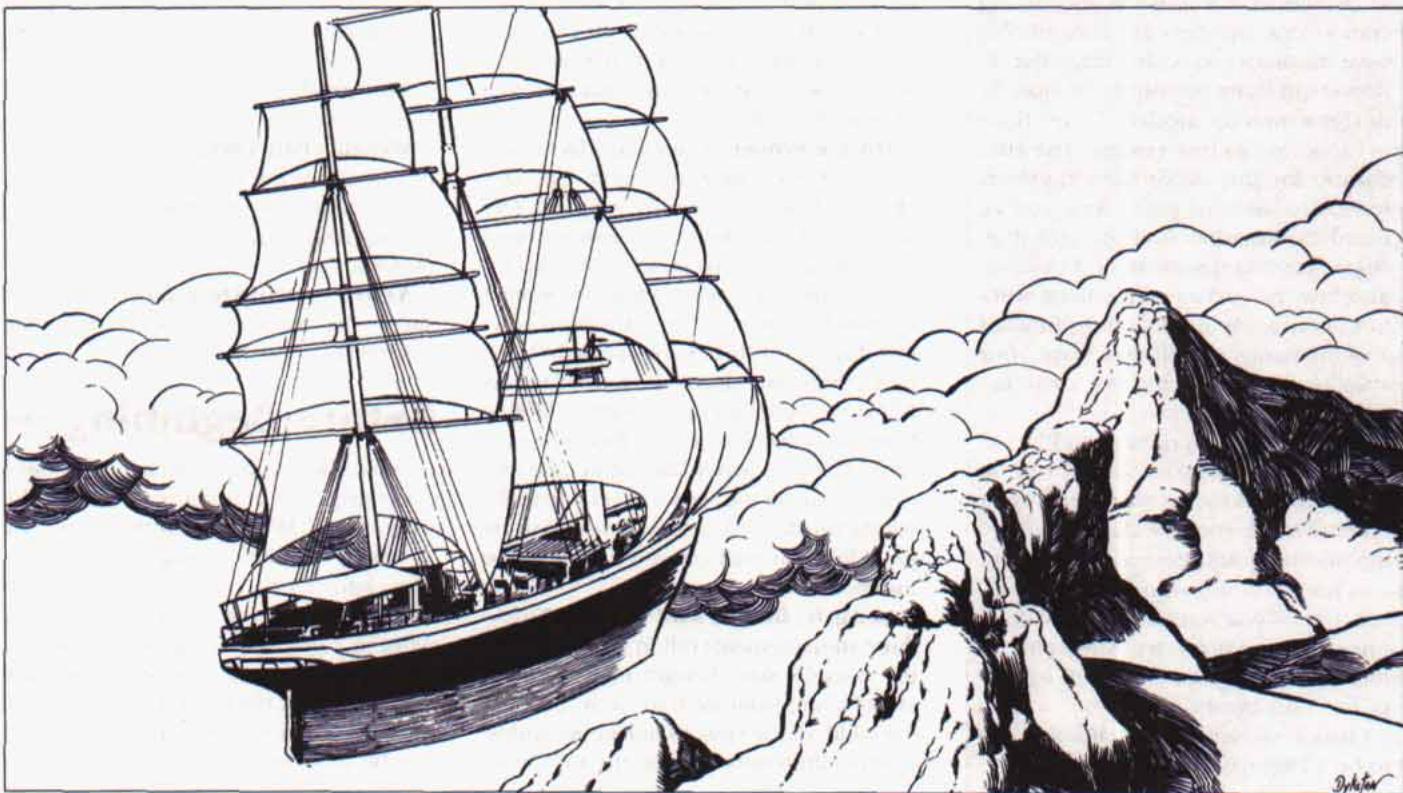
Magical enchantments also require exotic spell components that are costly or difficult to acquire. And if the enchanter does not have the necessary skills—Engineering, Shipbuilding, Architecture, or any other skill the DM considers necessary—he must hire specialists to guide his efforts.

Also, only 18th-level and above spellcasters may enchant huge magical items. Demihumans must rely on their clan relics when enchanting a skyship—a process taking ten years or more. Only in magic-rich lands such as Alphatia are

skyships common—elsewhere, a vessel flying over populated areas often elicits panic, awe, or jealousy among the inhabitants. (Many a skyship's crew has fended off attacks from fearful mobs—or from bold groundlings intent on having a flying ship of their own!)

### Loosening the Rules

If you find these limits too constricting in your campaign (a high-level cleric may want to enchant a skyship without the help of a magic-user, for instance), you may disregard them—to a point. The best way to do this without unbalancing the game is to allow the enchantment of huge *normal* constructions, but at a penalty. Enchanting a normal vessel (one already built of mundane materials) causes a -20% penalty to all enchantment success rolls (see p. 13). Clerics may then use *animate object* or *travel* enchantments to move the vessel. (DMs may rule that certain mundane constructions—





## Designing a Skyship

Rajadhiraja Chandra ul Nervi watched Jarita Maruti, perhaps the most powerful Jadugerya of all Sind, pace excitedly back and forth before him. She was talking so fast—her arms waving emphasis—he barely caught every other word. At last she paused long enough for him to speak.

"So, you have met with some success?" he asked.

"Yes! Haven't you been listening? It was all there! The materials, the procedures, the incantations—everything! It's quite simple, really. Merely an altered application of the techniques applied to any magical item. You simply..."

"When can you start?" The ruler of Sind interrupted his court magist before she could launch into a speech about magical processes and techniques.

"Oh, immediately. As soon as you decide what form you wish your first skyship to take."

"Form?"

"Yes, form." Jarita spoke slowly now, as though to a stupid child. "You need to decide what you want your flying craft to look like; how big it should be; what materials you wish it made out of. Reports indicate the Alphatians prefer designs directly modeled after their ocean-going sailing vessels. The Heli-dannic Knights make their skyships look like birds of prey. And you've heard the description of that *Ark* ship. Not a standard design at all. I have no idea how he enchanted the thing without completely bankrupting himself and his family, but if you want your ship to look like that we can certainly..."

"What would you recommend?"

"What? Oh, I don't know. It can be any shape, really, or size, depending on how much you're willing to pay for the materials. And how long you want it to take. A sailing ship's probably easiest. Unless you want it pulled by dragons, or powered by sunlight or rechargeable spells, or moved by elephants on a treadmill, or..."

Chandra ul Nervi sighed. It was going to be a long day.

houses, for instance—are simply not strong enough to withstand the stresses of flight.)

Likewise, the DM may decide to treat very small vessels—anything with a Lift Capacity up to 5 tons—as normal magical items, which can be enchanted by 9th-level spellcasters. This makes small flying craft much more likely to appear in the campaign, and allows Name-level spellcasters who are not yet 18th level to make emergency repairs to their flying vessel's lifeboats.

## Skyship Statistics —

A finished skyship is described in terms of a number of statistics or measurements, just as player characters are. These statistics are as follows:

**Lift:** The means by which the vessel, with her crew, passengers, and cargo, gets into the air—this is different than Motive Power, below, which is what flies the ship through the air once she's aloft. Lift is almost always magical (*float in air*, *levitate*, and similar spells). Even ships that use flying monsters, mechanical power, or even wind in their sails to fly almost always depend on magical means of providing Lift.

**Motive Power:** The means by which the vessel flies once she's aloft. Like Lift, Motive Power is usually magical (*fly* spells and the like), but is sometimes mechanical (perhaps steam produced by a fire elemental powering flapping wings) or muscle power (20 wood golems rowing, for example). Some vessels have more than one Motive Power (listed as Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Motive Powers). A second or third Motive Power can act as emergency backup in case one fails, or can let the vessel travel ethereally whenever desired. Some Motive Powers provide Lift as well (*fly* enchantments, for instance).

**Length, Beam, and Depth:** These three measurements (all in feet) describe the vessel's size. Length measures the vessel's hull from stem to stern. Beam is the width of the vessel's hull at her widest point—often measured at the top deck.

Depth measures the vessel's hull from her top deck to her bottom.

**Cargo Capacity:** The encumbrance, measured in coin weights or tons (one ton equals 20,000 cn), of cargo and passengers the ship can carry in addition to her crew and their gear. Cargo capacity is limited by both the available space and how much weight the ship's lifting enchantments (see p. 6) can lift.

**Crew:** The number of characters or intelligent creatures normally required to operate the vessel. This includes rowers, sailors, marines, and support personnel such as cooks, doctors, chaplains, etc.

**Lift Capacity:** The maximum weight the vessel can carry and still fly at full speed; determined by the strength and amount of the magic or technology used to provide the ship with Lift.

**Armor Class:** This is determined by which *form* spells the ship's hull is made from (cloth, wood, stone, iron, or steel), much as a character's AC is determined by the type of armor he wears.

**Hull Points:** Like a character's hit points, Hull Points (HP) are the amount of damage a ship's hull can suffer before being completely destroyed.

**Air Speed:** A flying vessel's Air Speed is equivalent to a Move score.

**Maneuvering Factor:** This is the number of times each round a vessel can change direction or altitude. Many large vessels require more than one round to perform a maneuver.

**Artillery and Defenses:** These are simply the ship's weapons and defensive capabilities, if she has any.

## Before Beginning —

Before beginning to design or to build a skyship, the character (and also the player or DM!) must come up with a detailed, workable design for the ship. The character may work alone if he has all the necessary general skills, or may work in conjunction with a team of NPC naval architects and other specialists. The character must decide what the ship will look like. Will she be ship-shaped? Will she be modeled after a flying monster?



Will she be something unusual, like a flying house?

The designer must also consider what he wants the vessel to do. Will she be a luxurious private yacht? A sleek, swift pirate craft? A government's lumbering military vessel armed to the teeth? A whimsical mage's fanciful flying castle? Will she need to be strong enough to withstand the stresses of penetrating Mystra's Skyshield to journey through the chill interplanetary Void (see p. 30)?

A skyship is really only a huge enchanted magical item, so the designer must also decide which spells to enchant her with. Will she be powered with *fly* or *travel*—or perhaps a magic item such as a *dynamo of flying*? Will she be protected with *shield*, *invisibility*, or an *anti-magic shell*? Will she defend herself with wands of *lightning bolts* or something even more exotic? The designer may wish to include amenities, such as a captain's cabin *climate* controlled to 70° or a food locker *climate* controlled to 40°, or even a *continual light* on the bridge.

For ideas about skyship design—or hints for refining a design—players and DMs alike may wish to take a look at the skyship cards included in this boxed set. Each card offers ideas about suitable shapes, capabilities, and spells any designer might want to use on their own ship. DMs and players should also read this whole chapter through before finalizing a skyship design, especially since each decision affects other decisions and the skyship's final statistics.

## Size and Shape —

Size and shape are the first things to consider when designing a skyship. Size and shape directly affect every aspect of the construction process and the finished vessel's capabilities—for example, how much cargo she can hold—and her requirements—for example, how many crew she needs.

### Size

Flying vessels may be nearly any size, as measured by Length, Beam, Depth, and Tonnage. Generally, the larger the ship, the more enchantments she'll need to fly—but the more hull points she will have. Smaller ships are generally faster and less costly, but also less durable. Based on her size and shape, the number of *form* spells required to build a vessel is discussed under "Special Effects," p. 12 and "Estimating Materials," p. 13.

### Ship-shaped Skyships

After centuries of developing flying vessels, the Alphatians have pushed skyship technology well beyond that developed by other nations. Other nations and individuals often copy Alphatian windrider designs. Alphatian skyships typically have wooden hulls, *float in air*, *levitate*, or *fly* enchantments, and sails for their primary or secondary Motive Powers. Some carry oars that are manned in calm weather.

The Alphatian Windriders Table gives statistics for the most common Alphatian designs. These are averages; individual skyships may be significantly larger or smaller, faster or slower than average.

**Sloop:** A one-masted vessel rigged with up to three fore-and-aft sails and two square sails. They're popular with pirates and smugglers. Private yachts are often made on a sloop design, with automated rigging and sails to cut down on crew members needed. Length: 50'–60'; Beam:  $\frac{1}{4}$  Length; Depth:  $\frac{1}{2}$  Beam; Sails: 8,100 square feet.

**Schooner:** These two-masted vessels have fore-and-aft rigging and relatively small crews. Length: 60'–80'; Beam:  $\frac{1}{3}$  Length; Depth:  $\frac{1}{2}$  Beam; Sails: 11,000 square feet.

**Brigantine:** These large two-masted vessels are square-rigged on their foremast and fore-and-aft rigged on their mainmast. Length: 75'–100'; Beam:  $\frac{1}{4}$  Length; Depth:  $\frac{1}{2}$  Beam; Sails: 13,500 square feet.

**Clipper:** These long, lean merchant ships carry a veritable cloud of sails on their three masts, with additional sails riding above their bowsprits and a spanker sail bringing up the rear. Enchantments designed to work the sails with minimal labor allow very small crews. The flat keels of most clippers allow them to land on ground or in water. Length 150'–250'; Beam:  $\frac{1}{5}$  Length; Depth:  $\frac{1}{2}$  Beam; Sails: 31,500 square feet.

**Man-of-War:** These three-masted fighting vessels have three or four decks, numerous armaments, and a large com-

Alphatian Windriders Table

Crew								
Ship	Sailors	Marines*	Tonnage	Cargo Capacity**	Air Speed	Hull Points	Armor Class	
Sloop	25–50	20–40	70–100	25–40	140' (70')	24–36	6	
Schooner	30–60	30–60	100–200	50–100	120' (60')	36–72	6	
Brigantine	50–100	50–100	170–400	100–240	120' (60')	60–108	6	
Clipper	40–60	—	400–1200	300–900	160' (80')	144–384	6	
Man-of-War	100–200	200–400	700–1500	175–375	120' (60')	240–528	5	

\*Normal complement if fitted for fighting. Ships can carry more marines if they have the required cargo capacity.  
\*\*Capacity, in tons, in addition to crew. Includes passengers, provisions, armaments, and lavish appointments.





## Designing a Skyship

"It seems simple enough," Rudri Salmanin of the Vaishya caste said to the arch-mage Jarita. "My family certainly has enough experience in barge building to accept the contract. Although I must admit, we have never built a barge quite this large before."

"You'll not be building it—I will," Jarita told the man. "Your job is to advise me. To draw up the engineering plans for a barge of these dimensions, and to oversee the construction."

"Yes, of course, as you say," Rudri exclaimed, tugging the brim of his cap in a sign of respect. "We will begin immediately. The plans will not be overly difficult, although there are some matters of concern to address. For instance, a barge of this size cannot fit through the locks of the irrigation canals. She will also sit quite low in the water, which would be unfortunate should she meet heavy waves."

"You needn't worry about that. The barge will rarely sit in water at all. Although it would be preferable for it to be able to land either on solid ground or on water."

"Land, mistress?" the man asked, obviously puzzled.

"Yes. You see, this will be a *flying* barge. A magical wonder the likes of which has not been seen in Sindhi skies for centuries. A tribute to His Highness, the Maharajadhirajaparamabhattarka. A testimony of the great knowledge and power of Sind's Jadugeryas. A flying vessel that will place awe and fear into the hearts of all those who look upon it. A magnificent barge, bearing Himayan warriors and sufficient armaments to ensure peace in the kingdom." Jarita paused to gather her thoughts. "Ah, yes. Well. It's to be a flying barge. Will that present any difficulties to you?"

"Oh, no, mistress. I don't think so. But I must know more before I can be sure. For instance, how will it fly? What sort of stresses will this place upon the support structure? How will we stabilize it against the wind currents?"

"Ah. Well. I hadn't thought of that..."

plement of marines. The Alphatian Imperial Navy commissions many of these ships. Most Men-of-War are enchanted with the *shield* spell for an AC of 5. The Alphatians are fond of lavishly decorating their war vessels with gilded carvings. Length: 150'-225'; Beam:  $\frac{1}{3}$  Length; Depth:  $\frac{1}{4}$  Beam; Sails: 18,000 square feet.

### Optional Sail Rules

DMs wishing a high level of detail may adjust a windrider's Maneuvering Factor and Air Speed (see p. 11) to reflect the vessel's sails and rigging. If the sails can be arranged to meet the wind at a variety of angles, the ship can move into the wind as well as with it—tacking to make progress against a headwind.

**Square-Riggers:** Ships such as galleons hang their sails from yardarms perpendicular to the direction of travel. This gives the normal Air Speed (see the "Alphatian Windriders Table," p. 5) but reduces the Maneuvering Factor by one category.

**Fore-and-Aft Riggers:** Ships such as schooners have triangular sails arranged along the long axis of the ship. Increase the Maneuvering Factor by one level; reduce Air Speed by  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

**Other:** Ships with a combination of square sails and fore-and-aft sails do not alter Air Speed or MF. Less sophisticated rigging (square sails fixed in place, for example) restricts travel to the current wind direction. Reduce the Maneuvering Factor by one level and Air Speed by  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

### Other Shapes

Of course, there are many other shapes for flying vessels besides windjammers. Designers may wish to create flying rafts or dirigibles, flying carpets or flying brooms, or even a flying castle—as long as it's engineered well enough to withstand the stresses of flight! However, vessels that aren't ship-shaped are subject to a performance penalty. Before a vessel is entered in play, the DM decides whether she is aerodynamic. Vessels that are not aerodynamic maneuver less quickly than aerodynamic ships (see p. 11).

DMs may limit a vessel's Air Speed further if the design is radically unrealistic for a flying object. Non-magical means to fly faster than 160 yards per round are not recommended.

### Hull Materials

When deciding on the frame's size and shape, the designer must also think about the material that will make the frame. The materials selected affect Tonnage (which in turn affects Lift Capacity and Motive Power), Armor Class, Hull Points (which are determined by a combination of material and size), and whether or not she is susceptible to fire or other attacks.

Since skyships must be created with *form* spells, characters can create hulls of cloth, wood, stone, iron, or steel. Designers may also combine these materials. For example, wooden-hulled skyships may have *steelform* armor plating their sides. *Clothform* hulls must be reinforced with underlying frames of *woodform* or similar *form* spells. For example, flying canoes and other very light craft sometimes trade the better Armor Class and high Hull Points of sturdier material for the light weight of ribbed *woodform* frames clothed in *clothform* canvas hulls.

When a hull has more than one type of material, the Armor Class is that of the outermost material (the cloth hull, AC 8; or the steel armor, AC 2). Damage affects the hull points of the outermost material first, as well. When the outermost material is destroyed, use the Armor Class of the underlying material. If a vessel's hull is made of a combination of different materials with no material being outermost, the vessel's AC is that of the most prevalent material.

### Lift and Motive Power

Once the designer has settled on a size and shape, it's time to think about how the ship will fly. It's not enough just to select a means of flight. There are two distinct problems to be solved when creating a flying ship: getting her into the air



(Lift) and making her fly once she's there (Motive Power). Most skyship designers use magic to solve one or the other—or both—of these problems.

**Lift:** Lift can be conferred by magic spells, mechanical power, or muscle power. However, magic almost always provides a skyship's Lift. Even with mechanical or muscle power as the vessel's Motive Power, magical Lift is often a good idea, since it dramatically reduces the work the mechanism or creatures must do to keep the ship flying.

Some skyship designs call for non-magical Lift, either as a primary method or as a backup in case the enchantments fail. Mechanical means of getting the skyship into the air—or flying creatures to pull it up—are often less costly than magical lift enchantments. For example, the gnomish engineers of Oostdock in the Hollow World have learned the art of filling huge balloons with lighter-than-air gases to get their contraptions aloft.

**Motive Power:** Many magical solutions to the problem of Lift also solve the problem of moving the vessel once she's airborne. Hulls enchanted with *fly* spells are a perfect example. Other magical solutions involve magical devices, such as *dynamics of flying* (see p. 53), that power the vessel. Such magical devices can provide enormous cost savings compared to enchanting a vessel's frame, but most require recharging or refueling, making them more expensive to maintain in the long run.

### Magical Enchantments

Magical enchantments provide the most reliable sources of Lift and Motive Power available to skyships.

In the D&D® game world, enchanting the frame with magical Lift is the most common—and the most efficient—way to get a skyship off the ground. Even with Fantasy Engineering (see p. 18), technology isn't sufficiently advanced to allow non-magical jet aircraft or similar technological wonders.

Even if the ship will use mechanical or muscle power as Motive Power, enchant-

ing each section of the vessel's frame during construction with a magic spell to provide Lift is very helpful, if not vital. Without such enchantments, the ship's own Tonnage will often meet the limit of the mechanical or muscle Motive Power's capability—in other words, if a ship doesn't also have magical lifting spells, adding cargo or passengers will likely prevent her from flying.

**Magic Spells:** These enchantments are most often applied to flying vessels.

**Dimension Door:** A vessel with *dimension door* capabilities can instantaneously jump to another spot 360 yards away. The vessel's crew, cargo, and passengers are included in this spell effect. This spell is usually used as a secondary Motive Power or a defense tactic. This enchantment does not provide Lift.

**Float in Air:** Enchanting a vessel's hull with *float in air* spells reduces the Tonnage by 80%. This means that the vessel's effective Tonnage is  $\frac{1}{5}$  her actual Tonnage. (Use this figure only for the purposes of calculating Lift Capacity for vessels with mechanical and muscle-powered means of lift.) *Float in air* also provides Lift Capacity equal to the vessel's Tonnage or 4,000 cns, whichever is greater: this is important for an enchanter creating an item such as a flying carpet or flying broom rather than a huge skyship.

**Fly:** Vessels enchanted with *fly* spells can move in any direction at any Air Speed up to their maximum—the helmsman merely has to concentrate on the desired direction and speed. (See “Air Speed,” p. 11, for information on calculating a vessel's Air Speed.) As with *float in air*, *fly* provides Lift Capacity equal to the vessel's Tonnage or 4,000 cns, whichever is greater.

**Levitate:** *Levitate* can only provide vertical Lift: it does nothing to move the vessel once she's airborne. *Levitate* provides Lift Capacity equal to the vessel's Tonnage or 4,000 cns, whichever is greater.

**Teleporting:** Like the spell *dimension door*, *teleport* also provides the means for a quick escape or instantaneous long-distance travel, though there's always at

least a 5% chance of missing the target destination (see the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*, p. 52).

**Travel:** Vessels enchanted with the *travel* spell can fly, journey to other planes of existence, and even assume gaseous form upon command. The crew had better hope the vessel's enchanters enhanced the *travel* spell to turn them to gaseous form as well!

**Drawbacks:** The major drawback of using magic as the Motive Power is the cost to enchant the vessel with movement spells. Even a *fly* spell costs 9,000 gp per frame section—not including any frame sections discarded due to failed enchantments. High-level spells such as *travel* are prohibitively costly.

Another potential drawback is fraud. Unscrupulous skyship enchanters occasionally don't bother to use the enchantment process, but simply cast *fly* and other movement spells directly on the vessel under construction, fixing them with *permanence* spells. This saves time and circumvents the necessity for costly and rare components that proper enchantment requires. These vessels do fly as well as if they'd been properly enchanted—until the ship encounters a *dispel magic* effect!

### Magical Devices

Some designers avoid exorbitant construction costs by equipping their vessels with devices that convert various forms of energy into Motive Power. A *dynamo of flying* converts spell energy. An *internal conjuration engine* consumes *potions of flying* as fuel. These devices can also provide cost-effective secondary Motive Powers for emergency maneuvers or to back up the Primary Motive Power (see “Magical Items,” p. 53.)

Mechanical devices operated by magical fuel (*potions of flying*, for instance) should provide Air Speeds equivalent to the spell effect—360 yards (120 yds) for *fly* spells. If the magical fuel is an alchemical formula, the DM should determine Air Speed based on the expense and difficulty involved in making the fuel.





## Designing a Skyship

### Flying Creatures

Flying creatures in harness—dragons, griffons, pegasi, giant birds, and other flying monsters—may pull a skyship. While these vessels are often faster than wind-driven skyships, they may suffer from monster exhaustion or rebellion. Well-trained monsters are expensive and difficult to obtain. Monsters may also be injured in battle, crippling the vessel's maneuverability. The use of flying monsters is usually best left to people who want to make a grand impression. A dragon-prowed skyship pulled by live dragons is, after all, *very* impressive.

However, skyships often weigh several tons, while the Load scores of flying creatures are measured in mere cns. You would need a whole flock of flying monsters to move even an empty skyship, and a second flock to move a skyship's crew, cargo, and passengers. That's why it's so important to use enchantments to keep down the weight of a vessel that will be pulled by flying monsters.

Flying monsters can only lift as much weight as their Load score (see each monster's description in the *Rules Cyclopedia*). When more than one monster is harnessed to the same vehicle, divide the vessel's Tonnage (in cns) by the monsters' full-speed Load score to determine how many creatures are required to pull the vessel.

For example, a griffon's full speed Load score is 3,500 cns. To lift and move a 5-ton (100,000-cn) vessel at full speed, it takes 29 griffons, thus:

$$\begin{aligned}100,000 \text{ cn vessel} + \\3,500 \text{ cns per griffon} = 28.57 \text{ griffons}\end{aligned}$$

Rounding up, of course, you need 29 griffons to move a 5-ton vessel at full speed. Adding a ton of cargo (or five passengers) means you need to add six more griffons to maintain full speed.

But the same 5-ton vessel, her hull enchanted with *float in air* (which reduces a vessel's weight by 80%), would weigh only 1 ton ( $\frac{1}{4}$  as much, or 20,000 cns); six griffons ( $\frac{1}{4}$  as many) could then

pull her. Such a vessel would actually have two Lift Capacities: that of the lifting enchantments and that of the monsters.

Flying creatures are also much more effective as Motive Power than as Lift. Creatures can horizontally move a vessel weighing 10 times their normal Load scores if they don't also have to provide Lift.

However, flying monsters pulling vessels that *float in air* actually do provide Lift as well as forward movement. Their ability to gain altitude is still limited by their normal Load scores—their Load capacities are only multiplied by 10 when moving horizontally. In general, a team of monsters which can fly at full speed with a vessel enchanted with *float in air* can climb or dive at half speed. (See the Dragon Raider skyship cardsheet as an example.)

Vessels pulled by flying monsters fly at the monsters' Move scores. If the vessel's weight, including passengers and cargo, exceeds the monsters' combined Load scores, their speed drops to  $\frac{1}{2}$ . Use the Move score for the slowest monster if more than one type is used.

See p. 60 for a chart of all the various flying monsters with their Maneuvering Factors, monthly cost of upkeep, and other information.

### Mechanical Flight and Muscle Power

Fantasy Engineering (see p. 18) allows the creation of mechanical devices that transform muscle power or magical power into Lift and flight. Mechanical devices may include propellers, rotor blades, flapping wings, oars, even huge bellows that suck air from the vessel's prow and expel it through her stern. Muscle power may be provided by creatures or magical constructs. Magical power could be as unusual as magically fuelled rotor blades.

Mechanical flight has one big advantage: methods which do not work in the real world may be perfectly valid in the D&D® game world. Flapping wings

powered by twenty gnomes pedalling bicycles can make a Mystaran skyship fly.

Mechanical devices operated by muscle power provide Air Speeds equivalent to the operating creatures' Move score. (Use the slowest Move if more than one type of creature is involved.) For example, a gnome-powered flying contraption would have an Air Speed of only 60' (20')—the normal Move score for gnomes. A skyship powered by wood golems operating bellows will have an Air Speed of 120' (40'). Furthermore, wood golems are not subject to fatigue, as gnomes are.

DMs must simply guess what the Lift Capacity of pedal power, lever-operated flapping wings, and so on might be. Even with Fantasy Engineering, one human can provide only 4,000 cn lift—enough for himself and a bit of baggage. Once again, enchantments are a good way to overcome the limitations of muscle power. Lowering a ship's weight with *float in air* or enchanting her machinery to boost the muscle power gives good results.

**Fixed Wings:** As with real-world airplanes, fixed wings provide only Lift as the craft's forward motion—at least as long as the vessel moves fast enough for the air pressure acting on the wing to counteract gravity. Fixed wings do nothing to provide Motive Power, and a fixed-wing vessel must have at least one method of Motive Power.

In general, every square foot of wing will provide half a pound of Lift for every 10 yards of forward motion per round. Use the following formula to calculate fixed-wing Lift:

$$\text{wing area} \times \text{speed} \times 0.05 = \text{lbs. lifted}$$

For example, with an encounter speed of 160 yards, wings covering 250 square feet can lift one ton (250 square feet  $\times$  160 yards  $\times$  0.05 = 2,000 lbs.). Note that fixed-wing Lift requires a minimum forward speed to get off the ground at all:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{min. speed (yds/rd)} = \\ \text{Tonnage (lbs.)} / (\text{wing area (ft}^2\text{)} \times 20)\end{aligned}$$





## Designing a Skyship

This may require a long runway as the vessel gets up to speed. DMs may alter lifting capabilities based on wing design, modified by any research into real-world aerodynamics they care to do.

**Flapping Wings:** Flapping wings provide both Lift and Motive Power, but tend to be inefficient. Muscle-powered flapping wings are limited to a Lift Capacity of about 4,000 cns ( $\frac{1}{4}$  ton) per person operating them.

If a winged skyship is powered magically (with *animate object* enchantments, for instance), every square foot of her wing area provides either 20 pounds of Lift or one yard per round of Motive Power. Remember that skyships must both ascend and fly once they're airborne, so the wings' square footage must be split between Lift and Motive Power. Thus, 250 square feet of flapping *animated* wings can provide one ton of Lift (with 100 square feet of wing area supplying Lift) and an encounter speed of 150 yards per round (with the remaining 150 square feet of wing area going to Motive Power).

With magical Lift, the entire wing area may provide Motive Power (and hence Air Speed). There are limits to Air Speed, regardless of wing size. A well-designed skyship may use *animated* wings for an Air Speed of 480 yards (160 yds)—equivalent to a roc or pegasus. The *animated* wings of a less well-designed skyship may achieve Air Speeds of only 240 yards (80 yds)—the same as an average dragon. Use your imagination and common sense to determine Air Speeds provided by unusual enchantments.

**Oars:** Oars for flying vessels may be ordinary wooden oars (possibly with very wide blades), or perhaps giant feathers, or may be enchanted with magic. Oars used in calm weather move a ship at one-third her normal Air Speed.

**Steam:** DMs may allow steam power in the campaign, but it should be noisy, cumbersome, and dangerous. For example, the DMTM may rule that steam for skyships must be created by fire elementals, or that the boiler must be enchanted with *fireball* spells, and so on. Magically

generated steam power gives Air Speeds up to 360 yards (120 yds). Steam engines should otherwise be limited to Air Speeds of 120 yards (40 yds).

**Ailerons:** Skyships that do not rely on magical enchantments to control altitude (*fly* spells and the like) usually use ailerons. These flaps (or fins, or sails) can be angled to guide the vessel into a climb or dive. Details are left to the DM.

**Muscle Power:** Flightless monsters—golems, zombies, fire elementals, and the like—can operate a ship's cranks, oars, steam engines, or other devices. While mindless constructs and undead laborers perform the duties assigned by their master without thought of rebellion, bound djinni and efreeti or captive humanoids do not take so kindly to enslavement. Skyship designers must take care to ensure that intelligent monsters are kept happy, or at least kept from revolting.

Note that muscle power is *much* more effective as a Motive Power than as a means of Lift. Creatures can move horizontally a vessel weighing 10 times their normal Load scores if the skyship's Lift is provided through another means (such as *levitate* enchantments or lighter-than-air gases). Likewise, muscle-powered machinery can move horizontally 10 times the weight it can lift.

### Wind

Wind is the favored Motive Power of Alphatian skyship designers, as much for the romance of wind-driven ships as for practicality. Note that wind can only provide Motive Power; it cannot Lift a vessel that is not equipped with wings or the like. Enchanting a vessel with *float in air* (see p. 51) allows her to behave in the air just as she would on the sea; all she needs are some sails and ailerons to ride the winds.

However, relying on wind as a primary Motive Power does have some drawbacks. Windriders fly best when the winds are right—almost gale-force and blowing toward the ship's destination. Although well-designed ships can maneu-

ver even when the winds are light or ill-favored, they fly slowly. See "Wind and Weather," p. 26.

Wind-driven ship-shaped skyships generally have an encounter speed  $\frac{1}{3}$  greater than their water-going counterparts' Move scores. See the Sailing Vessels Table, page 71 of the *Rules Cyclopedia*. Note that the figures listed are in feet per round; convert these to yards per round for skyships.

A wind-driven skyship's daily movement rate (in miles) is also usually three times her encounter speed (in yards). This daily movement rate takes the vagaries of the shifting wind into account. See p. 5 for sample Alphatian Windriders.

### Lighter-than-Air Craft

Hot-air balloons and similar airships generally require enormous gas containers to lift relatively small vessels. Assume one cubic yard (9 cubic feet) of hot air or gas can lift 10 cns of weight. Thus a 5-ton vessel would require a roughly 100,000 cubic-foot balloon (110'  $\times$  30'  $\times$  30'), or one hundred 10'  $\times$  10'  $\times$  10' air chambers. These are generous estimates—don't increase a gas's lifting power unless it's magical.

### Combining Motive Powers

Skyships can have multiple means of Motive Power, two of which may operate simultaneously. In general, add  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the slower Motive Power's Air Speed to the primary Motive Power's Air Speed.

Remember that flying monsters cannot fly faster than their Move score unless they're magically *basted*. At the DM's option, a secondary Motive Power may allow overburdened flying monsters to fly at full speed rather than half speed.

### Adding Accoutrements

Anything that is not an integral part of the ship's frame is considered an accoutrement. This includes interior cabins,





## Designing a Skyship

Rajadhiraja Chandra ul Nervi has instructed his court mage to build a flying barge. The vessel's frame will be a solid, flat rectangle, with dimensions Length 100', Beam 60', Depth 2'. Its surface area—6,000 square feet—would indicate that the frame will require 6 *woodform* spells. However, the entire frame is solid through its 2' depth, doubling the number of segments required to 12. The barge will have Armor Class 6 (the usual AC for wood), 144 Hull Points (12 segments times 12 Hull Points per segment), and weigh 300 tons (each segment weighing 25 tons alone).

Jarita Maruti, his mage, has decided to get a little fancy with her frame construction. She will sacrifice volume from her *woodform* spells to gain a 20% increase in Hull Points and to magically color the wooden frame sky-blue. Applying two special effects to the casting of her *woodform* spells decreases the volume produced by each spell to 25% (halving it once to 50%, then again to 25%), or only 250 cubic feet of wood. This quadruples the number of segments she will need to construct the frame. Jarita doesn't realize this when she sets out to construct the skyship, but she will come to regret this decision; time to enchant and cost of rare material components also quadruple! (At least the rajadhiraja will be pleased when he sees how well the coloring works as camouflage on cloudless days.)

The barge's design calls for the hull to be enchanted with *fly* spells for lift and maneuverability, as well as a *pban-tasmal force* effect (based on five uses per day) for extra camouflage. All other capabilities will be added as accoutrements—including normal and magical weapons mounted along its sides; a magical *lightning bolt* device to rain destruction down on the ground; an enclosed guard house to store munitions and protect the barge's commanders; and a *teleport* pad for quick deployment of troops from the barge to the ground.

pilot houses, weaponry mounted on the frame or the decks, and so on.

Some accoutrements require their own enchantments, and perhaps even materials magically created with *form* spells. Masts, sails, harness, ailerons, and other mechanical means of Motive Power, Lift, or of controlling difficult skyship maneuvers are good examples of accoutrements that should be crafted with *form* spells.

### Armaments and Defenses

Armaments and defenses are important accoutrements for any skyship. Skyship frames may be enchanted with built-in armaments and defenses. *Shield* spell enchantments improve Armor Class; *resist fire* provides protection from *fireballs* and other fire attacks. Designers unconcerned with cost may link *teleport* capabilities to a *contingency* enchantment that automatically blinks the ship out of the way of a devastating attack. Use imagination in arming and defending skyships.

In addition to defensive capabilities enchanted into the vessel's frame, a skyship often has weapons for air-to-air combat (fighting other skyships), for melee combat (repelling boarders), or for attacking ground targets. Weapons range from light catapults mounted on the top deck to heavy-duty *fireball* and *lightning bolt* wands mounted on their hulls. Some craft have special bays or hatches from which things are dropped on targets below. (See the rules on aerial combat on

pp. 114–115 of the *Rules Cyclopedia* for information on bombing attacks.)

Armored hulls increase AC but also increase Tonnage. Wards, alarms, traps, guard patrols, etc.—both mundane and magical—are very important for protecting a ship when her looks or suspected cargo attract spies, saboteurs, or pirates.

### Special Effects (Optional)

Spellcasters do not have to be limited by the exact descriptions of *woodform* and the other *form* spells from which they construct their skyship's hull. As long as the DM approves each innovation, the spellcaster may swap half of a *form* spell's volume for one special effect.

Special effects may be cosmetic, such as making a *stoneform* section crystal-clear, or creating a naturally growing section of *woodform*, complete with leaves. A small sailing ship created this way might one day grow up to be a big windrider! Color is another special effect—a steel-framed vessel may be camouflaged as a wooden-hulled ship, or vice versa.

Special effects may also alter a section's weight (Tonnage), Armor Class, or Hull Points. Each special effect is limited to a 20% decrease in Tonnage, a 20% increase in Hull Points (round up), or a -1 to Armor Class. No more than five special effects can be applied to any one casting of a *form* spell. (See "Creating a Frame Section," p. 12.)



# Filling out the Skyship Record Sheet

Now is the time for the DM or player designing a D&D® skyship to begin filling out a copy of the Skyship Record Sheet on the last page of this book.

You should be able to fill in her Description (sloop, elven *lightship*, etc.), Motive Power(s), Length, Beam, and Depth. For a ship-shaped vessel, you may be able to consult the Alphantian Windriders Table (on p. 5) to fill in the lines for the number of ship's Crew or Marines as well as her Tonnage, Cargo Capacity, Air Speed, Hull Points, and Armor Class. You've also likely decided what her artillery and defenses are.

You still have some statistics to fill in, though—especially if the ship is not ship-shaped or if she has special features. You need to find the ship's Maneuvering Factor, Tonnage (which dictates the amount of Lift and Motive Power she needs), Armor Class, Hull Points, and Air Speed.

## Maneuvering Factor

Maneuvering Factor measures how maneuverable a skyship or flying creature is. It determines the number of times each round a vessel can perform a maneuver (a change of up to 60° in horizontal or vertical direction). Ships needing more than one round to perform one maneuver list the Maneuvering Factor in fractions:  $\frac{1}{3}$  for a vessel that takes three rounds to perform one maneuver.

Two considerations affect a ship's Maneuvering Factor: whether she is aerodynamic and whether she is moved by magic or by flying monsters. (Aerodynamics and maneuverability are cumulative; both may apply to a ship.) The DM decides if a vessel is aerodynamic. Aerodynamic shapes (windjammers or lozenge-shaped craft, for example) get a maneuvering bonus while shapes that are not aerodynamic (castles, pyramids, icosahedrons, and the like) get a penalty.

To determine the vessel's Maneuvering Factor, compare her Length in feet from bow to stern, or along her longest axis, (exclusive of any accoutrements such as

Maneuvering Factors		
Ship's Length	Aero-dynamic	Not Aerodynamic
To 2'	5	3
To 10'	3	1
To 50'	1	1/2
To 250'	1/2	1/3
To 1250'	1/3	1/5
1251'+	1/5	1/10

masts) to the "Maneuvering Factors" chart. If the vessel is aerodynamic, use the middle column; use the right-hand column for non-aerodynamic craft.

**Magical Motive Power:** Ships moved by magic are treated as one category better on the chart.

**Flying Monsters:** Vessels using flying monsters as their Motive Power must take the monsters' Maneuvering Factor into account as well as the ship's.

To find a monster's Maneuvering Factor, find its length (or height if it's taller than long) on the chart. A pegasus, for instance, would fall on the "To 10'" line.

Most monsters are aerodynamic. A monster may belong in the non-aerodynamic column if it floats rather than flies or if it has a maximum flying speed of 30' or less per round. Monsters related to the plane of Air (djinni, for example) or that are nimble in flight (dragons, etc.) rate one category better on the chart.

The Maneuvering Factor of a vessel drawn by flying monsters is the worst of the following: the vessel's normal Maneuvering Factor (based on size alone), one category lower than the monsters' Maneuvering Factor (if the vessel is aerodynamic), or two categories lower than the monsters' Maneuvering Factor (if the vessel is not aerodynamic). Use the worst monster's Maneuvering Factor if more than one monster type is involved.

## Tonnage

A vessel's weight helps to determine the amount of magical or other Lift required. Tonnage is the result of the number of *form* spells needed to create a ship. (See the "Form Spells Results" table

on p. 13 to determine how many *form* spells are required for a ship's frame.)

Add 20% to the Tonnage of the vessel's frame to account for interior decks, machinery, gear, etc., then add the weight of the crew and their belongings (one ton for every 5 crew). This is the ship's total Tonnage. This does not include the cargo or passengers—estimate the maximum amount the ship will need to carry in order to calculate the Lift she needs.

## Armor Class and Hull Points

A flying craft's Armor Class depends primarily on the type of *form* spells used in her frame. Each section of a vessel's frame has a given number of Hull Points. To determine the ship's total Hull Points, multiply each *form* spell's Hull Points by the number of frame sections in the ship.

## Air Speed

Air Speed determines the vessel's *maximum* speed, and depends on the Motive Power used. Vessels with more than one Motive Power use the Air Speed generated by the Motive Power in use. Air Speed is not always at maximum; Effective Air Speed varies with flying conditions (see "Riding the Winds," p. 21).

Air speeds of magically powered skyships are equal to the spell's speed: *fly* gives an Air Speed of 360 (120). Air Speeds of skyships enchanted with *animate object* vary with the design.

Skyships measure movement in *yards* and *miles*. An Air Speed of 360 (120) gives a normal daily movement of 360 miles and an encounter speed of 120 yards per round. (This works out to roughly 25 mph and assumes skyships do *not* fly at maximum speed 24 hours each day; see "Traveling," p. 21.)

**Metric Conversions:** Metric users can simply call a yard a meter. Those wishing more accuracy can call a yard a meter, then subtract 10%. Multiply the daily movement by 1.6 to convert miles to kilometers; a skyship with Air Speed 360 (120) could travel 576 kilometers a day.



# Building a Skyship

Before the construction process can begin, the designer must know the ship's size, shape, and capabilities. The enchanter must also have all the spell components necessary for casting the form spells necessary. And, if the ship is to be built by a player character, the DM™ must have approved her design.

The enchanter must construct and enchant the frame, section by section. A section is the product of one *form* spell—*woodform*, *stoneform*, and so on. Each section must be enchanted separately with any spell effect which will apply to the vessel as a whole, then fitted and joined to neighboring sections. See *Fantasy Engineering* for non-magical engineering rules.

When the ship's frame is built, the ship's accoutrements must be added. These include masts and sails for wind-driven vessels; ailerons, wings, and rudders for lift or maneuvering; magical or mundane weapons; and any extra doodads the skyship design calls for (*create climate* controlled cabins, for example).

DMs wishing to design a skyship without regard to cost or time—a long-abandoned skyship for the PCs to stumble upon, for instance—may simply ignore this chapter and select whatever features they want the ship to have from the previous chapter.

The following procedures assume the vessel's frame is to be enchanted to provide Lift or Motive Power. This enchantment must be done at the same time that the ship is constructed. Interior decks can be constructed normally, of mundane materials, and may be built after the vessel's magical frame is finished.

For strictly mechanical vessels, see "Fantasy Engineering," p. 18.

## Enchanting the Frame

Before the spellcaster begins the enchantment process in earnest, the DM should review all the procedures for enchanting magical items on pp. 250–255 of the D&D® Rules Cyclopedia. The DM should also determine how much of each

rare component the enchantments for each section will consume: repeated failures may cause unlucky enchanters to run out.

Sloppy magic-users willing to cut corners sometimes use a *permanence* spell instead of a third *form* spell. The ship's owner will learn the folly of this practice when a magic-user casts *dispel magic* on the ship.

As each section of a skyship's frame is created, it must also be enchanted with each spell effect that will apply to the frame as a whole. For example, this includes any enchantments to provide Lift or Motive Power, such as *float in air* or *fly*; applications of the *shield* spell to improve Armor Class, and any special spell effects designed to affect the vessel and those aboard, such as *climate*. A section may be enchanted with additional effects applying only to itself; a *light* spell for headlights, etc. (See "Enhancing Enchantments," p. 15).

## Creating a Frame Section

Building a skyship's frame requires magic-users to cast *form* spells while engineers or other specialists with the appropriate knowledge of shipbuilding or architecture guide their efforts.

A vessel's frame includes any part vital to her structural integrity: in a ship-shaped vessel that includes the hull, keel, and top deck. The frame must be strong enough to withstand great stresses, yet light enough to avoid exceeding the vessel's Lift Capacity.

Well-built flying vessel frames must be crafted with at least three times as many *form* spells as their square footage indicates. The spellcaster must cast the *form* spell once to shape the section, at least once more to shape it exactly to specifications and to join it to neighboring sections, and again to lock its shape against further tampering with the *form* spells.

## Special Effects

It is possible for a spellcaster to devote five special effects solely in order to

lower the weight of each section created by 20%, resulting in a weightless frame. However, even a weightless frame must be enchanted with enough Lift Capacity and Motive Power to move the ship's crew, passengers, and cargo. Besides, five special effects multiply the time to enchant and cost in material components by 32—not counting costs for failed enchantments!

Whichever special effect is applied, the Tonnage and Hull Points of each section are halved, although the material's Armor Class remains the same. Tonnage, Hull Points, and AC for the vessel as a whole remain the same, as building the frame will require double the number of sections per special effect.

Each special effect applied to the *form* spells cast to create the frame will greatly increase the costs and time taken in the enchantment process. One special effect doubles the number of sections that make up the frame, and each of those sections must be enchanted with any spells the designer wishes to apply to the ship's frame as a whole—such as *fly*, *float in air*, etc. Taking the probabilities of enchantment failure into account, the enchantment time and cost of material components will more than double with each special effect.

**Simplifying the Math:** You should apply any increases in Hull Points or decreases in weight to the frame as a whole, rather than calculating the changes for each section. This will simplify the math a little bit.

For example, two special effects devoted to decreasing weight will decrease the frame's Tonnage by 40% and require four times as many sections as normal (halved once for the first 20% decrease and again for the second 20% decrease). Adding a special effect such as a mirror-like finish on the frame's outside surfaces would then increase the number of sections eightfold.

Some special effects are more cost effective than others. Decreasing the weight of each *form* spell actually *decreases* Lift Capacity if Lift is provided by magical enchantments (which provide



Lift for the frame section +20% regardless of the section's weight). *Form* spell weight reduction is usually done on beast- or mechanically-powered vessels.

**For Example:** Jarita Maruti of Sayr Ulan builds the frame of a flying barge with *woodform* spells. She applies two special effects to each section of frame: a Hull Point increase of 20% and colors each section sky blue. This multiplies the number of sections she must create by four (to 48). The frame's Hull Points increase by 20% (to 173), and the wood is blue.

### Estimating Materials

Each application of a *form* spell creates one *section* of a skyship's frame. Most skyship frames require multiple sections. While the ship is being built, each section of the frame must be enchanted with every spell that will apply to the entire vessel—especially the enchantments to provide Lift or Motive Power—as well as with any magical offensive or defensive capabilities the frame itself has.

To estimate the number of *form* spells required, you'll need to apply a little geometry. Here are some guidelines.

Most wooden and stone hulls should be 1' thick. That allows for 1,000 square feet of hull per section—the cubic volume of material produced by a *woodform* or *stoneform* spell; it includes all struts, joists, ribs, and other supports necessary for the ship's structural integrity. Iron and steel hulls should be 2" thick, allowing for 500 square feet of hull per section.

A reminder about special effects: doubling the hull's thickness (as with a special effect), regardless of the hull material, doubles the number of sections required—and also doubles the vessel's Hull Points and Tonnage. Halving the hull's thickness halves the number of sections required, and halves Hull Points and Tonnage. Armor class remains the same in both cases. (See "Special Effects," pp. 10 and 12.)

**Ship-Shaped Vessels:** Most windriders are three to five times as long as their Beam and are roughly half as deep

as their Beam. The hull can be estimated as though the ship were half a cylinder, plus the square footage of her top deck:

$$[\text{Length} \times (\frac{1}{2}\text{Beam} \times 3.14)] + [\text{Length} \times \text{Beam}]$$

Galleons often have Depths greater than half their Beams. For them, estimate the hull area of the bottom of the ship, up to a height of half the Beam, as though it were half a cylinder. Then add the remaining sides and the top deck. The formula is then:

$$[\text{Length} \times (\frac{1}{2}\text{Beam} \times 3.14)] + .2 \times [\text{Length} \times (\text{Depth} - \frac{1}{2}\text{Beam})] + [\text{Length} \times \text{Beam}]$$

These formulas overestimate the area, allowing for crossbeams and other structural necessities.

**Odd-Shaped Vessels:** The surface areas of most shapes, no matter how odd, can usually be approximated by some combination of cylinders, half-cylinders, rectangles, and so forth. For a Roman chariot, for instance, the floor area can be estimated as a rectangle and its sides estimated as a half-cylinder (or a full cylinder if it's closed in the back).

Here are the formulas for calculating the surface areas of common shapes. As long as all your measurements are in feet, the result will be in square feet. Divide by 1,000 to determine the number of *woodform* or *stoneform* spells needed, or by 500 for *ironform* and *steelform* spells.

- **Circle:**  $3.14 \times r^2$ , where  $r$  is the radius.

- **Cone:**  $3.14 \times r \times l$ , where  $r$  is the radius of the base and  $l$  is the length of a line from the edge of the base to the apex of the cone.

- **Cylinder:**  $2 \times 3.14 \times r \times l$ , where  $r$  is the radius and  $l$  is the length or height.

- **Hex:**  $.866 \times d^2$ , where  $d$  is the diameter of the hex (measured from one face to the opposite face).

- **Rectangle:** Length × Width.

- **Sphere:**  $4 \times 3.14 \times r^2$ , where  $r$  is the radius.

- **Triangle:**  $\frac{1}{2}b \times h$  where  $b$  is the length of the base and  $h$  is the length of the altitude line, drawn perpendicularly from the base to the opposite vertex.

Don't get hung up on the exact area of a flying vessel's frame, or on the precise number of *form* spells required. Estimate it as closely as you can—then get on with the game!

**Mundane Frames:** If the DM allows spellcasters to enchant frames made *without* the use of *form* spells, it's best to estimate how many *form* spells would have been used. Use this figure to determine the cost and time to enchant the normal frame. The chance of success for each enchantment on a section of frame equivalent to the results of a *form* spell should be penalized by -20%. A failed enchantment doesn't mean that any part of the frame must be replaced, but the enchanter must spend money and time to try again.

### Success Rolls —

Both the enchanters and any other specialists involved in the construction process must make their success rolls in order for the skyship to be built properly.

**Engineers:** The specialist in charge of overseeing the construction must make

<b>Form Spell Results</b>				
<b>Spell</b>	<b>Tonnage</b>	<b>AC</b>	<b>Hull Points*</b>	
<i>clothform</i> (900 ft <sup>2</sup> )	1,250 cns	8	2**	
<i>woodform</i> (1,000 ft <sup>2</sup> , 1' thick)	25 tons	6	12	
<i>stoneform</i> (1,000 ft <sup>2</sup> , 1' thick)	75 tons	6	20	
<i>ironform</i> (500 ft <sup>2</sup> , 2" thick)	20 tons	2	6	
<i>steelform</i> (500 ft <sup>2</sup> , 2" thick)	20 tons	2	8	

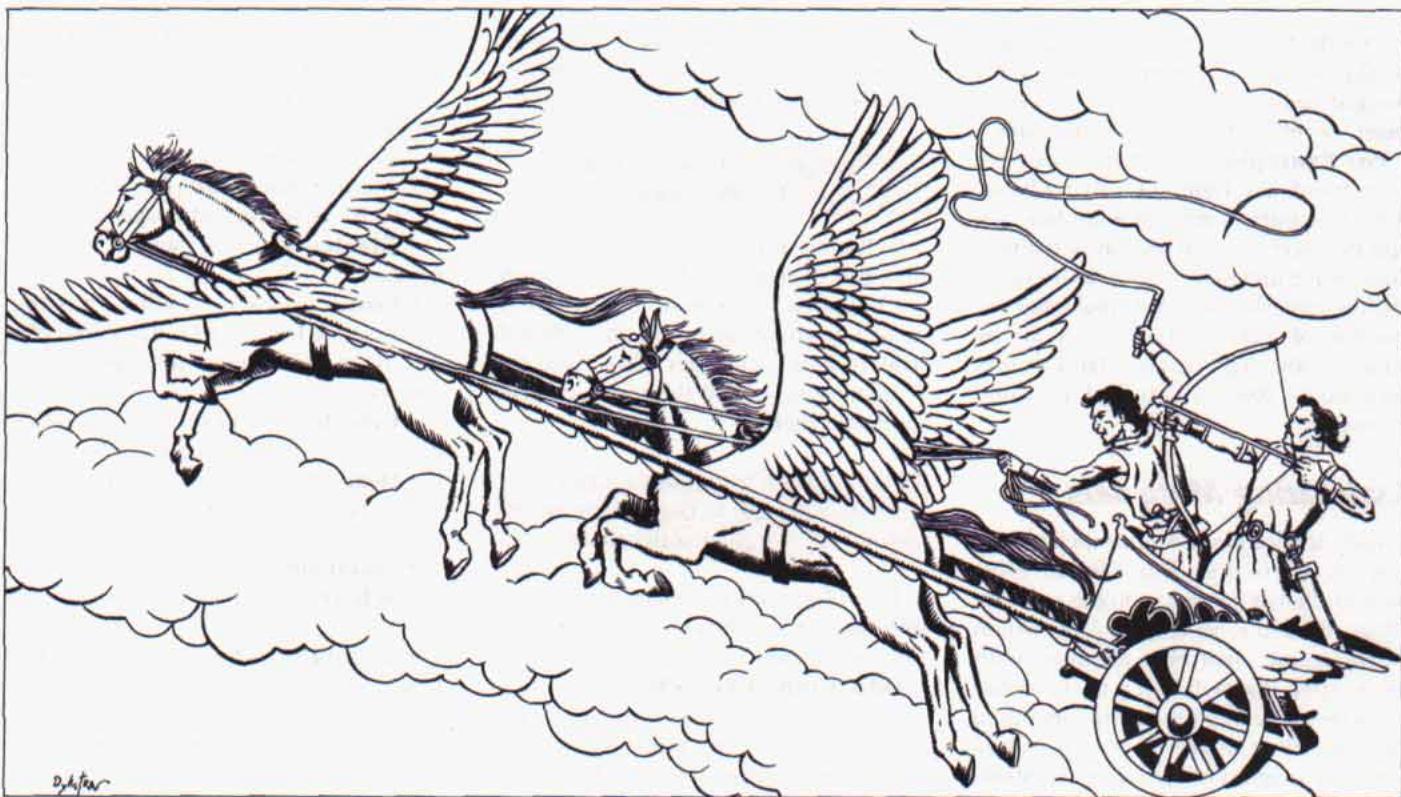
\*Multiply the number of frame segments by the number in this column to determine the ship's total Hull Points.

\*\*Keep track of sail hit points separately.





## Building a Skyship



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his Intelligence ability check (or appropriate skill roll) three times each day of construction. Three failures in one day indicate the supervising specialist has overlooked an engineering flaw or mistake in construction. Other specialists on the job may catch the mistake if they succeed with an Intelligence ability check or appropriate skill roll. The DM should make these construction success rolls, as flaws and problems may not be apparent until well in the future.

These success rolls are made in addition to the success rolls the spellcasters must make to successfully enchant each section of the ship.

**Fewer Rolls:** Optionally, the DM may decrease the engineer's success rolls to one per day. On very long projects, this can be dropped to once per week. However, with fewer success rolls required, any failure indicates some sort of problem has cropped up, or a flaw has been overlooked. The results are up to the DM, but a typical problem may add one

day to construction for every point by which the success roll was missed. Three failed success rolls in a row, regardless of the time interval, indicates a major flaw. Unless other participating engineers make their own success rolls (to be checked at the DM's discretion), the flaw will not become apparent until the skyship is finished and tested in flight. The results of the flaw are also up to the DM—the flaw could result in a +1 penalty to Armor Class, a reduction of normal Air Speed, or another similar frustrating but not necessarily lethal problem.

**Spellcasters:** A spellcaster's chance of successfully enchanting a flying vessel is calculated the same way as for any magical item: ]

$$[(\text{Int} + (\text{Lvl} \times 2)) - (3 \times \text{spell level})] = \%$$

The spellcaster must roll a chance for success for each spell on each frame section. (The chance of success may be

increased with the application of a *prepare enchantment* spell, see p. 52). Botching the enchantment means that the section must be replaced, but it doesn't affect any other section. It just means redoing that section, taking more time and, of course, more money.

**Optional:** Instead of rolling for each spell effect enchanted onto each frame section, the DM may allow spellcasters "free" success after the first frame section is successfully enchanted with all applicable spells. This reflects the spellcaster's learning experience—once he creates one section correctly, he has learned how to create and enchant any number of identical sections.

With this optional rule, the spellcaster rolls for success for each spell of the first section only, then rolls once more for the rest of the frame. Calculate this overall success roll based on the most difficult spell level involved, thus:

$$((\text{Int} + \text{Lvl}) \times 2) - (3 \times \text{highest spell level}) = \%$$



If the roll is successful, all other sections are enchanted without any failures. If the attempt fails,  $1d4 \times 10$  percent of the sections must be discarded and replaced. Thus, a roll of 3 on  $1d4$  requires replacement of 30% of the frame's sections. Replacing sections means creating and enchanting the first replacement—*checking for success* with each spell effect—and then checking for success again for any other replacements.

**Reminder:** The enchanter must be of at least 18th level to be able to enchant a huge magical item at all. Demihumans can enchant huge magical items only with the use of their clan relics (see p. 146 of the *Cyclopedia*). Elves who have reached 9th or 10th level may enchant small flying ships (5 tons or less) if the DM allows, see p. 3.

## Cost and Time to Enchant

**Costs:** The cost to enchant each section equals the total number of spell levels applied to the section  $\times$  3,000 gp. Include the initial *form* spell in this calculation to represent the materials needed to prepare the newly formed sections for further enchantments. (Subsequent *form* spells used to shape or lock each section do not add to this material cost.)

In Alphatia, enchantment components can be purchased from other magic-users. Don't forget to add these costs into the total. The DM may be generous, allowing this to be covered by the enchantment costs above, or stingy, requiring up to double the cost to purchase these rare components. Even if spell components are purchased, enchanting a flying vessel should require at least one adventure to acquire a rare component.

Don't forget to add the wages of any hired specialists or workers who help to build the skyship. See p.133 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia* for sample specialist salaries. Alphatian spellcasters are naturally more expensive than the run-of-the-mill hired mages listed there; they demand weekly wages of 500 gp per level. Hired workers get paid for every

day of work whether the enchantments succeed or not!

**Time:** Time to enchant each section is equal to one week, plus one day per every 1,000 gp spent. If the enchanter fails on any one enchantment, that section must be discarded and a new one created and enchanted to take its place. (See the previous page for an optional success rule.)

## Keeping Costs Down

Building a skyship is an extremely pricey proposition. Many builders try to cut costs by as much as they can. Cutting costs doesn't necessarily mean cutting features, though.

**Low-Level Spells:** Skyship designers concerned with cost effectiveness apply the lowest-level spells possible to gain the desired effects. Creating Lift with first-level *float in air* spells (see "Flying Magic," p. 51) costs half as much as using second-level *levitate* spells. Of course, the *levitate* spell provides vertical maneuverability while *float in air* requires ailerons or some other means of controlling altitude. But the savings in spellcasting costs often outweighs the increase in engineering and construction costs.

**Charges and Uses Per Day:** The normal process of enchanting skyships results in permanent effects with few limitations on their use. Enchancers can save time and money by limiting an enchantment's usefulness, either by requiring the expenditure of charges or by limiting the number of times each day the effect can be called upon.

Certain magical effects not needed all the time may have a number of charges. The following guidelines draw on the "Miscellaneous Magical Items" enchantment rules from the *Rules Cyclopedia*.

- The cost to enchant one frame section of a flying vessel with one charge of a spell effect is  $100\text{gp} \times \text{spell level}$ . Each subsequent charge adds  $100\text{gp} \times \text{spell level}$ . Reduce this to  $80\text{gp} \times \text{spell level}$  per charge if the effect is not rechargeable.

- Each section of a vessel's frame must be enchanted with the same number of

charges of the spell effect. The vessel as a whole then has access to the number of charges applied to one section—not to the total number of all charges on all sections.

- The cost to recharge an effect is the same as the initial enchantment cost, multiplied by the number of frame sections affected. Recharging is done to the vessel as a whole, rather than to each individual section. Of course, effects cannot be recharged with a greater number of charges than the original enchantment provided.

Limiting the number of uses of a spell effect within a given length of time also saves expense. Calculate the initial enchantment cost as  $1,000\text{ gp} \times \text{spell level}$  (rather than  $3,000\text{ gp}/\text{level}$ ). Add to this  $100\text{ gp} \times \text{spell level}$  for each use allowed per day.

If the effect is usable every week, reduce initial enchantment cost to  $800\text{gp} \times \text{spell level}$  (plus  $100\text{gp} \times \text{spell level}$  for each use allowed). Initial enchantment cost for a time period of one month is  $600\text{gp} \times \text{spell level}$ ; a time period of one year costs  $400\text{gp} \times \text{spell level}$ .

Each section of the vessel's frame must be enchanted with the same number of uses and identical time periods.

**Note:** Flying vessels cannot be enchanted with spell effects that have both a limited number of uses per time period and a set number of charges.

## Enhancing Enchantments (New Rule)

Once each section of the frame is enchanted with a particular effect, the spellcaster may increase the strength of that effect by enchanting the frame as a whole with further applications of the spell. This especially applies to the lifting capabilities of *float in air*, *levitate*, and *fly* effects, but the DM may allow enhancement of other spells as well.

**Cost:** Each application of a spell enhancement costs  $2,000\text{ gp} \times \text{spell level}$  times the number of sections in the frame. The DM may adjust this cost upward or require additional rare and expensive





## Building a Skyship

components. Enhancing an enchantment also requires a success roll. If the spell-caster fails, further enhancements of *any* spell type are impossible.

**Effect:** Enhancing Lift enchantments such as *float in air* increases the vessel's Lift Capacity by 20% of her Tonnage per application—or by 4,000 cns, whichever is more. *A vessel's flying enchantments must be enhanced in order for her to carry cargo or passengers; single enchantments of float in air or other lift enchantments provide only enough Lift for the vessel herself—and perhaps the crew.*

The results of enhancing other spell effects, if allowed, are up to the DM. Enhancing a vessel's magical Motive Power may improve Air Speed by 20% per enhancement, while enhancing a *shield* effect which improves the vessel's AC by -1 may gain a further -1 bonus for each enhancement.

**Limits:** No more than five enhancements of any effect are allowed. A vessel's Lift Capacity cannot be more than

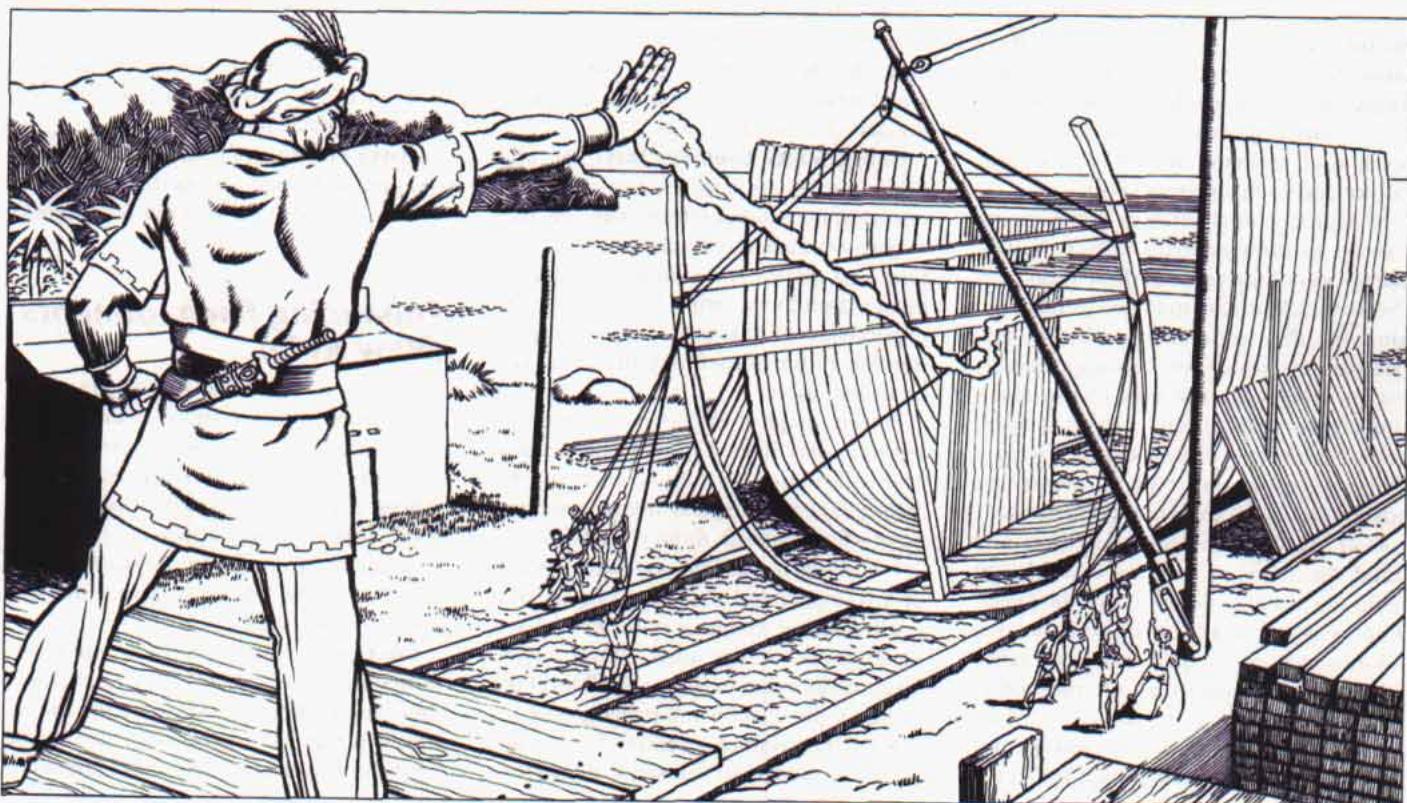
twice her Tonnage or 24,000 cns, whichever is greater. Enhanced movement enchantments cannot result in an Air Speed more than twice normal value. Bonuses to the vessel's chance to hit (if ramming or using other built in attack capabilities) or to her AC should be no greater than +/-5. Effect durations should not be extended more than five times the original duration. Spell effects with limited durations—a *baste* effect which lasts only three turns, for instance—may be doubled by one enhancement, tripled by two enhancements, and so on.

## The Quality Rating (Optional)

At the DM's option, flying vessels may have a quality rating, or QR, reflecting the amount of care and cost of materials which went into their design and construction. QR is expressed as a percentage, and may be used any time a ship gets into trouble.

Start with an average QR of 50%, then apply all appropriate modifiers below.

- Overseering engineering specialist has an Intelligence (or appropriate skill) of 13-15: +5% each.\*
- Specialist has an Intelligence (or appropriate skill) of 16-17: +10% each.\*
- Specialist has an Intelligence (or appropriate skill) of 18: +15% each.\*
- Overseering spellcaster is of level 27 or higher: +20%.
- Overseering spellcaster is 36th level: +25%.
- Assistant spellcaster is level 27 or higher: +10% each.\*
- Frame was created with a minimum of three *form* spells per section (to ensure proper shaping and locking it in place): +20%.
- Components for enchanting process are superior to those required: +5% to +25% (DM's choice, depending on nature of components).
- Overseering specialist failed his Intelligence ability check (or appropriate skill



roll) three times in one day: -25% each failure (unless discovered and corrected).

- Specialist failed two Intelligence ability checks (or appropriate skill roll) in one day: -5% each occurrence (unless discovered and corrected).

• Overseeing spellcaster cheats on spellcasting or enchantments: -25% to -75% (DM's choice, depending on nature of cheating).

• Assistant spellcaster cheats: -10% to -50%.

• Overseeing specialist cheats on design or construction: -25% to -75%.

• Components for enchanting process are inferior: -5% to -75% (DM's choice, depending on nature of components).

• Ship suffers 10% loss of hull points (through use, combat, or sabotage): -10% for each 10% reduction until repaired.

• Ship suffers failure of an enchantment (through damage, sabotage, poor spellcasting, or other reason): -5% to -75% (DM's choice, depending on nature of enchantment). Total loss of all enchant-

ments results in a QR of 0 until restored.

\*No more than three specialists or spellcasters may apply these bonuses on any one construction project.

Note that it *is* possible to have a QR greater than 100%.

**Using the Quality Rating:** When a skyship is riding out a storm, attempting to squeeze out just a little more Air Speed than she was designed to be able to give, or attempting difficult and hazardous maneuvers, the DM may roll d% against the vessel's Quality Rating. Apply any modifiers appropriate to the situation (-50% in hurricane-force winds, +20% for a successful Piloting skill, etc.). Rolling the modified Quality Rating or less on d% indicates the ship survives the attempt. Making the roll by 50% or more indicates the ship performed beautifully!

The DM decides the results of a failed QR roll. The ship may suffer the loss of hull points, failure of some of her enchantments, or a permanent lowering

of her Quality Rating. Other effects should be role-played—going out of control, capsizing, breaking up, sails ripping or masts snapping in the wind, etc.

## Summary

Here's a quick recap of the steps of building a skyship.

1. Design the skyship, determining all necessary spells.
2. Collect all spell components required.
3. Hire all laborers and experts required.
4. Create a section of the ship's frame.
5. Enchant the section with such spells as *fly*, *float in air*, etc., as it is created.
6. Repeat steps 5 and 6 until the ship's frame is built. (Each additional frame section is attached to the previous section as it is created.)
7. Add any enhanced enchantments to the completed frame.
8. Add any magical and mundane accoutrements to the skyship.
9. Fly!

## Nautical Glossary

**able** a ship that is seaworthy and fast  
**aft** toward the stern of the ship  
**alee** away from the wind (to leeward)  
**all hands** the whole crew  
**aloft** above the deck, usually in the rigging  
**amidship(s)** the boat's middle  
**aweight** an anchor being hauled up  
**ballast** weight below the waterline, either internal or externally, to the keel  
**barging** getting upwind of another boat to cut off the other boat's air  
**berth** a bed on board ship; also a mooring slot at a dock  
**boat** a small vessel, or one carried on a ship, as a lifeboat (all yachts and some smaller military vessels are boats)  
**bomb** a bad storm  
**bow** the front of a boat  
**bulkhead** a wall that separates cabins and is usually integral to the hull  
**captain** an employee in charge of a boat; an amateur in charge is the skipper  
**carried away** washed overboard

**cat's paw** a light puff of wind  
**chance** bad or heavy weather  
**chantry** song sung by a boat's crew as they work  
**close-hauled** sailing close to the wind  
**course** the boat's direction  
**deep six** to sink something  
**downwind** away from the direction from which the wind is blowing  
**drogue** an object dragged astern to slow the boat in heavy weather  
**freshen** an increase in the wind speed  
**furl** to roll up sails  
**galley** a ship's pantry and kitchen  
**gam** to tell sea stories  
**gangway** an opening in the gunwhale, or a ramp from a pier to a boat  
**grab rail/strap** a strap for hanging onto so you don't lose your balance  
**gunwhale** (pronounced gun' l) a railing around the deck  
**heave-to** to sail slowly enough that the boat doesn't need to be steered  
**in irons** headed directly into the wind; the boat cannot get the wind in her sails  
**jack** useful; handy

**jogging along** sailing slowly  
**leeward** (pronounced loo' ward) away from the wind  
**line** a rope  
**old man** the captain or skipper  
**overhaul** to pass another boat  
**pilot** a seaman who guides ships into and out of ports  
**port** the left-hand side of a boat  
**prow** the front of the boat  
**rigging** lines that control the sails  
**roll** the rocking of a boat  
**run to sail** with the wind astern  
**saloon** main cabin, if ship has no berths  
**scud** to run before a strong wind; ragged or broken clouds  
**sea breeze** a breeze blowing toward shore  
**seaman** a knowledgeable sailor  
**ship** the largest type of vessel; larger than a boat  
**skipper** amateur in charge of a boat  
**spindrift** sea spray  
**starboard** the right-hand side of a boat  
**tack** to change direction by turning the prow of the boat through the wind





## Fantasy Engineering

The concept of fantasy engineering—the skills required to build functional machines in the D&D® game world—was first introduced in PC2: *Top Ballista*. The rules were designed for skygnome characters, but are adapted here for non-gnome characters.

These rules may be used to craft devices from hand-held six-bolt repeating crossbows to wonderfully complex devices to tell time or irrigate fields. They may be combined with the skyship construction rules to create vessels combining fantasy engineering and magic to fly.

### The Skills

If you do not use general skills in your campaign, you may restrict fantasy engineering abilities to non-player character specialists, or allow Ability Checks against Intelligence or Wisdom with +4 penalties to the dice rolls.

#### Fantasy Physics (Wisdom)

This is the ability to design a device to carry out some relatively complex function based on a pseudo-technological theory. Fantasy Physics is the principle that if something looks as if it ought to work—even though its workings may not actually be entirely possible in the real world—chances are that it will work. Non-gnome characters may learn this skill with the DM's permission, but will have a permanent +1 penalty to their skill rolls.

#### Fantasy Engineering (Intelligence)

This is the practical complement to Fantasy Physics. While that skill covers theory and principles, Fantasy Engineering (also known as Machine Building) covers the practical skills necessary to create complex devices.

As with Fantasy Physics, the DM may allow non-gnome characters to possess this skill, but with a -1 penalty to all skill rolls.

### The Tools

No serious inventor should be without the following tools.

#### Drafter's Kit

This consists of parchment, pen and ink, charcoal writing sticks, compasses with which to draw circles of any size, rulers for measuring and drawing straight lines, metal templates with hexes and angles and squares and triangles cut out of them, a notebook in which to keep important design notes, and similar essential equipment. A proper drafter's kit costs about 50 gp and adds a -1 bonus to any Fantasy Physics skill check.

#### Meddling Box

Meddling boxes are essential; without a meddling box the inventor is at a +2 penalty to his Fantasy Engineering skill checks. A meddling box is a small box with various widgets, doodlies, twiddlers, doodads and thingummies—the kind of small items that are twiddled between the thumbs, chewed at one end, tucked behind one ear, and used to scratch the head and generally fidget with. Most meddling boxes have individually customized components. The average cost is 50 gp.

### Building Machines

Gnomes and other equally inventive characters can use Fantasy Physics and Fantasy Engineering to design and build all sorts of imaginative devices. Real-world designs that failed may be used to inspire Fantasy-Engineered designs that will work in the D&D® game world. (As examples, take a look at some of Leonardo da Vinci's sketches of pedal-powered flying machines, or some of the more bizarre attempts in the early days of airplane design.) Player characters (and NPCs hired to build something for PC employers) should follow the steps below when developing any new device.

### Planning the Design

The first step is to decide exactly what the machine is supposed to do. A machine may have more than one function, but it's best to stick to relatively simple purposes and designs.

The player (or DM, if the designer is an NPC) must come up with the basic principle to be used in the machine's design. This is the central idea behind the machine. This need not be a detailed nuts and bolts explanation, although adding eccentric details is encouraged. Keep Fantasy Physics in mind. The functional principle must appear reasonable, but the details don't matter.

The machine's essential function may be carried out by either pure technology, magic, or a mixture of the two. (This must be specified in the design stage.)

**Important Note:** If magic is to be part of the design, the inventor must be a spell-caster of at least ninth level! Otherwise, the machine will not work.

The machine's power source must also be specified. Here are some examples:

**Golem-Muscle:** One or more golems turn cranks to operate this device. Powerful, but space intensive and best for slow action.

**Pedal Transmission:** One or more gnomes (or other creatures) pump the pedals to make the device work. Cheap, but even gnomes get tired of pedaling.

**Spring-Load:** A large metal spring slowly unwinds, driving the device to which it is attached. Once completely unwound, it must be rewound to function again.

**Steam-Power:** This technology consists of heating water in an enclosed area in order to build up steam pressure, which drives machinery as it is released. Steam machines are heavy, hot, complicated, and usually require a minimum of four engineers to operate. Steam boilers have a tendency to explode.

**Wind-Cycle:** Bags, sails, or vanes catch the wind, rotate machinery and power the device. Speed and power of the effects depend upon wind speed.



**Entrapped Magical Energy:** Magical energy (or an energy creature such as a fire elemental) is entrapped in a storage device. Energy release powers the invention. However, trapped creatures may attempt to escape.

## Design Complexity and Time Required

Next, the DM needs to figure out how easy or difficult designing the device will be. The "Design Complexity Table" below lists a selection of modifiers that will affect the character's chance to design an invention that may be successfully constructed. Add up all applicable modifiers—these will apply to the character's Fantasy Physics skill check (see "Will it Work?" below).

The DM should determine the invention's innate complexity. This is as much a measure of the machine's potential impact on the campaign as it is actual complexity of design. Constructing a really useful, sizeable machine should be significantly harder than crafting something small and fairly conventional.

The DM should also determine which extenuating circumstances (if any) will affect the success of the design stage. These include distractions—anything that keeps the character from continuous work on the design or from sufficient concentration. Adventuring is an example of a distraction that should carry maximum penalties (a +4 to all Fantasy Physics skill checks, see "Will it Work?" below); developing a design in a rowdy tavern should bear minimal penalties (only +1 to Fantasy Engineering skill checks when attempting to follow the design).

Successful skill checks on appropriate general skills (Shipbuilding if designing a ship-shaped device; other Knowledge or Science skills as the DM judges appropriate) add bonuses to the character's Fantasy Physics skill checks. The DM may allow extenuating circumstances to modify the skill check. For example, having seen a similar device may add a -1 bonus to the skill check; examining such a device closely may add a -3 bonus; hav-

**Design Complexity Table**

Design Complexity	Skill Modifier	Time Required
Easy	-2	1d4 days
Simple	none	1d4+2 days
Tricky	+2	3d6 days
Difficult	+4	5d6 days
Very Difficult	+8	30 + 7d10 days

Extenuating Circumstances	Skill Modifier
No Fantasy Physics skill	+4
No Meddling Box	+2
Distractions	+1 to +4
Suitable Drafter's Kit	-1
Appropriate skills	-1/skill

ing a design the DM loves and *wants* in the campaign may add a -4 bonus to the Fantasy Physics skill check, and so on.

The "Time Required" column of the Design Complexity Table indicates the minimum number of days the character must spend working out the design. The DM may lengthen this time to take into account any interruptions or extenuating circumstances involved.

## Will It Work?

Once the player has worked out the new device's general design, the DM needs to decide whether or not to allow the device to function as designed. This is basically a common sense interpretation of the Fantasy Physics skill. If, given a healthy dose of imagination, it seems like the device might work, then it will! Otherwise, the DM should allow the player to check his character's Fantasy Physics skill. On a successful skill check, the DM should tell the player the design won't work, and why it won't work.

Even if the DM determines the design itself is sound (according to the way things work in the campaign, that is), it may not be possible to build the contraption with the materials and skills available. A few more Fantasy Physics skill checks are in order.

When the player first submits the device's design to the DM for approval,

the DM and the player should *each* roll a skill check against the inventing character's Fantasy Physics skill (or against Wisdom at a +4 penalty if the character does not have that skill).

The DM's roll indicates whether or not the design can be successfully turned into reality. If the DM's roll fails, any device built on the design submitted will fail. The nature of the failure is up to the DM, but should reflect how badly the skill check missed. On a natural roll of 20, for instance, the design won't work at all. If the skill check was missed by 1, the design might still work, but not as efficiently or effectively as planned—a vehicle might need more fuel or maintenance than originally planned, while an intricate time-keeping device might lose a second every day, and so on.

The player's roll indicates how accurately the character can assess his own design. If the player rolls a successful skill check for the character, the DM should point out potential flaws in the design, and allow the player to alter that design before construction begins.

## Building the Contraption

While a device's designer need not be the chief builder, he should be deeply involved in the device's construction. After all, no one else will be able to understand his designs as well as the inventor himself can!

Before the character can begin building his device, the DM must decide how many stages construction will involve. This depends on the scale and complexity of the project. If the project involves building a sizeable machine (such as the Oostdokian airship detailed on the accompanying card sheet), the DM should break construction down into a series of stages, each of which requires a separate successful Fantasy Engineering skill check. Further stages may be required for complex devices with intricate moving parts, many functions, or other complicating factors.

*Example:* An Oostdokian airship requires four separate construction stages:



## Fantasy Engineering

one to build the balloon itself; one to build the frame of the car suspended underneath; a third to add the floors and walls of the car's interior; and a fourth to add the magical stuff (Elementals, etc.).

At each stage of the construction process, the chief builder must make a Fantasy Engineering skill check (against Intelligence if the character doesn't have that skill). Add in all applicable modifiers from the "Fantasy Engineering Modifiers Table," below.

**Important Note:** If the design uses magical enchantments, the chief builder must be a spellcaster of ninth level or higher, and do the enchantment himself. Alternatively, a spellcaster of the appropriate level may be hired. In this case, penalize any enchantment success rolls by 10% if the spellcaster lacks either the Fantasy Physics or the Fantasy Engineering skill; penalize enchantment success rolls by 25% if he lacks both!

### Fantasy Engineering Modifiers Table

- +4 if the chief builder doesn't have the Fantasy Engineering skill
- +2 if the chief builder doesn't have the Fantasy Physics skill
- +2 if the chief builder did not design the machine himself
- +2 if the builders do not have appropriate Meddling Boxes to work with
- +2 (or worse) if hired laborers do not have the Fantasy Engineering skill (or other Science or engineering skills the DM deems appropriate)
- +4 if a spellcaster other than the chief builder or designer places necessary enchantments on the device
- +3 if this is a rush job being completed faster in half the time it should take
- Half the modifier for design complexity from the **Design Complexity Table** (-1 for easy, 0 for simple, etc.)
- -1 for each level of the chief builder's Fantasy Engineering skill above the basic (-1 for Fantasy Engineering +1, -2 for Fantasy Engineering +2, etc.)

### Time and Construction Costs

Each stage of construction takes  $1d20+10$  man days as a base figure. (One character or NPC working for one day is a man day.) The DM can add to this base figure if rare components are needed, the work is intricate, the project is particularly large, and so on. A rush job can halve this time, but adds a +3 penalty to the Fantasy Engineering skill checks required at each stage of construction.

Each construction stage requires money as well. Figure in the wages of any builders hired, the cost of employing a spellcaster (if needed), the cost of raw materials (determined by the DM), the cost of any specialists called in during the design or construction process, and lots of little extras which add up. Some designs will use much more expensive components than others. A steam boiler heated by a fire elemental might require insulation made from a red dragon's hide, for instance. In general, the DM should come up with a construction cost which will hurt the character's resources without bankrupting him. Requiring the character to set out on an adventure to acquire enough money or rare materials needed isn't a bad idea, either.

If the device requires any enchantments, the time to enchant is added to the construction time; cost to enchant is added to the normal construction costs. See p. 15 for enchantment times and costs for huge magical items, or p. 252 of the *Rules Cyclopedia* for other magical items' enchantment times and costs.

### What if it Doesn't Work?

If any of the Fantasy Physics or Fantasy Engineering skill checks fail, the completed device will not work as designed. The DM may allow the designer and chief builder additional skill checks against Fantasy Physics or Fantasy Engineering to realize the problem—*after* the construction is completed. On successful skill checks, the builders can try again

with the same design. Otherwise, they'll need to come up with a new design.

The DM can take advantage of any failed skill checks to add time and money to that necessary to build the device. Failed skill checks are also useful excuses to limit a powerful design's translation into a functioning device. The DM should take care not to let powerful devices built with Fantasy Physics and Fantasy Engineering skills come to dominate the campaign.

Here are some suggestions for non-fatal problems and inefficiencies which may be introduced to a device with any failed skill checks in the design or construction stages.

- Some sort of magical fuel must be supplied—the steam, muscle, wind, or whatever source of power was chosen for the original design doesn't provide as much power as was expected.
- Operating time is limited (4 hours or less per day), then the machine overheats or starts to shake apart or whatever.
- There is a 1% chance per day that some small part falls off the machine, with a 50% chance that this halves operation time and requires maintenance. If the problem is neglected, the next part to fall off disables the machine.
- Certain conditions (heat or cold, humidity too high or too low, certain terrain conditions, etc.) render the machine inoperable.
- The machine operates as planned, but at only half strength or half speed—halve the Lift Capacity if a flying vessel, halve the Air Speed or Move (in the case of a land or sea vehicle), halve damage inflicted if it's an automatic ramming device or other weapon; etc.

### Machines and the Campaign

Machines and contraptions can be great fun for players to dream up and characters to build. They can also become adventure hooks, as eager inventors seek out rare materials essential for the realization of their dreams and designs.





## Riding the Winds

Solinari Astriadan of Alphatia spun the pilot wheel of his flying yacht, the *Enchanting*, in a desperate maneuver to avoid the oncoming fireball as his co-pilot slammed the aileron control levers into the "Dive" position. The tortured cry of rigging stretched to the breaking point was echoed by a crew member wrenched from his perch atop the foremast's yardarm as the large schooner heeled over into a spiraling dive. As the man dangled from his safety line, other crew raced up the ratlines to douse the flames caused by the near miss. Sails and rigging torn loose in the maneuver whipped dangerously.

Solinari struggled to regain control of his skyship. The Captain, Solinari's copilot, shouted orders to the crew through the megaphone and frantically pilled at control levers and knobs.

After a dizzying and terrifying drop and a close call with the treetops, pilots and crew managed to stabilize the ship. The *Enchanting* climbed back into the clouds to meet the foe; two pirate sloops bent on adding the flying schooner to their small fleet.

"Take the wheel and keep her on an even keel," Solinari bellowed over the flapping sails and the shouts of the crew. He stalked out of the pilothouse, grabbing his *staff of wizardry*, as his co-pilot rushed to obey. "Terry," he shouted, "get in there and do anything Captain Liam tells you to do. And mind you don't pull the wrong lever!"

The cabinboy nodded, wide-eyed, and ran into the pilothouse as the mage strode to the *Enchanting*'s bow. "Throw a fireball at me, will they?" he muttered. "We'll soon see who has the better magics." The ship shuddered and pitched in the unpredictable wind currents as Solinari raised his staff...

Once a flying vessel is constructed, it's time to take her out for a test flight. DMs may wish to familiarize themselves with the following sections of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*: "Water Travel By Ship," p. 90; "Evasion at Sea," p. 100; "Aerial Combat," p. 114; and "Naval Combat," p. 115.

## Traveling

Flying vessels base their long-distance movement on the first figure listed for their Air Speed. This figure is an average speed, and assumes the vessel will not fly at top speed in a straight line—weather, wind currents, crew fatigue and other factors all delay a vessel's progress.

In general, a flying ship can move a number of miles per day equal to  $\frac{1}{3}$  her normal Air Speed. Thus, a vessel with an Air Speed of 360 (120) can cover 240 miles each day. Halve this figure for any vessel that travels only during the day (or only during the night). Reduce it to  $\frac{1}{4}$  for any vessel that relies on muscle power—unless there are two shifts of muscle power available, in which case daily travel is only halved. Four shifts of muscle power will allow the full daily movement, but the increased Tonnage usually offsets any increase in speed.

## Takeoff and Landing

It's important to know what a skyship's landing capabilities are. Some skyships are designed to land in water—especially those modelled after seagoing vessels, complete with keel. Others may land on level ground. A few can land on the ground or in water. Most require level terrain (whether that's firm ground or calm seas). Some skyships aren't designed to land at all. Once launched from their construction cradles, they're grounded only in emergencies.

Takeoff and landing is automatically successful under normal circumstances. The DM may require a Piloting skill check in situations which make lifting off hazardous or difficult—enemy fire, a damaged vessel, high winds, and so on. Failed Piloting skill checks may result in loss of control, crashing, and similar problems. (See "Losing and Regaining Control," p. 24, and "Crashing," p. 25). In a crash, the vessel may suffer damage. Base the amount of damage on the speed of the vessel and whether it hits the ground or another solid object.

## Full Speed Ahead!

It's possible to push a flying vessel beyond her normal daily movement. This is similar to forcing a march (see the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*, p. 121), and carries some risks. Each day a captain tries to squeeze more distance out of his vessel than her Air Speed allows, roll 1d4 and consult the Forced Flight Table.

**Forced Flight Table**

**Vessel Die Roll**

Quality	1	2	3	4
Poor	F	F&M	F&S	M
Average	F	F&M	F&S	N
Good	F	F	F&M	F&S
Excellent	F	F	F	F&M

**F:** Forced flight successful: add 50% to day's movement.

**M:** Vessel's crew or flying monsters are moderately fatigued (if muscle-powered) or vessel is moderately damaged.\*

**S:** Crew is seriously fatigued, or vessel is seriously damaged.

**N:** No increase in day's movement, but no fatigue or damage.

\*If crew is already moderately fatigued, this result increases fatigue to serious; moderate vessel damage becomes serious.

In the chart, "Vessel Quality" is determined by the DM, based on his estimate of how well the vessel was designed and constructed, and how well-trained and fit the crew or flying monster teams are. If the optional Quality Rating rules are used, any vessel with a QR of 1–50 rates as "Poor;" 51–70 rates as "Average;" 71–90 rates as "Good," and 91+ is "Excellent."

All results are cumulative; "F&S" indicates that the forced flight is successful, but that the vessel's Motive Power (if muscle-powered) is seriously fatigued afterward, or that the vessel has sustained serious damage from the strain.

Fatigue results in a loss of muscle-powered Air Speed until the fatigued crew recovers. Moderate fatigue reduces Air Speed by  $\frac{1}{3}$ ; serious fatigue reduces it by  $\frac{1}{2}$ . The





## Riding the Winds



crew remains fatigued for 1d4 days. With complete rest, seriously fatigued crew become moderately fatigued in 1d4 days, and they recover their strength after another 1d4 days of rest.

Damage may be in the form of lost Hull Points or a temporary lowering of the vessel's Quality Rating. Serious damage may mean lost of Hull Points and a breakdown of the Motive Power (sails and masts ripped off the deck, temporary malfunction of magical engine, etc.).

### Slower Air Speeds

Skyships with Tonnages (including cargo and passengers) up to their Lift Capacity can move at their maximum Air Speed. For each increase in Tonnage equal to 20% of the vessel's Lift Capacity, decrease her speed by 10%. A vessel carrying twice her normal Lift Capacity travels at half speed. Vessels with Tonnages greater than twice Lift Capacity can't fly.

Vessels may lose Lift Capacity through spell failure, the death of one or more of their flying creatures, other damage, or lower air pressure at higher altitudes. For every 10,000' in altitude (round down), decrease a vessel's Lift Capacity by 5%. This effect ceases in the Void beyond the Skyshield (see "Worlds Beyond," p. 30).

Any change to Lift Capacity may affect a ship's Air Speed and whether she can stay aloft. At Tonnage double her current Lift Capacity, a vessel begins a One-Maneuver Dive). At Tonnage triple her current Lift Capacity, she begins a Two-Maneuver Dive. At Tonnage four times her current Lift Capacity, she crash dives.

#### Tonnage/

Lift Capacity Ratio	Maximum Air Speed
up to 100%	100%
120%	90%
140%	80%
160%	70%
180%	60%
200%	50%

Always round up when determining the percentage of a vessel's Lift Capacity filled by her current Tonnage.

### Long-Distance Travel and Rest

Crew and flying monsters must rest one full day for every six days they spend traveling or suffer penalties (see the D&D® Rules Cyclopedia, p. 89). Passengers and crew members who do not supply or add to the vessel's Motive Power do not suffer these penalties.

### Aerial Combat —

You need to know both a skyship's Maneuvering Factor and her Air Speed to conduct aerial combat. Remember that outdoor movement is *always* calculated in yards (or meters).

Movement during aerial encounters is kept track of with maneuvers. A maneuver is a change in direction or altitude.



During each round each vessel must also move forward at least half her Length—round up to the nearest 10 yards.

You can keep track of changed directions during combat with hex paper. Draw the combatants' flight paths on the hex paper, using a scale of one hex to 10 yards. (The hex paper on p. 299 of the *Cyclopedia* is perfect for this.) If you have a lot of table space, use 1-inch hexes and miniatures or cardboard cutouts to represent the vessels. In 25mm scale, each 1-inch hex represents 2 yards.

The DM (and each player) should also record the combatants' Altitude, Movement Spent (per round), and Dive/Climb Rate (if applicable) during each round. This record doesn't need to include horizontal maneuvers—the flight paths on the hex paper does that.

## Effective Air Speed

A vessel's Air Speed is recorded just like a Move Score: 360 (120), for instance. The number in parentheses represents the maximum number of yards per round the vessel may move when engaged in an encounter.

Most vessels can fly slower than their maximum speed. Other factors may also affect the vessel's Air Speed: wind and weather conditions (especially for wind-driven ships); the percentage of the vessel's Lift Capacity in use; the vessel's condition (p. 25); and so on.

## Maneuvers

A maneuver is a change in direction by 30 or 60 degrees. On hex paper, 30° changes a skyship's direction from the center of one hex face to an adjacent vertex or vice versa; 60° changes a skyship's direction from the center of one hex face to the center of an adjacent hex face, or from one vertex to an adjacent vertex. Changes in altitude, both climbing and diving, are also maneuvers, see below.

Continuing an old maneuver is not the same as starting a new maneuver. Beginning a climb counts as a maneuver—con-

tinuing the climb in the next round does not. Leveling off to horizontal flight does count as a new maneuver.

The first maneuver performed in any round is "free"—if the pilot is conscious and the vessel or monster is responsive, the maneuver automatically succeeds. The following situations require a skill check against Piloting or another skill:

- This is the second or subsequent maneuver by that vessel or monster in the same round. (This only pertains to monsters or vessels with more than one maneuver per round.)
- The pilot, who controls the vessel's maneuvers, lost one tenth of his hit point total (or the vessel lost one tenth of her hull points) in the last round.
- The pilot has taken one half of his total hit points or the vessel has lost one half of her total hull points.
- Any flying or flightless creatures providing Motive Power have taken half their total hit points, or half or more of the creatures were damaged last round.

Any circumstance the DM thinks would make maneuvering difficult—heavy rains or winds, poor visibility, etc.—should also require a skill check. With the optional Quality Rating rules (see p. 16), the DM may substitute a roll against the vessel's QR (if the ship has been damaged), or require a Quality Rating check as well as a piloting check (if the ship is likely to be damaged by the maneuver).

## Climbing

Vessels controlled by ailerons may climb by trading in some of their forward air speed for an increase in altitude. There are three climbing maneuvers: the One-Maneuver Climb, the Two-Maneuver Climb, and the Three-Maneuver Climb.

**One-Maneuver Climb:** This is a smooth, gradual climb at about a 30° angle. Break the vessel's Air Speed into units of 20'. (Any remainder is lost, unless used for an additional maneuver in the same round.) Each unit yields 10 yards of forward movement and a five-yard altitude gain. Decide how many Air Speed units will be used in the climb.

**Two-Maneuver Climb:** This is a 45° climb. It requires two maneuvers to commence. Vessels unable to maneuver twice in the same round must first begin a One-Maneuver Climb then enter a Two-Maneuver Climb during the next maneuver.) Break Air Speed into units of 30'. (Again, any remainder is lost unless used for a later maneuver this round.) Each unit yields 10 yards of forward movement and a 10-yard altitude gain. Decide how many Air Speed units will be used in the climb.

**Three-Maneuver Climb:** This is a very steep, difficult maneuver. Entering a Three-Maneuver Climb takes three maneuvers. Break Air Speed into units of 50'. (Any remainder is lost.) Each unit yields 10 yards of forward movement and 20 yards of altitude. Decide how many Air Speed units will be used in the climb.

Not all vessels can climb this steeply, especially if they rely on ailerons rather than magic to gain altitude. With the Quality Rating rules, Three-Maneuver Climbs require a Quality Rating check.

One maneuver is used up whenever a ship changes from one type of climb or dive to another. Going from horizontal movement to a one-maneuver climb takes one maneuver; entering a two-maneuver climb from a one-maneuver climb costs one maneuver; dropping from a three-maneuver climb to a one-maneuver climb takes two maneuvers.

**Vertical Climb:** Many ships take four maneuvers to go from horizontal to vertical flight. Lighter-than-air craft and vessels enchanted with *levitate* or *fly* spells can actually fly straight up. They trade their forward movement for equal altitude gain. Depending on how altitude is controlled, the DM may rule that it takes one maneuver for such ships to enter a vertical climb—two if they try to begin to climb from a dive (see below). This can be hard on the creatures on board, requiring Constitution checks (-2 to all attack rolls and saving throws for 1d4 turns) or Dexterity checks to keep their footing.

**Magical Altitude Control:** Vessels with magical altitude control (*levitate*, *fly*, etc.) may have more control over altitude and forward movement than ves-





## Riding the Winds

sels controlled by ailerons or other means. Rather than limiting them to one-, two-, or three-maneuver climbs, you may simply divide their Air Speed into units of 10'. Decide how many units will be used for forward motion and how many will be used for altitude gain. The cost in maneuvers depends on how the vessel is designed to control altitude. As a rule of thumb, you may require one maneuver for each 30° or fewer change in vertical direction. Some vessels may be able to change direction instantaneously (using only one maneuver to go from horizontal movement to vertical), but the DM may require Constitution checks to see if everyone on board makes the shift as easily!

**High Altitudes:** Remember that Lift Capacity decreases by 5% for every full 10,000' of altitude. Also, breathing becomes difficult at 15,000' and higher. Characters are at -2 to hit and damage rolls and on all saving throws and skill rolls. Above 20,000' altitude, air-breathing characters and creatures suffocate in 1d4 turns. *Air masks* and other *create air* enchantments negate these effects.

## Diving

There are four diving maneuvers, each of which matches a climbing maneuver.

**One-Maneuver Dive:** This is a gentle 30° dive. For each 10 yards she flies forward, the vessel dives 5 yards downward. This dive is done at half Air Speed.

**Two-Maneuver Dive:** This is a 45°

dive. With each ten yards of forward movement, the vessel also loses 10 yards of altitude. This Dive Rate is equal to the vessel's Air Speed.

**Three-Maneuver Dive:** In a Three-Maneuver Dive, the vessel loses 20 yards of altitude for every 10 yards she moves forward. This Dive Rate is equal to twice the vessel's Air Speed.

**Crash Dive:** When doing a crash dive, the vessel plummets at twice her Air Speed plus 480 yards per round (terminal velocity on Mystara). Forward movement is negligible. If the vessel's lifting capabilities have failed or the craft is out of control, the rate of falling is just 480 yards per round—do not add the vessel's Air Speed.

**Magical Flight:** Vessels controlling their altitude magically may dive the same way they climb—using one maneuver for each 30° (or less) change in vertical direction and allotting each 10-yard unit of Air Speed to either forward or downward movement. These vessels cannot exceed their Air Speed in a dive unless they disengage their flying magic! Depending on how they control altitude, such ships may require only one maneuver to go into a vertical dive (normally requiring four maneuvers) from level flight. Such quick changes of direction are hard on crew and passengers!

Note that Motive Power controls how vessels enchanted with *float in air* spells climb. These vessels cannot exceed their Air Speed in a dive; the *float in air* effect cancels gravity's pull.

## Losing and Regaining Control

Pilots may lose control of their vessels when they fail a Piloting skill check or when the craft is damaged or misses a Quality Rating check. The vessel may also go out of control if the flying monsters are spooked, when the ship suffers a *dispel magic* attack, and so on.

The exact effects of lost control depend on the circumstances and on the amount by which the pilot missed his skill check (or the vessel missed her Quality Rating check). For example, a pilot with a Piloting skill of 14 who rolls a 19 has missed his skill check by 5. (For a vessel's Quality Rating roll, find the number of points the vessel missed the check by, and divide by 5.) Compare the results to the Loss of Control Table, counting a 20 (or a QR check of 95 or higher) as 9+.

If a pilot loses control, he may regain control with a successful Piloting skill check. A pilot can make one check at the very end of the round in which he lost control; thereafter, he may make a number of checks per round equal to the vessel's Maneuvering Factor (or once per round if her MF is 1 or less). These Piloting checks are at a penalty equal to the number by which the pilot missed the roll in the first place. In other words, if he had a skill roll of 14 but rolled a 16, he missed by 2—and he can't regain control until he makes that skill check by 2! If he

Falling Damage Chart

Distance Fallen	Time Taken	Damage Taken
3 yds	<1 second	1d6
6 yds	<1 second	2d6
10 yds	1 second	3d6
15 yds	<2 seconds	4d6
20 yds	<2 seconds	5d6
25 yds	<2 seconds	5d6
30 yds	2 seconds	6d6
40–60 yds	3 seconds	9d6
70–100 yds	4 seconds	13d6
110–150 yds	5 seconds	16d6
160–225 yds	6 seconds	19d6
230+ yds	6+ seconds	20d6

### Loss of Control Table

#### Missed

#### Roll by Results

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1–2 | Vessel continues current maneuver (vessel ignores last maneuver or flying monsters ignore the last command).   |
| 3–4 | Vessel performs an accidental maneuver (DM's choice).  |
| 5–6 | Vessel stalls into a Two-Maneuver Dive until control regained, or dives at maximum Air Speed if magical Lift is still in effect. If flying monsters provide Motive Power they are uncontrollable for 1–3 rounds.                         |
| 7–8 | Vessel stalls into an uncontrolled Crash Dive until control regained or crash results; or dives at maximum Air Speed if magical Lift is still in effect. Flying monsters stall into a Crash Dive and are uncontrollable for 2–12 rounds. |
| 9+  | Pilot and/or crew hurled free (or knocked unconscious for 1–6 turns), or flying monsters providing Motive Power tear free of their harness.  |



doesn't regain control in time, the vessel may crash into the ground.

## Crashing

The "Falling Damage Chart" lists the damage a vessel takes from an unchecked plummet—a Crash Dive—into the ground. One-Maneuver Dives do no damage; Two-Maneuver Dives do 2d6 damage to the vessel or flying monsters and 1d6 damage to every passenger or rider; Three-Maneuver Dives do 3d6 damage to the vessel or flying monsters and 2d6 damage to every passenger or rider.

After six seconds of free fall, falling characters and vessels reach *terminal velocity*. This is the speed at which air pressure counteracts gravity: an object falling at its terminal velocity can't fall any faster. So 20d6 is the maximum falling damage regardless of how high you are.

For every 1,440' (480 yards) of altitude, it takes a full round of falling to crash.

## Damage to a Vessel

Different attacks do differing amounts of damage to a skyship. Normal missile and melee weapons cannot damage a ship's hull. However, these attacks may harm a ship's crew or flying monsters, and they do 1 point of damage to a vessel's sails or lighter-than-air balloons for every 5 points of damage dealt.

Siege weapons (catapults and the like) do normal damage to flying vessels. Most magical attacks—and attacks by man-sized flying monsters—do only 1 hull point of damage for every 5 points of damage dealt. Likewise, large flying monsters inflict 1 point of hull damage for every 5 points of damage they deal.

Damage to a vessel's hull may jeopardize her magical enchantments, and damaged vessels are difficult to pilot:

- Each loss of 10% of a vessel's total Hull Points reduces her Air Speed by 10%. Each 10% loss of a wind-driven vessel's sails' hit points also reduces Air Speed by 10%.
- When the vessel first loses 25% of her hull points, roll 1d20. If the result is

20, the vessel loses one Maneuvering Factor (to a minimum of MF  $\frac{1}{10}$ ; see chart, p. 11). Loss of 25% of the vessel's total hull points requires an extra Piloting check for any Two- or Three-Maneuver Climb in a single round. If the vessel uses magical Lift, any *enhancements* to the vessel's Lift Capacity fail—Lift Capacity is reduced to the vessel's Tonnage, with no extra Lift for cargo. This is likely to reduce the vessel's Air Speed.

If the vessel, under the weight of crew, passengers, and cargo, weighs twice her current Lift Capacity or more, she begins to fall. Other frame enchantments begin to operate at half value or unreliably, reducing Air Speed further if Motive Power is magical.

- When the vessel loses 50% of her hull points, roll a d20; if the result is 18–20, the vessel loses one MF (to a minimum of MF  $\frac{1}{10}$ ). Losing 50% of the hull points prohibits Three-Maneuver Climbs. Two-Maneuver Climbs require three successful Piloting checks. Magical hull enchantments that provide Lift fail and the vessel begins a Crash Dive. (The vessel may retain minimal steering.) Other frame enchantments may also fail.

- Loss of 75% of the vessel's hull points requires a Piloting check every round, (assuming it's not already in a Crash Dive) at a -4 penalty to the pilot's skill. If successful, the vessel stays on an even keel but cannot climb. If failed, the craft loses altitude in an unstoppable One-Maneuver Dive. At this point, the ship automatically loses one MF (to a minimum of MF  $\frac{1}{10}$ ).

- Loss of 90% of the vessel's hull points causes what's left of the craft to begin at least a Two-Maneuver Dive (even with non-magical Lift). The pilot must make a successful Piloting skill check to make any direction changes. The craft's MF drops to  $\frac{1}{10}$ .

- When a ship loses 100% of her hull points, she breaks up and her fragments fall to the ground.

**Optional Rule:** With the optional Quality Rating rules, a successful QR check at each stage lets the vessel perform as though she has lost the number

of hull points of the *previous* stage. A vessel that makes a QR check when she first loses 25% of her hull points is not subject to enchantment failure or extra Piloting checks. When she loses 50% of her hull points, she must make a Quality Rating check again. Success indicates the vessel performs as though she had lost only 25% of her hull points (even if she missed the previous Quality Rating check). Failure means the vessel suffers the penalties of losing 50% of her hull points (bypassing the 25% loss penalties if the previous Quality Rating check was successful). Quality Rating checks do not negate lost Air Speed due to damage.

## Ramming

See the *Rules Cyclopedia*, p. 115, for rules on naval combat. The Ramming, Grappling and Boarding, and Repairs rules apply well to skyships. Ships greater than 100 tons ram as large galleys.

## Magical Attacks

Most magical attacks do only 1 point of hull damage for every 5 points of normal damage. The attack may have other effects, however.

**Fireball and Other Magical Flame Attacks:** Wooden- and cloth-framed vessels are susceptible to fire unless they have been protected against it. When a *fireball* or similar magical attack hits, roll d% and compare the result to the total number of hit points damage the attack did (before dividing by five). If the d% roll is greater than the number of hit points of damage, the vessel's frame does not catch fire. If the roll fails, the hull catches fire, taking 1d4 Hull Points per round until the fire is put out.

**Dispel Magic:** A *dispel magic* spell cannot permanently affect a magical item, but it can cause a vessel's enchantments to fail temporarily. The spell affects a 20'×20'×20' area. Several spellcasters may coordinate their efforts to blanket the entire vessel with simultaneous *dispel magic* spells. If any part of the vessel's



## Riding the Winds

frame remains outside the spell's effect, the *dispel magic* doesn't work.

If the spell effects encompass the vessel's entire frame, the spell works. The chance of failure is normal—5% per level of difference between the spellcasters and the original enchanter. (Use the lowest level if multiple spellcasters are involved.) Check the *dispel* against each different type of spell the vessel has.

Permanent enchantments only go down for 1d10 rounds; all other enchantments are completely dispelled.

If a vessel's Motive Power goes down, she must switch to an unaffected Motive Power (if one is available) or stop moving. (At DM's option, the ship may coast for a while.) If a vessel's magical Lift goes down, the vessel begins a Crash Dive and continues to fall at maximum velocity until the magical Lift returns. The ship may crash unless secondary Lift (such as flying monsters) is available.

**Other Magical Attacks:** DMs may need to use some imagination (mixed with common sense) to determine the effects of other magical attacks on a flying vessel. For instance, a clerical *barrier* spell cast suddenly in a wooden skyship's path can be devastating. The spell's whirling hammers can destroy the results of a *woodform* spell; a *barrier* spell will do 5 hull points of damage for every 5 normal points of damage.

The druidic *turn wood* spell could force a wooden-hulled skyship from her course, perhaps pushing her into the ground (at 10 yards per round, not enough to do much damage) and pinning her there for a while.

## Evasion and Pursuit

Flying craft may also evade one another. This is usually done by flying into a cloud, around some obstruction (such as a mountain), or positioning the vessel between the pursuing vessel and the sun (effectively becoming invisible).

To determine a vessel's chance to evade, consult the Skyship Evasion Table.

Add 25% to the evader's chance of evasion if visibility is poor (fog, clouds, rain,

**Skyship Evasion Table**

Evading Ship's Speed (yards per round)	Chance of Evasion
Faster than pursuer	80%
0–30 slower	50%
31–60 slower	40%
61–90 slower	35%
91–120 slower	25%
121+ slower	10%

dark, etc.). DMs may determine modifiers for other conditions (*invisibility*, etc.).

If the evasion is successful, the pursuer loses sight of her prey and cannot find it again or attack it that day.

If the evasion is not successful, consider that the encounter begins with the pursuer at a distance of 300 yards on a clear day. At the DM's discretion, the pursuer may start closer if visibility is poor.

If the pursuer's speed is up to 30 yards per round greater than the evader's speed, the pursuer closes in at a rate of 10 yards per round. Superior sailing or piloting can allow a slower vessel to close in on a faster one.

If the difference in Air Speeds is greater than 30 yards per round, the pursuer closes in at her normal movement rate.

**Optional Rule:** If the DM is using the optional general skills rules, the two pilots may compete with their Piloting skills. If the evading ship's pilot rolls his Piloting skill better, he evades pursuit; if the pursuer rolls his skill better, he is able to close at the above rates.

## Wind and Weather (Optional)

DMs may wish to keep track of weather effects during a voyage.

**Step 1. Determine Weather.** Roll 2d6 when the journey starts; compare to the Weather Effects Table on the next page.

Vessels with Motive Powers other than wind are affected only on a roll of 10 or more; in weather milder than High Winds ignore the effects of wind and weather. For any flying vessels using wind as a primary or secondary Motive Power, continue with the following steps.

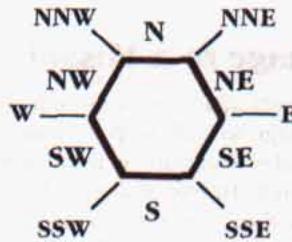
### Step 2. Determine Wind Direction.

Choose a prevailing wind direction or roll 1d12. The wind is coming from the direction listed:

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 = North       | 7 = South        |
| 2 = North by NE | 8 = South by SW  |
| 3 = Northeast   | 9 = Southwest    |
| 4 = East        | 10 = West        |
| 5 = Southeast   | 11 = Northwest   |
| 6 = South by SE | 12 = North by NW |

### Step 3. Determine Vessel's Heading.

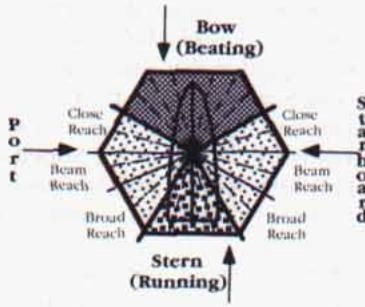
A vessel's general heading will be one of the twelve compass directions listed above. Except during combat situations, ignore minor variations in the vessel's direction of travel. Simply find the most direct route between the ship's departure and destination points, and see which hex face or vertex the ship must pass through to head toward her destination.



### Step 4. Determine the weather side.

The "weather side" is the side of the ship the wind is striking. This may be the bow, port (left), starboard (right), or stern. Determine the weather side by comparing the current wind direction

#### Weather Sides



with the ship's direction of travel. (Doodling on a piece of hex paper may help.) A ship is "running before the wind" if the stern is the weather side; "reaching" if the wind hits port or starboard; and "beating" if heading into the wind (see diagram).

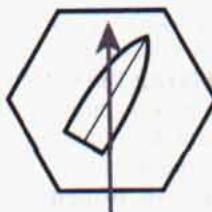
The weather side affects a wind-driven ship's Air Speed in combat and when calculating distance traveled daily. Adjust a wind-driven ship's Air Speed according to the reach and the wind strength (see the Weather Effects Table).

- Running or Beam Reaching:** Windriders fly at their normal Air Speed when running before the wind or on a beam reach (with the wind coming at roughly right angles to the axis of the ship).

- Broad Reaching:** Air Speed is increased by one-third normal when on a broad reach—the action of the wind actually produces more motive force when coming in off the stern quarter rather than from directly behind.

- Close Reaching:** Ships sailing on a close reach can move only at one-third of their normal Air Speed.

- Beating into the Wind:** Wind-driven skyships must *tack* to fly against the wind. They do this by sailing as close to the wind as possible (on a close reach), alternating their reaches from starboard to port. For example, a windrider head-



ing NNE with wind from the South is running before the wind, and can travel at her normal Air Speed. If she were heading NE with the same South wind, she would be broad reaching; Air Speed would increase by  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

### Weather Changes

Obviously, weather changes now and then. After you have determined the current weather conditions and wind direction, roll 1d8 to find out how soon these conditions may change.

#### Roll Check for changes in:

1	4 hours
2	12 hours
3	1 day
4	2 days
5	3 days
6	4 days
7	5 days
8	6 days

**Changes in Wind Direction:** To check for a change in wind direction, roll 1d8. On a 7 or 8, the wind remains the same. On 1 through 6, the wind shifts that many hex faces left or right. To determine direction, roll 1d8 again. Even, the wind moves clockwise; odd, it moves counterclockwise. This method can determine wind directions at differing altitudes as well—roll for each 1,200' (400 yards) change in altitude.

**Changes in Weather Condition:** When it's time to check for a change in weather condition, roll 1d6. A 1 shifts the current weather two notches up the scale (see next page). A 2 shifts it one notch up. A 3 or 4 indicates no change; a 5 shifts it down the scale one notch, and a 6 shifts it down two. For example, a roll of 6 would turn normal winds into high winds; a roll of 2 would change an extreme light breeze into no wind at all.

**Weather Effects Table (Wind-driven Skyships)**

Roll (2d6)	Weather	Effect/Notes	Missile Fire Penalties
2	No wind	Becalmed; no wind-driven movement possible.	0
3	Extreme light breeze	Wind-driven movement reduced to $\frac{1}{3}$ normal regardless of wind direction.	0
4	Light breeze	Movement reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ normal.	0
5	Moderate breeze	Movement reduced to $\frac{2}{3}$ normal.	0
6-8	Normal winds	Normal movement.	-1
9	Strong breeze	Movement increased by $\frac{1}{3}$ normal*	-3
10	High winds	Wind-driven movement increased by $\frac{1}{2}$ normal*; other Motive Power movement reduced to $\frac{1}{3}$ normal.	-5
11	Extreme high winds	Wind-driven movement doubled*; other Motive Power movement reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ normal. 50% chance* vessel suffers 2d8 hull points damage.	-7
12	Storm	Vessels must seek shelter or ride out the storm. Travel is possible only in the current wind direction. Wind-driven movement tripled, other Motive Power movement $\frac{1}{2}$ normal. 50% chance** vessel suffers 4d8 hull points damage.	no missile fire

\*Decrease by same amount if beating into the wind or close reaching.  
\*\*The DM may substitute a Quality Rating check.



## Riding the Winds

### Aerial Encounters —

See pp. 91–92 of the *Rules Cyclopedia* for wilderness (and aerial) encounter rules. When an encounter is indicated, roll d% and compare it to the table.

**Aerial Encounters Table**

d%	Result
01–25	Flyer*
26–40	Dragon*
41–50	Giant
51–60	Other Flying Vessel
61–75	Accident on Board
76–85	Unexpected Storm
86–90	Tornado or Whirlwind
91–95	Tubular Breach or Vortigern Vortex
96–00	Unusual Event

- Roll on the appropriate subtable, p. 97 in the *Cyclopedia*.

**Giant:** The giant(s) encountered may be a Cloud Giant (60% chance) or a Storm Giant (40%). This may be an encounter

with the giants' lair—a castle in the clouds, on a mountaintop, etc.

**Other Flying Vessel:** Possibilities include air pirates, enemy vessels, a flying merchantman, other adventurers, a ghost ship, and so on.

**Accident on Board:** Possibilities include a man overboard, an injury due to a rope or spar breaking, fire, discovering the supplies on board have spoiled, or any other mishap the DM cares to inflict upon the characters.

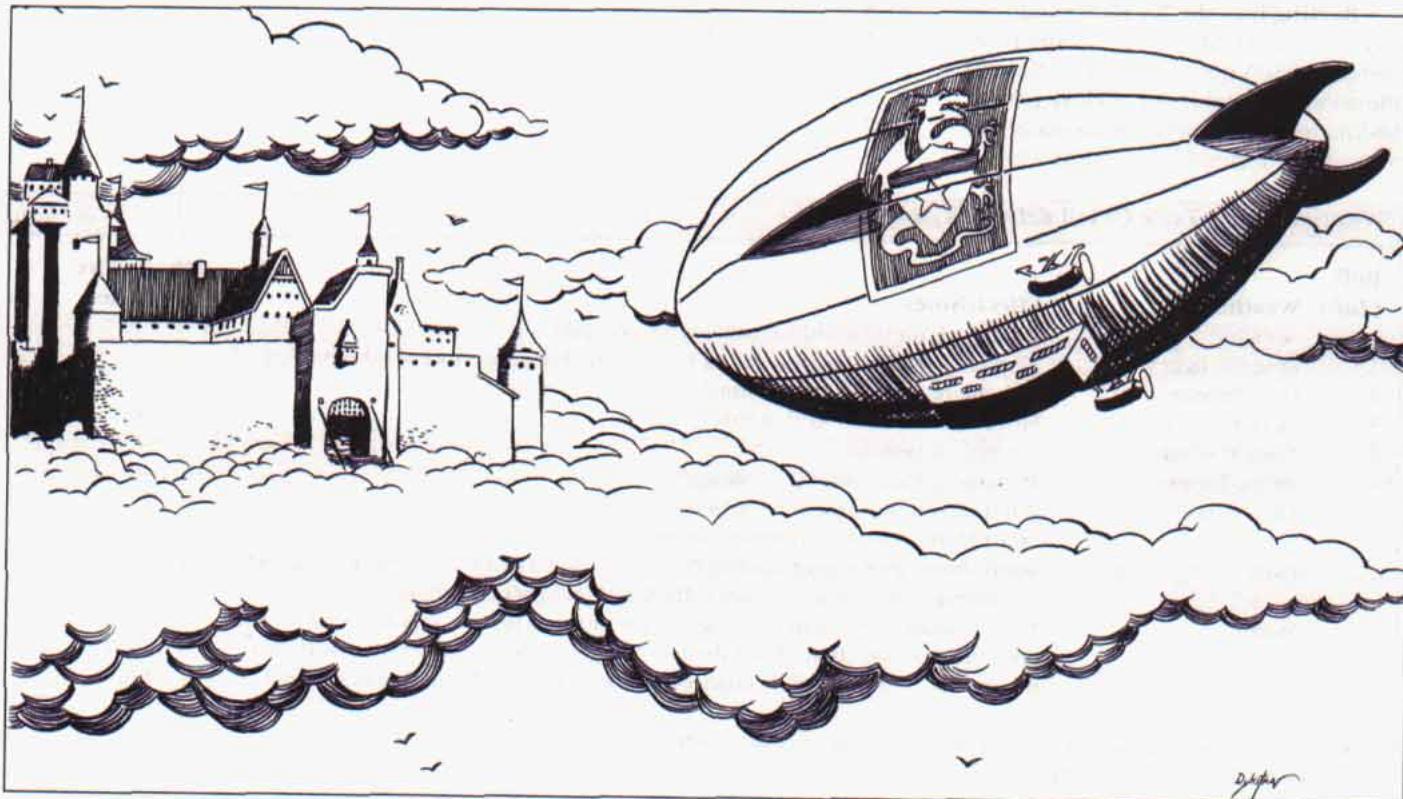
**Unexpected Storm:** See the Weather Effects Table on the previous page for the results of expected storms. Unexpected storms rise up suddenly, without warning, and are far more dangerous. This encounter may call for a Quality Rating check (if those rules are used), or an attempt to outrun the storm (as per the *Cyclopedia*, p. 90).

**Tornado or Whirlwind:** Vessels may attempt to evade a whirlwind. Each round the vessel is within the whirlwind, roll for the wind's attack (as a 16 HD monster)

against the vessel's AC. If the attack succeeds, the whirlwind does 1d8 points of hull damage. Anyone on the outside of the ship must save vs. death ray or be swept overboard. Every other creature takes 2d8 points of damage, halved if they are secured to an immobile part of the ship: everyone is shaken up a bit!

**Tubular Breach or Vortigern Vortex:** A tubular breach is a vertical column of anti-gravity; a vortex is a whirling funnel of winds racing up and out through a tear in the planet's Skyshield. These phenomena may be used to penetrate the Skyshield. See "Worlds Beyond," pp. 30, for more information.

**Unusual Event:** This encounter occurs when someone on board notices something unusual on the ground (or ocean) beneath the vessel. The nature of the occurrence is up to the DM; the Wilderness Encounters Table on p. 95 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia* may help. The event should be interesting enough for the captain to decide to investigate.



## Skyship Repairs —

Damaged skyships may be repaired—given time, a safe berth, and a sufficiently powerful spellcaster.

**Emergency Repairs:** A ship's crew may repair up to half the damage the ship has suffered. Five or more crewmen must be assigned to repair duty for repairs to be effective. (DMs may alter this number according to the vessel's size and the amount of damage sustained.) Appropriate raw materials (wood for wooden-framed vessels, etc.) must also be available.

A crew can repair one point of hull or sail damage per turn of work. These makeshift repairs temporarily restore lost Air Speed, but fall apart in 6d6 days. Crew cannot repair any enchantments that failed due to hull damage.

Crews trying to repair a skyship's frame during flight (which *is* possible) must make frequent Dexterity Ability checks to avoid falling off the ship or suffering accidents.

**Permanent Repairs:** Permanent repairs to a skyship's frame require a safe and stable berth, lots of time, and possibly some rare material components for redoing failed enchantments. They also require a spellcaster able to cast *form* spells to repair damage to the frame, and an enchanter who can reapply the frame's enchantments.

**Repairing Enchantments:** Enchantments that failed due to hull damage may be repaired by reapplying the enchantment effects. This may be done to the vessel as a whole—as with enhancements, p. 15—rather than to individual sections. If the vessel lost less than 50% of her hull points, one enhancement of each failed spell effect restores that effect for the entire vessel. Loss of 50% or more of the vessel's hull points requires two enhancements of each failed spell effect. Cost and time to perform these repairs are the same as enhancing enchantments during the construction process.

**Repairing Accoutrements:** Repairs to masts, decks, etc. are left up to the DM.

## Modifying Skyships (Optional)

DMs may allow skyship enchanters to modify their pride and joy after initial construction is completed. Once he has the resources, time, and money for the modification, an enchanter may replace the old *float in air* enchantments on his private yacht with *fly* enchantments.

Be aware that allowing modifications to magical creations after construction may prove dangerous to your campaign. If a magic-user can add an enchantment to his skyship, why not to his favorite *staff of wizardry*, or to a friend's *sword +3*? Here are some guidelines for limiting potential abuses of this optional rule.

**Cost and Time to Enchant:** Adding an enchantment to a completed skyship's frame costs *twice as much* in materials and time as initially enchanting the same effect during construction. The new enchantment must be added to each frame section, with normal chances of success applying. On any failed enchantment, the entire section must be replaced. This involves extracting it from the frame (grounding the vessel until fixed!) and reconstructing the section with all enchantments.

**Spellcaster Level:** The spellcaster trying to modify an existing magical item (including skyships) must be of a level equal to or greater than the original enchanter (compare to the *biggest* level if multiple enchanters were involved). If the spellcaster did not originally enchant the item at its creation, penalize the chance of success by -20%.

**Enhancements:** Enhancing existing enchantments is easier than adding completely new enchantments. See p. 15 for enhancement procedures and capabilities. Double cost and time to enhance. Normal enhancement limits (five per spell effect) still apply.

**DUNGEON MASTER™ Privilege:** DMs may disallow any new enchantments they feel uncomfortable with, or impose limits on the time allowed between construction and any modification.

## Machine Repairs —

Repairing a machine built with the Fantasy Engineering skill (see p. 18) requires a successful roll on the Fantasy Physics skill (to understand the machine's workings) *and* a successful roll on the Fantasy Engineering skill (to make the repairs). These rolls are at a +4 penalty if the repairer is not also the designer or original engineer. The DM assigns skill modifiers based on the complexity of the needed repairs (as per the Design Complexity Table, p. 19). Figure time to repair from the same table, using *hours* rather than days. Cost of repairs and necessary materials are up to the DM.

## Modifying Machines (Optional)

Designers of fantasy-engineered machines often can't leave well enough alone. They love to tinker with their designs, adding features here and there or improving capabilities. For example, the designer of a one-man pedal-powered flying machine may tinker with it after every flight, gradually increasing Lift Capacity, Air Speed, or maneuverability. (Had a little trouble making a tight turn last flight out? Add a rudder to the tail!)

As with skyship modifications, this rule is optional. There isn't quite so much room for abuse as there is with allowing modifications of magical items, but there may be a bit of record-keeping involved.

Modifications to a machine require the same Fantasy Engineering skills and procedures as the initial design and construction did. The DM determines the modification's Design Complexity (see p. 19). Time and cost to perform the modification are *doubled*. If the design requires magical enchantments, a qualified spellcaster must be available. All Fantasy Physics and Fantasy Engineering skill rolls are at a +4 penalty if the tinkerer is not also the original designer or engineer. If the modification fails, the DM may rule the machine is damaged or impaired in some way!





## **Worlds Beyond**

### **The Skyshield —**

Mystara's Skyshield is a bubble of transparent energy that holds the planet's atmosphere in and makes it difficult for objects to attain outer space. Small objects (with Tonnages up to 1 ton) can penetrate it with little difficulty. Most flying ships capable of reaching the Skyshield—at an altitude of 80,000'—are slowly deflected when they get close. There are ways for determined adventurers to penetrate the Skyshield, however (see below).

Reentering the atmosphere is much easier than leaving. Ships can break through the Skyshield with little difficulty. They fall rapidly to an altitude of 20,000', then slow to normal Air Speed.

### **Vortigern's Vortex**

The Skyshield occasionally suffers a temporary rip or tear. This may be caused by the passage of objects (meteorites and skyships, as examples) or by natural but unexplained fluctuations in the Skyshield's strength. Whenever a tear occurs, atmosphere escapes into the Void with incredible force. The stream of air creates a freak tornado, known as a Vortigern Vortex (named after the Alphatian wizard who first studied the phenomenon), a whirlhole, or a ripstorm.

These vortices are easy to distinguish from real tornadoes. In clear skies, they appear as shimmering, dancing funnels extending upward as far as the eye can see—all the way to the Skyshield. They rapidly suck any clouds directly beneath the tear into a ferociously whirling spiral.

If a pilot is crazy enough to sail right into one of these vortices, skilled enough to keep his craft pointed in the direction of the whirling wind, and has a ship sturdy enough to withstand the wind's battering force, he and his ship will be able to penetrate the Skyshield from within the tornado. (Frequent and difficult Piloting skill checks and Quality Rating checks are required.)

Rips in the Skyshield are temporary and not dangerous—except to objects caught in the whirling winds. The Skyshield repairs itself, "healing" 100 square feet of tear (a 10'x10' hole) per round. The largest vortex reported was the result of a hole 300' in diameter; it lasted a little more than an hour.

### **Tubular Breaches**

A tubular breach is a reversal of gravity that causes billowing funnels of clouds to rise toward the Skyshield. (An anomaly in Mystara's gravity field causes these dangerous turbulences.) Tubular breaches are temporary, vary greatly in strength, and occur only at very high altitudes (20,000' and above). (A tubular breach was observed once at the peak of a very high mountain in Glantri. Although relatively weak, it picked up rocks and gravel that showered a nearby monastery when the breach ended.)

A tubular breach can be used as a door to space. First the adventurers must find a breach, usually by watching the upper layers of clouds. Their ship must then enter the breach while performing a barrel roll—a perilous maneuver requiring a crack pilot. (This is a good time to call for an optional Quality Rating check as well one or more Piloting skill checks.)

If the breach is long enough to penetrate the Skyshield, the ship reaches space safely. If not, the breach flings the ship out into the upper reaches of the atmosphere, and the ship begins a crash dive. With a successful Piloting skill check (and an optional Quality Rating check as well), the pilot can regain control at 20,000'. Further Piloting skill checks may be attempted each round if the ship continues in a crash dive. See "Riding the Winds," p. 21.

Of course, all sailors and equipment must be properly secured to survive passage through a tubular breach. Few heavy warships or cargo vessels can perform a barrel roll, and no ship with a Quality Rating less than 75% can safely perform this maneuver into a reverse gravity field.

### **Other Routes Into Space**

There is a persistent rumor that very large flying monsters, such as dragons, are capable of reaching space. Hooking a vessel to one or more of these creatures just might do the trick. Once in space, the creatures are usually freed, and the ship must maneuver under her own power. Monsters used for Motive Power in space must be protected from the harmful effects of the environment.

Ships may also be enchanted with *reverse gravity* to carry them above the maximum altitude allowed by their Lift Capacity.

Would-be space explorers may be brave enough to use magic to create an artificial hole in the Skyshield—causing a ripstorm in the process. A *disintegrate* spell will create a 10x10' tear in the Skyshield. Other damaging spells such as *fireball* or *lightning bolt* will create a 100 square foot hole for every 40 points of damage inflicted in a single turn.

Other magical means through the Skyshield include traveling ethereally, teleporting across the barrier, or wishing the ship onto the other side.

### **Space Perils —**

Two primary dangers face travelers in the Void—extreme cold and lack of air. A well-designed ship with an airtight hull helps protect against these dangers. Enchantments that provide resistance to cold and a fresh supply of breathable air are essential for any extended travel in space. Ships equipped with *create atmosphere* and *climate* enchantments are especially suited to travel through the airless Void between worlds.

### **Suffocation**

Air-breathing creatures caught in space without adequate air supplies may suffocate. In the absolute airlessness of the Void, characters may die much more quickly than they would in the thin upper reaches of an atmosphere. A character can hold his breath for a number of



rounds equal to his Constitution score—half that if exerting himself (see the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*, p. 90). After that, he must make a Constitution check each round or suffocate. The first check is against his normal Constitution score; each subsequent one is rolled with a cumulative +1 penalty to the die roll.

A character who has suffocated can recover if air and medical attention are supplied within a number of rounds equal to  $\frac{1}{2}$  his Constitution score.

Neutral gravity (a type of cosmic glue—see next page) and friction work to counteract the physical effects of the lack of air pressure in the Void. There is no danger of explosive decompression in the D&D® game universe.

## Freezing

Although the Void between D&D game worlds is not at absolute zero, it is colder than an arctic glacier in the middle of a long winter night. Characters exposed to the cold for more than one turn must make a Constitution check each subsequent turn or suffer 1d6 points of cold damage. Heavy winter clothing adds a -1 bonus to the roll. The *resist cold* spell adds a -2 bonus to the roll, and decreases any damage suffered that turn by 1. Heated environments—suits, ships, etc.—can negate these cold effects.

**Optional Rules:** DMs may opt to take solar rays into account. In this case, any character remaining in direct sunlight for more than one turn will burn instead of freeze. The required Constitution check and damage sustained remain the same. Heavy winter clothing adds a -1 bonus to the roll (as with freezing), but the *resist fire* spell is needed for additional protection. With this optional rule, characters may avoid damage by moving between sunlit and shady spots each turn, alternately heating and cooling themselves.

DMs may opt to have ships affected by these extremes of temperature as well. Wooden and metal hulls not protected with *resist cold* and *resist fire* enchantments (or other means of protection)

must make a Quality Rating check each turn or suffer 1d6 hull points of damage.

## Gravity

Gravity works differently in the D&D game than it does in our own universe. Although planets, moons, and asteroids exert gravity in proportion to their mass, objects smaller than 20,000 cu (1 ton) exert no attraction to other objects. Therefore, smaller objects are always attracted to larger objects.

In the D&D game universe, the direction of gravitational attraction depends on the shape of the object. Gravity on a roughly spherical body is directed toward the center of the body. If the object is not significantly curved, it has a gravity plane. Unless they have their own propulsion, things that fall off a gravitational object continue falling in a straight line through space until they strike something.

**Gravity Planes:** A gravity plane has two sides: a positive side that pulls objects down toward the gravity plane, and a negative side which repulses objects away from the gravity plane. Thus, everything goes "down"; see the diagram on the next page.

To understand how this works, imagine an object floating in a pool of water. The surface of the water shows the position of the gravity plane in relation to the object. The positive gravity field lies above the surface of the water; the negative gravity field lies below the water.

Since objects with gravity planes are in space, where there is no "up" or "down," the gravity planes of different objects are often oriented in different directions and may even change as the objects rotate or revolve. Gravitational objects coming within range of larger gravitational objects will reorient their own gravity planes to parallel that of the larger object—sometimes violently.

**Gravity Spheres:** A roughly spherical object's gravitational field extends in a sphere whose radius is roughly 10x the distance from the object's center to its surface. Thus, the gravitational field of a ship 200' long would extend 1000' from

the ship's center. The gravitational field of a spherical planet with a radius of 3,000 extends 30,000 miles from the planet's center. The larger the object, the farther the field extends. The gravitational field of Mystara, a hollow world, extends only 6,000 miles, although the planet's diameter is 6,190 miles.

Spherical objects (whose gravitational fields are positive all around) attract one another with such force that collision is unavoidable once their gravitational fields meet. Such collisions create a single object with wildly fluctuating gravitational fields. Once the new object's shape stabilizes, its new gravitational field does too—in whatever orientation the new shape demands.

## Odd Examples of Gravity

Planets and other celestial bodies most commonly appear as spheres, disks, and cylinders. Built objects that take to space can be any shape, but they must be well balanced or their gravity plane may suddenly shift. The gravity fields of built objects perform according to their shape.

**Ships:** Ships have gravity planes, not gravity spheres. A space-going skyship has to be balanced, just like a normal seafaring vessel, or it will list so badly that her hapless crew would have to walk on the bulkheads to remain upright.

Air can easily be trapped within a ship's hull, as long as the hull is airtight. However, the air outside the ship slowly flows downward into space. One good way of keeping air around the ship—other than making the ship look like an ungainly tub—is having each crew member on deck wear an *air mask*. Or the ship herself could be enchanted to create and maintain her own air supply with the *create atmosphere* spell. The addition of *climate* enchantments wouldn't be a bad idea, either (see p. 52).

Any hole in the ship's hull would be a catastrophe, since the air on the ship would escape into space. On a poorly balanced ship, the gravity plane may suddenly shift (a failed Quality Rating check might indicate this), causing the crew and



## Worlds Beyond

atmosphere to fall off into space (see diagram D4 below).

**Disk-shaped World:** A diskworld "floats" flat on one side, with its gravity plane right across its thickness. Flat worlds must be slightly concave or have walls or mountains around their edges in order to retain atmospheres. (Skyshields help as well.) Air currents and atmospheric pressure keep the bulk of the air circulating from the edges down toward the center, then up from the center and back toward the edges (see diagram D2, below). Some disk worlds rotate as they revolve around their suns, giving them day and night cycles, but some face always toward or away from their suns. Some also spin like phonograph records, producing spiral cloud patterns and winds of up to hurricane strength.

**Planetoid Shard:** A shard (see diagram D3) is a roughly conical section that broke away from a spherical planet during a collision with another world or another planetary disaster. These strange

planetoids are often found among asteroid clusters of debris from the original world. The sharp edge of a shard's cone points downward, and part of the planet's surface remains on top of the shard. The point of the cone must be made of a material dense enough to keep the world in position.

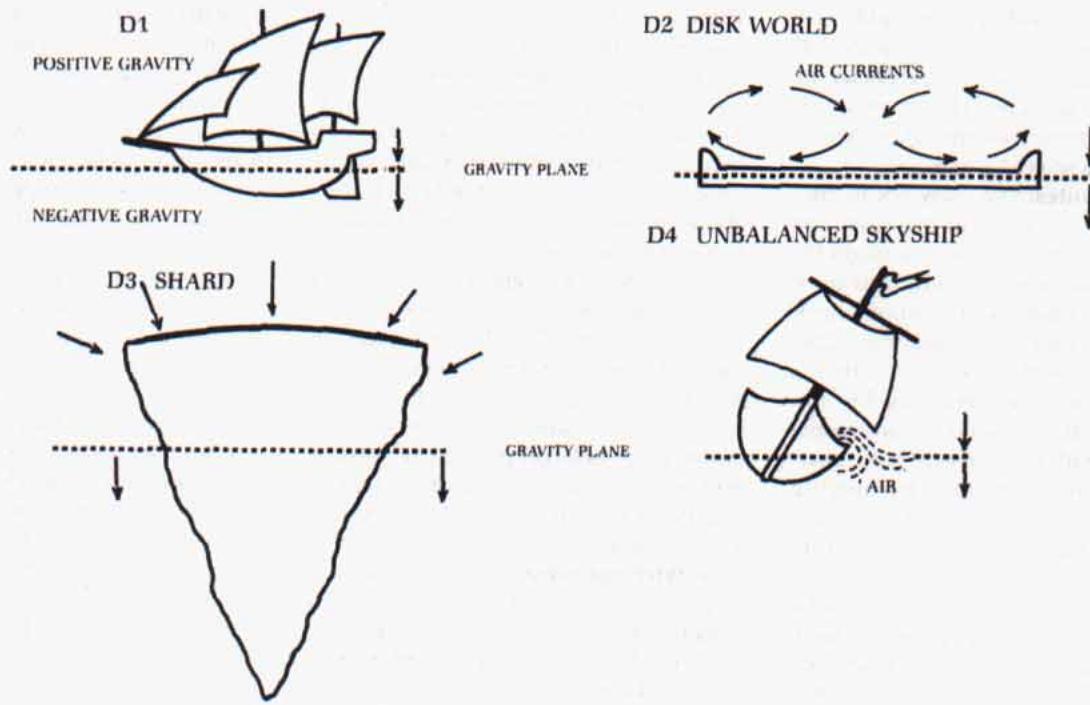
The shard's gravity field is unusual. Although it was once part of a spherical planet, a shard has a gravity plane. Its rounded top surface supports normal life—perhaps even the life it supported before the catastrophe—provided some force prevents the loss of its atmosphere. The lower part of the shard is in the negative gravity field; anything on it will fall off into space, and it cannot keep any atmosphere.

**Cylinders:** These worlds are partially round, and the long axis of such a cylinder is the "center" of its gravity. Gravity on the rounded surface of a cylinder world is directed down toward the cylinder's axis. Gravity on the two flat sides is

also directed straight down through the cylinder. Like spheres, cylinder worlds can have their own atmospheres, though traveling from the rounded side to a flat side is very disorienting. Cylinders can also spin along their long axes, producing day and night if the cylinder is oriented properly to its sun.

### Neutral Gravity

There is another important gravitational effect called neutral gravity. This is a weak gravitational force that any object weighing over 2,000 tons, such as a large ship or a planet, generates. Neutral gravity simply keeps an object from breaking up and drifting off into the Void of space. Friction does the same for smaller objects, such as ships that are nailed or pegged together. Neutral gravity does not affect anything on an object's surfaces, either outside or inside (in tunnels, on the lower decks of a ship, etc.). Neutral gravity has no equivalent in the common



laws of physics affecting other game worlds. Think of it as "cosmic glue."

## Gravity Strengths (Optional)

DMs may assign different gravitational strengths to each planetary body. Mystara is the "norm" to measure by, being at 100%. Myoshima (see p. 35) would be 90%, due to its dense core; Matera, like Earth's moon, would be around 17%; a giant planet may be at 200% or greater. The weakest gravitational field any object can have is 10%. Objects weighing less than 1 ton have no gravitational field.

A ship's effective Tonnage varies according to the strength of any gravitational field the ship is subjected to. Within Mystara's gravitational field, effective tonnage is 100%. Traveling alone through the Void, the ship's own gravitational field reduces her effective Tonnage to about 10% normal—unless the ship is very large. Ships entering the gravitational field of any larger body suddenly find themselves with Tonnages determined by the larger object's gravitational strength. These weight changes are especially important if the ship's new effective Tonnage is greater than her Lift Capacity—the ship may crash!

The strength of a gravitational field also affects damage suffered in a fall. In normal gravity, a character will suffer damage as per the "Falling Damage Chart" on p. 24. In 10% gravity, a character can fall 10 times as far and suffer the same damage. Likewise, in 200% gravity a character can fall only half as far before taking the same amount of damage.

**Effects on Character Abilities (Optional):** Spacefaring characters must frequently adjust to gravities different from their home world's. Characters can automatically adjust to gravitational fields at least half as strong as their home world's field, or to fields half again as strong. Mystaran characters, for example, can easily adapt to gravitational fields ranging from 50% to 150% in strength.

Mystaran characters suffer penalties in gravitational fields with strengths from

0% to 49%, and with strengths greater than 150%. These characters are at a -2 penalty to all hit rolls, ability checks, and Strength- or Dexterity-based skill checks. (Skills based on other attributes are unaffected, as are saving throws and damage rolls.)

In gravitational fields weaker than normal, characters will tend to misjudge the effort needed to do anything physical—lifting, jumping, fighting, etc. A character trying to lift a heavy-looking chest may tumble over backwards when it weighs much less than expected. More than one careless spacefarer has fallen over his ship's rail this way.

In heavy gravity, the effects are the opposite. Unwary characters find themselves falling short in any jump, or unable to lift something they could normally carry easily.

Characters spending any length of time in fields outside their adaptable range may learn a new general skill—Low Gravity Maneuvering or High Gravity Maneuvering—which negates the penalties suffered in gravity outside their adaptable range. No teacher is necessary to learn these skills: experience and an available skill slot are enough for a character to adapt to low or high gravities.

## Travel in the Void —

It is possible to travel from world to world within the Void—possibly even from star system to star system. Some civilizations do so regularly.

## Voidships

Any skyship that is equipped to deal with the perils of space qualifies as a Voidship. A viable atmosphere, protection from extreme temperatures, and a means of propulsion are all necessary. Magic usually provides the latter, although some Voidships take advantage of the solar winds (see p. 34).

Some Voidships are designed and built specifically for space travel. Voidships built in space may be truly enormous, having no need for incredibly strong Lift

Capacities to free them from the gravitational field of a planet.

## Relative Speeds

Speeds in space are significantly greater than those possible within gravitational fields and atmospheres—they have to be to allow Voidships to cover the vast distances between worlds. A Voidship's speed varies with the proximity of large gravitational bodies. The farther away such bodies are, the faster the ship can travel. There is no actual limit to a ship's speed in the Void.

Traveling from a planet to one of its moons should take about two weeks for a Voidship powered by a *fly* spell or equivalent magic. (Journeying from Mystara to Myoshima takes quite a bit less time, due to the peculiar properties of the two worlds and their unusual closeness.) Traveling to another planet within a solar system should take a month or more. Traveling to another solar system may take two or three months. Although solar systems are much farther away from one another than are planets within a system, Voidships can reach incredible speeds in the gravity-free space between systems. The actual travel time is up to the DM, and should be whatever is necessary to facilitate the pace and plot of the adventure.

**"Impulse" Speed:** Voidships near gravitational bodies drop to roughly 10× their Air Speed—call this "impulse" speed, if you like. This change in speed is automatic, instantaneous, and unhampered by inertia and other physical laws. It allows for encounters in the Void, and avoids the need for complicated formulas and calculations dealing with velocity, acceleration, and deceleration.

Encounter distance—the point at which a Voidship's movement drops to impulse speed—is 10× the radius of the ship's own gravitational field. A Voidship with Length 200' (and therefore a gravitational field with a radius 1,000') will slow to impulse speed when coming within 10,000' (3,333 yards) of the outer edge of another gravitational field.





## Worlds Beyond

Nongravitational objects (less than 1 ton) slow to impulse speed immediately upon entering a gravitational field. They may need to execute emergency maneuvers if they enter the gravitational field at an inconvenient angle. When entering a negative gravity field (i.e., one pushing away from the direction of travel), a nongravitational object slows to impulse speed just long enough to "fall" back out of the field.

### Maneuvering in Space

Use the same rules for aerial combat in the Void as in the atmosphere (see "Riding the Winds," p. 21). Speeds are faster ("Impulse Speed" is 10× Air Speed), so movement should be figured in units of 100 yards instead of 10 yards. Vessels must move at least five times their length between maneuvers (rather than only half their length, as in atmosphere). Ships cannot "fall" unless they're within another object's gravitational field, in which case they fall in the direction of gravity.

Voidships approaching a gravitational object may need to maneuver to prevent disaster when the ship's own gravitational field meets the object's. The interactions between two gravitational fields depend on the orientations of negative and positive gravity, and (optionally) on the respective gravity strengths.

When two positive gravitational fields intersect, the objects attract one another, possibly crashing. (If the objects are significantly different in size, the larger one pulls the smaller one toward it, and not vice versa; a Voidship cannot pull a planet out of position.) Damage from such a collision is the sum of the normal "falling" damage, taking into account the distance between the two objects when they first started falling toward one another. The relative strengths of the gravitational fields may optionally be added in as well (see p. 33). Simply double normal falling damage (to 2d6 for every 10' fallen) if the gravitational fields are of equivalent strengths.

When two negative fields intersect, the objects gently repel one another, gradu-

ally slowing and reversing their directions until their fields separate. Again, if the objects are significantly different in size, the smaller object slows and reverses its direction while the larger object continues as before, unaffected by the encounter.

If the two objects approach at any other angle, the smaller object reorients itself until its positive and negative gravity planes are aligned to those of the larger object. The smaller object then drifts downward until the vertical axis of its gravity plane aligns with that of the larger gravity field. Of course, it may crash into the larger object, or it may drift through the larger gravity field and into space again.

An object's reorientation to a larger object's gravity field takes one round (10 seconds) regardless of the relative angles of the gravitational fields or sizes of the objects. If the reorientation is a big one, the reorienting object may suffer damage or even break apart entirely!

Note that two spherical objects (with positive gravitational fields in all directions) cannot avoid collision once their gravitational fields intersect—unless one or both of the objects has a means of propulsion strong enough to break away from the other's gravitational field. Likewise, a spherical gravitational object attracted to a larger object with a gravity plane would be unable to orient itself to the larger gravity field. It would simply spin at ever-increasing speeds for as long as it was within the gravity plane unless it was stabilized by some other force. For this reason, few Voidships are spherical.

What all this means is that Voidships maneuvering near other gravitational objects must take care to avoid damage when the gravitational fields intersect. DMs should use their imaginations when dealing with failed Piloting skill rolls or other situations resulting in a Voidship's bad approach to a gravitational field. Quality Rating checks to avoid damage to the Voidship, additional Piloting skill checks to regain control, and Dexterity Ability checks to avoid falling over or overboard are all appropriate.

### Motive Power in the Void

Travel conditions in the Void tend to encourage use of Motive Powers different than those used for atmospheric flight. Most Voidships use magical motive powers; *fly* or *travel* enchantments work quite well in the Void. Beast-pulled Voidships can equip their flying monster teams with enchanted *harnesses of flying* and tailor-made *bridles of airbreathing* to let them fly and breathe in the Void.

Of course, Fantasy Engineering is perfect for Voidships. Propulsion devices can work on the principle that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. This allows muscle- or steam-powered travel through the Void, as long as the designers understand the Fantasy Physics involved in traveling through airless, gravity-free space.

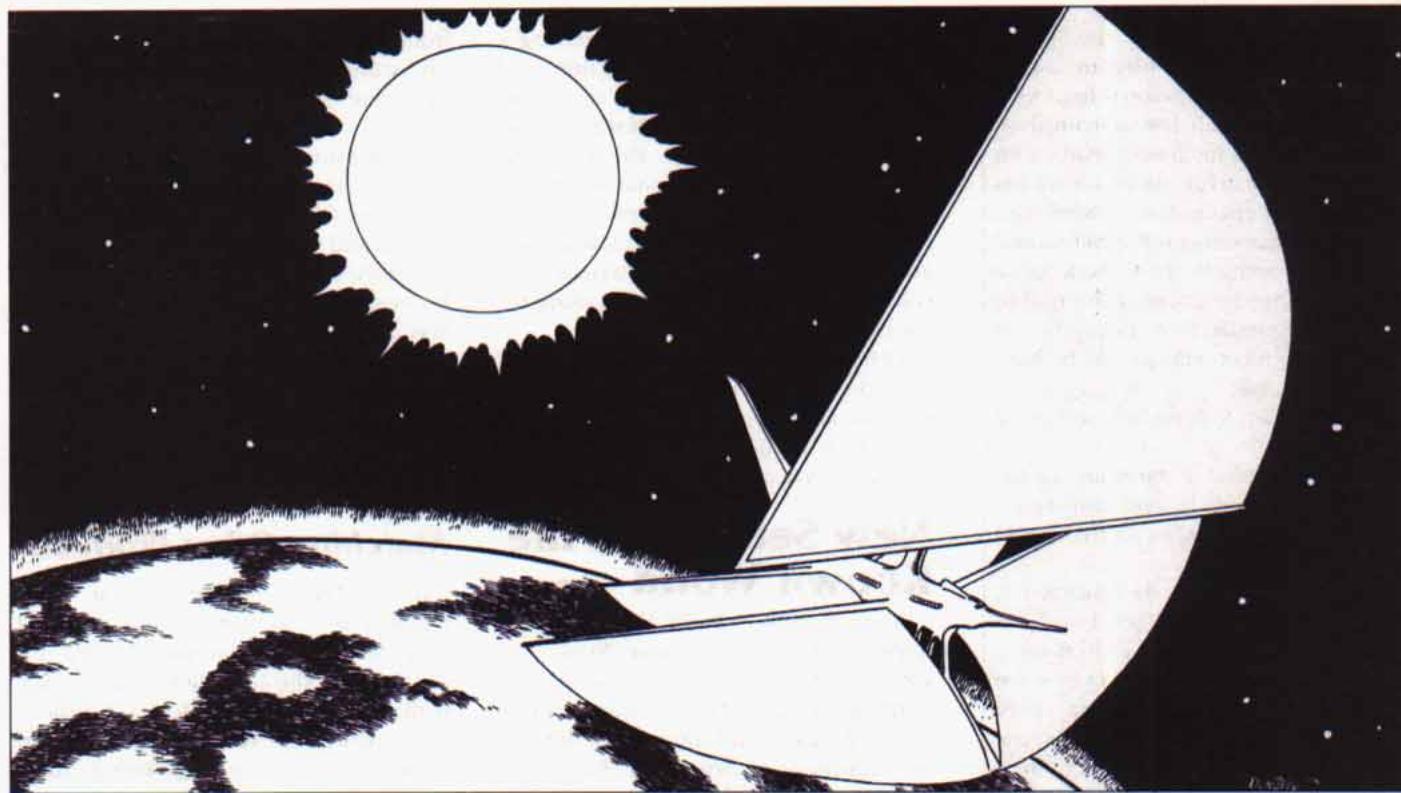
Conventional wind-driven ships simply do not work in the Void—there's no air to push them. However, there are a few Voidships designed specifically to ride the solar winds.

**Solar Winds and Currents:** Solar winds are streams of energy particles radiating from a star. Voidships equipped with solar sails—enormous sails made of cloth-of-gold or enchanted to catch light itself instead of air—can harness the solar winds as Motive Power. These lightriders may tack against the winds whenever they need to maneuver in towards a star. Most have secondary Motive Powers to allow faster travel toward a solar system's center. Their real strength lies in outbound travel, when the solar winds can push them ever faster through space.

Lightriders can maneuver like atmospheric Windriders (see "Wind and Weather," p. 26), though at 10× the normal Air Speed. Solar winds always blow in the same direction—outward from a sun or star. Strength may vary just as atmospheric wind strength may.

Space also has currents, eddies, tides, whirlpools, and flows of magical energy or solar winds which may capture unwary Voidships—or help them on their way. DMs should use their imaginations!





## Planets, Moons, and Other Worlds –

Space would be a very boring campaign setting if there weren't other worlds and other civilizations for the player characters to visit and explore. DMs may wish to use the "Odd Examples of Gravity" (p. 31) when creating their own worlds. The guidelines for designing campaign settings provided in the World Maker's Guide apply well to any world floating in the Void.

Mystara, the site of the Known World and the Hollow World, is only one planet in an entire solar system. There are other planets in the system, and some might be inhabited. There are asteroid fields, rogue comets, and similar wonders to explore—or to avoid! And right next to Mystara herself are two perfectly good moons for Void travelers to visit.

### Matera

This moon, well known to anyone living on the outer surface of Mystara, is a silvery, lifeless, crater-marked satellite. Like the moon of our Earth, it waxes and wanes in a predictable pattern, controlling the tides and lycanthropy, but it isn't very interesting to Mystaran adventurers—unless, of course, they know of the gateway to the Immortal City of Pandius located in one of Matera's large craters. As of AY 2000, the moon has remained unexplored.

DMs wishing to liven Matera up a bit may place unknown, secretive, and very reclusive underground creatures on this moon. Or explorers looking past the uninspiring exterior of this "lifeless chunk of rock" might find evidence of long-lost civilizations here. How about the wreckage of Voidships that undertook the perilous voyage from distant worlds only to crash on an inhospitable moon within sight of a magnificent world?

### Patera (Myoshima)

Mystara has a second moon, unknown to all but its inhabitants and a very few other mortal creatures. The Immortals call this moon Patera; its inhabitants call it Myoshima. The moon can't normally be seen by anyone outside its Skyshield, due to its core's unusual light-bending properties. (See *Heroes of the Princess Ark*, p. 93, for a description of Myoshima.)

DMs may wish to map out the various Rakastan dominions—or nations ruled by even stranger creatures. Myoshima could provide an excellent way station for adventurers just venturing out into the Void from Mystara's atmosphere. There are plenty of opportunities for adventure in the rakastan cities or in Myoshima's wilderness. If the PCs get bored with Myoshima's surface, they can get involved in skirmishes between Rakastan Voidships and Heldannic Warbirds or try to negotiate trade agreements between inhabitants of Mystara and Myoshima.



## World Maker's Guide

Brandan Earth-Mover of the Sphere of Matter chewed his fingernail nervously. Although he was an Immortal, and no longer felt like a complete novice, this was his first meeting with the most powerful Hierarch of his Sphere in any circumstances other than ceremonial gatherings and polite social functions. Forcing his hand back into a pocket before he chewed the nail to the quick, Brandan took a deep breath and tried to relax. She should be here any minute now...

"So, you want to learn how to build a world, do you?"

Brandan whirled at the sound of the rich, mellow voice behind him. Terra, known also as Mother Earth, stood before him.

"Y-y-yes, Hierarch," he stammered, then cleared his throat. "Yes, I do."

She gazed piercingly at him for a moment, her earth-brown eyes alive with curiosity and assessment. "Very well," she said at last. "I have some work I've intended to do for quite a while now. You may watch."

She gestured with one hand, and they no longer stood in the Plaza of the City of the Immortals. Instead, they floated weightlessly in a great black void relieved only by distant pinpricks of light. Brandan turned as Terra pointed out a distant sun, barely more than a large dot in space. In a moment he realized they were on the very outskirts of the Mystaran system.

Terra smiled. "Building a world is easy, provided you have the power to spend. Of course, you must have a general idea of what you want to build, and where you want to put it. I've chosen this spot for a little experiment. It's far enough away from Mystara to reduce the risks of other Immortals meddling with it, yet near enough for me to draw on Mystara's resources to populate my creation."

"Here, let me show you. It's simple, really. You start with a basic concept, and build from there. Of course, it helps to use a bit of common sense, or your creation may fall apart."

Whether you are a DM<sup>®</sup> preparing a campaign or a player with an Immortal character interested in shaping and populating a world, this *World Maker's Guide* will help you through the creation process. All you need is some hex paper, a pen, and imagination. Throw in a dash of common sense and some knowledge about how the real world works, and voilà! Your own fantastic new setting for the D&D<sup>®</sup> game!

Although the following material is geared specifically toward creating settings on Mystara, the D&D game world, much of it applies to any campaign and any game system.

### New Settings in the Known World —

Open the D&D *Rules Cyclopedia* to Appendix 1: The D&D Game World, and you'll see there's plenty of room for campaign expansion. The Gazetteer series covers Alphatia and the eastern third of the continent of Brun. The *Explorers' Guide* included in this boxed set expands the Known World into the Sind Desert and the Serpent Peninsula.

But that still leaves 75% of the surface of Mystara for you to develop—to say nothing of the Hollow World with its floating continents, or Myoshima, Matera, and any other world you wish to place in the Void surrounding Mystara.

### Research and Inspiration

Truth is often stranger than fiction, so you may wish to start with a bit of historical research. Choose a period and culture similar to the one you wish to place in your campaign, and do a bit of reading.

You can draw inspiration from novels, movies, fairy tales, and adventures and supplements published for other role-playing games. TSR, Inc. and other companies offer many role-playing aids applicable to any campaign regardless of the game system used. The AD&D<sup>®</sup> game *Campaign Sourcebook and Catacomb Guide* offers guidelines for good DMing,

from pacing a game to creating the world and dungeon encounters. DRAGON<sup>®</sup> Magazine is another excellent source of advice.

Once you have an idea, your local library is an excellent source of research material. It has popular histories of the period and culture you're interested in, probably including illustrations of forts, houses, cities, and other useful information. Don't forget movies about your culture or period, too. Even the worst B-movie can give you good ideas about how to describe an area to your player characters, how to populate and detail a particular village or NPC, and so on.

### Matching Other Products

If you decide to expand your campaign into an area near those covered by published products you're using, try to integrate the new campaign setting with the surrounding settings. Consider such things as trade of goods and knowledge between neighboring lands; effects of history (were two neighboring lands once at war, or are they now?), and so on. How would aspects of your new setting have affected the areas detailed in the published products, and vice versa?

At some point, TSR is likely to release a product that covers an area you've spent endless efforts developing for your own campaign. If player characters have already adventured in that setting, you should probably keep to your own version of Mystara. You can ignore the published product entirely or use it as the basis for expansion into another area of Mystara. You can move the setting of published adventures into another part of Mystara, or adapt them for play in your own setting.

In other words, don't worry when your campaign world differs from the "official" version. As long as you and your players are having fun, the officialness of the setting doesn't matter.



## What Do You Want?

Before you begin to map your new setting, you should decide what you want it to be like. Where is it located on Mystara? What real-world cultures or customs will you model the inhabitants' customs after?

You should not create your setting randomly. The more detailed and realistic your setting, the more alive it will feel to the players role-playing in it. On the other hand, don't be overly concerned with details: in the D&D® game universe, settings don't have to be painstakingly realistic, as long as they are logical and consistent within the campaign.

## Before You Begin

Chapter 17 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*, "Campaigning", is a good place to begin the development of a new setting. If you're expanding your campaign in the Hollow World or on Mystara's surface, the general terrain is already worked out for you in the maps on pp. 280–283 of the *Cyclopedia*. These world maps are at a large scale and leave ample room for refinement: mountain ranges always include valleys and streams; forests and jungles include clearings, hills, rivers and swamps and lakes, and so forth.

Before drawing a map of your new setting, you should consider the following questions. Your answers will help shape your setting, giving it depth and life.

- What's the climate like? This usually depends on the location (latitude) and prevailing weather patterns. But Immortal influences can affect an area greatly; see "Microclimates" on the next page.

- What are the major terrain features? Is there a mountain range? How high are the mountains? How long is the range? Is the land generally hilly or flat? Are there stretches of forest, grasslands, desert, or swamp? Does the setting include an ocean coastline? Major lakes or inland seas? What about rivers?

- Is the land civilized, borderland, or wilderness? Large regions often have a

mixture of civilized, borderland, and wilderness areas.

- Who or what are the dominant inhabitants? In heavily settled lands, humans or demihumans are most likely the dominant life forms. Do you want civilized humanoids or other intelligent races? In wilderness, no one life form may dominate, but you should list the most numerous or dangerous creatures in the area.

- How do the dominant inhabitants interact with the region's other inhabitants? If there's more than one culture or type of intelligent creature, are they in conflict? If resources are scarce, chances are they will be. Or do they live together peacefully—at least most of the time?

- Also, what relationships do the land's inhabitants have with those in neighboring lands. Few areas are truly insulated from all outside influences. Even island dwellers have relationships with nearby ocean inhabitants, and often trade with peoples in surprisingly distant lands.

- Has the land always been this way? Were there earlier civilizations, now long vanished? Was the desert once lush, or the plains the site of an inland sea?

Now it's time to fill in the details.

## About Mystara

In the real world, the environment plays a vital role in shaping societies. People moving into an area have to adapt to the environment they find there. Desert cultures have vastly different customs, beliefs, and architecture than cultures living on a plain or in a temperate forest. As a designer of D&D® game settings, you have a bit more freedom. You can design the setting to match the society you have in mind. Here are some things you should know about Mystara, the D&D game world.

## Mystara's Geology

Like most worlds, Mystara has an exterior surface which faces the sun and the stars. But instead of being solid, the planet is hollow inside. That interior is a world of its own, lit by a magical sun.

"For instance," Terra continued her lecture, "I've decided to experiment with the creation of a flat world. It will be small, to conserve my powers, but will have an atmosphere and everything needed to support life. I'll add a skyshield to keep the atmosphere in and unwanted visitors out."

"Now, Brandan, I will make the world round, like a coin, and spin slowly around its center. A diameter of about 500 miles sounds good. I'll put a mountain range around the rim. Oh, say, a thousand mountains with an average height of ten thousand feet. They'll help keep the atmosphere in, too, and let me fabricate a smaller Skyshield."

"Let's see. A large lake at the center would be good. Hmm. Maybe not. The world's rotation would set up a whirlpool if I put a lake there. Oh, why not? It'll make things interesting."

"Rivers, of course, to drain water from the mountains to the central lake. They'll irrigate the land and provide fresh water for the inhabitants."

"This far out from the sun, they'll need heat and light. But that's easy—I'll just create another heavenly body. Even a small burning orb would do, as long as it's close enough to my little worldlet. And its action on the atmosphere will keep the air in continual motion, drawing warm moist air up from the center of the lake and pushing it out towards the mountains. It can cool there, and drop its moisture as rain. And that should do it!"

By now, Terra seemed to be talking more to herself than to the young Immortal eagerly listening to her. The Hierarch muttered as she gestured with her hands at a point in the Void, calling upon the powers and magics she wielded to create a world in the cold, empty darkness of space.

"That's right, about a hundred miles thick. A dense, magical underlayer to provide a gravity just a shade less than Mystara's. The mountains, just so... The rivers, now, like this..."

In the blackness, a world took shape.





## World Maker's Guide

Two polar openings allow access from Mystara's surface into the Hollow World. Perpetual storms (caused by the collision of weather patterns from the planet's exterior and interior), deadly cold, and an anti-magic effect prevent most travelers from crossing through these gates.

**Measurements:** Mystara's diameter is 6,190 miles. Its circumference at the equator is just over 19,400 miles, and its crust is about 1,200 miles thick. The planet's total surface area, minus the polar openings, is just over 105 million square miles. Water covers 60% of the planet's surface.

The two polar openings measure 1,500 miles in diameter at Mystara's outer surface, but they are only 1,000 miles in diameter where they open into the Hollow World. Their curvature in toward the Hollow World is so gradual as to be unnoticeable except from high in the air. The interior diameter is 3,790 miles, and the interior circumference is 11,900 miles.

### The Hollow World

The Immortals created the Hollow World as a museum or preserve for animals and cultures nearing extinction on the outer world of Mystara. They cast a powerful enchantment called the *Spell of Preservation* over the interior world. This spell discourages changes in language, technology, and culture. It also influences the way magic works in the Hollow World. Many types of spells simply don't work here—divination and communication spells such as *know alignment*, summoning spells, and spells of instantaneous transportation, including *teleport*.

The Hollow World is lit by a sun floating at the world's center. There is no night—only an eternal, reddish noon. Floating continents orbit this sun, casting shadows on the Hollow World's surface. Many support life, as does the surface below them. The atmosphere is the same as that outside, but a band of vacuum separates the Hollow World's surface and its sun. The Hollow World has a surface area of just over 38 million miles (minus polar openings), 70% of which is water.

### Climate

Climate is, roughly, an area's weather patterns over time, its seasonal, predictable patterns of dry and wet, hot and cold. There are three broad types of climatic regions, polar, equatorial, and middle regions, although, each location will have its own particular weather patterns.

**Polar:** The sun never rises far above the horizon in polar regions, and these areas experience six months of "day" and six months of "night." During a day of the six-month polar day, the sun appears to travel in a circle just above the horizon, never dipping below the horizon to bring night. During a day of the six-month polar night, the sun stays continuously *below* the horizon, never rising. Cold air does not absorb moisture well, so most polar regions are dry, near deserts.

Annual polar temperature ranges from just below freezing in summer to -100° or lower in winter. Blinding blizzards can strike polar areas at any time, and resulting whiteouts, can drop visibility zero in the whirling snow. Polar areas support no vegetation, though tundra bordering it supports scrub. With little vegetation, animals are scarce, and are often carnivorous or magical.

**Equatorial:** In an equatorial region, every day of the year, the sun shines almost directly overhead at noon, producing high temperatures. Most equatorial regions obviously have hot climates; since warm air absorbs moisture well, equatorial regions are often wet and rainy. Also, winds at the equatorial belt tend to blow from east to west.

Equatorial areas are virtually seasonless. The temperature averages 80° annually and thunderstorms bring rain throughout the year. Dangerous hurricanes are also common in these areas, although dry winds lasting more than a week often blow in winter.

**Middle Latitudes:** The temperatures at the middle latitudes of a planet are simply between those of the poles and the equator. Winds in temperate regions typically blow from west to east.

**Other Considerations:** Large bodies of water, such as oceans or even large lakes) absorb heat readily and lose it slowly. In winter, coastal areas are often warmer than inland areas, as the water gives off the heat it absorbed all summer. Likewise, in summer coastal areas are often cooler than inland areas, as the water is absorbing from the air the heat it lost during winter.

It's also generally cooler in the mountains than in valleys, as air cools as it rises. And cities are generally hotter than the surrounding countryside, as the buildings reflect the sun's light and heat.

### Mystara's Microclimates

If you examine the Known World described in the *Cyclopedia*, you may notice some unrealistic physical features. The hot desert of Ylaruam, for example, is separated from the Norway-like Northern Reaches by little more than a hundred miles of hills and mountains.

Ylaruam is an example of a *microclimate*—an area whose climate is not affected by surrounding weather patterns or terrain. Ylaruam's hot, dry desert is the result of unusually strong influences from the Plane of Fire. Some microclimates are the result of powerful mortal magic. And when Immortals decide to get involved, anything can happen—including rivers that flow uphill, or in two directions!

This means you aren't bound by mundane reality when picking your setting's climate and terrain. You can decide that ancient curses, Immortal interference, or the influence of other planes cause it to snow in the tropics or have created a protected, lush valley in the arctic.

### Mapping Your Setting

Before you begin to map your setting, you should have a decided how large an area your setting will cover, what sort of terrain features to include, and so on. You might wish to gather ideas from maps of an area of Earth similar to your setting. A world atlas can show you how



rivers, mountain ranges, and coastlines behave, although usually in a small scale. Travel guides and road maps may also be helpful. And the United States Geological Survey publishes topographical maps of nearly every square foot of the United States.

When you know how much area your setting will cover, pick a scale for your maps. A scale of 24 miles per hex allows you to cover a lot of ground and gives the option of refining areas with larger-scale maps later. A scale of 8 miles per hex is good for a small nation. For even greater detail, use a scale of only 1 mile per hex.

The map of Mystara in the *Rules Cyclopedia* shows only the dominant terrain type of very large areas. As you draw your own maps of specific areas, you can add a great deal of detail. Keep in mind that changes from one type of terrain to another are rarely abrupt, although cliff faces and seacoasts are two obvious exceptions. Forest gradually thins to grasslands; grasslands become sparse and pock-marked with barren spots before giving way entirely to desert.

When you're placing terrain on your maps, keep in mind that each hex represents the dominant terrain in that hex. The larger the scale, the more variations player characters will encounter as they travel through that hex.

### Terrain Types



**Mountains:** Most mountains occur in chains or ranges. Many mountain ranges experience earthquakes and volcanic activity. Old, eroded mountain ranges, such as the Appalachians, are small (only about 5,000' above sea level) and have gentle contours. Geologically young mountains, such as the Rockies, tend to be much taller (up to 30,000' above sea level) with steep slopes and sharp peaks. Mountain ranges may be interspersed with valleys, basins, and flat, high plateaus. A mountain's lower slopes may be forested. Alpine meadows and tundra take over at about 7,000' (higher in

warm climates). Peaks may be snow-capped year round.



**Hills:** Smaller than mountains, hills also form ranges interspersed with small valleys. As *hill* and *mountain* are relative terms, the foothills of great mountain ranges would qualify as mountains themselves if they were transplanted to the middle of a plain. Hills may be covered by grasslands and pasture or by barren, stony desert. They may also be forested, or sparsely dotted with shrubs and brush.



**Broken Lands:** Heavily eroded mountain ranges or high plateaus may form broken lands similar to the mesas and spires of the American Southwest, or the impressive canyons and crags of the Gobi. Broken lands are often barren, and are found in arid areas which prevent the buildup of good soil or growth of vegetation.



**Deserts:** A desert is simply an area that receives fewer than 10 inches of rainfall annually. Most deserts are stony rather than rolling waves of sand dunes. Nearly 90% of the Sahara, known for its endless sand dunes, is actually rocky, stony, or gravelly. Few desert areas are totally lifeless, however; plants and animals adapted to the arid conditions eke out an existence in every desert. Oases may provide enough water to support lush vegetation, abundant wildlife, and even agriculture over an area smaller than an acre or a few square miles. Human populations in deserts are generally fewer than one person per square mile.



**Jungles or Rain Forests:** Regions with annual rainfalls of 70" or more may support rain forests. *Jungle*—tangled, impenetrable vegetation—usually grows only on the outskirts of rain forests and along river banks, wherever sunlight can penetrate the dense canopy. The depths of an equatorial rain forest are dark and relatively free of undergrowth. Most animal

and plant life occupies the high tree canopy, living on rainwater collected in leafy pockets or the hollows of tree limbs.

Subtropical rain forests tend to have smaller trees, more open canopies, and ample undergrowth than tropical rain forests. Two or three months of every year typically see reduced rainfall or even drought. Monsoon forests are tropical rain forests which receive a lot of rain each year, but also have a dry season when most trees shed their leaves. Bamboo thickets often nestle in a monsoon forest. Mangrove forests grow along tropical shores and estuaries.

Rain forests give way to temperate forests at about 4,000' above sea level.



**Forests:** In subpolar latitudes where temperatures remain below freezing for half the year, evergreens such as pines, spruces, and larches grow. Deciduous oaks, birches, elms, and maples grow where temperatures stay above 50° F for at least half the year, but frosts still occur. Where frost is infrequent, broad-leaved evergreens such as palms take over. In harsh climates, trees may be stunted or twisted.



**Grasslands:** Grasslands tend to thrive wherever conditions are too arid for forests but not harsh enough to foster deserts. Small forests or stands of trees often form in low-lying areas where there's plenty of water—especially along river banks—or on slopes protected from the wind. Hot climates may host savannahs, where trees and shrubs dot the grasslands. With gentle terrain and few obstacles, grasslands tend to have harsh winds.



**Swamps, Marshes, and Bogs:** Wetlands, where the soil is waterlogged for most of the year, come in many types. Swamps are wetlands dominated by trees—mangroves in saline areas; cypress, cedar, or other trees in stagnant fresh water. Marshes are dominated by grasses, and often form in estuaries and other low-lying areas by the





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sea. Streams and rivers almost always flow through swamps and marshes.

Bogs, also called moors, are wetlands on a bed of spongy peat. Bog mosses (such as sphagnum) and heaths are common, especially in cool regions. Fens are bogs of grasses and reeds, while trees often dominate tropical bogs. Once a bog forms, it tends to grow larger as water-retaining plants retard drainage.

Quaking bogs are mats of mosses and heaths floating on water. The mats may be thick enough to support larches and other trees, but unwary travelers and animals may fall through weak points. Raised bogs of sphagnum moss can grow on hills or rise above surrounding fens.

### The Necessities

Before you begin to dot your map with settlements and cities, be sure the inhabitants—and even the animals—can survive in the places you want them. People must have food and water to survive: a large city won't be built in the middle of a desert—unless it's built around a large, reliable oasis or there's a lot of magic involved.

**Water Sources:** All living things must have water. Water both shapes and is shaped by the land. Water may be salt or fresh, flowing or stagnant. It comes from somewhere—rainfall, springs, or runoff from melting snow—and goes somewhere else—into streams, rivers, underground aquifers, or oceans.

Remember that water runs downhill. The contours of the land determine the course of any stream or river. Old rivers tend to flow slowly along a wide course with many loops and elbows. Young rivers tend to be straight and swift and often have cascades, cataracts, and waterfalls. Most large rivers begin as small streams. When streams meet, they run together in a wider stream. When a river narrows, it runs faster. Rivers rarely split in the direction of flow unless the land is low and nearly level—at a river delta, for example.

Low-lying areas may collect ponds, swamps, or lakes. Estuaries where a river

meets the sea will be fresh or salt, depending on the tides, and salt marshes or mangrove swamps may grow in these wetlands.

In arid lands, water often evaporates before it can form a pond or a stream. Stagnant ponds and backwaters also evaporate but are continually, though slowly, replenished by rain or water seeping up through the ground.

Nearly every body of water supports life. Lakes and ponds collected in calderas are home to waterbirds and amphibians as well as insect larvae. Fish can live in these volcanic lakes, but only if they are artificially introduced. And travelers beware—a brilliantly blue volcanic lake may actually be a lake of sulphuric acid! Some desert ponds or lakes are too saline to support more than a few salt-resistant plants and small animal life.

**Indigenous Life:** A quick look in an encyclopedia can tell you what types of plants and animals inhabit areas similar to the setting you're creating. In the D&D® game world, monstrous versions of those plants and animals are likely to exist, as well. If you want cacti in your desert, you might also like to include a new monster—a cactus-like treant with a temper as thorny as its hide.

As you populate your setting with harmless, helpful, or monstrous denizens, try to create a viable ecosystem. Remember that herbivores need lots of vegetation—in a temperate region, about one acre per animal, and 640 acres make up one square mile. In a balanced ecosystem, there should also be one carnivore for roughly every ten herbivores. There obviously aren't going to be many large carnivores in a barren wasteland unless there's some magic involved!

Remember, too, that living things must have water, even if they've adapted to arid conditions. Plants need sunlight for photosynthesis. Magical constructs and some extra-planar creatures can survive quite well in hostile environments, but player characters will need a very good reason to venture into these areas.

Try to avoid the temptation of overpopulating your wilderness with hordes

of humanoids. In a balanced ecosystem, conflicts between species over limited resources tend to keep population levels down. If you decide not to balance your ecosystem, think of a reason for it. For example, plants growing underground may simply be fungi and the like—or they may get their energy from heat (lava flows or geothermal energy) rather than sunlight.

### Adding People —

Once you've decided on an area's terrain, plant, and animal life, you can build villages, towns, or even cities in it. Always keep in mind that people settle at a site for a reason: because that particular site offers features they're looking for.

### Terrain and Settlements

Terrain has a tremendous impact on any group of people. Arid lands lead to nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyles, as people must move on to new areas when they use up the local food and other resources. Rugged mountainsides limit available resources but offer protection from marauders and other dangers; in these areas, self-sufficient homesteads are often scattered over the countryside. Heavily forested areas provide ample hideouts for outlaws and bandits; the law-abiding inhabitants often live in close-knit societies with strict law enforcement and walled settlements.

All settlements have one thing in common, though: they *must* have a source of water and fertile soil. Any settlement larger than a village needs a lot of farmland to support its inhabitants. Ten acres of average cropland can feed one family of five people. A city of 25,000 (quite large by medieval standards) requires 50,000 acres, or a little more than 75 square miles of agricultural land (640 acres equals one square mile). Very fertile soil or many *create food and water* spells will increase the settlement's productivity. The greater the land's yield, the closer together and more populous towns will be.



At the other end of the scale, one acre of irrigated desert cropland requires the runoff water from 25 acres of wasteland. Thus, 50,000 desert acres can supply only 1,000 people. Desert settlements are widely scattered, and usually cluster around oases.

Fuel for fires—for cooking, warmth, and industries such as pottery and metalworking—is another consideration. Towns near woodlands may overharvest fuel, destroying the woodlands. Villagers desperate for fuel may begin to burn animal dung that they need to fertilize their crops—the beginning of a village's slow downward spiral into poverty.

Also, local building materials greatly affect the way a settlement looks. Towns near stone quarries look much different from those seated in the heart of a forest or squatting on an arid plain.

Finally, natural resources are often crucial to a settlement's life and growth. One village may boast a wealth of rich ore as well as expert metalsmiths. That town may draw trade from the entire region. For example, farmers who need a new plowshare or horseshoes must travel to that village for them. The village begins to prosper, as its inn hosts the smithy's customers, and visitors may decide to buy other goods or services while they're in town. But when a town's water or wealth fails, it becomes a ghost town.

## Societal Types

Food is of primary importance to any group of people. In fact, groups are defined in terms of the way they get their food. Whether a society is nomadic or sedentary is a very helpful first category.

**Nomads:** These people periodically move to locations with plentiful resources or to escape seasonal droughts or snows. Their possessions consist of what they can carry on their own backs or load onto pack animals. Their shelters are relatively small, sparse, and easy to build. In areas with abundant building materials, these shelters may be abandoned when the group moves. Where building materials are scarce, nomads' shelters are easy

to put up and take down and can be carried easily. Nomads may be either hunter-gatherers or pastoralists.

**Hunter-gatherers:** These people live off the land, hunting game and gathering edible wild plants. They may be sedentary in some extremely bountiful areas. Hunter-gatherers live in families, often extended families with grandparents, cousins, etc. Families may settle close to one another in times of plenty, splitting into small groups in lean times. In temperate regions winter settlements are usually close to fuel sources (forested mountainsides, for example). A group's stored food rarely lasts through the entire winter, meaning hunger every year.

**Pastoralists:** Pastoralists herd cattle, goats, and other domestic animals. They are often nomadic, always leading or following their herds to fresh pasture and water. Pastoral societies may start out as hunter-gatherers following annual migrations of herds. They gradually learn to control the herds, partially domesticating the animals. In most pastoral societies, wealth often is measured by the size and health of a person's or family's herd.

**Sedentary:** Sedentary peoples remain in one place for extended periods of time.

**Horticultural:** Horticulturalists plant small patches of vegetables and herbs with digging sticks and other simple tools—their tools for farming and food preparation are often the bulk of their possessions. They rarely use or know of irrigation, fertilization, and other agricultural techniques. Horticulture works best in forest soil, which is usually loose, so there is no need for plows. These plots of land rarely produce crops for more than two or three years. When the land is exhausted, the horticulturalists move on to another area, usually slashing and burning the land they plant. Horticulturalists' endless need for arable land may put them in conflict with their neighbors.

**Agricultural:** Agriculture involves the use of the plow, irrigation, crop rotation, fertilization, and other advanced methods of tilling large plots of land and maintaining soil fertility. Farming is full-time work

and usually completely replaces hunting and gathering as a food source. It also means a sedentary society that can depend on the same croplands year after year, and that often builds towns and even cities. Good farmland can support far more people than are required to work it, so members of an agricultural society can become full-time specialists in other trades. This in turn means the establishment of towns and markets where craftsmen, merchants, and farmers can gather and trade goods, as well as the development of a coin-based economy. The necessity for laws and law enforcement are integral to an agricultural society, which, with plentiful food and labor specialization, has usually also developed luxury goods and the concept of personal property—definite ideas about rights regarding personal property.

**Trading and Specialized Groups:** Sometimes whole societies may live entirely by trade, acting as middlemen or specializing in producing goods (salt, spices, precious metals or stones, etc.) their neighbors need. Such societies are rare and at the mercy of changes in relationships with their client societies. War or disasters can sever their trade ties, destroying their economies.

**Combinations:** Many societies combine elements of the above types. Horticulturalists may supplement their food supplies through hunting and gathering or keeping animal herds, and so on.

## Technological Level

A society's technological level can be categorized as Stone Age, Bronze Age, or Iron Age. Once a new technology is invented, it spreads quickly as other groups quickly learn from the developers. Such borrowing societies may skip a technological stage, but their knowledge in other areas may not be as advanced.

**Stone Age:** Stone age people make tools of wood, bone, antler, and stone. The term *stone age* covers a great deal of technological accomplishments, from simple flaked-stone tools to highly polished, sharp, and durable axes and

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knives. Many stone age societies mine and quarry materials they find near the earth's surface. They often have domesticated dogs, though not usually other domesticated animals. Their shelters may be anything from caves to well-constructed stone or brick houses. Their pottery and cloth may be crude or highly refined. Stone age societies do not know how to smelt copper and other metals from ore, although some talented individuals may discover how to hammer gold and other soft metals they find.

**Bronze Age:** Bronze age technology begins when people develop the technique of melting copper-rich ores. Abundant copper leads to improvements in other technologies: copper-clad plows can till stonier ground than wooden plows, making more land available for agriculture; copper knives and hammers can be more durable than stone tools. And the same technology used for smelting copper ores also improves pottery firing techniques.

The discovery that bronze (a copper-tin alloy) is stronger than either copper or tin ushers a society into the Bronze Age. Bronze tends to be discovered by accident, when workers suddenly realize that the ore they have been smelting is not pure copper, but seems to be another, harder metal. Bronze weapons and armor are vastly superior to stone weapons and animal hide armor. Bronze-wielding warriors have a tremendous advantage over stone-wielding warriors—whether the latter are members of an enemy culture or less fortunate members of the bronze-wielding warriors' own society.

**Iron Age:** Iron is harder and more durable than bronze, but requires hotter fires to smelt. Wrought iron (forged on an anvil) can strengthen doors and windows and makes weapons and armor as superior to bronze as the latter is to copper or stone. Iron plows can bring even more land under cultivation.

Carbon steel is made by keeping the iron in hot charcoal for several days,

slowly adding carbon to the iron. The steel can be hardened by quenching it in water or oil. Societies with the knowledge of steelworking have incredible advantages over societies with less advanced technology.

### Population Levels and Settlements

The D&D® Rules Cyclopedia gives guidelines for population levels in civilized, borderland, and wilderness areas (see p. 139). Civilized areas are likely to have ample, fertile farmland, a relatively high population, and settlements ranging in size from hamlets to cities. Borderlands extend beyond the civilized areas, have fewer settlements and may even contain pockets of wilderness, but retain at least a few trappings of civilization—villages, forts, roads or trails (however overgrown), and so on. Wilderness is any area that's not yet settled. The lack of civilized settlements may be because the



area's remote, inhospitable, or home to ferocious creatures and other dangers.

The population figures in the *Cyclopedia* assume a 24-mile hex. If you're creating a detailed area map, you'll need to use another scale. As a rough guide, a 1-mile hex encompasses .85 square miles; an 8-mile hex represents 56 square miles; and a 24-mile hex represents 500 square miles. The following guidelines use population densities of the number of people per square mile to make it easier for you to adjust the figures to any map scale.

Population levels result from the complex interaction of terrain features, natural productivity of the area, and the techniques the inhabitants use to get their food from the land. Here are some guidelines to use when deciding how many people live in the area you're designing.

Because they are at the mercy of the land, nomads have the greatest space requirements of any type of society. Nomadic hunter-gatherers typically travel in bands of roughly a dozen adults and their children, although bands of up to 35 are possible. Loose association with other bands (usually through marriage) forms a tribe of 15–20 individual bands—about 500 people—who may sometimes gather in large groups for celebrations or to defend territory held in common. In terrain with average game and plant resources, each band member requires 10 square miles to sustain him. Thus, an average tribe requires roughly 5,000 square miles of territory; that works out to ten 24-mile hexes for the tribe. With such a low population density, the territories of nomadic hunter-gatherer societies qualify as wilderness areas.

The more reliable food supply of pastoralists leads to greater population densities. Even arid lands (desert and harsh steppes) can support one herder per square mile.

Horticulturalists or hunter-gatherers will eagerly settle in abundantly productive lands. Such lands can sustain a dozen people per square mile, and villages can have as many as 2,000 inhabitants. (These settlements qualify as villages, despite their high population, because they lack

such things as full-time police forces, merchant areas, and other features that distinguish villages from cities.) These settlements require reliable food sources, (a seasonal salmon run, for instance) and a means of storing preserved foods to carry the settlement through any seasonal lean times. Even with the relatively high population density, these areas qualify as wilderness. Except in the immediate vicinity of the village, the settlers leave the surrounding lands in a wild state.

Agriculture greatly increases a land's yield, allowing for greater population densities. Depending on the quality of the soil and their agricultural techniques, agriculturalists can support 25–100 people per square mile. With simple agricultural techniques, one square mile can support about 25 people. With true agricultural techniques (including irrigation, crop rotation, plows, soil fertilization, and other methods to keep land productive) one square mile can sustain as many as 100 people per square mile. Scattered farms and villages practicing agriculture qualify as borderland. Areas productive enough to support towns or many large villages qualify as civilized. The upper limits of population density in civilized areas (5,000 families, as given in the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia* on p. 139) work out to 50 people per square mile. The populations of cities and towns add to these base population figures.

**Villages, Towns, and Cities:** Sedentary societies tend to band together in settlements for mutual assistance and defense. Individual holdings, hamlets, and villages having up to 200 households (roughly 1,000 people) can be considered rural, with the majority of inhabitants making their living from the land.

Communities with 500 or more households—or with amenities such as mines, hospitals, or universities—are considered urban, with a greater proportion of the inhabitants earning their living from crafts, merchanting, and other means than those living off the land.

In most pre-industrial agricultural civilizations, about 90% of the population is rural while only 10% live in towns and

cities. The ratio of urban to rural dwellers can rise as high as 40–50% of the total as long as the surrounding area can support the increase in non-agricultural specialists. Although some pre-industrial cities reach population levels of a million inhabitants, these are rare. Only supercities supported by royalty, a national government, or the production of a tremendously valuable commodity can attain and sustain population levels of 100,000 or more people. During the Middle Ages (the technological level most prevalent on Mystara), big cities usually had closer to 20,000 inhabitants—usually fewer. Even a town of 5,000 is usually thought of as large by most people.

As you develop your setting's villages, towns, and cities, try to make sure that your urban populations don't greatly outbalance your rural populations. (A ratio of 80% rural population to 20% urban works well in a standard medieval setting.) Also if communities are too close together, they will compete with one another for the available resources and wealth. This may result in one community dissolving in poverty while the other prospers, or it may result in constant conflict between the two communities. External sources of income (trade, etc. with distant neighbors) can solve this problem for one or both of the communities.

**Changing Population Levels:** A great many factors affect an area's population: the availability of food and other resources, the presence or absence of predators and other dangers, disease, war, famine, and so on.

Some factors are less tangible. A society that believes their patron Immortals wish them to rule the world produce a larger, more aggressive population than a society following a way of life emphasizing peace and harmony with nature. Societies with access to effective medicines or magical healing tend to have larger populations than those whose populations are at the mercy of every disease or injury. Some societies grow faster than others for purely biological reasons. Long-lived elves and dwarves have fewer children in a given decade than humans





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or halflings, and some humanoid races are notorious for population explosions.

When building your world, add up population growth yearly, rather than monthly. The figures for population growth in the *Cyclopedia* (p. 139) are based on monthly growth, and you should change them to reflect annual population growth, or you will have massive overpopulation in no time. For example, in one good year with few accidents the population of just one wilderness tribe would increase sevenfold—from roughly 50 families to 350!

Of course, some of a population's annual growth can be explained by immigration, especially in prosperous countries that attract citizens from other nations. The figures also apply primarily to human populations; demihumans and humanoids may have higher or lower population growth rates.

Although most populations will increase over time, disaster periodically lowers population levels—sometimes drastically. Famine is a good example. A bad growing season, war, crop blight, locust swarms, drought, or floods can destroy an area's crops, reducing the population by 2d6% for each month it lasts. A bad plague can easily kill 10–60% of a nation's urban population, plus another 10–40% of its rural population. Plague spreads quickly in crowded cities, and fleeing citizens may carry death with them to neighboring towns, cities, and nations. In really bad times (oppressive government, continual near-famine, etc.), entire villages may pack up and leave.

It rarely takes long for a population to recover, however. Even before life returns to business as usual, dispossessed immigrants from neighboring, possibly overcrowded lands will begin to stream into the area, filling in the gaps in the work force left by those who died.

### Developing a Government

Every society has a government—a recognized means of settling disputes, organizing community actions, and so forth.

The type of government depends on the history, culture, economics, and environment of the society. No two governments are exactly alike in every way. Governments also change over time, through coups d'état, revolutions, or reformations.

Nomadic hunter-gatherers have simple governments. They rarely have a recognized tribal leader. Important decisions, such as when and where to move, are determined by discussion. The elder members of society may settle disputes, basing their decisions on traditions and customs rather than laws. Tribe members who are particularly skilled in an activity may lead tribal activities such as hunts, raids, and the like, but these are not permanent or hereditary positions.

Some bands or tribes have a chief, usually someone they trust to make the best decisions about where the tribe will hunt, where to camp for the season, and other activities affecting the band. Such chiefs rarely have absolute authority—they rule by persuasion. A few consecutive bad decisions usually mean that the band will select a new chief.

Empires, on the other hand, have large, complicated governments. The emperor typically governs through appointed bureaucratic officials and innumerable layers of administrative departments. Each of the empire's subject nations may have its own governing body as well; these handle internal affairs while reporting to a central imperial authority.

Here are some additions to the list of government types presented on p. 259 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*.

**Anarchy:** The absence of government. Most anarchies result from the collapse of a government. In the absence of a central authority, the strong often bully the weak, and may form a new government with the strongest in charge. True, durable anarchies can occur when members of the society cooperate—hunter-gatherer bands, for example. Such anarchies are impractical in societies whose members are greedy or jealous.

**Aristocracy:** Government by an elite group—usually the highest social class. Ideally, the aristocracy contains the peo-

ple most fit to rule: i.e., those who will rule capably, with the interests of the nation in mind. In reality, most aristocracies involve nobility who inherit wealth, status, and titles having little or nothing to do with the merits of the individuals.

**Bureaucracy:** Government by bureaus and departments and their chiefs. Power is split among the various groups, each of which performs one and only one function. Bureaus may be in charge of the military; in charge of law enforcement; with keeping up the roads, bridges, and fords; assessing and collecting taxes, and so on. Gnomes are particularly fond of bureaucracies.

**Divinarchy:** Government by soothsay-ers and diviners. A divinarchy can also be a government run with the help knowl-edge granted by the Immortals. With greedy or ruthless officials, such a gov-ernment is likely to take advantage of its foreknowledge to expand its control over neighboring lands as well as its own peo-ple. On the other hand, a divinarchical government with a strong sense of fair play has a definite advantage when it comes to rooting out corrupt officials.

**Hierocracy:** Government by clerics, organized by rank, a single High Priest or a High Council holds absolute authority. Hierocracies do not claim that their laws and decisions come directly from the Immortals, or that governing clerics always speak for those Immortals. Gov-ernments ruled by those in holy orders—not necessarily with a strict hierarchy of rank—is called a *bagarchy*.

**Plutocracy:** Government by the wealthy. A ruling council of merchant-princes or other wealthy members constitutes a plutocracy. If positions in the ruling body are hereditary, the govern-ment may be an aristocracy as well.

**Your Own Government:** Keep your players on their toes by developing unique governments. Is your society matriarchal (ruled by women), patriarchal (ruled by men), or egalitarian? What bureaus, departments, bodies, or groups does the government include: parlia-ments, congresses, courts, etc.? Do the rulers rule by force, charisma (popular



vote), tradition (inherited titles), or rationalism (I'm the best fighter, so I should rule the nation in time of war)? If the government has a monarch, is he a figurehead or does he hold true power? Does the government suppress opposition forcefully or by some other means?

Are government positions and power hereditary, granted by appointment or election, attained through competition, or ordained by signs from the Immortals? How and when can bad rulers be deposed or replaced? Does a ruler rule for a fixed term, until age has robbed him of strength or magic, or until death?

Governments can also be overthrown. In a coup d'état, an individual or group ousts the rulers (usually by force) and takes control of the government. Revolutionaries overthrow the political system itself—its laws and organizations—as well as the people who used to rule.

Societal problems can lead to uprisings. Disputes between opposing factions of the ruling class; the rise of a charismatic leader or a new philosophy among the people; unequal distribution of wealth or power; and oppressive laws and taxation can all lead to rebellion.

**Regional and Local Governments:** Empires, large nations, and densely populated areas may need regional governments between local and national governments. These regional communities may be called by different names—baronies, counties, duchies, cantons, principalities, kingdoms (when part of a governing empire)—depending on how the nation organizes itself.

Villages, towns, and cities often have their own local government as well. Villages may be governed democratically with village meetings, or by a village headman or council of elders. City governments may be patterned after the national government. Merchant and craft guilds may become the basis for a democratic government or an oligarchy.

### Social Status

Nomadic hunter-gatherers and pastoralists have no social classes; an indi-

vidual's status is determined by his or her ability to acquire food through hunting, raiding, or gathering; the size and health of a pastoralist's herd determines his or her status. Sedentary cultures, on the other hand, develop intricate social hierarchies based on occupation and class. People practicing certain professions (sage, smith, warrior, etc.) may enjoy greater status than people in other occupations (tanner, grave-digger, beggar). The prestige or stigma attached to each occupation varies from culture to culture.

One thing to consider when working out a social hierarchy is whether the culture uses a rigid caste system or an open class system. In a rigid caste system, birth determines status, which has little chance of changing within the person's lifetime. Castes may be organized along occupational lines (children following their parents' occupation) or along racial lines (certain races are treated as second-class citizens or held in slavery). In some caste-based societies, semi-independent organizations such as the military or a clerical order may offer the means to gain higher status than normally allowed.

Open class systems offer some freedom in status; talented or persevering individuals may rise in status regardless of birth.

Status can greatly affect many aspects of a person's life: whom he may marry, whether she can read, what job he may—or must—hold, and even if she is permitted to travel outside the boundaries of her town.

### Ethics and Beliefs

Every culture believes its ethics and beliefs are right and good; many also hold that opposing ethics and beliefs are wrong or evil. Most societies are complex mixtures of good and evil, and citizens rarely agree unanimously which actions and beliefs fall into which category.

You may need an indisputably evil enemy for the characters in your campaign to strive against, even a society that practices everything the player characters consider evil. Or you may wish to create a nation with wise rulers and peaceful

citizens for Lawful characters to belong to. Neutral cultures are perhaps more realistic, with citizens and government officials displaying the full range of ethics and emotional viewpoints—from greed to generosity, selfishness to selflessness, violence to pacifism.

A culture's patron Immortals also influence a society's ethics and beliefs. A nation that honors the Immortal Asterius in his aspect of the Patron of Thievery will have quite different beliefs and customs than one that honors Zirchev, patron of the forest folk.

You can also play against characters' expectations by creating a society with surprising belief systems—ores following the precepts of Law, for instance, or forest dwarves who have adopted the ways of the druids.

### Customs

If your new setting is populated by any intelligent creatures, one of the first things you must do is decide how they think and act and what's important to them. You need to create a culture for them. Culture is the sum total of everything not instinctual—that is, everything taught or learned. This includes laws, manners, beliefs, and so on.

With innumerable cultures—and some settlements' histories spanning close to 10,000 years—the real world is an endless inspiration for customs and ways of fictional societies. As you develop the cultural setting of a new area, read a little bit about Earth cultures similar to the one you envision in the new setting.

A culture's customs include rites and rituals surrounding birth, reaching adulthood, marriage, and death. Many societies have customs governing diet and food preparation. Certain foods may be prohibited or reserved for rituals—cultures that believe totem animals often forbid killing or eating those animals. Some customs call for strict methods of preparing food before it is considered "clean." Other groups believe that eating the flesh of certain animals will give them that animal's characteristics: a group may believe





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that eating lion meat, for example, will give a person great strength and courage.

Customs may also dictate relationships between a society's members. Many cultures discourage a groom from seeing his bride before the wedding. Some believe a man looking upon or speaking to his mother-in-law will cause her death. Custom often governs inheritance after death, and succession to power.

Customs may change over time, or apply differently to different segments of society. Warriors who die in battle may merit different death rites than people who succumb to accident, disease, or simple old age. Likewise, customs observed by the common people may differ from those followed by nobility. Some traditions die out as society evolves.

**Birth Rites:** In most cultures, the birth of a child is a joyous occasion. There is usually a naming ceremony shortly after birth, and often a ritual that welcomes the child into the spiritual community. Some cultures wait until the child is older before granting a permanent name, especially if the infant mortality rate is high.

**Puberty Rites:** Puberty marks the social transition from child to adult. Customs of puberty range from initiating the youngster into the secrets of adult society through painful or frightening trials to granting permission to drink alcohol.

**Marriage Rites:** Some societies encourage or enforce monogamy; others value polygamy. Marriage may require a dowry payment. The ceremony may be brief—the bride and groom simply announce their marriage—or highly elaborate. Clerics often sanctify marriages with rituals, and a feast and dance often follow. Custom also dictates the husband's and wife's duties and whether divorce is permitted.

**Death Rites:** A society's beliefs about the afterlife greatly influences its death rites. Funerals may be marked by grief or rage at the departure of the deceased, or by joy in the expected rebirth. Disposal of the body is handled in a variety of ways: burial, funeral pyres, and mummification are common solutions. Other societies send the body out to sea on a

resplendent boat, some leave its disposal to nature, and some even teleport it away to another place or—if the society is very conscientious—another plane. Some societies fear the spirits of the dead will come back to haunt them, and practice elaborate rituals designed to prevent this.

### Laws

Customs become laws when they're codified and enforced by police, judges, and punishments. Codes of law may range from lists of commandments handed down by an Immortal to elaborate statutes and legal processes only highly trained lawyers can understand.

In general, urban laws are stricter and more complex than rural laws. They deal with the problems caused by dense populations; everything from thievery and murder to whose duty it is to sweep the street in front of a shop. National laws often enforce certain morals and beliefs, and govern commerce and other relationships between communities.

Some judicial systems leave the decision of guilt or innocence to a single person; others require a committee or jury's consensus; others prefer a trial by combat that leaves the decision to chance or the Immortals—and appeals may or may not be allowed. On Mystara, magic (*detect evil, know alignment*, and similar spells) can ease the pursuit of truth and justice.

Most systems of justice that strive to be just or fair try to fit the punishment to the crime. Possible punishments include fines, corporal punishment (whippings; or the loss of a hand, nose, ear, and so on), public humiliation or punishment, incarceration, change of status, exile, and execution.

As you create your society's legal system, try to make the laws and enforcement procedures fit the society. Societies ruled by despots or tyrants will have harsh, oppressive laws. Those at war with neighboring cultures will be on the lookout for spies. Good societies usually have legal procedures to determine guilt or innocence, while evil societies may allow little or no defense. Laws do not

always apply equally to everyone—the ruling class may be immune.

You should also consider how laws can affect the player characters. If even petty thievery is punishable by death, make sure any PC members of the thief class understand that. Either make it impossible for a would-be thief to even try to steal something (well-armed police or magical guardians are crawling all over the place), or allow some chance of survival if caught—bribery, trial by combat or fire to prove innocence (even if guilty), escape from prison, and so on.

### Daily Life

A population's day-to-day life is usually spent earning a living—hunting, farming, manufacturing goods, and so forth. But once the necessary chores are out of the way, people can spend their time on hobbies or social activities.

The amount of time a person needs to devote to daily chores depends on occupation and lifestyle. There's a lot more work involved in the upkeep of a farm—with its animals, crops, tools, buildings, and so on—than there is for a hunting band's encampment. Even in semi-desert lands, nomadic hunters enjoy a lot of spare time, spending fewer than 40 hours a week hunting or gathering food.

Your society may have as many subcultures as you wish. In a caste system, each caste forms its own subculture. Likewise, empires stretching over large territories usually encompass many different cultures, united by law, force, or some combination of both.

Remember that an area's terrain, climate, and productivity (or lack thereof) will greatly affect the people living there. A mountain community is very different from a city situated in the middle of a plain, even if the people speak the same language and adhere to the same laws.

### Language

The members of a culture often share a language while neighboring cultures speak their own tongues. Neighboring





cultures with different customs and beliefs may sometimes share a language or similar dialects of a parent language.

Civilizations spanning multiple cultures use different languages. One language is usually adopted as the official language of court and legal proceedings.

Trade languages (lingua francas or pidgins) often result from communication and commerce between cultures speaking different languages.

There are many real-world languages you can base made-up languages on. Some sound harsh and guttural while others sound soft and fluid. A language that sounds right for your culture will help in naming places and people.

**Writing:** Also, agricultural or trading societies are the most likely to develop a way of keeping records, often in the form of writing. Merchants need a reliable way to keep track of the large quantities of trade goods that they handle, the local temple needs a way to keep track of offerings brought to their patron Immortal, etc. And once a method of recording information is invented, others quickly seize upon it to record legends and histories, to send messages, and so on.

## Developing Economies

The more the player characters travel through your setting, the more they become involved with its economy. After all, the characters adventure in part to earn their living, and even if they don't

buy townhouses and fine clothing, they must still buy gear and food. A realistic economy is more than just a very good means of separating the characters from their money, though. It's the backbone of every nation, city, and village they visit.

An economy is simply the means by which a society manages its most important resources: land and people. The land provides food, water, and raw materials; people provide labor and skills.

A nation's economy can be based on either private enterprise or central control. With private enterprise, individuals—merchant princes, plantation owners, or innkeepers and farmers with their own land—own most businesses. Consumers buy goods, and the money is paid back to workers as wages. Supply and demand determine what is made and what price must be paid. When a product becomes scarce, its price rises, encouraging increased production. In this economy, some people wind up rich while others wind up very poor.

In a centralized economy, the government tries to control production, distribution, and consumption of goods. This requires a well developed bureaucracy—such as an empire—and is never easy to succeed with. The government tells farmers how much of which crops to sow, miners how much ore of what type to extract from the ground, weavers how much homespun and silk to make, and so on. The complexity of a nation's economy makes centralization prone to mistakes and oversights—grain rots in warehouses in one province while peasants in another province starve. Because of problems like these, nations with centralized economies often maintain large standing armies to quell uprisings among the dissatisfied.

Most national economies mix private enterprise and centralization. A government, for example, may pass laws prohibiting price fixing or forbidding guild or business monopolies, or it may monopolize some goods or services. When private enterprise is strong—in the hands of merchant princes with their own military

forces, for instance—it can force the government to let them do pretty much what they want.

Large governments play an enormous role in a nation's economy. Government officials decide how much treasury money to spend on roads and canals for transportation of armies and goods. Some "enlightened" nations also educate and provide for their citizens' health and welfare—this may increase future production, but at the expense of current resources. Remember that governments also employ many soldiers, bureaucrats, tax collectors, and so on. Most governments also control police, fire fighters, armies, and other vital services that private enterprise can't easily provide.

## Goods

As you develop a setting's economy, consider its resources, its level of technology, and its people's skills.

The Dominion rules in the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia* suggest some typical resources (p. 140). Unless the player characters will manage the local natural resources (i.e., they are dominion rulers), you can make do with just a general idea of what's available. But be logical about what's available. Desert nomads are likely to have animal resources and perhaps some mineral resources, such as salt. A riverside community on a small plain next to a forest will be rich in animal and vegetable resources: timber, fuel, and wild game in the woods; domestic animals and crops on the farmland; fish and waterfowl from the river.

Next, decide what the society makes with its resources. Nomadic herders may make only as much milk, meat, and hides as they can use, with little or nothing left over for trade. A more diversified society may weave baskets from grasses, make pottery from clay, jewelry from gold and silver mines, and swords renowned for their keen edge and unbreakable blades from their steel works.

Finally, decide which surplus goods the society will trade. Once again, a general idea is enough.



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### Trade

Once societies begin to trade with one another, they develop trade routes: trails, roads, and navigable waterways. Nations with extensive and well-kept roads can quickly move surplus food into a famine-stricken area, move armies and their supplies to national borders in need of protection, and enjoy lively internal and foreign trade.

Remember that transportation methods vary. Carts and wagons require good roads with no potholes or washouts, as well as reliable fords, ferries, and bridges. Pack animals or human porters may be all that can make it through rough terrain or over bad roads.

Canoes and other small boats can negotiate rapids and dangerous streams, but can't carry much more than a few hundred pounds of cargo. Barges and rafts are made for carrying cargo, but do best on quiet, slow rivers. A nation on a sea coast will probably have coastal vessels or even a navy. Seagoing ships transport goods from nation to nation.

A fantasy campaign can also have magical transportation. Magic-rich nations may have fleets of *flying carpets* or skyships to transport goods quickly over any terrain. Merchants may hire magic-users to *teleport* important packages. Even *boots of speed* or *boots of traveling and leaping* can help. How about entire wagon caravans equipped with *horse-shoes of speed* and *square wheels* to allow rapid transport across mountains?

### Buying and Selling

Very simply, people swap their surplus for things they need or want that they can't make themselves. The simplest form of exchange is bartering one thing for another. Barter can become very complicated very quickly, however, since people must use promises as currency. If a hunter needs a stone ax, he might swap some food with someone in his tribe who's hungry in return for that person's promise to make him a new set of clothes. The hunter then could trade

that promise to a third person for the stone ax. When complicated trades like this occur often, there's often confusion when it's time to collect: people often forget the sequence of promises, and arguments follow. Adventurers visiting barter-based societies may be asked to help unravel such cases: those who have *rings of truth* will be quite popular. Most cultures eventually develop a currency in response to these problems: see "Money," below.

Merchants and traders are middlemen who bring goods to the customers—a fighter who wants a fine steel blade doesn't have to spend a month traveling to another nation for it. Of course, merchants want a profit for their trouble.

Markets and fairs bring buyers and sellers together. Most towns have at least a weekly market to which local farmers bring their produce. Many markets, especially food markets, are held daily. Large annual fairs may become so well known that people come from hundreds of miles with their wares to sell and money to spend. Some markets specialize in one type of goods—fish markets, livestock fairs, etc. Others, like the traditional bazaar, offer arrays of many goods.

### Money

As a society's products diversify and trade increases, people begin to want a convenient medium of exchange—something with an accepted value that can be exchanged for a variety of goods and services. Money, in other words.

Ideally, money is easy to transport and maintains a stable value. If people think their money is losing its value—if they believe the government is mixing base metals into their gold coins, for instance—the entire currency system can collapse. Inflation soars as people demand more and more coins for even simple things like a loaf of bread.

**Coins:** Money comes in many different forms. On Mystara, metal coins are the most common medium. You may want the ease of having all the nations in your campaign use the denominations listed in

the conversion chart on p. 62 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*. One nation's gold piece would then be worth any other nation's gold piece. But this doesn't mean a gold piece has to be called a gold piece. One nation may have pesos while another has rupees and a third mints denarii, or yen.

If you and your players don't mind the added record keeping, you can make national coinage more realistic and a lot more varied. You can even change prices and currency exchange rates from nation to nation.

**Other currencies:** Anything can be used as money, as long as everyone agrees to accept it in transactions. For example, people on Mystara often use gems, either raw or cut, for large transactions. Beads, cowry shells, and even enormous carved stones have been used as money on Earth. (In the case of the stones, ownership was ritually transferred during transactions, though the stones themselves were not moved.)

If you wish to introduce new currency types into your own world, you might use quartz crystals with *continual light* cast on them. Perhaps you might like them magically colored, with each color indicating a different value. Or you might introduce carved whale or dragon teeth; wooden beads strung on threads in denominations of five, ten, twenty, and fifty; or even fire beetle glands which lose their value as they lose their glow.

### Banking

As player characters in your campaign accumulate wealth and valuable goods, they may quickly feel the need of someplace safe to put it while they're out adventuring for more. You may find that developing a banking system for your campaign is vital to the player characters' happiness.

Temples are popular places to deposit wealth, as local beliefs and respect for the Immortals tend to keep thieves away. Some clerical orders allow free deposits of coins and valuables in their vaults; others expect donations to the temple in

return. Foreign thieves or invaders often have no regard for local beliefs and no compunction against ransacking temples—as long as those temples aren't consecrated to an Immortal they honor.

The government treasury is another safe place to deposit money. If the government uses the deposited money, it will give the depositor back the full amount, plus some extra—government bonds, in effect. The problem with government treasuries is their tendency to confiscate the deposits in times of war—or whenever the government falls into the hands of unscrupulous rulers.

Private bankers offer safer, more reliable safekeeping of valuables. They may start out as goldsmiths, merchants, or money changers who have their own security systems for protecting their business. As more and more people deposit their money with a private banker, the banker may begin to offer other banking services as well: loans, money changing, transferring money between accounts, and paying interest on savings deposits.

True banks (as commercial enterprises) arise first in big cities. They may be backed by city funds, the national government, or *extremely* wealthy individuals or private groups. In societies that have advanced past the typical medieval level, banks may issue bank notes (a promise to pay to the bearer a specified amount) instead of coins or bullion—paper money.

**Deposits:** Banks willingly accept valuables for safekeeping or a deposit of money on account. Valuables are placed in a vault or another secured area until the owner wants them back. Banks usually charge a fee for safeguarding valuables; an annual charge of one or two percent of the value of the goods, for example.

When someone deposits money on account, the bank credits the amount to the depositor's account—making a record of the transaction and the account's balance, and possibly charging a fee for the deposit. The bank then uses the money to make loans and other investments. Banks that do well with their investments

may waive the depositor's fees or credit the account with periodic interest.

**Money Changing:** Bankers may also keep foreign coins on hand to exchange for local currency. They also accept foreign currency for exchange with local coins, and can change large denominations into smaller ones and vice versa. Merchants who want to bring foreign currency on their travels or adventurers who are new in town find this service handy. Banks rarely change gems or valuables into money, unless the local currency includes such items or unless they're sure a jeweler or merchant will buy the gems. Money changing comes with a price tag—up to 10% of the value of the money exchanged.

**Checks:** Some banks will honor a depositor's written request to pay money to a third party. But people won't accept checks as payment unless they think that they can exchange them for cash without too much trouble. Of course, many banks charge fees for checking privileges.

**Loans:** Wealthy people often invest in loans that they're confident will be paid back with interest. Banks and governments may also lend money, usually against collateral. Lenders may charge simple or compound interest.

Some societies frown on or prohibit charging interest on loans. However, most people would rather not lend money with no hope of profit. People with money don't have a chance to back businesses, which in turn slows economic growth. On the other hand, clever bankers and merchants can find ways around such prohibitive laws.

### Taxes

Only governments with well developed administrative and law enforcement agencies can rely on taxation as a sizeable source of revenue. In a barter-based society, taxes are paid in kind, in goods and services (much of feudal Europe worked this way.) Governments that cannot reliably collect taxes from the population usually rely on border, bridge, and road tolls. Poll taxes are popular with govern-

ments, as collection doesn't require much skill, but unpopular with the populace—everyone, rich or poor, pays the same amount.

**Fixing Tax Revenues:** The dominion rules in the *Cyclopedia* are designed to force player character rulers to adventure in order to pay their dominion's bills. The tax revenue figures on page 140 of the *Cyclopedia* assume that a gold piece is roughly equivalent to \$10 of today's money. A D&D® gold piece cannot feed a peasant family of five for a year, as a single gold coin could in medieval times. Even keeping to that level of inflation, the 10 gp per month Standard Income figure (taxes paid in goods and services) is too high. Take, for example, a peasant family of five. Each one, working as an unskilled laborer, earns an average of 5 gp per month (1 gp apiece) if you assume their labor is worth the same as their military services (per the cost of a Normal Man mercenary in the *Cyclopedia*, p. 133). Demanding an extra 10 gp of labor from those five peasants is unrealistic.

To determine your area's tax revenues, you must either decrease its Standard Income and direct Tax paid or increase the peasant family's income—thereby increasing the government's costs to hire mercenaries and laborers for building roads and other civic construction.

You may wish to use the following tax-revenue guidelines instead of those in the *Cyclopedia*. They assume an average income of 10 sp a month for each inhabitant. Of this, half is spent on food. Also, 80% of the population are assumed to be agricultural peasants and the remaining 20% may make up to four times as much as the agricultural workers. In a balanced economy, half the total tax revenues come from farmland, while the other half comes from cities. Adjust the figures for nations with per capita incomes less than or greater than 10 sp a month: don't forget to adjust prices as well. Player characters in a thriving urban economy should very quickly lose their hard-earned gold to wining, dining, and fine clothes!

**Standard Tax Income:** Urban areas generate more revenue than rural areas,



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both because their economies are usually based on currency and because they have more people. Both prices and incomes are higher in cities than in villages, and the table reflects this. Note that the taxes listed are per person, not per family. As averages, they include everyone, male or female, young or old, regardless of productivity.

Settlement	Average
Type	Tax Revenue
Cities	5 sp/month
Towns	3 sp/month
Villages & Farms	1 sp/month
Borderlands	5 cp/month
Wilderness	not taxable

**Other Taxes:** Most governments also gather merchant taxes, bridge and road tolls, and fees of all sorts. If you feel like doing the math, merchant taxes on imported goods generate 1–2 cp a month per inhabitant, as long as the government can regulate all traffic entering the area. Road tolls net an average revenue of 1 cp per 100 inhabitants each month, and are usually collected at city or town gates. Bridge tolls provide an average of 5 cp per 100 inhabitants each month. Of course, successful adventurers are favorite targets of the tax collectors, typically having to give up 25–50% of their adventure-won treasure to taxes and fees.

**Tax Distribution:** Of the taxes people must pay in cash, 70% goes to the local ruler (town council, baron, etc.); 20% goes to the nation's treasury; and 10% goes to clerical organizations. These ratios may change depending on who holds the most power at the moment. Weak governments may be unable to collect their share of taxes, leaving more in the hands of the local rulers; strong clerical organizations may demand more than 10%, and so forth.

## The Dynamic Campaign

Few societies are completely static—nor should they be. Help your setting come alive by giving it a history and a

future. Knowing an area's history, at least in general terms, gives the campaign a sense of depth. Letting the player characters discover changes as the setting evolves—either in response to player character actions or as an aside to the campaign's adventures—makes the setting seem much more real.

### History

Every nation or people has a history. When creating your setting's history, the first thing to decide is how long your area has been the way it is. Did dramatic changes in weather and climate or earthquakes, volcanoes, or the whims of the Immortals change it drastically? Were there previous inhabitants such as other humans, demihumans, or nasty humanoid monsters? If so, are any left? How did the current inhabitants get there? When they moved in, did they clear forests, build cities, dam rivers, or irrigate the desert? What other changes have the environment or the society undergone?

Don't forget neighboring societies in your history: historical events greatly affect current relationships. An area's history may include wars, treaties and alliances, and mutual endeavors with surrounding people. Think about the effects such events would have—border changes, shared development of technological or magical inventions, etc.

Your history should also include events such as revolutions, the rise of popular or very unpopular rulers, movements and changes in the society's beliefs (the appearance—and perhaps disappearance—of prophets or other reformers), prosperity under one dynasty and economic ruin under another, and so on.

### Future History

Once you have a general idea of your setting's history and perhaps some specific details about certain events, you can build a future on its past. Many events progress logically over time. Societies that warred in the past are likely to war again when a fresh grievance arises. Wars

raging in the present must end sometime. Even in peaceful societies, secret followers of a long-dead prophet or madman may grow in power and suddenly burst on the scene. Volcanoes or other natural disasters which happened in the past may happen again in the future.

It's helpful to list future events for your area. You can set dates or get the player characters involved in an event whenever it would add to the story you're building in your campaign.

### The Here and Now

Current events in your campaign should have their roots in the setting's past and extend tendrils of consequences into your setting's future. It's all right to have a few isolated events now and then, but a sense of progression through time adds depth to the campaign. Let the setting's historical events inspire present events in internal politics, diplomacy, and even aspects of daily life.

For example, if a tyrant has recently come to power and has not yet been overthrown, there are bound to be plots and counter-plots in the new government and unrest within the populace. The deposed government may have an ace up its sleeve, perhaps the previous ruler's heir. This can spawn adventures involving spies, kidnappers, assassins, and desperate chases through city streets.

Or perhaps a seemingly insignificant event of the past—the disappearance of a minor nobleman and his fortune a year ago—is the key to crucial diplomatic negotiations currently going on between the government and a neighboring nation. The government suspects foul play on the part of the neighboring nation's spy network and is threatening war, while in reality the nobleman eloped with his lady-love from across the border; the two are simply trying to live quietly under an assumed name in a third nation.

Historical events also affect daily life: just think of all the holidays honoring past events or people—birthdays, commemorations of discoveries, Independence Day celebrations, and so on.

### New Spells

These spells are useful to skyship designers or pilots. Some, such as *float in air*, are most useful for enchanting skyship frames (or interiors) with magical effects. Others, such as *calm winds*, are most often cast in flight.

When adapting spells to the enchantment process, the resulting enchantments are not necessarily limited to the same range, duration, and effect as the base spells. (See "Making Magical Items," pp. 250–255 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*.) DMs should interpret a spell's enchantment results in a way most suitable to the campaign. If powerful magic items are rare in the campaign, enchantments should have many of the same limitations of the base spells. If the campaign abounds in powerful magic items, enchantments can greatly exceed the normal limits of the base spells. The enchantment results described in "Building a Skyship," p. 12, try to strike a balance between the two extremes.

Skyship designers are high-level spellcasters who may have developed customized spells and enchantments. (See "Spell Research," p. 255 of the *Cyclopedia*, for guidelines on creating new spells and enchantments.) How about an enchantment similar to a *bag of holding* that increases a skyship's Cargo Capacity?

### Clear Sight

**Spell Level:** 1 (Magical)

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** 2 rounds per level of caster

**Effect:** Makes distant spot look close

When this spell is cast, any spot up to one mile distant can be viewed as if it were only 10' away. The person affected by the spell need only pick a spot and concentrate his attention on it and the image becomes larger. The area viewed is a circle up to 70' in diameter. This spell is especially handy for identifying distant flying objects or scouting a landing place from the air. It also forms the basis for enchanting *spyglasses*.

### Float In Air

**Spell Level:** 1 (Magical)

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** 6 + 1 turns/level of the caster

**Effect:** One object (up to 4,000 cns) floats in air

This spell allows an object to float in air as though it were in water. The object does not rise when the spell is cast—it must be moved to the desired height. Its encumbrance is reduced by 80% while the spell is in effect, allowing heavy objects to be easily moved horizontally as well as vertically.

The air around the base of the object acts like water, and resists movement—the object will not bob about with the slightest air current. Objects that do not normally float in water will *float in air* as though they were made of cork. Odd-shaped objects may not remain upright!

This spell may be cast on a character, allowing the character and up to 2,000 cns of equipment to *float in air*.

### Heat Air

**Spell Level:** 1 (Druidical)

**Range:** 120'

**Duration:** 3 turns per level of caster

**Effect:** Heats 100' diameter sphere of air

This spell heats 540,000 cubic feet of air (roughly a 100' diameter sphere) to a temperature high enough to provide lighter-than-air lift. The spell does not have to heat the air continuously—when the spell is cast, it can be commanded to be "off" half the time, doubling its duration. For example, a fifth-level druid could command either one heating lasting two and a half hours, or five half-hour heatings spaced out over five hours.

Each half hour of heating air in an enclosed container such as a balloon provides an altitude gain of 1000' (roughly 100 yards per turn), with a Lift Capacity of 30 tons. Each half hour that the spell is *not* used to heat the air results in an altitude loss of 1000' (100 yards per turn—until the enclosing balloon or what have you reaches the ground, of course).

For every 3 tons a vessel's Tonnage exceeds the Lift Capacity provided by the *heat air* spell, decrease the altitude gained by 100', and increase the altitude lost when the air is no longer heated by a similar 100'. For every 3 tons of Lift Capacity exceeding the vessel's Tonnage, increase the altitude gained by 100'; decrease the altitude lost when the air is no longer heated by a similar 100'.

If the *heat air* spell is used to heat less than 540,000 cubic feet of air, increase altitude gain by 100' for every 10,000 cubic foot decrease in the volume of air heated. Do *not* increase altitude lost when the air is no longer being actively heated (the balloon or whatever will still lose 1000' per half hour, adjusted for Tonnage).

This spell can provide the basis for an enchanted balloon or other container that increases or decreases altitude on command.

At the DM's option, magic-users or wokani (non-human magic-users) may learn this spell as well. Gnomish spellcasters are almost certain to know it!

### Ollskin

**Spell Level:** 1 (Magical)

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** 2 turns per level of caster

**Effect:** Protects one creature from precipitation

This spell prevents fog, rain, hail, and other forms of precipitation from touching the creature (or small object) it is cast upon. Precipitation comes within an inch of the creature's body, but strikes an invisible barrier and does not penetrate to the clothes or skin. The barrier does not affect any kind of missile or other object, only natural precipitation.

A creature under this spell can see clearly in driving rain because none gets into his eyes. The spell is often used to protect crew working the decks of a skyship in bad weather. It can also form the basis of an enchantment to keep the skyship herself from getting wet—it's a good way to cut down on shipboard accidents caused by slippery decks!

# Skyship Magic

## Displacer Field

**Spell Level:** 2 (Magical)

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** 6 turns

**Effect:** Bends light rays, makes the subject appear to be next to his actual position

This spell produces an effect similar to a *displacement cloak*. The caster and everything he's carrying appear to be 5' from their actual position. This grants a +2 bonus to saving throws vs. spell, wand/staff/rod, and turn to stone attacks. Hand-to-hand attacks by opponents are penalized by -2, and most missile fire automatically misses. The spell may be cast on someone other than the caster. It may also be cast on inanimate objects man-sized or smaller.

Name-level magic-users (9th level and higher) can make this an area effect spell, displacing the images of everything within a radius of 5' per level. Skyships enchanted with this effect cannot be hit by non-magical siege weapons; ram attacks against them are at -2.

## Climate

**Spell Level:** 3 (Magical)

**Range:** Immediate area, 8,000 cubic feet

**Duration:** 1 hour per level of caster

**Effect:** Maintains specific temperature, humidity, etc.

When cast, this affects an area up to 8,000 cubic feet (a 20'x20'x20' area) and changes the climate to the caster's liking.

The spell cannot change a harmful environment into a safe one (airless areas must first be filled with a *create air* spell), or make a normal environment hostile (by bringing on blistering heat, etc.). But it can keep a skyship warm in the cold upper reaches of the atmosphere.

Skyship enchanters may cast this spell on a room and use *permanence* to make it last. Each room may thus be a different, unvarying temperature; the captain's cabin could always be a dry 70°, while a room near the galley kept at 40° could serve as a refrigerator. (This spell *cannot* create a freezer except by enchantment.)

## Dispel Fog

**Spell Level:** 3 (Magical)

**Range:** 20' per level of caster

**Duration:** permanent

**Effect:** Removes fog from area

This spell eliminates normal and magical fog from a spherical area with the diameter indicated by the spell's range. Only fog, mist, and normal clouds are affected—not bodies of water, rain or other precipitation, or storm clouds. The fog dispelled is gone permanently, but the area may be filled by new fog pouring in from around it. A *dispelled* area stays clear for one turn per level of the caster regardless of other conditions.

## Create Atmosphere

**Spell Level:** 4 (Magical)

**Range:** Immediate area, 8,000 cubic feet

**Duration:** 1 hour per level of caster

**Effect:** Creates air and holds it in place

This spell is similar to the *create air* spell, except that it holds the air within an 8,000 cubic-foot space. It's thus ideal for spacegoing vessels—normal *create air* spells and enchantments do nothing to prevent the air from leaking away.

The spellcaster determines the shape of the breathable area. An 80'x10'x10' area on the deck could become breathable, for example, while some areas could be left in vacuum for security reasons.

## Automatic Pilot

**Spell Level:** 5 (Magical)

**Range:** 0 (Vessel only)

**Duration:** 6 + 1 turns/level of the caster

**Effect:** Pilots a flying vessel

This spell keeps a flying vessel on a steady course, constantly maintaining altitude, speed, and direction of travel. The vessel's Motive Power must be under magical control for this spell to work. It will work for vessels enchanted with *fly* spells or crewed by magical constructs, for example, but not for wind-driven skyships—unless the vessel's rigging and sails are magically controlled.

*Automatic pilot* cannot avoid dangers in the ship's path without assistance from a helmsman. It can detect most potential dangers, however—storms, flying monsters or vessels, mountains etc.—at a distance equal to 50 yards per level of the caster. When the spell detects a potential danger, it sounds an alarm and slows to half speed. The helmsman can then set a new course, altitude, and speed; or disengage the automatic pilot effect. If no response is made before the vessel is within 100 yards of the potential danger, the *automatic pilot* spell brings the vessel to a full stop.

## Prepare Enchantment

**Spell Level:** 5 (Magical)

**Range:** 0 (1 item or frame section only)

**Duration:** 3 days per level of caster

**Effect:** Increases chance of success for enchantment by 1% per level of caster

This spell improves an enchanter's chance of success in enchanting one item (or one section of a huge magical item's frame). It must be cast on the item before enchantment begins. The spell prepares the item to be more receptive to the enchantment process.

This effect lasts for 3 days per level of the caster. The chance of success with any enchantment attempted during this time improves by 1% for each level of the caster. The spellcaster may attempt as many enchantments on that item as desired, until one fails (whereupon the item cannot be enchanted with further effects) or until the *prepare enchantment* spell duration ends. Any enchantment not fully completed when this spell ends loses the bonus to the chance of success.

This spell cannot prepare a previously enchanted item, nor can it be cast on the same item more than once.

At the DM's option, the *prepare enchantment* spell may be available to clerics as well. If it seems this spell may unbalance the campaign (allowing player character spellcasters to create magical items too easily), the DM may disallow it.

### Spell Turning

**Spell Level:** 5 (Magical or Clerical)

**Range:** 10' per level of the caster

**Duration:** 1 round

**Effect:** Reflects one spell upon the caster

This spell counters one spell cast by a wizard (or cleric) within range. It must be cast the same round as the target's spell is cast. It will not turn any spell of a higher level than the caster knows, or spells cast by magical items. The magician's version affects only magical spells; the clerical version affects only clerical spells.

*Spell turning* cannot be used to counter a spell cast by a higher-level spellcaster. Chance of failure is the same as for *dispel magic*: 5% per level of difference between the spellcasters.

*Spell turning* has no effect on spell-like powers of monsters, or on any spells which would not normally affect a living subject—*form* spells, *create air* or *purify food and water*, and so on.

This spell is unreliable in combat (the caster must gain initiative that round for it to be effective, and is never sure which spell, if any, an opponent may be readying) and is used primarily to enchant such items as a *dynamo of flying* (see *Magical Items*).

### Calm Wind

**Spell Level:** 6 (Magical)

**Range:** 360 yards

**Duration:** 1 turn per level of the caster

**Effect:** Calms winds

This spell creates an "eye of the storm" effect, reducing even gale-force winds to a breeze within the area of effect. The spell has no effect on fog or precipitation, only on the wind that accompanies it. This is a handy spell for gaining respite from storms or to steal the wind from another windrider.

At the DM's option, this spell may be used by druids.

## Magical Items

The following magical items are particularly suitable for skyship campaigns.

### Aerial Anchor

This is a 3" long miniature gold anchor and needs only a thread or string for a cable. When dropped from any flying device or creature, it keeps that device or creature steady at that point in the air, regardless of air movements or storms of any kind. The only danger is that the thread might break. For every 5 tons of ship's Tonnage, there is a 5% chance the thread or string will break in any wind stronger than a light breeze. Double the chance of breakage for normal winds; triple it for high winds.

Some *aerial anchors* come equipped with a magical cable. This can anchor any skyship in anything less than high winds. In high winds or a storm, however, the cable has a 5% chance of breaking per every 50 tons of ship's Tonnage.

### Air Mask

This is a helmet or mask enchanted with the *create air* spell. It allows the wearer to breathe normally underwater, in thin atmosphere, or in an airless Void. If airtight and fitted tightly around the wearer's head, it protects against poison gas as well. Flying monsters must have *air masks* made for their head shapes—a human's *air mask* will not fit a griffon.

*Air masks* enchanted with charges provide 12 hours of fresh air for one creature per charge.

### Dynamo of Flying

This permanent magical device converts spell energy to Motive Power, Lift Capacity, and sometimes other vessel-wide spell effects. Usually crafted as a large black box (one cubic yard, weighing 8,000 cn), a *dynamo of flying* can function anywhere on board a ship. For convenience and safety, it's typically secured in the vessel's control area. A

*dispel magic* attack by a spellcaster may cause the *dynamo* and all spell effects powered by it to "go down" for 1d10 rounds (see pp. 24 and 25). For this reason, a vessel rarely relies solely on her *dynamo* for lifting capabilities.

*Dynamics of flying* are usually tailor-made for a specific vessel. They may be enchanted with multiple effects: *fly*, *teleport*, *travel*, *invisibility*, *dimension door*, and so on. The user chooses which effects to activate.

To power a *dynamo of flying*, the user must cast a spell onto the device. This requires physical contact, but can be done with any spell—even those that create something, such as a *form* spell, and those that normally affect the caster only. It does not work with spells cast from scrolls or other magical items. The *dynamo* gains the equivalent of one charge per level of the spell cast upon it. It can store up to 50 charges at a time.

Each spell effect the *dynamo* creates costs one charge per spell level. (For example, *fly* costs three charges, while *travel* costs eight charges.) Duration of effect is the same as though cast by an 18th-level spellcaster. (If the enchanter's level is known, use that instead.)

*Dynamics of flying* come in different strengths.

- A *lesser dynamo* can power vessels only up to 50 tons. Moving larger ships with a *lesser dynamo* requires twice the normal number of charges per spell effect for a 100-ton vessel; three times the number of charges for a 150-ton vessel; and so on. Cost to enchant a *lesser dynamo* is halved.

- A normal *dynamo* can power vessels up to a Tonnage of 150. Affecting a 300-ton vessel costs twice as many charges, as above.

- A *greater dynamo* can power vessels up to a Tonnage of 450. Cost to enchant a *greater dynamo* is doubled.

If the *dynamo* is used to provide lift as well as motive power, its Lift Capacity is double the Tonnage of the ship. Charges used and spell duration are as per other spell effects.

## Skyship Magic

A *dynamo*'s user can elect to spend more charges to increase the vessel's Air Speed past the normal maximum of the spell involved (*fly*, etc.). Each increase costs the same number of charges as evoking the effect, in return for a 20% increase in Air Speed—and a 20% chance the *dynamo* will malfunction, losing all charges for 1d6 days. Doubling Air Speed costs five times as many charges as the initial effect, with a 100% chance the *dynamo* will be unusable for 1d6 days once the effect's duration ends.

Spellcasters enchanting a *dynamo of flying* must know *spell turning* (the base spell for creating a dynamo, see p. 53), as well as any spell the *dynamo of flying* will need to provide. *Dynamos of flying* must be made permanent, for  $5 \times$  the initial enchantment cost (see the D&D<sup>\*</sup> *Rules Cyclopedia*, p. 252).

**Examples:** A *dynamo of flying* enchanted with *fly* and *shield* by an 18th-level spellcaster can lift and fly a 100-ton skyship for 19–24 turns per 3 charges

used. Using an additional charge to activate the *shield* improves the vessel's AC by 1 for 2 turns. A particularly impressive *greater dynamo* might use *fly* for normal flight and *teleport* or *travel* for special situations. It may also be enchanted with other effects—*shield*, *invisibility*, *baste*, *anti-magic shell*, and *weather control*, etc. (Such a powerful device is phenomenally expensive and difficult to create.)

**Optional Rule:** If the DM wishes, a *dynamo of flying* can make even a non-magical vessel fly. This is especially appropriate if you use the optional rules allowing wizards to enchant normal vessels and buildings to fly (see p. 3).

### Internal Conjunction Engine

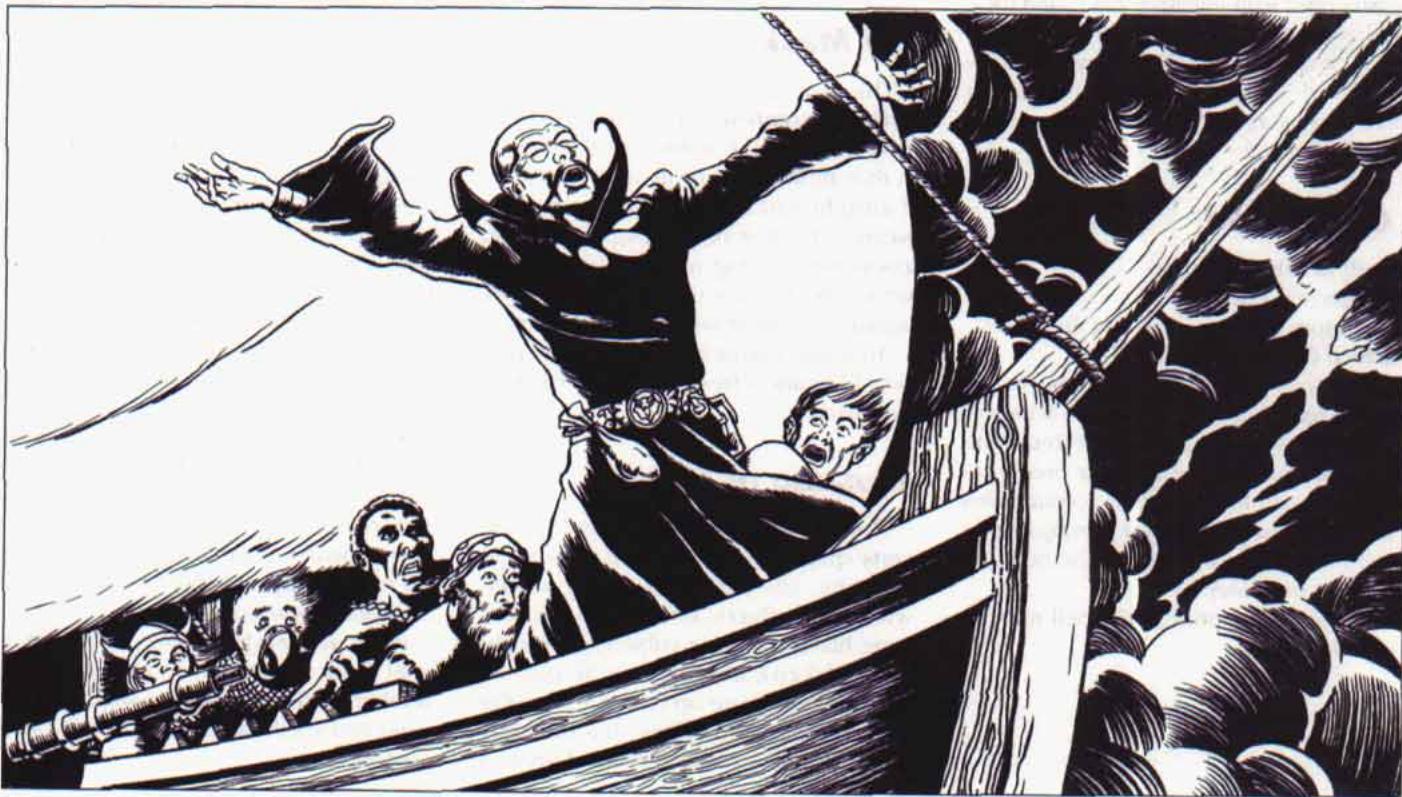
This magical device converts potions of *flying* into Motive Power for a flying vessel. It functions much like a *dynamo of flying*, but provides no effect other than *fly*. It's often aesthetically shaped—a

statue, large vase, or similar decorative item—but always has at least one opening for potions of *flying* as fuel. Some have storage tanks which can hold up to 50 potions; others must be refueled regularly. The user directs the vessel's flight by concentrating while keeping one hand on the *internal conjunction engine*.

Engines come in five sizes. The smallest, an *internal conjunction engine +1*, converts a potion of *flying* into one day of flight (24 hours usage). An *internal conjunction engine +2* gives 2 days of flight per potion; an *engine +5* gives 5 days of flight per potion.

One *internal conjunction engine* can provide a Lift Capacity of 100 tons. Each additional 100 tons of Lift Capacity (or fraction thereof) desired requires another engine—or an additional potion of *flying* as fuel. Air Speed is 360' (120') (modified by any Tonnage in excess of the Lift Capacity; see p. 22).

Some *internal conjunction engines* can convert other potions into spell effects as



well. These rare engines have two openings—one for fuel (i.e., potions of *flying*) and the other for potions for additional effects. These secondary effects function only while the vessel is flying under the *engine's* power. Possible effects include:

- A potion of *agility* improves the vessel's Maneuvering Factor by one level (see chart, p. 11).
- A potion of *blending* provides the vessel with camouflage (only 10% chance of being seen with normal vision) or colorful decoration for 7–12 turns.
- A potion of *defense* improves the vessel's Armor Class by 1 for one turn.
- A potion of *speed* doubles the vessel's Air Speed and Maneuvering Factor for 7–12 turns (maximum MF is 5). The DM may require a Quality Rating check to avoid damage to the vessel.

The DM decides which potions the *engine* can consume and what the actual effects are (if different from above). All other potions will damage the engine, making it inoperative for 2d12 days. Pouring anything but a potion of *flying* into the main fuel intake valve of the engine causes it to malfunction.

Spellcasters creating an *internal conjuration engine* must enchant it with *spell turning* (see p. 53), but do not need to enchant the engine with *fly* or any other spell. Cost to enchant is 1,000 gp times 5 (the level of *spell turning*) times the number of days of flight each potion of *flying* will grant. For each potion other than a potion of *flying* the engine is capable of consuming, increase cost to enchant by 1,000 gp times 5 times the spell level of the effect created by the potion. For example, an *internal conjuration engine* +1—capable of one day of flight per potion—with the ability to use potions of *speed* to double the vessel's Air Speed and MF would cost 20,000 gp (5,000 for *flying* and 15,000 for the third-level *baste* effect from the potion of *speed*). Making it permanent (*internal conjuration engines* cannot be enchanted with charges or uses per day) costs an additional 100,000 gp (5 × initial enchantment cost), for a grand total of 120,000 gp. Time to enchant: 127 days.

Name-level spellcasters may make potions of *flying* to replenish their fuel stocks. Chance of success is the same as for any magical item. Cost to create one potion of *flying* is the same as any magical item with one charge—see the *Cyclopedia*, p. 252.

### Leaf of Falling

When worn, this small brooch shaped like a leaf protects the wearer from falls. Whenever the wearer approaches any hard surface fast enough to cause damage, the *leaf* automatically takes effect, slowing the wearer to a slow fall (like a leaf). No falling damage is sustained in falls of 60' or less, and only 1 point for each 10' of falling thereafter (maximum 20 points of damage regardless of height). The *leaf of falling* has 3–30 charges when found, and each use costs 1 charge.

### Pouch of Winds

This looks like an ordinary canvas or leather pouch, tied tightly shut and bulging at the seams with its contents but weighing practically nothing. When the pouch is opened, a magical wind escapes. This wind will be a *fair breeze*, a *contrary wind*, or a *storm wind* that continues to blow for 1d12 days even if the bag of winds is closed.

A *fair breeze* blows in the direction the user wants to travel, increasing a wind-driven ship's Air Speed by  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

A *contrary wind* blows in the opposite direction to that desired. It cuts a wind-driven vessel's Air Speed to  $\frac{1}{3}$  normal.

A *storm wind* blows in a random direction (see "Wind and Weather," p. 26). The ship must run before the wind (triple normal movement, with 50% chance the vessel suffers 4d8 hull points damage) or seek shelter.

The contents are determined when the *pouch of winds* is first enchanted. If a *pouch of winds* is found, roll d% to determine the contents randomly. It will have 2d10 charges left when found, with a 50% chance of being rechargeable.

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>01–50%</b> | Fair Breeze   |
| <b>51–75%</b> | Contrary Wind   |
| <b>76–95%</b> | Storm Wind  |
| <b>96–00%</b> | Controlled Winds—user selects the wind and whether it affects his vessel or another one within 300 yards. |

A similar *pouch of winds* is a permanent item (no charges are required) which may be either empty or full when found (50% chance each). When opened, an empty *pouch of winds* captures the current prevailing wind, becalming the area within a half-mile radius of the *pouch of winds* for 1d6 days. The area affected moves with the *pouch of winds*. A full *pouch* releases the captured wind as soon as it is opened. The released wind blows for 1d6 days in the same direction and at the same strength it had when captured, affecting all skyships, flying creatures, and so on, within a half-mile radius.

Spellcasters trying to enchant or recharge a *pouch of winds* must have access to the druidic *control winds* spell, a *weather control* spell, or a *wish*.

### Rudder of Guidance

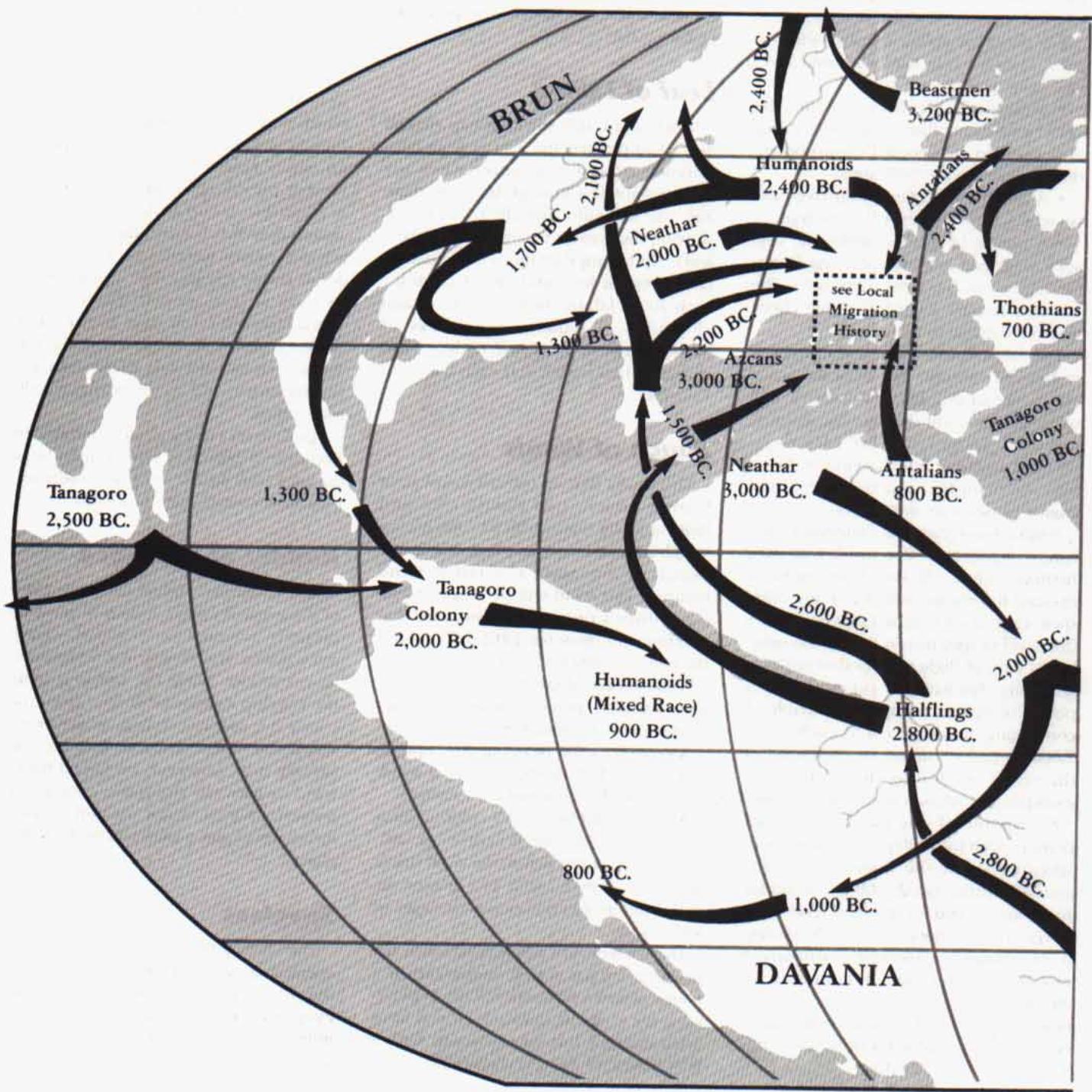
This enchanted *rudder* takes the place of a normal skyship's rudder. It must be properly mounted and manned—it will not work on any skyship not designed to have a rudder. When the *rudder* is used, the skyship cannot be forced from the course her user has chosen, whatever the winds and other conditions may be. The skyship may, however, be forced backward or forward along her course (by powerful winds, magic, or ram attacks, for instance) and a *wish* will override the effect.

### Spyglass

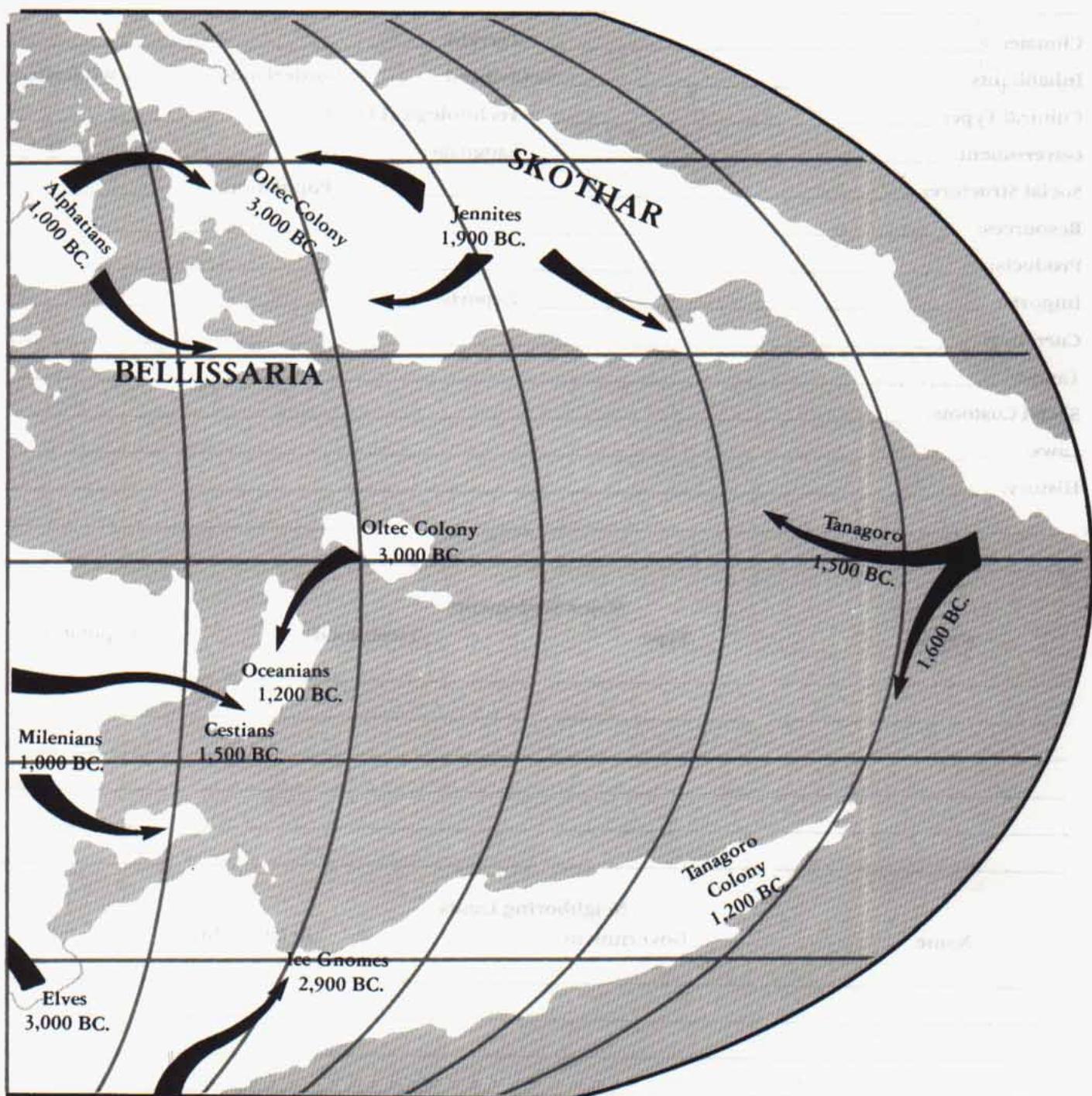
This 2' long hollow metal tube has an eyepiece at one end and a large crystal at the other. Anyone looking through the eyepiece can view any spot up to one mile distant as though it were only 10' away.

# Mystaran Migrations

## OUTER WORLD, POSTCATACLYSMIC MAP (3,000-1,000 B.C.)



## Mystaran Migrations





## Campaign Setting Design Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Climate: \_\_\_\_\_ Terrain: \_\_\_\_\_

Inhabitants: \_\_\_\_\_ % Civilized \_\_\_\_\_ % Borderlands \_\_\_\_\_ % Wilderness

Cultural Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Technological Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Government: \_\_\_\_\_ Language: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Structure: \_\_\_\_\_ Population: \_\_\_\_\_

Resources: \_\_\_\_\_

Products: \_\_\_\_\_

Imports: \_\_\_\_\_ Exports: \_\_\_\_\_

Currency: \_\_\_\_\_

Taxes: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Customs: \_\_\_\_\_

Laws: \_\_\_\_\_

History: \_\_\_\_\_

Major Settlements			
Name	Type	Livelihood	Population

Neighboring Lands		
Name	Government	Relationship

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# Campaign Setting Design Sheet

Name: Graakhalia      Type: Underground Caverns  
 Location: Beneath the Plain of Fire in the Great Waste  
 Description: Nearly 25,000 mi<sup>2</sup> beneath the Plain; 1,000' into bedrock; approx. 12 levels of tunnels & caves  
 Climate: Varied, dangerous, & damp      Terrain: Caverns  
 Inhabitants: Sheyallia Elves & Gruugrakh Gnolls NA % Civilized      NA % Borderlands      NA % Wilderness  
 Cultural Type:      Technological Level:  
 Government: bands; council of 6 elves & 6 gnolls      Language: Elven & Gnollish  
 Social Structure:      Population: 25,000; 20% elves  
 Resources: "sun caves", underground rivers & lakes, firestones  
 Products: subsistence, no real products for trade  
 Imports: any necessities can't make themselves      Exports: minimal: gems, precious metals, firestones  
 Currency: barter; use occasional foreign coins; homemade coins  
 Taxes: none  
 Social Customs: Venallya (exchange program); tolerance  
 Laws:  
 History: Gruugrakh gnolls moved in around 1000 BC; Sheyallia Elves arrived around 528 BC; Jennial's rebellion AC 722

## Major Settlements

Name	Type	Livelihood	Population
Braatmok	southwest area		yellow mold
Orkmok	northern area	incursions from Black Mtns. here	
Rhialliamok	east & southeast area	elves expanding here	
Grongmok	central area	most bands camp here	

## Neighboring Lands

Name	Government	Relationship
Sind		Minimal trade at Gola Keep
Black Mountains		Humanoids invade Graakhalia

# Flying Mounts Chart

Creature or Magic Item	Air-Speed (Yards per Round)	Maneuvering Factor and Takeoff	Hit Dice	Cost: Young (gp)	Cost Upkeep	Cost and Weight Multiplier for Gear and Armor	Load (Cn Wt)	Int
Dragon, blue				6,600				
" Baby	60	MF 5 (b)	6		60	×5	6,000	6
" Small	80	MF 3 (b)	9		90	×10	9,000	9
" Large	100	MF 1(b)	13+3		130	×10	13,300	12
" Huge	120	MF 1 (b)	18		180	×20	18,000	15
Dragon, gold				11,750				
" Baby	60	MF 5 (b)	8		80	×10	8,000	6
" Small	80	MF 3 (b)	11		110	×10	11,000	9
" Large	100	MF 1(b)	16+3		160	×20	16,300	12
" Huge	120	MF 1 (b)	22		220	×20	22,000	15
Dragon, white				4,300				
" Baby	60	MF 5 (b)	6		60	×5	6,000	6
" Small	80	MF 3 (b)	9		90	×10	9,000	9
" Large	100	MF 1(b)	13+3		130	×10	13,300	12
" Huge	120	MF 1 (b)	18		180	×20	18,000	15
Drolem	80	MF 1/2 (b)	20	**	0	×20***	20,000	3
Flying								
" Broom	80	MF 3 (a)	n/a	**	0	×2***	4,000	—
" Carpet	100*	MF 1 (a)	n/a	**	0	×5***	6,000	—
" Spell	120	MF 3 (a)	n/a	**	0	n/a	2,000	—
Griffon	120	MF 1 (b)	7	450	70	×5	7,000	2
Hippogriff	120	MF 1 (b)	3+1	250	30	×2	3,100	3
Pegasus	160	MF 3 (b)	2+2	125	20	×1	3,300	4
Roc				6,250				
" Small	160	MF 1 (b)	6		60	×5	6,000	2
" Large	160	MF 1/2 (b)	12		120	×10	12,000	2
" Giant	160	MF 1/3 (b)	36		360	×20	36,000	2
Sphinx	120	MF 1 (b)	12	5,625	120	×10	12,000	13

\* This flying carpet air speed is figured for one human-sized flyer and gear (approximately 2,000 cn weight). For rates at higher weights, see p. 239 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*.

\*\* These have no "young form;" they must be acquired through adventuring or through other means provided by the campaign. Rules for the creation of drolems are described in the *Cyclopedia*, pp. 253–254.

\*\*\* These items cannot wear armor, but can have saddle-blankets and saddlebags.

(a) Mount magically floats straight into flight, no difficulty in takeoff; can hover without difficulty.

(b) Mount flaps wings to take off; can be hampered by tight quarters, stopped if wings bound or injured; can hover with difficulty.

## Column Heading Notes

**Air Speed:** the mount's normal Air Speed in yards per round. To get the mount's speed per turn, multiply by 3.

**Maneuvering Factor:** how maneuverable the mount is while aloft (see p. 11).

**Takeoff:** how easy it is for the mount to launch into the air, as the footnotes at the bottom of the chart indicate.

**Cost: Young (gp):** how much money it costs to buy one of these mounts when it is

in its infant state—a griffon cub, a dragon egg. To train one of these beasts for riding, the trainer must own it from its youth and train it himself. Such beasts, trained by man, cannot learn spells; a gold dragon or a sphinx trained to be a riding-monster or to pull a skyship will never have the normal spells of its kind.

**Cost: Upkeep (Month):** how much money it costs to feed and shelter the mount, paid monthly.

**Cost and Weight Multiplier for Gear and Armor** determines how much gear such as bardings, saddle-blankets, saddlebags, etc. cost compared to normal equipment prices. Multiply encumbrance as well.

**Carry (Cn Wt)** shows how much weight the beast can carry on its back. As an average figure, a human being plus equipment weighs 2,000 cn.

**Int** is the creature's Intelligence (see p. 153 of the *Cyclopedia*).



# SPELLJAMMER® Conversion Guide

DMs interested in having a D&D® spacefaring campaign may wish to adapt the SPELLJAMMER® rules for use with their own D&D game campaign. This is not difficult, although some rules translations require the DM to make a judgment call based on the particular campaign and the players involved. DMs may adapt the SPELLJAMMER rules in their entirety, substituting the Void between the stars of the D&D game universe for crystal spheres and phlogiston. (For example, Mystara and its moons would be in their own crystal sphere.) You may also wish to use the ship designs provided with the SPELLJAMMER sets as they are. Refer to the AD&D® Game Conversions in the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia* (pp. 291–294) for guidelines in converting magic spells, character classes, etc.

Alternatively, you may keep the physical laws and game rules as presented in "Worlds Beyond," p. 30 and adapt only those SPELLJAMMER rules which will add desired details to your space campaign. A reality shift that alters a SPELLJAMMER vessel upon its entrance into the D&D universe would then be the best way to handle a ship from the SPELLJAMMER universe (see the *Cyclopedia*, p. 292).

**Gravity:** The main difference between the SPELLJAMMER set's background and the D&D space presented here is the way in which gravity functions. Spelljammer ships have a gravity plane, but both sides of a spelljammer's gravity field pull toward that plane. This means that creatures can actually walk on the underside of their ship's hull. This also means that the crew must walk on the ceilings of the decks located on the other side of their ship's gravity plane. Gravity is always at 100%; there are no variations in gravitational strengths in the SPELLJAMMER universe.

If you prefer the positive and negative effects of gravity in the D&D game world, use a reality shift to alter the gravity planes of Spelljammer vessels. Keep in mind that some vessel designs (the Illithids' nautiloid, for instance) may end up with inconvenient gravity plane orientations. Adding outriggers—thereby altering the way the object would float in

water—can solve the problem of a gravity plane cutting through the wrong axis of the vessel.

**Air:** In the D&D universe, objects do not normally carry their own envelope of air into space with them. Spelljammers entering the void between worlds in the D&D universe would slowly lose their air, pulled "down" by the negative gravity field. Give characters time to find a solution to the problem before they run out of air.

**Cold:** Unlike wildspace, the void between worlds in the D&D universe is cold—although not as cold as the space surrounding Earth. This may remain true even if you place Mystara within a crystal sphere. (The extreme temperature can be explained by a gate to an icy dimension or plane.)

**Ship's Rating:** Each Ship's Rating point in the SPELLJAMMER rules translates to an Air Speed of 120/40; thus a spelljammer with a Ship's Rating of 3 will have an Air Speed 360/120. An Air Speed of 720/240 is the fastest recommended in the D&D universe (Ship's Rating 6). Every two additional Ship's Rating points above the recommended maximum of 720/240 improve the ship's Maneuvering Factor by one level, rather than increasing the ship's speed.

In the SPELLJAMMER rules, space vessels double their speed when not flying through an atmosphere. Either double skyship speed in the Void (rather than multiplying by 10) or allow spelljammers to travel at 10x their atmospheric speed when in the Void.

**Maneuverability Class:** Either refigure a spelljammer's Maneuvering Factor based on its hull length and shape, or assign a simple correlation (an MC of A equates to an MF of 5; an MC of B equates to an MF of 1; and an MC of F equates to an MF of 1/2).

**Tonnage:** In the SPELLJAMMER rules, Tonnage is a measure of volume rather than weight. The Tonnage estimates presented in this product represent actual weight and are in line with seagoing vessels of real-world Earth; this makes it easy to translate a historical Earth ship into a Mystaran skyship. To translate a spelljammer's Tonnage for use with the D&D skyship rules, either recalculate the vessel's Tonnage based on the skyship design rules, or (for a quick-and-dirty estimate), simply double the spelljammer's Tonnage. To translate a skyship for use with the SPELLJAMMER rules, divide Tonnage by 2.

**Hull Points:** Either recalculate the Hull Points based on the skyship's design, or allow them to remain the same while Tonnage is translated from one system to the other.

**Armament:** Make any necessary changes in range, damage, etc., damage, etc. based on the "AD&D® Conversion Guide" given in the *Cyclopedia*.

**Armor Rating:** Translate this to the proper AC for the materials used, remembering to make any additions or subtractions for any alterations in design or enchantments.



# Skyship Designer's Worksheet

## Maneuvering Factors for Vessels

**Maneuvering Factor If:**

Object Size	Aero-dynamic	Not Aerodynamic
To 2'	5	3
To 10'	3	1
To 50'	1	1/2
To 250'	1/2	1/3
To 1250'	1/3	1/5
1251+*	1/5	1/10

Vessels moved by magic are treated as being one category better on the chart, as are monsters strongly related to the plane of Air (djinni, for example) or which have a reputation for nimbleness in the air (dragons, etc.).

With a Tonnage double her current Lift Capacity, a vessel begins a One-Maneuver Dive (see p. 24). At a Tonnage triple her current Lift Capacity, the vessel begins a Two-Maneuver Dive. At a Tonnage four times her current Lift Capacity, the vessel begins a Three-Maneuver Dive. At a Tonnage four times her current Lift Capacity, the vessel begins a crash dive.

Lift Capacity Ratio	Maximum Air Speed
up to 100%	100%
120%	90%
140%	80%
160%	70%
180%	60%
200%	50%

Always round up when determining the percentage of a vessel's Lift Capacity filled by her current Tonnage.

## Form Spell Results

Spell	Tonnage	AC	Hull Points
<i>clothform</i> (900 square feet)	1,250 cns	8	2*
<i>woodform</i> (1,000 cubic feet)	25 tons	6	12
<i>stoneform</i> (1,000 cubic feet)	75 tons	6	20
<i>ironform</i> (500 square feet, 2" thick)	40 tons	2	6
<i>steelform</i> (500 square feet, 2" thick)	40 tons	2	8

\*Keep track of sail hit points separately.

## Fantasy Engineering Design Complexity Table

Design Complexity Modifier	Skill Required	Days
Easy	-2	1d4
Simple	none	1d4+2
Tricky	+2	3d6
Difficult	+4	5d6
Very Difficult	+8	30 + 7d10

## Extraneous Circumstances

No Fantasy Physics skill	+4
No Meddling Box	+2
Distractions	+1 to +4
Suitable Drafter's Kit	-1
Appropriate skills	-1 bonus/skill

## Fantasy Engineering Modifiers Table

- +4 if the chief builder doesn't have the Fantasy Engineering skill
- +2 if the chief builder doesn't have the Fantasy Physics skill
- +2 if the chief builder did not design the machine himself
- +2 if the builders do not have appropriate Meddling Boxes to work with
- +2 (or worse) if hired laborers do not have the Fantasy Engineering skill (or other Science or engineering skills the DM deems appropriate)
- +4 if a spellcaster other than the chief builder or designer places necessary enchantments on the device
- +3 if this is a rush job being completed faster in half the time it should take
- Half the modifier for design complexity from the "Fantasy Engineering Design Complexity Table" (-1 for easy, 0 for simple, etc.)
- -1 for each level of the chief builder's Fantasy Engineering skill above the basic (-1 for Fantasy Engineering +1, -2 for Fantasy Engineering +2, etc.)

# Aerial Combat Tables

**Forced Flight Table**

Vessel Quality	Die Roll 1	Die Roll 2	Die Roll 3	Die Roll 4
Poor	F	F&M	F&S	M
Average	F	F&M	F&S	N
Good	F	F	F&M	F&S
Excellent	F	F	F	F&M

**F:** Forced flight successful: add 50% to day's movement.

**M:** Vessel's crew or flying monsters moderately fatigued (if muscle-powered) or vessel moderately damaged.\*

**S:** Crew seriously fatigued, or vessel seriously damaged.

**N:** No increase in day's movement, but no fatigue or damage.

\*If crew already moderately fatigued, result increases fatigue to serious; moderate vessel damage becomes serious.

**Falling Damage Chart**

Yards Fallen	Seconds Taken	Damage Taken
3 yds	< 1 second	1d6
6 yds	< 1 second	2d6
10 yds	1 second	3d6
15 yds	< 2 seconds	4d6
20 yds	< 2 seconds	5d6
25 yds	< 2 seconds	5d6
30 yds	2 seconds	6d6
40–60 yds	3 seconds	9d6
70–100 yds	4 seconds	13d6
110–150 yds	5 seconds	16d6
160–225 yds	6 seconds	19d6
230+ yds	6+ seconds	20d6

**Vessel Damage Summary**

**Magical Damage/Huge Creatures:** 1 hull pt damage /5 pts normal damage.

**Large Creatures:** 1 hull pt damage/10 pts normal damage.

**10% loss of hull points:** 10% reduction in Air Speed (each 10% loss of a wind-driven vessel's sails' hit points also reduces Air Speed by 10%).

**25% loss of hull points:** an extra Piloting check required for any Two- or Three-Maneuver Climb in a single round. If Lift is magical, any enhancements to Lift Capacity fail—reducing Lift Capacity to the vessel's base Tonnage (no extra Lift for cargo or passengers). If the vessel (plus cargo) weighs twice current Lift Capacity, she begins to fall. Other frame enchantments operate at half value or unreliably, reducing Air Speed if Motive Power is magical. Roll 1d20. On 20, the vessel loses one Maneuvering Factor (to a minimum of MF  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; see chart, p. 11).

**50% loss of hull points:** prohibits Three-Maneuver Climbs; Two-Maneuver climbs require three successful Piloting checks. If Lift is magical, hull enchantments fail and the vessel begins a Crash Dive (the vessel may have minimal steering). Other frame enchantments may also fail. Roll a d20; on 18–20, the vessel loses one MF (to a minimum of MF  $\frac{1}{4}$ ).

**75% loss of hull points:** requires a Piloting check *every* round, (assuming she's not in a Crash Dive) at a -4 penalty to the pilot's skill. If successful, the vessel stays aloft but cannot climb. If failed, the craft begins an unstoppable One-Maneuver Dive (see p. 24). The vessel loses one MF (to a minimum of MF  $\frac{1}{8}$ ).

**90% loss of hull points:** what's left of the craft loses altitude in at least a Two-Maneuver Dive (even with non-magical Lift). A Piloting skill check is needed to make any direction changes. The craft's MF drops to  $\frac{1}{16}$ .

**100% loss of hull points:** vessel breaks up, her fragments fall earthward.

**Ramming Damage:** as per *Rules Cyclopedia*, p 115.

**Maneuvers Summary**

**Horizontal Maneuvers:** 60° any rnd

**One-Maneuver Climb:** 30°; 20' of Air Speed yields 10 yds forward + 5 yds up

**Two-Maneuver Climb:** 45°; 2 maneuvers; 30' of Air Speed yield 10 yds forward + 10 yds upward

**Three-Maneuver Climb:** 60°; three maneuvers; 50' of Air Speed yield 10 yds forward + 10 up

**Vertical Climb:** four maneuvers

**One-Maneuver Dive:** 30°; 5 yds down /10 yds forward

**Two-Maneuver Dive:** 45°; 10 yds down/10 yds forward

**Three-Maneuver Dive:** 60°; 20 yds down/10 yds forward (2x Air Speed)

**Crash Dive:** 2x Air Speed +480 yd/rnd

**Loss of Control Table**

**Missed**

**Roll by Results**

**1–2** Vessel continues current maneuver (vessel ignores last maneuver or flying monsters ignore the last command).

**3–4** Vessel performs an accidental maneuver (DM's choice).

**5–6** Vessel stalls into a Two-Maneuver Dive until control regained; or dives at maximum Air Speed if magical Lift is still in effect. If flying monsters provide Motive Power they are uncontrollable for 1–3 rounds.

**7–8** Vessel stalls into an uncontrolled Crash Dive until control regained or crash results; or dives at maximum Air Speed if magical Lift is still in effect. Flying monsters stall into a Crash Dive and are uncontrollable for 2–12 rounds.

**9+** Pilot and/or crew hurled free (or knocked unconscious for 1–6 turns); or flying monsters providing Motive Power tear free of their harness.

# Skyship Record Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Built By: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Motive Power(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ QR (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Length: \_\_\_\_\_ Beam: \_\_\_\_\_

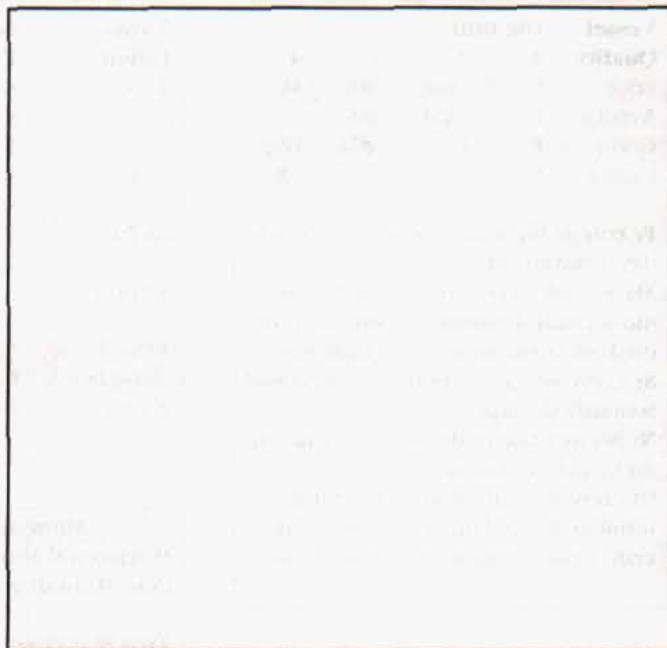
Depth: \_\_\_\_\_ Tonnage: \_\_\_\_\_

Cargo Capacity: \_\_\_\_\_

Crew: \_\_\_\_\_ (Minimum) (Maximum) \_\_\_\_\_

Officers: \_\_\_\_\_ Passengers: \_\_\_\_\_

Marines/Mercenaries: \_\_\_\_\_



## Lift Capacity

Normal: \_\_\_\_\_

% Reduction: \_\_\_\_\_

Current: \_\_\_\_\_

Maximum Airspeed: \_\_\_\_\_ %

## Combat Notes

Armor Class:



Hull Points:



Damage:

## Air Speed

\_\_\_\_\_ ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  
miles/day (encounter)

Effective: \_\_\_\_\_

Maneuvering Factor: \_\_\_\_\_

## Artillery

Type	#Attacks/Round	Damage	Notes

## Defenses

Type	Notes

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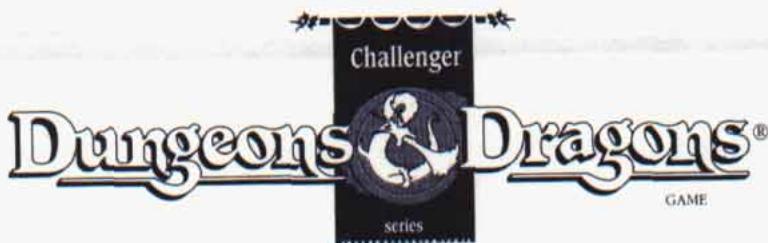
GAME

# Champions of Mystara™

## Explorer's Manual



FREDFIELDS 888



# Dungeons & Dragons®

GAME

## Champions of Mystara™

Explorers' Manual

by Ann Dupuis

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1094XXX1903

ISBN 1-56076-615-8

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# Introduction

This *Explorers' Manual* expands the geographical and cultural knowledge of the D&D® Known World as presented in the D&D Gazetteer series. Two entire cultures presented to readers of the *Princess Ark* series in DRAGON® Magazine appear here in more detail. Two previously unknown cultures appear here as well: the Graakharians of the Great Waste and the Karimari of the Serpent Peninsula.

Readers already familiar with Sind and its environs—from X4: *Master of the Desert Nomads*, from information included on the Trail Maps of the D&D Known World, and from statistics presented in the *Poor Wizard's Almanac*—may notice some changes between those products and this one. The information given here reflects the more accurate statistics and figures now available to explorers and mapmakers.

Readers already familiar with the Serpent Peninsula from adventure module X6: *Quagmire!* will notice even more changes. Endless hexes of swamps, jungles, and clear lands with no one living in them seemed unrealistic when placed in the context of the intricate histories developed for Mystara since module X6 was first published. The myriad migrations—by human, demi-human, and humanoid alike—that have swept the face of Mystara since the Great Rain of Fire were bound to have introduced intelligent inhabitants into every habitable corner of the globe. The general topography of the Serpent Peninsula remains basically the same; its history and current state of habitation do not.

## The Desert Nomad and Quagmire! Adventures

Those of you who wish to use the modules X4, X5, X6, or X10 in your campaign may certainly do so, though you should modify the adventures to fit the information presented here. (All these modules are now out of print.)

**The Desert Nomad Series:** These three adventure modules—X4, X5, and X10—revolve around the Master of Hule's

attempts to extend Hulean rule into the Great Waste and beyond. Only a few changes are necessary to update these adventures to the latest information published for the D&D® game world (see "Future History," p. 54).

Adventure module X4: *Master of the Desert Nomads*, should begin in the spring of year 1005 AC, when the armies of the Master of Hule first overrun the Great Waste and the Kingdom of Sind. X5: *Temple of Death*, follows. The main invasion of Darokin, detailed in X10: *Red Arrow, Black Shield*, should take place in the fall or winter of 1005 AC, and would probably end sometime around the spring or summer of 1006 AC.

The areas along the Asanda River should be updated to reflect the fact that Sindis inhabit the fertile plains on both sides of the river. You should take care not to let the player characters actually defeat the Master (Hosadus) unless you arrange for some equally crafty and powerful Hulean leader to step in and take the Master's place in the events of the Great War and the occupation of Sind.

In order to integrate X6: *Quagmire!* with the Serpent Peninsula as it is now, it may be easiest to use those portions which don't require major changes and ignore the rest. For example, the "spiral cities" mapped on the cover can easily be adapted to provide interior plans for the shell-shaped abodes of Yavdlom seers. Many of the "Wild Lands Adventures" area encounters can add detail and excitement to overland travel in the southern reaches of the Great Waste or on the Serpent Peninsula. The High Seas Encounters table on p. 14 of X6 can also be used with few modifications.

If you wish to play the *Quagmire!* module in its entirety, you should set the adventure in the year 425 BC, while the People of Yav were exiled to the Immortals' Arm. This works well with a one-shot mini-campaign (with characters you won't be using in your normal campaign) or as a time-traveling side trek for the normal group of player characters.

There are a few changes you'll need to make to the adventure if you play it in its entirety, in a pre-Thyatis time frame. The Tanogoro inhabitants of the city of Quagmire refused to accompany the People of Yav on their journey to the Immortals' Arm, and for three generations have been eking out an existence with a bit of agriculture, fishing, and the little trade they could coax their way from other nations' passing ships. But by 425 BC, their city is sinking into the sea and lizard-men of the peninsula's lowlands have besieged their city.

All encounters with people from the Kingdom of Ierendi should be changed to refer instead to traders from Nithian colonies on the eastern islands—the Kingdom of Ierendi will not exist there until 602 AC. And if the PCs go to Slagovich, they should find a much newer city than that described in Prince Haldemar's chronicles (see p. 16 of *Heroes of the Princess Ark*), without the fancy hydraulic gadgets enjoyed by rich inhabitants of Slagovich fifteen hundred years later.

## A Note About Languages

The terms, place names, and personal names presented in the sections on Sind were inspired by the Urdu (Hindustani), Sindhi, and Sanskrit languages of the Indian sub-continent, and by place names and personal names of Pakistan and India.

Likewise, the languages of the Yavdlom Divinarchy and the Karimari were inspired by Swahili and other African languages.

All mistakes made in grammar, usage, and spelling of real-world words are the author's (who took many liberties). These languages were used to provide atmosphere, and are not meant to imply any connection between Africa and India of the real world on the one hand and the Serpent Peninsula and Sind of the D&D world on the other.

The Sheyallia and Gruugrakh languages are entirely fictitious. Any resemblance to actual languages, living or dead, is purely coincidental.





# The Great Waste

## Geography and Climate

The Great Waste is bounded on the north and west by the Black Mountains; to the south by the Sea of Dread; to the east by the Kingdom of Sind, the Atraghin Plateau, the Republic of Darokin, and Glantri; and by savannah and the Gulf of Hule to the west. It encompasses a million square miles of rocky canyons, salt flats, sand dunes, gravel plains, and scrub lands.

Although the Great Waste is mostly arid, it encompasses two sizeable lakes. Lake Hast, to the northeast, receives runoff waters from the northern side of the Amsorak Mountains. In monsoon season, the River Devaki hurtles down from the Adri Varma plateau, adding its dark, foul waters to the lake. A shallow, salty lake called Lake Halli lies to the northwest. It receives sparse runoff from the Black Mountains' southern slopes.

The Asanda River in the east winds its way through the Kingdom of Sind. Canals and mud dams help irrigate Sind's fertile lowlands along the river's 300-mile length. The Asanda River originates in the great Salt Swamp—more than 10,000 square miles of sodden terrain, salt-encrusted mud flats, brackish pools, and acrid streams harboring tough grasses and dangerous crocodiles. The wet season brings purifying rains and countless waterfowl to the swamp, followed by irregular flooding along the Asanda River.

To the south, the Silt River drains the central reaches of the Great Waste through a low, muddy valley. The river flows sluggishly even in the wettest part of the year, and silts up completely in the dry season. The Throat River to the west fares better, carrying relatively clear waters through the Konumtali Savannah and into the Gulf of Hule year-round.

The Great Waste rises from sea level to an altitude of roughly 5,000' at Lake Halli and the central foothills of the Black Mountains. This gradual rise is barely perceptible on the flat plains of the Great Waste, and cannot be detected at all in rough or broken terrain.

## The Sind Desert

This part of the Great Waste is barren and stony. Craggy bluffs and rock outcroppings rise abruptly from the otherwise level plains. Tenacious shrubs and thorn bushes dot the landscape, occasionally forming dense thorny forests. Natural desert pavement—pebbles and stones intermeshed like cobblestones—cover vast expanses of level ground.

Temperatures reach 110° Fahrenheit during summer months, dropping rapidly to 40° or 50° at night. Winters are devastatingly cold, with temperatures rarely exceeding 40° in the daytime and dropping as low as thirty degrees below zero at night. The little rainfall (usually less than 4" per year) falls primarily in the wetter summer months. Legends tell of a winter blizzard that buried the desert under snow to the height of a man many generations ago, but snow hasn't fallen here in living memory.

The Sind Desert is home to an estimated 100,000 nomadic herders, hunters, and raiders. It also attracts outlaws and brigands intent on robbing rich caravans traversing the trails that lead from Sind to Slagovich and the western lands.

**Encounters:** In addition to the human inhabitants of the Sind Desert, travelers may meet giant ants, rock baboons, bats, giant beetles, blink dogs, caecilia, a blue dragon or two, insect swarms (primarily locusts), lions (on the edge of the western savannah), giant lizards, mantis scorpions, ogres, nomadic bands of orcs and other humanoids, giant scorpions, giant rattlesnakes and spitting cobras, sphinxes, revenants, thoul, trolls, and wights. In addition to the camels, horses, goats, and sheep herded by the Urduk nomads, the Sind Desert supports wild herds of antelope and asses. Periodic dangers include pebble storms (with winds so fierce they pick up gravel and pebbles as though they were sand), flash floods or treacherous bogs caused by sudden storms, dry quicksand so powdery a camel can sink up to its neck in less than a minute, and singing dunes that mysteriously moan or vibrate with the sounds of distant drum beats.

## The Plain of Fire

The Great Waste's northern expanses encompass a rugged, inhospitable area known as the Plain of Fire. Numerous sinkholes, canyons, and arroyos carved by long-forgotten rivers break the level surface of the plain. Gaping holes in the desert floor attest to underground labyrinths of caves and tunnels. The plain's bedrock is known as karst—a type of limestone riddled with cracks and crevices that channel all surface water below ground. A thin, infertile layer of soil covers parts of the Plain of Fire. Other regions present bare expanses of flat rock broken into jagged lumps that can tear the boots off passing travelers.

Strange black crystalline rocks, called "firestones," litter the plain's surface. They absorb the heat and light of the sun and radiate it back at night. (The eerie reddish glow of large clusters of firestones can be seen for miles.) Temperatures are higher in the Plain of Fire than in the Sind Desert, reaching 120° or higher in the summertime and rarely dropping below 90° at night. Even in winter, the Plain of Fire maintains temperatures of 70–90 degrees.

With water scarcely to be found anywhere on its surface, the Plain of Fire is usually avoided by travelers. Few realize the extent of the underground labyrinths, or that beneath the Plain of Fire live the semi-nomadic Sheyallia elves and the Gruugrakh gnolls.

**Encounters:** Only rarely does one meet living creatures larger than an insect or a mouse on the topside of the Plain of Fire. Most of the area's denizens live underground, in the vast networks of caves and tunnels carved over the centuries by violent floods—they venture to the surface only when scouting or replenishing their firestones. Travelers may find the occasional red or blue dragon on its way to better hunting grounds, or small humanoid tribes confined to the few surface oases.

For more information on the underground labyrinths of the Plain of Fire, see "Graakhalia," pp. 25–32.





## The Great Waste

### The Burning Waste

Minor quakes and avalanches frequently shake this region of craggy, eroded rocks. Geysers and tar pits are common. The shifting rocks of the waste occasionally release natural gases, which then burst into flame. These gases burn for weeks, sending dark clouds of smoke into the desert sky. Because of the area's violent, unpredictable terrain, there are no permanent dwellings or communities in the Burning Waste. Temperatures average 90–100°, day or night, winter or summer. Natural hot spots occur here and there where underground lava pools and steam vents heat the rocks above. Raindrops splashing onto these rocks sizzle and turn to steam. Despite an annual rainfall averaging 10", little grows in the Burning Waste.

**Encounters:** Most of the creatures in the Burning Waste are drawn there by the area's unique environment. They include efreeti, earth and fire elementals, lava ooze, a phoenix or two, and flame salamanders. Unconfirmed rumors claim a clan of fire giants have built an iron castle in the center of the Burning Waste.

### The Barren Plain

This level plain of semi-arid grasslands divides the Sind Desert from the Sea of Dread's rocky coastline. In times past, prolonged droughts have caused the area's short, hardy grasses to die off, leaving a barren, sandy plain. With the return of the rains (10"-12" annually) the grasses once again emerged, attracting small herds of antelope and other herbivores. In recent centuries, nomads from the Sind Desert have ventured into the Barren Plain with their livestock.

To the west, the Barren Plain gradually gives way to the Konumtali Savannah's longer grasses and scattered trees. Temperatures in the Barren Plain are fairly constant, ranging from 50° on winter days to 100° at the height of summer. Nights average 20° colder than days.

**Encounters:** Wild animal herds include antelopes, asses, gazelles, hog deer (short, heavy deer with yellowish

brown coats and dark bellies), oryxes, rhinos, warthogs, and zebras. Feral herds of camels, horses, or goats also roam the plains. Most of the Barren Plain's nomadic herders are Urduk nomads. A few are descendants of displaced tribes from Ylaruam; fewer still are humanoids.

See p. 33 for encounters and conditions in the Konumtali Savannah.

### The Black Mountains

The Black Mountains dominate the Great Waste's northern edge. They are some of the tallest and most dangerous of mountains anywhere on Mystara. Many of the mountain range's peaks are permanently ice covered, and large glaciers fill the higher valleys. Travel through the Black Mountains is nearly impossible, except at certain passes and trails. Travellers confront food scarcity, snow-covered crevasses, avalanches, cunning monsters, freezing cold, and air so thin it makes breathing difficult.

Hardy scrub bushes and twisted pines clothe the mountains' southern foothills. The stunted, twisted pines give up at about 12,000'; only the grasses and lichens of tundra terrain cling to the higher slopes. Peaks higher than 15,000' altitude (of which there are many in the Black Mountains) present nothing but bare rock to wind and sky. Temperatures drop by 4° F for every 1,000' in altitude, rapidly decreasing from the uncomfortably hot temperatures of the Plain of Fire.

**Encounters:** Orcs, ogres, kobolds, goblins, hobgoblins, gnolls, and bugbears all live in the caves and wildlands of the mountains. Less common intelligent inhabitants include mountain giants, a few scattered and beleaguered dwarven colonies, red dragons, and at least one mated pair of gold dragons. There are also some tribes of neanderthals, yeti (sasquatch), manscorpions, harpies, and some families of ill-tempered atchaks. Other monsters include wyverns, rocs, manticores, flying hydras, hippogriffs, griffons, and chimeras. Normal animals include wolves, bears, rock baboons, and herds of deer and mountain goats.

## Ancient History —

Millennia ago, the Great Waste was blanketed by a vast temperate forest that straddled both sides of the Black Mountains. Polar ices covered the lands now known as Glantri, Darokin, and much of the Known World farther east.

Then, three thousand years before the Crowning of the Emperor of Thyatis, the civilization of Blackmoor destroyed itself in a tremendous cataclysm. Mystara turned on its axis, plunging the lands of Blackmoor and an elven civilization on the far side of the world into the cold and darkness of the newly-oriented polar regions. As polar caps melted and new ones formed, Mystara's climates underwent abrupt and disastrous changes. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts, and destructive storms became common. When the "Great Rain of Fire" was over, the face of the planet had changed.

Alternating disasters of fires, fierce winds, torrential rains, and drought had swept the lands south of the Black Mountains clear of their forests. When Mystara's climates stabilized, the new weather patterns deprived the Great Waste of life-giving rain. Only hardy grasses, borne on the winds, managed to gain footholds near the coasts; most of the region remained desert.

Small animals gradually moved into the desert's margins, taking advantage of the lack of competition there. They were followed by larger herbivores—antelopes, two-humped camels from the foothills of the Black Mountains, and small wild horses. After the herd animals came carnivores, including wolves, lions, bugbears, and the Urduks—light-skinned nomadic hunters, descendants of the Neathar culture that also spawned the Blackmoor race. For a short time, around 2250 BC, Ilsundal led several clans of elves on a migration across the Great Waste from the west, but they quickly moved on to more hospitable lands.

In 1750 BC, a series of great volcanic eruptions and earthquakes extending eastward from the Burning Waste split several large land masses away from the coast of





## The Great Waste

what is now the Kingdom of Sind, the Atruaghin Clans area, and the Five Shires. Nothing remained of this land but scattered islands (now the Kingdom of Ierendi and the Minrothad Guilds).

The earthquakes caused the collapse of a plateau to the east of the Great Waste (the predecessor of today's Atruaghin Plateau). This drove some of the surviving human inhabitants out into the desert, where game could still be found. Conflicts between the copper-skinned newcomers (descendants of ancient Oltec and Azcan cultures) and the light-skinned nomads of the desert eventually resolved into cooperation and intermarriage as the refugees from the east adopted Urduk ways for themselves.

This second cataclysm changed the prevalent weather patterns again. After half a century of continued earthquakes, storms, and droughts, shifts in prevailing winds and temperatures brought good rainfall and mild weather to the region. The eastern forest spread over the scars of the fallen plateau and along the coast of the Sea of Dread. The desert bloomed. Only the Plain of Fire remained inhospitable. Its porous bedrock, carved by deluges of wind and water, channeled the abundant rainfall underground, leaving little water on the surface.

In 1675 BC, the Asanda River's newly-forested valley attracted more copper-skinned settlers from the ruined plateau. These were farmers, driven from their homes by Tahkati Stormtamer and his united tribes (now known as the Children of the Horse). They found the rich soil surrounding the river perfect for their crops, and established many riverside communities. They called themselves "Sindhi," probably naming themselves after the Asanda River.

Inevitably, the Sindhis encountered the Urduks, also enjoying prosperity in the now green land. Trade developed between the two cultures. The Urduks, with their herds of goats, horses, and camels, preferred the lush grasslands to the forests. They traded meat, milk, and hides for surplus grains and hand-crafted goods provided by the Sindhi.

For nearly four hundred years, the two cultures prospered and grew. They paid little attention to the tribes to the east, except to repel the occasional raid. The Sindhi cleared more land for their crops and towns, while the Urduk herds multiplied. Some nomads, attracted by Sindhi wealth, left their herds to settle in the towns.

Thirteen centuries before the crowning of the first Emperor of Thyatis, migrating humanoids began to encroach on the Great Waste. A tribe of ogres were the first to arrive, in 1291 BC. They settled in the marginal lands on the edge of the Plain of Fire, and began to learn the local customs of the Urduks and Sindhis. For a time they lived peacefully, only occasionally raiding Urduk herds and Sindhi villages. But in 1271 BC, their wells dried up—five previous years of sparse rainfall had extended the edges of the Plain of Fire—and they moved east in search of water and food. Along the way, they devastated Sindhi villages and enslaved the villagers.

Their reign of terror was brief. Within a year, concerted efforts by Sindhi and Urduk warriors drove the ogres eastward, into the lands that would later become the Republic of Darokin. The displaced ogres eventually settled in the Broken Lands.

No sooner had one problem been solved than another descended upon Sindh. In 1257 BC, tribes of Red Orcs led by Wogar overran the southern lands, including Sindh and the tribal lands of the Atruaghin Clans. Although the eastern tribes had been united under the leadership of Atruaghin in 1400 BC, they fell to the overwhelming numbers of orcs. The Sindhi, strengthened by expert Urduk horsemen, managed to beat back most of the Red Orc attacks.

The year 1255 BC brought with it renewed attacks from the Red Orcs, now firmly in control of the Atruaghin Clans. The first Sindhi settlement to fall was Shahjapur (near present-day Sayr Ulan). Others followed, and by 1253 BC the Sindhis and their Urduk allies were hard-pressed.

Help arrived unexpectedly from the west. An Urduk explorer returning from the Serpent Peninsula brought with him a band of short, dark-skinned warriors—the Karimari—and five trained elephants. The combination of the Karimari's strange battle magic and the horrifyingly devastating elephants turned the tide once more. By 1250 BC, Sindh was free of the Red Orcs.

To assure their victory, the Sindhis pushed their armies eastward into the orc-infested forests and established fortified settlements along the line now demarcating the Kingdom of Sind's eastern border. They pushed deep into Red Orc territory just south of the Amsorak Mountains, to the shores of Lake Amsorak itself. Although they could make no inroads into the occupied territories of the Atruaghin Clans, the Sindhis managed to keep the Red Orcs at bay. At least part of their success lay in the use of trained elephants, brought across a thousand miles of grasslands by Karimari traders. The increasingly solid alliance between the Urduk nomads and the Sindhi settlers helped as well.

Things remained at a standoff for more than two centuries. To organize defenses and ensure good communication and supply lines, the Sindhis developed an aristocratic government ruled by a king drawn from the ranks of noble fighters. Sindhi society began to organize itself along four social classes: the Himayas, or warriors; the Rishiyas, or clerics; the Prajayas, or commoners (farmers and craftsmen); and the Kuliyas, or servants and unskilled laborers. They also segregated themselves into the sindi-varna (born of Sindhi parents) and the urdu-varna (of Urduk parentage).

In 1000 BC, a tribe of gnolls fleeing from their Nithian masters made their way through the Broken Lands and into the Amsorak Mountains. The gnoll migration coincided with an incursion of humanoids from the Broken Lands. Hordes of orcs conquered the Hin of the Five Shires and spread throughout most of what would become Darokin. Goblins and hobgoblins migrated along the Amso-



## The Great Waste

rak Mountains and north around the Plain of Fire to the Black Mountains.

Some gnolls tried to settle in the fertile lands of Sindh, and the Sindhis welcomed them as unskilled laborers. Tired of constant flight, some gnolls elected to stay, working for human masters in return for food and shelter. Those who valued freedom more than ease moved on. These gnolls discovered the labyrinthine tunnels beneath the Plain of Fire and established themselves in the land of Graakh (see p. 25).

All these humanoid migrations pressured the Red Orcs to the east, causing them to renew their attacks on Sindh. Along with increasingly bloody skirmishes with their old enemies, the Sindhis suffered from attacks from new enemies—dispossessed humanoids of all sorts, including trolls, bugbears, and kobolds—passing along Sindh's northern borders.

To make matters worse, the Urduk nomads no longer enthusiastically upheld their side of the Sindhi-Urduk alliance. After two centuries of relative safety, buffered from the brunt of the orcish attacks by the well-organized defenses of Sindh, the Urdiks' passion for orc fighting had dulled. As fewer and fewer Urduk horsemen responded to the Sindhi plea for warriors, the sindi-varnas began to disdain, then to despise, the urdu-varnas. Marriages between people of Sindhi and Urduk descent were forbidden; those of mixed blood were relegated to urdu-varna status.

After four more centuries of border disputes with the Red Orcs, the exacting obedience to authority demanded by the ever-present threat of war had solidified the social classes of Sindhi society into true castes. The urdu-varna were restricted to the Prajaya and Kuliya castes: commoners and servants. Even within their own castes, the copper-skinned sindi-varnas looked down upon the descendants of Urduk townsmen. Trade was no longer permitted with the Urduk nomads, who roamed farther into the grasslands.

But the standoff with the Red Orcs wasn't to last forever. In 800 BC, the

soon-to-be Immortal Atruaghin returned to find his people firmly in the grip of their orcish oppressors. He led the Children of Atruaghin in revolt against their masters. The Sindhis seized the opportunity to throw themselves in force against the Red Orc western lines. By 795 BC, the concerted attacks by two enemies had crushed the orcish conquerors. Red Orc survivors fled east and north.

At the end of the war, Atruaghin parlayed with the ruling Himayas of Sindh. The eastern border of Sindh was set at roughly its current extent, with Sindhis holding most of the green valley south of the Amsorak Mountains to the western shore of Lake Amsorak. Knowing that such treaties tend to be forgotten after a few generations, and fearing further hostilities from humanoids inhabiting the lands to the north and east of his beloved clans, Atruaghin used his mighty magics to restore the ancient plateau that once protected his people. When the earthshaking spell was completed, a plateau twice as high and three times the size of the original rose above the surrounding forest and hills. The current Atruaghin Plateau was born.

Atruaghin's magic had unexpected side effects. Coupled with continuing changes in Mystara's climate (the original polar ice sheets were only now retreating from the mountains of Glantri), the new landform interfered with prevailing weather patterns. Once again, winds shifted and rainfall changed drastically. Although the coastal lands of the Atruaghin Clans remained well supplied with rain, the plateau blocked the easterly rain clouds from Sindh and the grasslands beyond. Seasonal storm patterns of the Sea of Dread changed as well. Over the next century, Sindh's winters became ever drier. The summer storms, called monsoons, brought much-needed rain to the area—but in the form of torrential downpours that could sweep the crops away as easily as drought withered them.

By 650 BC, most of the interior grasslands had reverted to desert. The Urduk herds dwindled, robbing the nomads of their wealth and bringing hard times to

the people. In Sindh itself, the once lush forests fell to the double onslaught of drought and the cities' demands for fuel and building materials. Forest gave way to grasslands, which in turn became desert as increasingly desperate Sindhis overfarmed and overgrazed the land.

Into the new deserts of the Great Waste came the Sheyallia elves, fleeing the ecological havoc the Tanagoro settlers were causing on the Serpent Peninsula (see p. 35). The Urdiks of the remaining grasslands and the Sind Desert made it plain that, while they would let the elves pass through their lands, the Sheyallia were not welcome to stay. Their way blocked to the east by Sindh, and to the north and west by the humanoid-held Black Mountains, the Sheyallia wandered into the inhospitable Plain of Fire. They found the Gruugrakh gnolls and their underground settlements. After brief hostilities, the two cultures settled into an uneasy partnership (see "Graakhala," p. 25).

The Sindhis continued to struggle against the desertification of their lands and against humanoids in the Amsorak mountains and western Darokin. The ruling families splintered into bickering factions, each trying to get the most land and water resources for themselves and their people. The situation was worsened by the fact that a number of shape shifters had infiltrated the upper levels of Sindhi society. They included adaptors, doppelgangers, mujinas, and bhuts (these appear human by day but become ferocious, man-eating, scaled, fanged things at night; see X4: *Master of the Desert Nomads*). Unknown to most of the populace, these shapeshifters ruled Sindh for centuries, but they could not cooperate.

By AC 1, Sindh had disintegrated into a number of *mumlykets* (muhm' lih kets), or little kingdoms whose rulers squabbled over an increasingly poorly productive land. The Rishiya caste grew in power and popularity as they preached perseverance and the promise of a better life in the future—if only the Sindhis honored the Immortals correctly and discharged their duties well in this life.



# Sind: Gateway to the Eastern Lands

The current Kingdom of Sind (foreign merchants dropped the "h") encompasses a number of once separate mumlykets, each ruled by a rajah ("king") or maharajah ("great king"). Over them all rules Rajadhiraja ("king of kings") Chandra ul Nervi—also titled the Maharajadhiraja ("great king of kings"), or, more properly, the Maharajadhirajaparamabhattarka.

Sind is paradoxically known for both its fabulous wealth and extreme poverty. While rich Sindhi merchants trade silk, cotton, rice, salt, and tea with foreign nations, poor farmers and craftsmen can barely feed their families. The rajahs' golden palaces overlook decrepit tenements that house the poor of Sind's cities.

Sind is also known as the Gateway to the Eastern Lands. It offers the easiest route between the eastern lands (Darokin and beyond) and the western lands (the Serpent Peninsula, Hule, and the Savage Coast). Of course, merchants of Darokin and other eastern lands call Sind the Gateway to the West.

## History of Sind —

Much of Sind's history is filled with petty skirmishes and wars between bickering rajahs. Successive rulers fought for land and wealth and struggled to control resources and foreign trade. Only in the last few hundred years has Sind presented a unified face to the outside world.

For events prior to AC 1, see "Ancient History," p. 4.

### Historical Synopsis

**AC 67:** Orcs living near Lake Amsorak wrest most of Darokin from its human inhabitants in this bloody summer. The humans and elves of Darokin join forces to drive the orcs out; they're successful. Thousands of orcs flee into Nagpuri, slaying and pillaging as they overrun the lands. Nagpuri's warriors must contend with orc troubles for the next decade.

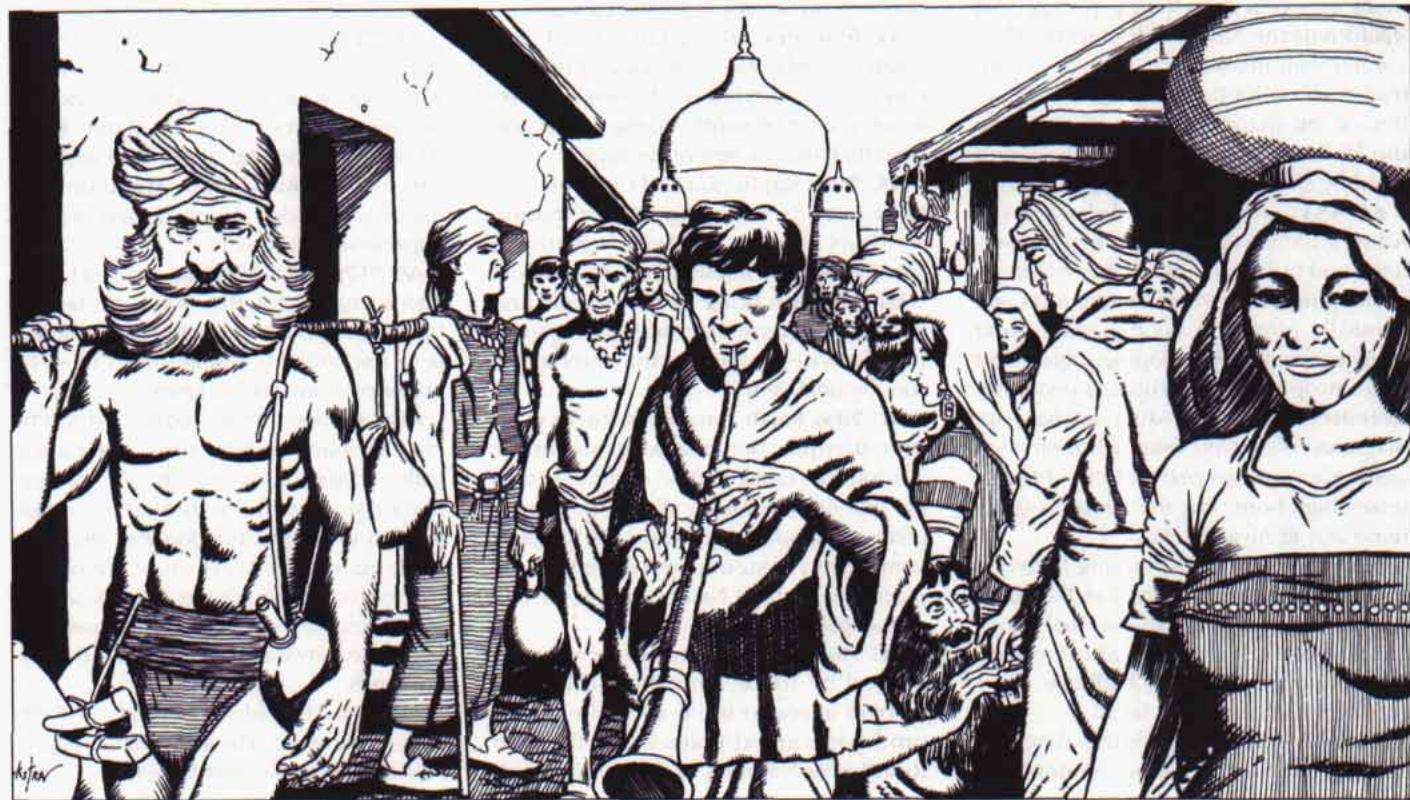
**AC 100–150:** Three prominent families rise to power in the Asanda plain—the

Pratikutas of Putnabad (which includes present-day Jaibul and Jalawar); the Rastrapalas of Shajarkand; and the Mahavarmans of Nagpuri and Gunjab. Throughout the century, successive generations gain and lose power and ground in almost constant struggles for control.

**AC 179:** The Pratikutas seize control of the entire length of the Asanda River and most of the Salt Swamp—despite internal problems with revolts and rebellions.

**AC 186:** Rajah Vijay Pratikuta dies, leaving Putnabad to Sarad, his only son. Rajah Sarad's weak rule loses all but a fraction of Putnabad's territory. Newly-powerful families rule in Jalawar and Jhengal. Other rajahs suspect these new rulers are shape shifters.

**AC 250:** Nomads driven from their homelands in Ylarum by Thyatian colonists make their way into Darokin and then into Sind. They bring with them single-humped dromedaries, fine horses, and techniques for making *flying carpets*. Some settle in Sindhi towns. Many more find kin-



## Sind

dred spirits in the Urduk nomads west of Sind and add their herds and desert traditions to those of their new-found brethren. Rajahs seeking to strengthen their armies with Ylari warriors try to attract Ylaruam settlers to their lands.

**AC 425:** Minrothad traders unwittingly introduce lycanthropy to Sind. The disease threatens to overrun every level of Sindhi society. Weretigers are especially prevalent. Other shape shifters already in Sind see this as an opportunity to unite their kind—doppelgangers and mujinas allying with lycanthropes—and seize complete control of the area.

Ka the Preserver, an Immortal, fears this would irrevocably alter Sindian culture and transplants nearly half of the Sindhi population to the Hollow World before the shape shifters can effect their takeover. Ka gives false memories to those he transplants—memories of an outer world Sind once ruled by shape-shifters called *chambabara*, or “deformed animals.”

Those left behind also receive false memories of a devastating plague that killed half the Sindhi population. They are left with many shape shifters to contend with, as Ka transported only a fraction of the shape shifting population to the Hollow World. For a while, a Sind ruled by shape shifters becomes a reality.

**AC 451:** Sindhi mages led by Maga Aditi, a name-level female magic-user, unite and overthrow the shape shifters. A brutal purge follows. Elaborate tests and carefully plotted traps expose a great many shape shifters—doppelgangers and lycanthropes alike—who are promptly executed. When the dust settles, the magic-users of Sind establish their own caste, the *Jadugeryas*, and claim themselves high-born, like the Himayas (warriors) and Rishiyanas (clerics).

**AC 609:** Decades of feuding between the Jadugeryas and Rishiyanas of Putnabad end as the Jadugeryas flee to the southern portion of Putnabad and carve their own mumlyket out of the badlands. They call their small kingdom Jaibul.

**AC 687:** Ierendi merchants discover the rich trade opportunities Sindhi ports

offer. Jaibul and Putnabad compete fiercely for foreign trade.

**AC 691:** Yuvraj Narendra ul Nervi, the Crown Prince of Sindrastan, nearly dies when his favorite elephant goes mad and gored him. A holy man saves his life, calming the elephant and healing the prince. While he lies unconscious, Narendra experiences a terrible vision of danger Sind will face in the future—a danger the Sindhi people will be powerless against unless Sind's independent mumlykets are united. When Narendra awakens, the holy man is gone; no one can say who he was or where he went. Narendra's father, Sanjiva ul Nervi, dies later in the year, leaving the rulership of Sindrastan to his son.

**AC 695:** Rajah Narendra ul Nervi's army initiates the slow and bloody process of the unification of Sind by conquering Gom, Karganj, and Naral.

**AC 696:** Sandapur falls to Narendra's onslaught. Backed by the allied forces of the rajahs of Jalawar and Putnabad, the village of Pramayana stands against Sindrastan's armies for more than a year.

**AC 698:** Pramayana falls at last, but Rajah Narendra realizes he cannot hope to conquer all of Jalawar. He strikes westward instead of south, taking Sindri and Khamratni and the rest of Jhengal.

**AC 700:** Rajah Narendra establishes Gola Keep to encourage desert trading caravans to enter the Asanda Plain via Jhengal. His generous trade agreements with Slagovich bring fabulous trade and wealth to Jhengal. The Rajah also marries his first wife, Drisana, who bears him a son the next year.

**AC 703:** Rajah Narendra's forces conquer Baratpur, bringing Baratkand under Sindrastani control. The rajah assumes the title of Rajadhiraja, allows the former rajah of Baratkand to retain his title and some governmental privileges, and places Rajah Javis Nandin on the throne of Jhengal.

**AC 704:** Still resistant to being conquered by force, both Putnabad and Jalawar agree to unite with Sindrastan (and pay annual taxes and tribute to Rajadhiraja Narendra ul Nervi) in return

for sharing the benefits of trade with Slagovich. The ruling Jadugeryas of Jaibul reach an agreement with the rajadhiraja, allowing them independence in return for promises not to interfere with Sindhi affairs, and to allow caravans traveling through the Barren Plain to pass through Jaibul to Putnabad.

**AC 705:** The Rajadhiraja turns his attention northward, his eyes on the fertile lands of Nagpuri. Within six months, the rajah of Nagpuri swears fealty to Rajadhiraja Narendra ul Nervi. The deal is sealed with the marriage between the Rajadhiraja and Kumuda, the rajah's daughter.

**AC 706–713:** Bloody wars to control Kadesh and Gunjab nearly exhaust the Rajadhiraja's resources. In AC 712, Raneshwar falls to Narendra's troops. The next year, Kadesh agrees to unite with lower Sind, provided the Rajah of Kadesh retains his rulership under the new title of Maharajah (Great King), just as the Rajah of Gunjab was allowed the year before. The Maharajah of Kadesh also betrothes his infant daughter to the Rajadhiraja's twelve-year-old son.

**AC 714:** Rajadhiraja Narendra ul Nervi announces the total unification of the Kingdom of Sind with the treaty reached between Sindrastan and Peshmir. Rajah Ravi Prabhapravitha of Peshmir assumes the title of Maharajah. Mandara, the maharajah's eldest daughter, becomes the Rajadhiraja's third wife.

**AC 717:** The Rajadhiraja charges Jahore and its ruling families with the task of building a Sindhi Navy. The first problem is to find suitable timber; most must be imported from eastern lands.

**AC 726:** The newly-completed Sindhi navy of four merchant vessels and a war galley mysteriously sinks in Jaibul's outer harbor shortly after returning from their maiden voyage to Tanakumba. The rajah of Putnabad suspects sabotage on the part of foreign merchants jealous of their own lucrative positions as middlemen in the trade between the eastern and western lands.

**AC 735:** The elderly Narendra ul Nervi dies in his sleep. His son, Kistna, proves a just and capable Rajadhiraja.



**AC 776:** Rajadhiraja Kistna ul Nervi dies of a fever after reigning for four decades. His strong rulership cemented Sind's unification. A grandson, Hansh ul Nervi, succeeds Kistna as Rajadhiraja.

**AC 793:** Rajadhiraja Hansh ul Nervi is found dead after eating a poisoned fig. His son Ramanan takes the throne.

**AC 805:** Dwarves fleeing the anti-dwarf policies of Glantri establish small communities in the mountains of Nagpuri, Punjab, and Peshmir.

**AC 812:** Rajadhiraja Ramanan ul Nervi dies after eating a bowl of figs. His eldest son, Kulpakh, assumes the throne, claiming his father's death is the result of Immortal justice. Within a week, Kulpakh begins issuing bizarre proclamations—exhorting the Jadugeryas to find a way to make it snow in the Great Waste, proclaiming all Rishiyas to be vampires feeding on the people of Sind, and insisting all animals be set free of their bondage and not asked to do man's work. Within a month, Kulpakh dies when a ceremonial elephant freed to wander the streets runs amok and tramples him. Kulpakh's brother Balin, barely in his twenties, takes the throne.

**AC 832:** Rajadhiraja Balin ul Nervi drowns in the Asanda's flood waters while trying to rescue a child caught in the churning river. His eighteen-year-old daughter (and only heir) Nitara ul Nervi claims the throne of Sind and the title of Ranidhiraja. After a rocky start—plagued with attempted assassinations and failed coups—her rule stabilizes into fifty years of peace and prosperity.

**AC 882:** Ranidhiraja Nitara ul Nervi abdicates the throne of Sind in favor of her grandson, Anandarun ul Nervi. Nitara then embarks on a ship bound for Alphatia, ostensibly to tour Floating Ar and other wonders of the world. She doesn't return.

**AC 889:** Rajadhiraja Anandarun ul Nervi is assassinated, leaving no heirs. Those close to him suspect the rajah of Nagpuri, but can present no proof. Vadim, Kulpakh ul Nervi's great-grandson, seizes the throne.

**AC 897:** The Srinivasans of Sandapur petition Rajadhiraja Vadim ul Nervi to allow them to secede from Nandin-ruled Jhengal, claiming incompetence on the part of the rajah of Jhengal. Amid rumors of graft, bribery, and corruption, the Rajadhiraja orders Jhengal divided into East Jhengal (named Azadgal by its new rajah) and West Jhengal (stubbornly called "Jhengal" by its inhabitants).

**AC 901:** Kers Zeberdesti, a Jadugerya claiming to be Anandarun ul Nervi's illegitimate son, heads a successful coup against Rajadhiraja Vadim ul Nervi. Kers takes the throne, as well as the ul Nervi name.

**AC 913:** Rajadhiraja Kers ul Nervi dies in a blazing fire—apparently the result of a magical experiment gone awry—that destroys the royal palace and much of Sayr Ulan. His son Darshan becomes Rajadhiraja, and orders the palace rebuilt. The architectural plans call for an artificial lake with the splendid new palace built on an island in its center.

**AC 915:** A Himaya named Sarad Ylayci seizes the throne in a bloody coup. He claims to be yet another illegitimate son of Anandarun ul Nervi. Once his power is secure, he orders construction on the palace continued. Like Kers Zeberdesti, Sarad takes the ul Nervi name as well as the throne.

**AC 939:** Rulership of Sind passes to Timin ul Nervi when his father, Rajadhiraja Sarad ul Nervi, dies in bed.

**AC 951:** A pet tiger seriously mauls Rajadhiraja Timin ul Nervi. Although he survives, Timin is crippled and abdicates the throne in favor of his son Kapil. The new Rajadhiraja is only sixteen years old, but quickly proves himself a capable leader in repelling the worst humanoid raids known this century.

**AC 992:** Rajadhiraja Kapil ul Nervi dies of injuries sustained while battling a blue dragon that had plagued Baratkand. A grandson, Chandra ul Nervi, becomes Rajadhiraja.

**AC 1000:** Prince Haldemar of Alphatia foils a plot by the Rajah of Jaibul to add Putnabad to the Rajahstan of Jaibul.

## Sindhi Society —

As a legacy from the Red Orc wars, Sindhi society is highly organized and regimented. The caste system dominates the society's rules of conduct and locks each Sindhi into a specific occupation and social level. It influences nearly everything in Sind, from the government to daily life.

### The Caste System

Custom, tradition, and law have divided Sindhi society into five social castes based on hereditary occupations. Children born into a caste remain members of that caste for life.

Each caste has its own traditional occupations, ceremonies, and customs. Sindhi law forbids intermarriage between castes. Custom dictates that castes dine separately to avoid "contamination" through association with members of another caste. Sindhis who must deal closely with members of a less privileged caste ritually bathe themselves to cleanse their persons of the contact when business is done.

**Himaya:** This ruling caste developed from a group of families renowned for their fighting and leadership during the long wars with the Red Orcs. Children born into Himaya families are strongly encouraged to study combat and warfare and learn to wield the scimitars and spears traditionally used by Sindhi warriors. Those without the talent or strength for fighting are taught skills in finance, trade, politics, diplomacy, or administration. Most government officials are drawn from the Himaya caste, as are the soldiers and officers of Sind's armies. Himayas who do not go into government or the army may become merchants and traders, or manage businesses or plantations staffed by Prajaya artisans or farmers.

**Rishiya:** This caste traditionally provides spiritual guidance to the people of Sind—rulers and commoners alike. Their duties often bring them into close contact with the other castes. Only Rishiyas are allowed to break the dining taboo by eating food with people of other castes, but



## Sind

they must ritually purify themselves afterward. Most Rishiyas are also clerics; a few are druids or mystics. Some choose to become wandering ascetics, wearing rags and living off food given in return for their preaching and tutoring.

Although they do not rule the nation directly, Rishiyas are actually considered of a higher, more privileged caste than the Himayas. The King of Sind himself must bow before His Most Holy Eminence, the Purohita (chief of the Rishiyas). Rishiyas counsel government officials in all matters. They also conduct festivals and ceremonies and intercede for those wishing favors or guidance from the Immortals.

**Jadugerya:** Born into powerful magic-using families, Jadugerya children are strongly encouraged to study the magical arts. An exceptionally high percentage of them have considerable talent for spell-casting. Jadugeryas are duty-bound to use their spells in the service of any Sindhi who requires them. This duty must be discharged first to the Rishiyas, next to the Himayas, then to other Jadugeryas, to the Prajayas, and, last of all, to the Kuliya.

By tradition, the spellcaster expects a "gift" in return. The more difficult the spell, the greater the gift, but the actual worth of any gift is determined both by custom and by the giver's means. Thus, a Rishiya is expected to pay more for having a *clairvoyance* spell cast than a Kuliya would be. Name-level magic-users are expected to spend at least one quarter of each year casting enchantments and making the resulting magical items available to Sindhis who need them. Unfortunately, with so many requests from privileged caste members (Rishiyas, Himayas, and other Jadugeryas), Prajaya and Kuliya requests for enchanted items are rarely fulfilled.

**Prajaya:** Common farmers and craftsmen belong to the Prajaya caste. Prajayas may follow many traditional occupations, but children are strongly encouraged to study the trade of their parents. Children who have absolutely no talent or interest in their family's traditional occupation (as

blacksmiths, rice farmers, weavers, or whatever) may learn a different trade by arranging for a ritual "adoption" into a family that practices a trade they wish to learn.

With so many occupations being followed by entire families, Prajayas have organized themselves into sub-castes. Agricultural occupations (farming and herding) are considered "higher" pursuits than artistic occupations (crafts such as potting, weaving, and smithing). This may have something to do with the fact that many Prajaya artisans are also urdu-varnas—born of light-skinned Urduiks—whom Sindhi society considers inferior to the sindi-varnas.

**Kuliya:** This caste of servants and unskilled laborers are the poorest and lowest of Sind's citizens. Like the Prajayas, most families follow traditional occupations as barbers, launderers, dung collectors, sweepers, or other lowly occupations. Urdu-varnas of the Kuliya caste are also known as *nantyaj*, or "untouchable." They're relegated to occupations as corpse-handlers, grave diggers, and executioners. Other Sindhis avoid all contact with them, and must ritually bathe themselves and their clothing after any meeting with a Kuliya.

**Castes and Population Levels:** Members of the Prajaya and Kuliya castes outnumber the privileged castes. They traditionally marry earlier and have more children than Rishiyas, Himayas, and Jadugeryas. In rural areas, roughly 10% of the population will be members of the Himaya caste, 5% will be Rishiyas, 5% will be Jadugeryas, 50% will be Prajayas, and 30% will be Kuliyas. In urban areas, the ratios are closer to 20% Himayas, 15% Rishiyasm, 15% Jadugaryas, 25% Prajayas, and 25% Kuliyas. Although at first glance the traditional farming population—roughly half the Prajayas—seems too small to support all of Sind's people, the numbers are deceiving. Of all occupations, agriculture is the only one considered suitable for members of any caste. Many Kuliyas serve as unskilled laborers on farms and plantations, and unfortunate members of the privileged castes

who are unable to enter their caste's more traditional occupations often end up as farmers.

**Castes and Daily Life:** Each caste has its own customs, including traditional clothing, methods of greeting one another, festivals, and traditional food dishes. Except when necessary for business or other reasons, Sindhis avoid contact with members of other castes. When on the streets, caste members will greet one another but ignore anyone of a different caste. By custom, Prajayas and Kuliyas avert their eyes from anyone of a privileged caste—looking upon them is viewed as an act of contamination. Those of "lower" castes give right of way to those of "higher" castes.

The rules and customs attending visits to one's home by members of another caste are complex. Unless the visitor is a Rishiya, the host will serve food according to the visitor's station (from a feast for one of higher caste to a piece of fruit for one of significantly lower caste) while refusing to dine himself. The distance the host comes out of his house to greet the approaching visitor, the length of the visit, the height of the chair offered to the visitor, topics discussed, and everything else surrounding the visit is dictated by the relative castes of visitor and host.

Sindhis can gain or lose status within their own caste. There are wealthy Prajayas and poor Rishiyas. But even wealthy Prajayan farmers, while respected by the community and active in local government, must observe the customs of deference and humility towards the poorest members of a privileged caste.

**Castes and Foreigners:** Sindhis tend to stereotype foreigners according to their own ideas about castes. Skin color is the first thing most Sindhis notice when dealing with foreigners. Because members of the privileged castes have a rich, copper-colored skin tone, they tend to look down on both lighter-skinned people (who look like the despised urdu-varnas) and people with darker skin.

Aside from skin color, most Sindhis judge foreigners by their occupations.



Clerics are highly respected, regardless of the Immortals they honor. Foreign fighters and magic-users are considered only a step below their Himaya and Jadugarya counterparts. Artisans, merchants, and farmers are equated with Prajayas unless they demonstrate fighting or spell-casting abilities as well as their occupational skills.

Most Sindhis expect foreigners to learn the Sindhi language and Sindhi customs, and to respect and follow Sindhi traditions (or at least attempt it). To do otherwise is an insult. On the other hand, Sindhis visiting other countries strive to learn and respect the strange ways of the people there.

**Changes in the Wind:** Not all Sindhis feel the caste system is good for Sind. A few idealists from all castes are working toward abolishing the worst abuses the caste system imposes on unprivileged Sindhis—especially the untouchables. Many of these idealists think it wrong to judge people by skin color or to exclude any talented people from government because of their caste. Traditionalist Sindhis blame these new sentiments on the influence of foreign traders in Sind.

## The Government

The Rajadhiraja at Sayr Ulan holds supreme power throughout Sind. He heads the military and is the nation's highest judge and lawmaker. Since the ul Nervis united Sind under their rule, the position has been hereditary, passed from father to eldest son—with some exceptions. At his coronation, each Rajadhiraja swears an oath asking the Immortals to take his life and his offspring should he ever oppress the people of Sind. The Rajadhiraja has a special secret service force of spies who gather intelligence and report to the King of Kings all goings-on in the other mumlykets.

The *mantri parishad*, a council of eleven experienced statesmen, advises the Rajadhiraja in all matters. Each mumlyket sends one representative, appointed by the rajah, to the council.

These ministers have the right to discuss and even veto the Rajadhiraja's orders, although they cannot veto any order issued a second time. They can also authorize expenditures from the state treasury for internal affairs (disaster relief, building or repairing roads and irrigation canals, and so on). Council members spend a lot of their time cutting deals, forming alliances, and compromising. Expenditures for military or foreign affairs must be authorized by the Rajadhiraja himself.

The Sindhi government includes a highly-developed bureaucracy. There are separate departments for accounts, agriculture, foreign trade, internal trade, mines, revenue, and taxation. Department heads are usually drawn from the Rishiya or Himaya castes, although other government workers and administrators can belong to any of the privileged castes. Prajayas and Kuliyas are excluded from national government.

Each mumlyket is semi-autonomous. Rajahs are allowed to run their states as they see fit, subject to the ancient sacred laws of Sind and to the Rajadhiraja's decrees. They must forward 20% of all taxes and tolls collected to the treasury in Sayr Ulan.

*Panchayats* ("councils of five") govern individual towns and villages. The chief councilor of the *panchayat* must, by law, be of a privileged caste, but the other four members may be Prajayas or Kuliyas. Untouchables are excluded from all levels of government.

**The Rajadhiraja as Lawmaker:** Although the king of Sind is within his rights to pass new laws, most of his decrees concern specific applications of ancient, sacred laws passed down from Sindhi ancestors. Sind's Rishiyan keep a close eye on the king's decisions. If he issues a decree that goes against any of the sacred laws, they publically denounce his decision. If the king refuses to repeal the decree, Rishiyan throughout Sind will denounce him to the people, who are more than likely to rise up against the king and demand his overthrow—or to tear him apart in the streets.

## Sind's Armies

Each mumlyket has its own standing army drawn from the ranks of the Himayas. In addition, the Rajadhiraja commands an elite force of warriors drawn from each mumlyket. In times of peace, Sind's armies comprise roughly 1% of the population, or one out of every fifteen Himayas. In times of war, every able-bodied Himaya not needed for administrative and governmental duties is expected to join the army, swelling its ranks to nearly 10% of Sind's total population.

Traditional Sindhi trappings of warfare include scimitars, spears, horse-drawn chariots, and fighting elephants. Cavalry, both horse and camel, customarily left to the Urduks in ancient times, now makes up only a fraction of Sind's armed forces.

See p. 60 for War Machine statistics.

## The Economy

Sind's current economy markedly favors the Himaya, Rishiya, and Jadugerya castes. While the Prajaya farmers eke out a living from their lands and Prajaya craftsmen labor over their goods, the ruling fighters, clerics, and magic-users feast and revel in their princely estates.

Sind's croplands are barely sufficient to supply the nation's needs. Irrigation is a constant problem. The Asanda's waters are too salty to support good crops, and Rishiyan clerics must *purify water* and *bless* the fields regularly for the crops to grow. Where the soil is good and water plentiful, landowners often insist fields be sown with export crops such as cotton, tea, and mulberry to feed the silk worms—leaving less land for staple crops such as rice and dates.

Prajayas and Kuliyas rarely have enough ready cash to purchase goods with coins; barter is their usual method of trade. Nor does this always involve the immediate exchange of one thing for another. More often, a farmer will approach a blacksmith and ask for a plow. It's the blacksmith's traditional duty to honor the request, even



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though he won't see payment until harvest time. If the crops are poor, the blacksmith may not see payment at all; neither may the barber, the weaver, the laborers who dug the irrigation ditches, and so on. As debts are passed from father to son (and mother to daughter), and since old debts must always be paid before new, a farmer's entire crop surplus may go to pay taxes and repay decades-old debts.

Himayas, Rishiyanas, and Jadugeryas have no such duties toward the lower castes (they receive "gifts" in return for all services such as military protection and spellcasting). They do, however, traditionally owe their services to one another. Individuals who do not wish to fulfill their duties in kind (fighting or spellcasting) may opt to pay a tax instead.

Despite these difficulties, most Sindhi commoners and laborers manage to keep their families from starving. But famine is never far away. Crops may fail due to drought, saline irrigation water, insect plagues, crop blight, or the trampling hooves of skirmishing armies. Most famines are local, confined to a single village or state, and of short duration. The very old, the sick, and the very young are the first to succumb. Thousands die if the famine is widespread or prolonged.

**Taxes:** The three privileged castes owe their mumlyket an annual Denar tax of one-fourth of all profits, taxes, services, and goods received from others. Individuals may waive this tax if they freely offer their own services to the government or others of the privileged castes.

Prajaya farmers and craftsmen must pay a quarter of all produce in taxes to their maharajahs. Another quarter goes to the Rishiyanas, in return for *blessing* the fields and providing spiritual guidance. The labors of Kuliya servants and unskilled workers are their taxes, and are due to whichever Himaya, Rishiya, or Jadugerya families employ them. In return, they receive barely adequate food, shelter, and clothing.

Urdu-varnas of both the Prajaya and Kuliya castes must pay an annual *Sarsbhumari*, or poll tax, of one Khundar (1 sp) per man, woman, or child.

**Imports:** Although the nearly starving Prajayas and Kuliyas could benefit from imported foodstuffs, Sind's rulers prefer to trade their gems and precious metals for such items as the royal elephants (from the Serpent Peninsula), *teleported* snow for iced deserts (from the glaciers of Glantri), and knickknacks from distant lands to decorate their palaces. Lower-caste traders import semiprecious stones which craftsmen apply to beading, ceramics, cloths, and silver goods for export.

**Exports:** Sindhi traders are best known for their brightly dyed cotton cloths. Sind also exports salt, silk, undyed cotton thread and cloth, rice, tea, and exquisite robes, ceramics, and silverware.

**Coinage:** The King of Sind's mints produce only two official coins. The largest denomination is the Guru, a 1" diameter platinum piece with a small semiprecious rose quartz crystal set in its center. A Guru is worth 25 gp. If the platinum and the crystal are separated, each is worth only 5 gp. The Rupee is the other standard coin minted by the King's mints. It's also made of platinum and is also an inch in diameter, but doesn't have a crystal. The Rupee is worth 5 gp.

Individual maharajahs and certain Rishiyan orders exercise the right to mint their own coins as well. The most common coins are the Bhani (a gold coin worth 1 gp); the Khundar (a silver coin worth 1 sp); and the copper Piaster (1 cp). Most of these coins are traded freely throughout Sind, and are often accepted at face value in foreign trade. Literally dozens of other types of legal tender may be found in Sind as well, including glazed ceramic beads called Aydhas (two equal 1 cp) and large silver coins called Annas (5 sp apiece).



## Daily Life

An incredible number of customs and beliefs affect every aspect of Sindhi daily life. The strongest customs concern the caste system and the way Sindhis interact with members of their own and other castes (see p. 9). Other customs derive from the harsh Sindhi environment or from history.

### Animals

Sindhis keep domesticated cattle (water buffalo as draft animals and hump-backed cattle for milk), camels (two-humped camels as draft animals and dromedaries as riding animals), goats and sheep, horses, asses, and dogs. Many also keep rabbits or doves as pets, and hawks for hunting. The wealthy are fond of monkeys and parrots imported from the Serpent Peninsula. Elephants are sacred and beloved of the Immortals—they're used primarily in ceremonies, processions, and in warfare. The Royal Elephant Keepers breed a few elephants in the elephant preserve each year, but most are caught wild, then driven across the Barren Plain from the Serpent Peninsula.

### Clothing

The basic form of clothing worn by Sindhi men is the *dhoti*—a long loin cloth wrapped around the hips and thighs in such a way as to look like baggy knee-length trousers. (Kuliya men are forbidden to wear the *dhoti*; they wear loose-fitting trousers tied at the waist and ankles instead.) Men go bare-chested in hot weather. In cooler weather and on ceremonial occasions they may wear a short cloak thrown over the shoulders or a sleeved cotton shirt. Winter clothing consists of loose-fitting ankle-length trousers, long-sleeved shirts, and fur coats or jackets or felt cloaks made of beaten goat and camel hair.

Sindhi women wear the *sari*—a long cloth (about seven yards) wrapped about the entire body with one end left to hang



in loose folds down the front or thrown over the head as a hood. Saris are often brightly dyed and embroidered. Women from wealthy families wear short blouses and petticoats underneath their saris. They also sport elaborate hairdos held in place with golden combs or pins.

The privileged castes tend to prefer white cotton for their clothing, while Prajayas and Kuliyas dye theirs indigo or green. Rishiyanas wear white cotton turbans; Himayas wear a *mogbu topu* (a square hat) made of cloth-of-gold; Jadugeryas wear moghu topus made of black cloth. Prajayas and Kuliyas wear felt hats with stiff brims that stick straight up, forming a sort of bowl with a convex bottom sitting on top of their heads. They often carry small objects in the brim.

Jewelry is popular with both sexes of all castes. Men wear chest plaques and arm-bands; women wear necklaces, bracelets, anklets, and girdles. Sindhis often spend every spare coin on jewelry to display their wealth as ornamentation. Especially expensive or fine pieces of jewelry are usually worn only on ceremonial occasions. Sind has a thriving jewelry industry that produces everything from glazed ceramic beads to armor made of finely inlaid and gem-encrusted gold.

## Death Customs

When a Sindhi man dies, his eldest surviving son has the duty to perform the death rites over his funeral pyre. If he has no sons, a grandson or adopted son will do—or the father or an uncle. Likewise, the eldest surviving daughter performs the death rites over her mother. Rishiyanas conduct the ceremonies for Sindhis unfortunate enough not to have the appropriate family member to perform the rites.

Bodies are burned on a funeral pyre, and the ashes scattered on the Asanda's waters. If the person performing the death rites cannot make the pilgrimage to the banks of the Asanda, he may spread the ashes in a secluded spot where no one is likely to be contaminated by contact with them before purifying rains can wash them away.

Sindhis believe that reincarnation follows death. They also believe that *karma*, the sum of all one's deeds in all past lives, determines the form the reincarnated person will receive. If a Sindhi performs his duties properly throughout his life, he believes he will be reincarnated as a member of a higher caste. Otherwise, he may be reincarnated as a member of the same caste, demoted to a lower caste, or reincarnated as an animal.

## Inheritance

When the head of a Sindhi household dies, his possessions are split equally between his widow and his eldest son. If he has no sons, his eldest daughter receives a share instead. In this way, Sindhi women can inherit part or all of their husband's or father's estate, becoming the head of their own household. They may even inherit a mumlyket, becoming a Rani or Maharani. When they in turn pass on, the estate will be split between the surviving husband and the eldest son (or daughter). If the deceased leaves behind more than one spouse, the spouse's share goes to the senior spouse. Anyone left out must make their own way in the world.

## Education

Only members of the privileged castes receive any formal education. Their studies include Sind's history (with emphasis on military achievements) and literature (especially epic tales). Depending on the occupation parents wish their child to pursue, tutors may cover such topics as law, politics, accounting and economics, foreign languages, and the like.

Education for Prajayas and Kuliyas usually takes the form of an apprenticeship with their own family, or (in the case of Prajaya artisans) another craftsman. Some Rishiyanas and mystic orders also run schools which admit students from lower castes. Topics covered stress the duties of each caste and the proper ways to honor the Immortals. Some schools teach their low-caste students to read and write—for a fee.

## Food

Sindhis eat little meat; most of their cattle, goats, and camels are milked rather than slaughtered. Milking provides curds, ghee (semiliquid, clarified butter), cheese, and milk.

Sind's other staple foods include rice, wheat, barley, peas, and dates. Farmers also grow melons, tea, and spices—including sesame, coriander, cardamom, nutmeg (which also provides mace), cinnamon, cumin, turmeric, allspice, ginger, fenugreek, and cloves.

Many traditional dishes are heavily spiced with curries (complex combinations of Sindhi spices) and may prove unpalatable to foreigners.

## Marriage Customs

Sindhi men may marry as many women as they can support in comfort. Likewise, a woman can marry as many men as she can support—if she's the head of her household. In practice, most Sindhis are monogamous. Only the very rich—the rajahs and maharajahs, wealthy farmers or merchants, and the like—customarily indulge in polygamy.

Only heads of households can legally marry. Men must wait to inherit their father's estate or establish their own house before taking a wife. Women must marry the head of a household, unless they themselves hold that position. Marriage is allowed only between members of the same caste, and never between sindi-varnas and urdu-varnas.

Most weddings have simple ceremonies in which a presiding Rishiya blesses the union, while close friends and family bear witness. Very rich Sindhis may hold a feast afterward, inviting many members of their caste to witness not only the new marriage but also their great wealth.

If either spouse wishes to divorce the other, the woman simply leaves and goes back to her family—either on her own decision or at the request of her husband. Remarriage is allowed in all cases of divorce or widowhood.



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### Names

The Sindhis often name their children after objects or creatures in the hopes of flattering any Immortals who like to manifest themselves as that creature or object. Another popular method is to pick a name based on the day of the week the child was born, or the season, or some event taking place at the same time. Some names are unpleasant (such as Klesa, meaning "pain"), in the belief that they'll fool evil spirits into thinking the child is not worthy of attention. Children are usually named when two weeks old.

Here are some common Sindhi names and their associated meanings.

**Female:** Ambar (sky); Ananda (bliss); Avasa (independent); Baka (crane); Corah (unchanging); Durva (grass); Gauri (yellow); Jambu (rose apple tree); Jayne (victorious); Kamala (lotus); Kavindra (mighty poet); Kiran (ray); Lalasa (love); Madhur (sweet); Mutu (pearl); Nata (rope dancer); Nitara (deeply rooted); Pandita (scholar); Prabha (light); Rajni (night); Sarita (river); Shanata (peaceful); Sharan (protection); Tirtha (ford); Upala (opal); Yasmine (jasmine)

**Male:** Adri (rock); Anand (happiness); Arun (sun); Balin (mighty soldier); Bhaskar (the sun); Chander (the moon); Hanuman (monkey); Hari (tawny); Hastin (elephant); Kami (loving); Kiritan (wearing a crown); Lal (beloved); Mohan (delightful); Nehru (canal); Purdy (recluse); Rohan (sandalwood); Rohin (on the upward path); Salmalin (taloned); Sanat (ancient); Sarad (born in the autumn); Sarojun (lotus-like); Tayib (good); Vadin (speaker); Vasin (ruler)

### Recreation

Sindhi children play with sun-baked clay figures shaped and painted as people and animals. Children of wealthy parents may play with bronze figurines instead. Wooden whistles and bull-roarers are also popular. Both children and adults love to fly kites.

Many Sindhi adults like to gamble and wager with one another, especially with

dice. The privileged castes play *chaturanga*, Sind's chess-like game. It's played on a board of 64 squares with pieces representing rajahs, elephants, horses, chariots, and soldiers. Each turn, the player throws a cubic die: if it comes up a 1 or 6 he can move any piece; on a 5 he must move the king or a warrior; on a 4 he must move the elephant; on a 3 a horse; on a 2, a chariot.

Sind is famous for two fine wines: Anguri wine, made from grapes in Nagpuri; and Msiri, wine sweetened with fermenting sugared fruits and perfumed with extractions of various spices.

Some Sindhis, especially of the lower castes, have a habit of chewing betel nuts. These nuts are sliced and dried, then folded with cardamom or turmeric in leaves from a pepper plant, and chewed like chewing gum. Betel nuts temporarily stain the mouth a bright orange brown, have an intoxicating effect similar to mild alcohol, and act as a worming agent against internal parasites.

### Sindhi Laws

As with everything else in Sindhi life, Sind's laws are based on customs and traditions and regulated by caste. In general, breaking a law against a member of a higher caste carries a stiffer penalty than breaking a law against a member of a lower caste.

Conversely, punishments are more severe the higher the caste of the criminal. A Kuliya convicted of theft, for instance, is fined an amount equal to the value of the goods stolen. A Prajaya is fined eight times the value; a Himaya sixteen times the value; and a Rishiya thirty-two times the value. The idea behind this is that Rishiyas, being of higher caste, fall much further from the grace of the Immortals when they steal than do the lowly Kuliyas. The Rajadhiraja himself is expected to make restitution for any theft he commits with the return of the stolen item and a fine—thrown into the Asanda River or given to a Rishiya order—a thousand times greater than the value of the goods stolen.

By custom, a Sindhi accused of a crime has the right to pay a someone to take the blame and bear the punishment in his stead. Few take advantage of this custom unless the expected punishment is physical—flogging, imprisonment, mutilation, or death. Desperately poor Prajayas and Kuliyas may accept the accused's punishment, both because payment is usually high and because the deed is thought to increase the substitute's chances for a better life in his next incarnation.

### Law Enforcement

There is no separate branch of law enforcers—the armies of the individual rajahs and maharajahs act as police in each mumlyket. The Rajadhiraja employs a network of spies to investigate suspicious activities and to arrest those involved in crimes aimed against the central government.

Any Sindhi suspecting a crime may report it to the village council, the nearest garrison, or to a rajah. Sindhis who catch someone in the act of a crime may arrest them—regardless of caste—and either hold them captive to await the arrival of soldiers or bring them before the appropriate authorities. If a citizen witnesses a crime but is unable to make an arrest (because the criminal is too dangerous, for instance), he's expected to seek out the nearest Himaya and request him to make the arrest instead. As Himayas are charged with the duty to protect all Sindhis and are usually armed, they rarely refuse.

### Judgments

Judgment of an accused criminal can only be passed by members of the same or a higher caste. Ideally, the judge should have memorized the ancient, sacred laws of Sind, as set forth by the poet and chronicler Dhamma Manaparyaya. If a judge of the appropriate rank and knowledge isn't available, the trial must wait, be moved to some place where a judge can be found, or presided over by a tribunal made up of one mem-



ber of each caste (even if the members have little knowledge of sacred law).

Trials are fairly simple. Accused and accuser stand before the judge or tribunal. The accuser states the nature of the offense and presents the evidence against the accused, who may then speak in his own defense. Either side may call in witnesses (who must appear voluntarily—they cannot be summoned), including character witnesses to speak for or against the accused. When both sides have been heard, the judge asks any questions he wishes and then announces his decision. Whenever possible, judges should have all witnesses, the accuser, and the accused speak under the influence of *charm* spells with the suggestion that they speak the truth. Many Sindhis who specialize in the law and making judgments wear *rings of truth* or carry small collections of removable *rings of truthfulness* to place on the witnesses.

## Crime and Punishment

Much of Sindhi sacred law calls for the talion—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Here are the most common crimes and their customary punishments.

**Theft:** In cases where the stolen goods are recovered, punishment consists of a fine equal to the amount of the stolen goods—adjusted for the criminal's caste (see above). If the goods cannot be returned, punishment may consist of imprisonment, compulsory fasting, or public humiliation.

**Bodily Harm:** Maliciously hurting another person is punishable by equal bodily harm inflicted on the accused if convicted. Foreigners don't often realize that issuing or accepting a challenge to a duel is considered to prove malicious intent—they may be punished for every blow they land.

**Murder:** Sindhi sacred law recognizes self-defense as a legitimate reason to kill someone. Even so, the killer must recompense the victim's family with a *mewt jurmana* ("death fine"). In case of malicious murder, a convicted killer is usually sentenced to death and handed over to the

victim's family to carry out the punishment in whatever manner they see fit.

**Political Crimes:** Forgery, unauthorized minting of coins, or falsifying public seals is punishable by imprisonment, flogging, or fines. More serious political crimes—including plotting against the government, attempted assassination of any rajah or members of their family, spying against the government, and treason—usually carry the death penalty.

## Sind and the Immortals

At first glance, Sindhis seem to honor a vast pantheon of Immortals. The profusion of temples, shrines, and sacred caves dedicated to various legendary heroes and other manifestations of the Immortals attests to this. Upon closer examination, however, a scholar may learn that the thousands of beings so honored are in fact the incarnations and manifestations of only a few Immortals. Some are actually fictitious, and don't correspond to any Immortal at all. Instead, they embody ideas or ideals—love, hatred, peace, war, law, chaos, and so on.

The Sindhis honor each of these heroes, Immortal manifestations, and ideals separately—with pilgrimages, feasts or fasts, shrines dedicated to their story, and so on. Sindhis with great faith in the truth of what the Rishiyas teach them strive always to act honorably toward every living creature they meet, for any one or any creature could be an incarnation of an Immortal.

## Ixion

The Rishiyas teach that Ixion, the Sun Prince, embodies creation, protection, and death. They call upon *Ayazi*, Ixion's creative aspect, in any matters dealing with birth or the sowing of seeds. According to Sindhi beliefs, *Himayeti*, Ixion in the role of defender, comes to earth in a material form whenever the order of the universe is threatened—in times of war or natural disaster, for example. *Aksyri*, Ixion's destructive aspect, manifests itself

near the end of a creature's life. Gathering up the departing life force, Aksyri gives new life to the dead (reincarnating the life force in a newborn). The Sindhis believe that if the world were ever destroyed, Aksyri would appear to reincarnate Mysara itself.

Each of these three aspects is thought to have appeared in many forms throughout Sindhi history. The supposed manifestations of Ayazi include Valda, the mother of the first Sindhi rajah, and Eta, the legendary Rishiya who showed the Sindhis how to irrigate the land. Sindhi legends tell of the hundreds of times Himayeti has donned flesh and led doomed armies to victory or vanquished the curses of drought, plague, or earth tremors. He has variously taken the form of a turtle, a horse, an elephant, a traveling dwarf from a far-distant land, and many heroic Sindhis. Aksyri, the destroyer, is believed to manifest himself only in dreams during any of the "little deaths" experienced by mortal creatures. According to Rishiya teachings, Aksyri will manifest himself in physical form only at the end of the world.

Not all of the manifestations, avatars, and incarnations attributed to Ixion in any of his aspects are actually true. Some were heroes in their own right who never attained Immortality, some were avatars of other Immortals temporarily interested in Sind's affairs, others are the figments of Rishiya imagination.

## Kala (Hell)

While Ixion's many aspects symbolize life and rebirth, Kala ("the black one") embodies only death and chaos. She, too, gathers the life forces from dying creatures and reincarnates them, though she reverses the natural order when she does so. Instead of placing life forces in new bodies based on how dutiful and compassionate they were in their past life, she harvests the most evil life forces she can find and places them in newborns most likely to grow up to positions of power and influence (as princes, princesses and the like). This way, she





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hopes to spread as much pain, strife, and suffering as she can.

Kala is honored in many forms, each corresponding to an evil legendary person believed to be one of her manifestations. Most Sindhis who honor her do so in the hopes that, if properly honored, she will have mercy on their families. Some Sindhis actually embrace the philosophies she embodies, however, and actively go about trying to increase the amount of evil in the world.

The *Buraiyas*—a cult of assassins, thieves, and murderers—are the most persistent of Kala's followers. Successive generations of Sayr Ulan's Rajadhirajas have tried to eradicate them, with sometimes drastic results.

Kala is better known as Hel in the Northern Reaches—the only other nation in the Known World where she has a significant following.

### The Role of the Rishiyanas

The Rishiyanas of Sind act as intermediaries between Sindhis and the Immortals. When a Sindhi wishes to petition an Immortal for a favor—the birth of a child, a good harvest, etc.—he brings his request to a Rishiyan who advises him which manifestation of the Immortals he should address. The Sindhi has the option of performing the necessary rituals himself, or of donating a fee to the Rishiyan to carry on in his behalf. Most choose to let the Rishiyan perform the ceremony, as Rishiyanas (especially clerics) are supposedly experts in the methods used to persuade an Immortal to grant a favor.

Rishiyanas also have the traditional duties of *blessing* the fields, *purifying* irrigation water, and seeing to the spiritual health of all Sindhis. Their belief in reincarnation has some interesting effects on the services they may render. Although the *raise dead* and *raise dead fully* spells are in no way forbidden to them, few Rishiyanas will consent to *raise* the body of a good or righteous person. They feel this will jeopardize the chances of the deceased person being incarnated into a better form—a higher caste, or even as

the next manifestation of Himayeti. On the other hand, generous Rishiyanas will cast a *raise dead* spell on a notorious criminal if they feel the resurrected person will seize the opportunity to improve their behavior in this life, hence improving their chances for their next life.

**The Rishiyan Blessing:** Sindhi clerics can cast a modified version of the clerical *bless* spell. The modified spell encourages plant growth, rather than improving morale as a normal *bless* spell does. The Rishiyan *blessing* is a second-level spell, with an area of effect of one acre (4840 square yards, or 1/640th of a square mile) and a duration of six months.

Unlike a *plant growth* spell, a Rishiyan *blessing* does not have an immediate or dramatic effect. It simply serves to cancel the harmful effects of Sind's poor soil and drought conditions.

## Mystic Orders

Most Sindhi mystics take vows of poverty and live on charity. They wrap themselves in patched, cast-off cotton cloth and rarely wear cloaks or shoes. They spend their days meditating, receiving visitors or going about doing good works, and begging for their meals—or for donations of food and goods for their cloister. Sindhis believe such donations ensure they'll have a better life in their next reincarnation.

Many orders act as caretakers of shrines or sacred places of pilgrimage. Cloisters may be found in every city and in rocky caverns scattered throughout Sind's hills. Individual mystics also may be found wandering Sind's towns and wilderness.

**Fakirs:** These ascetics follow beliefs that originated in Ylarum and have since evolved with Sindhi influences. They take vows of extreme poverty, owning nothing but the rags they wear and—perhaps—a begging bowl. Fakirs strive to master their bodies to the point that pain and exhaustion mean nothing to them. Their devotions include ritually strenuous exercises, such as whirling like tops in the noonday sun, walking on hot coals, lying on beds of nails, and similar feats.

**Keis:** The Keis make up the largest mystic order of Sind, with nearly 5,000 members in their many cloisters. They welcome members from all castes—even foreigners—provided they pass rigorous mental and physical tests. They seek enlightenment through quiet meditation and a form of unarmed combat that emphasises the simplest form of self-defense—don't be there when the blow falls.

**Jashpurdhanas:** This small order inhabits a rock-cut monastery in the mountains of Kadesh. Members spend most of their time meditating on the meaning of life. After training their minds and bodies with unarmed combat exercises for three years, initiates must embark on a ten-year journey in search of truth and knowledge.

**Shehids:** These mystics are known for their selfless devotion to the welfare of their fellow men. They protest abuses and oppression committed by powerful people, and never hesitate to step in when they see injustice. Many shehids have died protesting some rajah's ill-usage of his subjects.

**Svamins:** These mystics are known for their enigmatic answers to impossible questions such as "what is the meaning of life?" They are reclusive, each living alone in the wilderness—they have no cloisters. Candidates hoping to become a svamin must seek a svamin willing to teach them. Svamins accept only one pupil at a time.

**Yogins:** These mystics seek to master the body and mind by meditating while practicing ritual postures. They may be found anywhere—even in the middle of a busy street—standing motionlessly on one leg, on their heads, or in contorted positions, oblivious to their surroundings.

See the mystic character class in the D&D® Rules *Cyclopedia*, pp. 29–31.





### The Sindhi Calendar

Sindhis base their calendar on the cycles of Mystara's moon. The new moon marks the first day of every month; the full moon falls on the fifteenth day. There are twelve months, each with four weeks. The seven days of the week are: Sombar; Mangal-bar; Budh-bar; Brihaspati-bar; Sukra-bar; Sanee-bar; and Rabi-bar.

Although Thyatians celebrate New Year's Day on the first day of Nuwmont (in the middle of winter), Sindhis count the new year as beginning on the first day of Baisaakh (Flaurmont on the Thyatian calendar), in anticipation of the arrival of spring rains.

Sindhis number the years from the unification of Sind. Thus, AC 715 equals Sind's Year 1 (marking the first full year of the unification of the Kingdom of Sind).

Nearly every day sees a celebration somewhere in Sind in honor of one of the many Immortal avatars. Other special events include birthdays, weddings, funerals, and naming ceremonies. The anniversary of the crowning of Sind's current Rajadhiraja is celebrated by a closing of all businesses and distribution of food to the poor. This currently takes place on the 9th of Asin; the date will change when someone replaces Chandra ul Nervi as Rajadhiraja.

**Baisaakh (Flaurmont):** *Dobrana* (New Year's Day) is the first day of Baisaakh. Celebrations include visiting families and friends, exchanging gifts, and ceremonially honoring Ayazi. Ritual bathing in the Asanda River is an important part of the celebrations. Those who can't travel to the river itself make do with sacred water created by the Rishiyanas with *create water* spells and mixed with water from the Asanda River.

**Jeth (Yarthmont):** The 8th of Jeth is *Sindipura*, or Unification Day; it marks the official unification of Sind. It's a day for friends to affirm their continuing friendship, and for athletes from every mumlyket to gather in Sayr Ulan for a week of games and contests.

**Asaarth (Klarmont):** *Durva-bar*, the 8th of Asaarth, is Grass Day. Rishiyanas preside over ritual offerings of grass. Nearly everyone dons rings made of twisted durva grass, which are thought to protect the wearer from evil. Like many of Sind's holidays, Durva-bar is accompanied by much rejoicing, feasting, and dancing.

**Sawan (Felmont):** The *Davetkanaja*, or Feast of the Snakes, takes place on the 17th day of Sawan. Hundreds of *seperas*, or snake charmers, gather in market squares with their cobras. By day, Sindhis bring offerings of milk to the cobras. At night, they light up every corner of their houses with candles, lamps, and *light* spells; processions wind through the streets accompanied by torch light and the din of gongs, cymbals, drums, and horns. Children are allowed to stay up all night, though few manage to stay awake until dawn. Sawan is also the first month of the monsoon season.

**Bhadon (Fyrmont):** Along the coast of the Sea of Dread, Sindhis gather on the 24th of Bhadon for the *Roktham* ceremonies. For five days, dozens of colorful tent cities break the normal monotony of the coast line. Sindhis wade knee-deep into the waves to cast offerings of coconuts, betel nuts, and dates as far into the sea as they can. Some throw flower wreaths as well. They entreat the sea to calm itself and to end the monsoons so vessels can once more sail in safety.

**Asin (Ambyrmont):** This month brings the last of the monsoons. In the Salt Swamp, Sindhis honor *Dylkes Sabib* ("Mister Charming"), the legendary father of all crocodiles. People from miles around drive goats into the Salt Swamp as sacrifices to sustain Dylkes Sahib through the increasing dryness of the swamp until the monsoons return.

**Kartik (Swiftmont):** Sindhis celebrate the birthday of Dandin, a major incarnation of Hamayeti, on the third day of Kartik. Rishiyanas ritually bathe and dress statues of the Immortal, then parade them through the streets on elephant-back. The rest of the day is filled with dancing, feasting, games, and other entertainments designed to please Dandin.

**Aghan (Eirmont):** On *Vada*, the 16th of Aghan, Sindhis proclaim their resolutions to become better people in the future. Like Sind's New Years' Day, this festival involves ritual bathing in the Asanda's waters. Many indulge in their favorite vices all day (gambling and the like) with the promise that, starting tomorrow, they'll never do it again.

**Puus (Kaldmont):** The second day of Puus is *Bojuthvana*, an official holiday for draft animals. No animal carries a pack or rider, pulls a plow or vehicle, or turns a wheel the entire day. Sindhis mark the day with horse, elephant, camel, and bullock races—all accomplished by Sindhis lining the streets and urging the riderless animals on with much shouting and arm-waving.

**Maagh (Nuwmont):** The 5th of Maagh marks Jaibul's Independence Day.

**Phagun (Vatermont):** *Rushnikesret*, or the Festival of Lights, occurs on the last day of Phagun. The festival commemorates the loss and return of Lal, the young son of Nitya, a legendary hero said to be an incarnation of Himayeti. Every street is lined with lanterns draped under colorful cloth, while more lanterns hang from ropes strung between house roofs. Adults spend most of the day playing dice games. One's luck with the dice during Rushnikesret is said to foretell one's fiscal luck for the coming year. When the sun sets, people pick up the lanterns and wander about the streets crying "Lal, where are you?" Three hours after sunset, the boy chosen to play the part of Lal is allowed to be found. His discoverers parade him through the streets, and everyone goes home to lively feasts accompanied by singing and dancing.

**Chait (Thaumont):** The 28th of Chait, the last day of the year, is the wildest of Sind's festivals. *Jeyrzymmedaribar*, or the day of irresponsibility, is celebrated with bonfires burning well into the night, crowds of dancers in the street, practical jokes, and shrieking participants throwing orange tinted water and *abeer* (a red powder made from dyed flour) into one another's faces.



## Atlas of Sind —

The large map of the Great Waste shows Sind's cities, but only the most prominent towns and villages. You may place individual holdings, villages, and small towns as needed.) Red lines mark the borders of each mumlyket, or state.

**Geography:** In the year AC 1000, the Kingdom of Sind lays claim to 200,000 square miles of desert, grasslands, swamps, and hills on the eastern edge of the Great Waste, with a population of 600,000. Several *dhands* (saline ponds) are scattered throughout the region. The Asanda River cuts southern Sind roughly in half. To the east, the land rises from the river plain up to the Atruaghin Plateau and the Amsorak Mountains. To the west, it rises more gently to the Sind Desert and the tortured landscape of the Plain of Fire. To the north, the Amsorak Mountains dominate the mumlykets of Kadesh, Gunjab, Nagpuri, and Peshmir. Farther north lies Adri Varma, a great rocky plateau. The Barren Plain and the Sea of Dread are to the south.

**Climate:** Sind has four annual seasons. Winter winds from the Adri Varma plateau are dry and cold, bringing little rain or snow but dropping average daytime temperatures to 40°. The winds shift at the onset of spring, bringing sporadic rain showers from the Sea of Dread. Summer is monsoon season, lasting from Sawan through Asin. Fierce storms from the south sweep the coast and rage inland into the Asanda valley, dumping torrents of rain as far north as the great salt swamp, and occasionally even the Plain of Fire. Another shift in wind direction heralds the fall months, as dry winds once again move into Sind from the Adri Varma plateau.

Sind's hottest months are Jeth and Asaarth. Temperatures rise to 100° (120° and even higher in desert areas and badlands), dropping by 20-30 degrees at night. These months see high winds and dust storms as well. Maagh is the coldest month, with daytime temperatures averaging around 40° and frosts frequent at night.

The monsoons provide most of Sind's annual rainfall. On average, western Sind sees 4-6" of rainfall each year, while the Asanda Valley receives about 20". The monsoons are notoriously unreliable. They may skip Sind entirely one year, causing drought, only to deluge the area with up to 70 inches the next. Sindhis never know whether to expect drought or floods.

There is one storm Sindhis speak of with dread, for, unlike the monsoon, it brings only destruction. This is the *marut sanat*, a devastating wind that races across the Plain of Fire into the Asanda Valley once every two or three decades. It brings with it blistering heat and whirlwinds capable of dropping tons of sand, gravel, and even boulders hundreds of miles from their origin. The storm usually lasts three days, but leaves a path of destruction in its wake.

**Encounters:** In addition to the human inhabitants of Sind, travelers may encounter animal herds (cattle, camels, horses, and goats; deer and antelope in non-settled areas); giant ants; bandits (especially in the deserts and badlands); basilisks, cockatrices, and crocodiles (in the salt swamp); djinn, red dragons, efreeti, ghouls, gnolls (who may be Gruugrakh gnolls from the Plain of Fire); headsmen and thugs (including members of the *Buraiya* cult of assassins); giant lizards; giant scorpions; shadows; sphinxes; and trolls.

### Azadgal (East Jhengal)

**Area:** 10,000 square miles; predominantly agricultural land, some grasslands and badlands, a bit of the Salt Swamp

**Population:** 50,000

**Ruling family:** The Srinivasans. Rajah Ultman Srinivasan is in his 60s, and has had a dozen wives in the past (three of whom are still alive and married to him). He has nineteen children (9 sons and 10 daughters) and nearly 50 grandchildren.

**Capital:** Sandapur (pop. 9,000)

**Other settlements:** None of significance

**Description:** Once part of Jhengal proper, Azadgal became a separate state

when the Srinivasans made a successful bid for independence. It's an extremely affluent state. In addition to its rich farmlands along the Asanda River, Azadgal benefits from a number of mines in the badlands west of Sandapur. Long-dead streams hide gold nuggets in gravelly beds, and fierce winds have stripped away earth and soft stone from the surfaces of the badlands' enormous rock formations, exposing underlying platinum deposits. Large gravel deposits contain such gemstones as sapphires, moonstones, topazes, garnets, and Azadgal's renowned rubies. The rajah employs a special force of Himaya warriors (many of them his own children and grandchildren) to guard the mineral-rich areas from squatters and treasure seekers.

With so much income from his mines, the rajah has little temptation to force farmers to sow exportable crops and encourages them to concentrate on staple foods instead. Riverside fields yield plentiful rice and melons, while fields farther inland are planted with wheat, sorghum, chick-peas, and various vegetables. Date palms, apple orchards, and spice plantations round out Azadgal's agricultural produce. As a result, the mumlyket's underprivileged castes are better off than most Sindhi commoners.

Even so, most of Azadgal's wealth is concentrated in the hands of its Himayas, Rishiyanas, and Jadugeryas. The rajah has declared a number of annual holidays and festivals. During the twice-yearly *Artha* festival, everyone dresses in their finery and visits friends to exchange gifts. The holiday is particularly popular among the Prajaya and Kuliya castes, as tradition encourages the wealthy to exchange gifts of coins and rare spices with anyone who offers them any gift in return, no matter how humble.

**Secrets:** Rajah Ultman Srinivasan has no intentions of reuniting even an inch of his territory with Jhengal. Quite the contrary, in fact. He has been plotting for years to wrest the western edge of the badlands from Jhengal, knowing full well that precious metal and gem deposits are as rich there as in the badlands he already



## Sind

claims. So far, the Srinivasans have managed to hide that fact from Jhengal—with a little help from Jadugeryan *invisibility, phantasmal force, confusion, and hallucinatory terrain* spells. The few Jhengali investigators who actually find evidence of the rich deposits west of the border haven't made it back to report to Rajah Marut Nandin.

## Baratkand

**Area:** 32,500 square miles; mostly desert, with a number of oases near Baratpur; Baratkand also includes some hills and grasslands and part of the great Salt Swamp

**Population:** 40,000

**Ruling family:** The Radhas. Rajah Mohan Radhas is a kind-hearted old man (entering his early eighties) and a good and just ruler. His children have all been killed in various skirmishes with humanoids. He still has three living grandsons: Balin (39), a renowned fighter; Dalal (37), an experienced diplomat; and Sankar (28), an elephant trainer in Sayr Ulan. Tulasi (19), the rajah's great-granddaughter, recently married the maharajah of Kadesh's oldest son.

**Capital:** Baratpur (pop. 7,000)

**Other settlements:** Gunga Keep (pop. 1,000)

**Description:** Baratkand, on the edge of the Plain of Fire, encompasses some of the most imposing desert terrain in Sind. Its rocky, gravelly plain rises up in the northwest to meet the tortuously twisted limestone formations of the Plain of Fire. Near the town of Baratpur, the desert plain forms a large basin. Here, many fresh springs well up from far underground, creating small islands of greenery and arable land that dip below the blackened desert floor. Baratpur is the largest of a number of towns and villages that cluster around the basin's oases.

One oasis—the Jadu, thirty miles west of Baratpur—is especially known for its steaming waters and the profusion of brilliantly colorful flowers that grow around the spring year-round. Prajaya artisans weave these flowers into head-

resses, gowns, and floral displays valued throughout Sind (and in some distant countries as well).

**Secrets:** Gunga Keep has been suffering from repeated raids of humanoids from the Amsorak Mountains. Rajah Mohan Radhas has pleaded with the maharajah of Kadesh to assist in eliminating these monsters, to little avail. Even the fact that the two mumlykets have pledged mutual support—a deal cemented by the marriage of Tulasi to Prince Hara of Kadesh—does not seem to sway Maharajah Kabir Rudraksha. The latter claims the humanoid trouble must stem from Gunjab; after all, his own lands suffer no such incursions. Rudraksha has agreed to send 100 fighters to assist Baratkand's own troops. Maharajah Mohan Radhas doubts this will be enough, especially as humanoid incursions from the Plain of Fire are increasing as well.

## Gunjab

**Area:** 17,000 square miles; mostly mountains and their foothills

**Population:** 20,000

**Ruling family:** The Surs. Twenty-six year old Maharajah Sarojun Sur has never married, although other rajahs occasionally offer their marriageable kin to him. His uncle Darshan, an elderly but experienced politician, travels in the rajah's stead whenever politics demand a representative of Gunjab appear at functions, councils, or negotiations.

**Capital:** Raneshwar (pop. 5,000)

**Other settlements:** None to speak of

**Description:** Gunjab is a province of goatherders, hunters, and mountaineers. Set in the western arm of the Amsorak Mountains, Gunjab's terrain consists of bare mountain peaks, forested slopes, and grass-covered foothills. A few narrow valleys wind their way through the range, providing Gunjab's little arable land.

As with Kadesh, the ul Nervis had such trouble cleaning Gunjab's militias out of their mountain strongholds that they settled for a treaty of alliance with the Rajah of Gunjab. Since then, the maharajahs of

Gunjab have maintained the illusion of being independent of Sindrastan and the southern states. In fact, Gunjab depends on Sayr Ulan for a great many goods and products its people cannot produce themselves. And its maharajah gives the same percentage of his income as a "gift" to the Rajadhiraja of Sayr Ulan that other rajahs pay in taxes.

**Secrets:** Deep in the mountains north of Raneshwar, Maharajah Sarojun Sur is training a "secret" hidden army. He hopes someday to overthrow the rule of Sayr Ulan, freeing Gunjab and Sind's mumlykets from the restrictions and obligations forced on them by the Rajadhiraja. Rumors abound that he trades exotic monsters and rare minerals found in the mountains to contacts in Glantri in return for funds and magical aid to further his objectives. The harsh conditions in Gunjab keep his army small; it doesn't really pose a threat to the ul Nervi dynasty. Rajadhiraja Chandra is well aware of the plot. He allows the Maharajah of Gunjab his delusion, knowing that Gunjab's army would rise to Sind's defense in case of trouble from outside sources.

## Jalawar

**Area:** 13,500 square miles; mostly agricultural and grasslands, with some forest

**Population:** 70,000

**Ruling family:** The Madhars. Rani Drisana Madhar has the distinction of being the only female ruler ("rani") currently in power in Sind. She's supported by Vijay Niranjan, her half-brother (31 years old), who intercedes in diplomatic meetings with any foreigners uncomfortable with the idea of dealing with a female ruler. Although the twenty-six year old Rani has two husbands, Rohit (29) and Bhagwandas (23), she has not yet borne any children.

**Capital:** Sambay (population 12,000)

**Other settlements:** Kandaputra (pop. 900), traditional home of Jalawar's Royal Elephant Keepers; Bangore (pop. 750); and Pramayama (pop. 800)

**Description:** If Sind is the Gateway to the Eastern Lands, Jalawar is the Gateway

to Sind. While Putnabad expends its energy and resources fending off Jaibul's harassment, Jalawar welcomes traders, both foreign and domestic, with open arms. Its fertile soils need only a little help from the Rishiyas to produce enough food to feed its citizens, with ample surplus for export.

Sambay is a busy port of call for traders from Jaibul, Yavdlom, Ierendi, Darokin, Minrothad, Slagovich, and the Davanian coast. Its twin bays harbor ships of all types; even full-sailed clipper ships from Alphatia.

With the largest chunk of the ancient forests still standing within its borders, Jalawar's Himayan families have kept the coveted positions of Royal Elephant Keepers. The forests on the Atruaghin border are essential as Sind's elephant breeding grounds. Even so, most of Sind's royal elephants must be imported from the Serpent Peninsula.

**Secrets:** Rani Drisana Madhar suspects Jaibul is behind a number of tragic ship losses in the past few years. At least one

merchant vessel simply disappeared shortly after leaving Sambay, as though swallowed by a sea monster or carried off by a giant Roc. The rani also knows of two incidents involving ships loaded with particularly precious cargoes which were lost off the coast of Jaibul when Jaibul's lighthouse failed. One ship carried valuable spices; the other was loaded down with bales of silk, gold ingots, and the famed Star of Sind (a ruby weighing nearly half a pound) on their way to Tanakumba as a token of the Rajadhiraja's interest in cementing diplomatic relationships with the Yavdlom Divinarchy. Although the public story claims the ships sank with all hands aboard, Rani Drisana Madhar suspects the Black Rajah of Jaibul now has their cargo.

### (West) Jhengal

**Area:** 32,000 square miles; mostly desert, badlands, and salt swamp

**Population:** 40,000

**Ruling family:** The Nandins. Rajah

Marut Nandin (41 years old) has twin sons, Inder and Easwar (15), and a daughter named Kaveri (12). His wife, Tulasi (35), is reknowned for her mastery of Chaturanga (Sindhi chess).

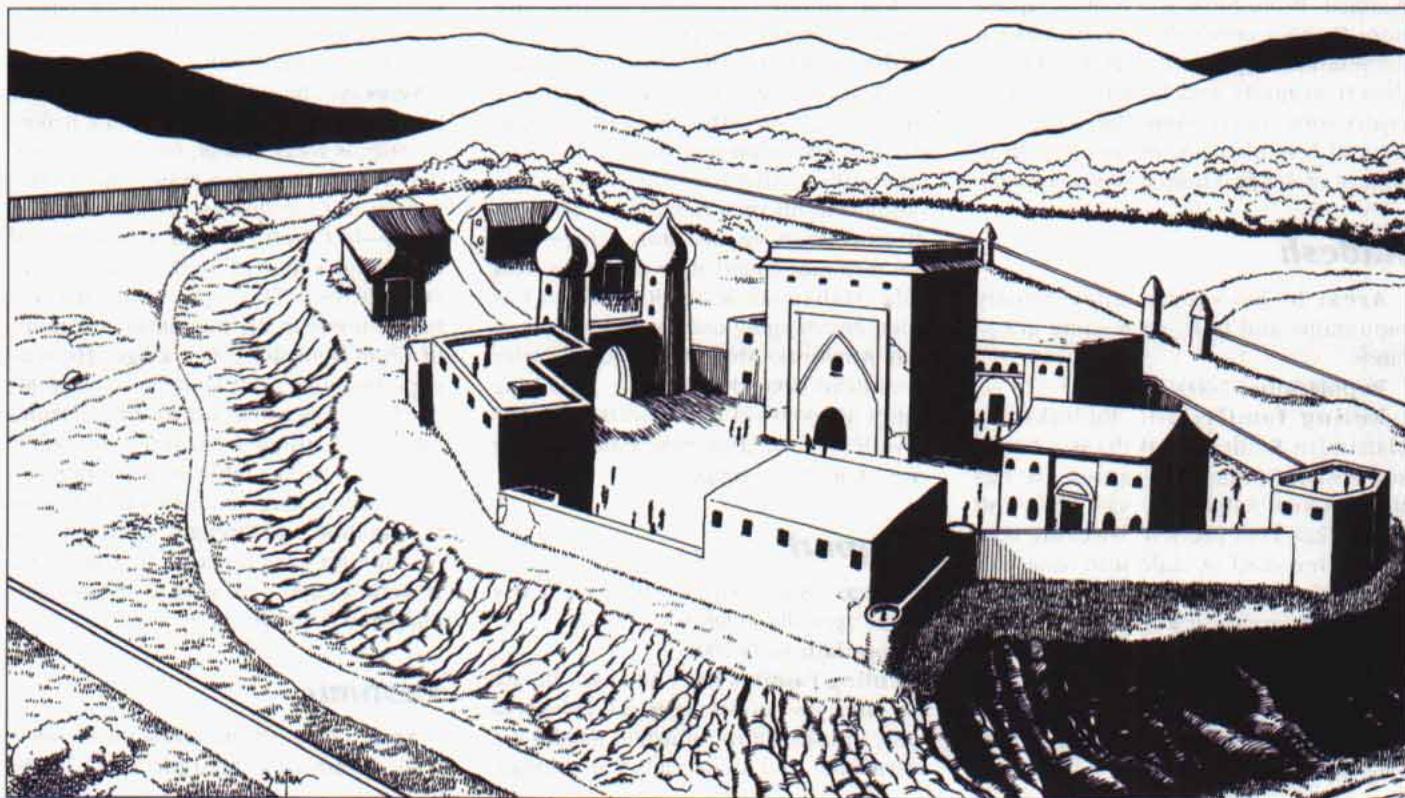
**Capital:** Khamrati (pop. 6,000)

**Other settlements:** Sindri (pop. 1,000), Gola Keep (pop. 800)

**Description:** West Jhengal (simply called Jhengal by its inhabitants) covers a great deal of nearly worthless territory. This wasn't always so—Jhengal once extended to the Asanda River and was perhaps the most prosperous mumlyket of Sind. In AC 897, the eastern (and most productive) half of Jhengal gained independence, becoming Azadgal.

Despite its poor lands, Jhengal remains important in Sindhi affairs by virtue of the fact that Gola Keep protects the most commonly used caravan trail to Slagovich. Jhengali troops often accompany caravans up to 100 miles into the Sind Desert before leaving them.

A Kuliyan sub-caste of swamp guides make their living guiding caravans



## Sind

through the Salt Swamp on the way from Khamrati to Gola Keep. Although the trail is generally well marked through the desert, it diverges into many different trails as it enters the swamp. Only foolish caravan masters venture into the swamp without an experienced guide. The same guides sometimes venture deep into the salt swamp in search of the rare Kajahali flower, the source of a potent tranquilizer called *Kaji*. Physicians prescribe *Kaji* in tiny doses for insomniacs, although certain Sindhi assassins prize *Kaji* as a poison. In sufficient quantities, *Kaji* can fell an elephant or kill a man. According to rumor, *Kaji* is even effective against such creatures as dragons and other powerful monsters.

**Secrets:** The rajah of Jhengal desperately seeks to establish better relations with Azadgal in an attempt to regain some of the wealth lost in the secession. The Nandins especially covet Azadgal's fertile valleys. So far, diplomacy and offers of great treasures have failed to elicit any concessions from the Rajah of Azadgal. Brute force is out of the question; Jhengal needs the few warriors it commands to protect it from raids by desert nomads and humanoids. The rajah's sons are contemplating more subtle and less pleasant means of taking control of Azadgal from its current rulers.

## Kadesh

**Area:** 20,500 square miles; mostly mountains and hills, with some grasslands

**Population:** 30,000

**Ruling family:** The Rudrakshas. Maharajah Kabir Rudraksha is a handsome man in his early forties. He has three wives: Asha (24), Kasi (28), and Harini (22). Four previous wives are now dead. One died in childbirth, one was thrown from her horse, another drowned in a tragic boating accident, and the fourth died of a mysterious illness. He has one son (Hara, 20 years old, now married to the great-granddaughter of the rajah of Bartakand) and two daughters (Mitra, 13; and Meena, 6).

**Capital:** Latehar (pop. 6,000)

**Other settlements:** Gawan (pop. 400)

**Description:** Kadesh is famous for its superb Himayan warriors; the current maharajah's many-times-great-grandfather very nearly succeeded in ruining the ul Nervis' plans for a united Sind. As a result of the bloody wars surrounding Sindrastan's attempts to bring Kadesh into the newly united nation, Kadesh enjoys relative autonomy.

Kadesh's mountains are notorious for the cave systems and forested slopes that protected and hid the resistance fighters two centuries ago. Most of Kadesh's residents live in the mountains, farming in small valleys or earning their livings as hunters and woodcutters. A cord of wood fetches an exorbitant price in Sind's tree-starved southern states.

**Secrets:** Maharajah Kabir Rudraksha is the secret patron of a cult of assassins (*the Buraiyas*) that plagues Peshmir, Baratkand, and Sayr Ulan. Although outwardly he appears benevolent, the maharajah has directed his assassins to kidnap Sindhis—including his own citizens—for harsh labor in his silver mines in the mountains. He plans to marry his son Hara to the maharajah of Peshmir's only daughter (after the unfortunate death of Hara's present wife), then assassinate the maharajah (thereby adding Peshmir to his own mumlyket). His son, meanwhile, plans the same thing—with the resulting united state under his own rule. Maharajah Kabir Rudraksha has been encouraging restless humanoids of the Amsorak Mountains to plunder Baratkand instead of Kadesh, promising them aid should the "foolish desert-dwellers" ever dare penetrate into the mountains for revenge.

## Nagpuri

**Area:** 13,000 square miles; mostly prime agricultural land

**Population:** 70,000

**Ruling Family:** The Kalkiins, who are not Himayas but belong to the Jadugerya caste instead. Rajah Salmahlin Kalkiin is a stern ruler and an accomplished mage.

Every member of Nagpuri's ruling family is a practicing magic-user, from Salmahlin's aged mother Ambika to his 7-year-old daughter Lila. The rajah (65 years old) has two wives (Nipa, 69; and Kalindi, 38) and four sons (Javas, 38; Rohan, 36; Almiron, 15; and Lais, 10).

**Capital:** Mahasabad (pop. 13,000)

**Other settlements:** Chandbali (pop. 500)

**Description:** Nagpuri could support a larger population if the rajah didn't insist that most of his lands be sown with tea, spices, and mulberry bushes instead of rice and other grains. Much of Nagpuri's produce is exported to Darokin and Glantri in return for precious metals, gems, rare materials, and strange objects rumors claim the rajah requires for his magical experiments. Even with a shortage of staple foods, Nagpuri's underprivileged castes get by fairly well. The weather is milder in Nagpuri than in most of Sind, and rainfall is both sufficient and reliable.

The forest on Nagpuri's southern border is a game preserve, where the rajah's game keepers breed and keep exotic animals from distant lands.

**Secrets:** The village of Chandbali has been stricken with a sickness that makes its citizens weak and ill; many eventually die. The village wise man believes the source of Chandbali's curse lies in the north—in Glantri. In fact, the source of the village's misfortune isn't nearly that far removed. The rajah's son, Rohan, built a tower in the mountains just north of Chandbali three years ago. He was experimenting with some new alchemical formulas for a *potion of fortitude* when something went terribly wrong. The area's water table is now contaminated with a magical agent which lowers Constitution and Strength scores. Rohan has no idea how to fix the problem and is afraid to admit his guilt or ask his hot-tempered father for help.

## Peshmir

**Area:** 12,000 square miles; mostly hills, some mountains and agricultural lands.



Peshmir's most prominent feature is a volcano which occasionally spews forth clouds of ash or a stream of lava. Lake Hast defines Peshmir's northern border.

**Population:** 40,000

**Ruling family:** The Valins. Maharajah Kami Valin is a wise old warrior. His daughter Bel is beautiful, virtuous, and 20 years old. Bel's mother died; the maharajah has no other wives or children.

**Capital:** Karakandar (pop. 10,000)

**Other towns and villages:** Jalbad (pop. 700)

**Description:** Peshmir's wealth is based on trade with Glantri and Wendar, and on a thriving fishing industry. Despite the fact that the waters that fall from the northern plateau every monsoon season are black and foul, most of Lake Hast is somehow clear and deep. Fish grow up to four feet long in its waters. Peshmir's Prajayan farmers plant their crops on terraced hills, especially on the ash-rich slopes of the volcano. Kuliyan laborers work in the maharajah's obsidian mine,

producing nearly 100 tons of obsidian each year. Maharajah Valin is a good and just ruler. Peshmir is one of the few places in Sind where the underprivileged castes are actually well off and happy.

**Secrets:** Most of the maharajah's vast wealth comes from a gold mine deep within the bowels of Peshmir's volcano. Rumors of a stream of molten gold have piqued Rajadhiraja Chandra's interest, but his spies have been unable to verify its existence. Peshmir's Jadugeryas do their best to ensure the mine's secrecy.

## Putnabad

**Area:** 11,000 square miles; mostly good agricultural land; some desert, badlands, and grasslands

**Population:** 80,000

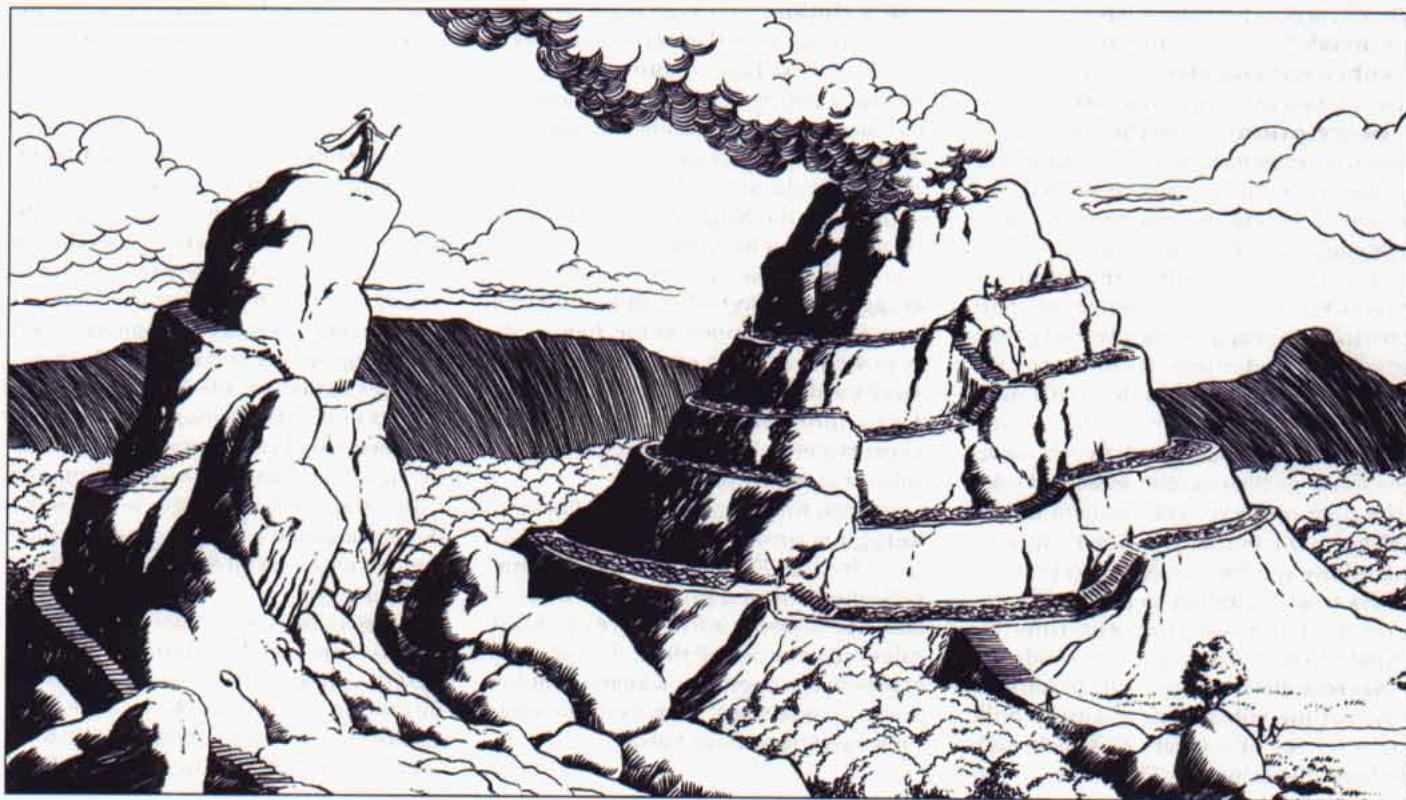
**Ruling family:** The Ashuptas. Maharajah Jalil Ashupta Khan, in his late fifties, has one son named Dharjee (27 years old). His wife died in childbirth, and Ashupta Khan has never remarried. Much to the disgust of Sind's northern mahara-

jahs, Jalil received the rajadhiraja's permission to use the title of Maharajah when he succeeded his father as Putnabad's ruler. He added the title Khan to his name in AC 990, after a visit from an Ethengarian diplomat.

**Capital:** Jahore, the Pearl of Putnabad (pop. 18,000)

**Other settlements:** Asandapur (pop. 1,000)

**Description:** The Pearl of Putnabad is a sprawling megalopolis on the westernmost branch of the Asanda delta; the river runs right through the city. High, fortified walls enclose the inner city, protecting the privileged castes, merchants, temple complexes, and the maharajah's palace. Beyond the walls spreads a squalid collection of overcrowded shacks and muddy passageways. A shabby port occupies the southern edge of the city, allowing ships with shallow drafts to sail up to Jahore. Larger ships remain anchored in a small bay at the mouth of the delta. Stone bridges within the inner city span the Asanda River; most of the population



## Sind

uses small barges to cross over.

**Secrets:** Jahore is recovering from an insidious plot by the Black Rajah of Jaibul which involved poisoning the Asanda river with an apathy-inducing drug. As a result, construction efforts from AC 990 to AC 1000 produced crooked towers, asymmetrical windows and doors, and onion-shaped domes in a state of near-collapse. Prince Haldemar of Haaken foiled the plot in AC 1000, but the Black Rajah of Jaibul is far from through with his plans to discredit the Ashupta family and claim Putnabad for his own.

## Shajarkand

**Area:** 25,000 square miles; mostly agricultural, grasslands, desert, and salt swamp; Shajarkand also contains some badlands and a bamboo forest

**Population:** 70,000

**Ruling family:** The Venkats. Rajah Ramanan Venkat recently assumed the throne upon his father's death; the rajah is only 13 years old. His uncle, Bharani Venkat, acts as his chief advisor.

**Capital:** Naral (pop. 10,000)

**Other settlements:** Gom (pop. 975); Karganj-by-the-Swamp (pop. 600)

**Description:** Shajarkand is one of Sind's larger mumlykets. In ancient times, its rulers bore the brunt of many Red Orc attacks. The Venkats came to power only a century ago, after the death of the last of the Thaman family—Shajarkand's rulers for nearly a millennium. The province encompasses nearly every type of terrain Sind offers. Its products are equally varied, from salt to goat's milk and hides.

Centuries ago, the Thamans set aside the forest on Shajarkand's eastern border as a tiger preserve. The Loknath family (Himayas) has the traditional duty of patrolling the forest's edges to prevent tigers from molesting cattle or villagers and to keep them from entering the Royal Elephant Grounds to the south.

**Secrets:** Persistent legends in Karganj say that the village was originally built by survivors of a great city which sank beneath the salty bog. Of course, rumor

also has it that somewhere out in the swamp lie the ruins of the city, complete with hidden treasures of untold value. As proof of the truth of these legends, Karganj citizens display exquisitely crafted ceramic vases, wooden statuettes that they claim are unthinkable ancient and were once sheathed in gold foil, as well as the occasional silver button or brooch.

## Sindrastan

**Area:** 13,500 square miles; mostly desert, some grasslands and hills

**Population:** 90,000

**Ruling family:** The ul Nervis. Rajadhiraja Chandra ul Nervi (35 years old) has two wives (Jaya, 33, and Anila, 21). Jaya has borne him two sons (Chander, 13; and Kedar, 9). Anila just recently bore Chandra a daughter (Sita, 1 year old).

**Capital:** Sayr Ulan, capital of all Sind (pop. 30,000)

**Other settlements:** Palkat (pop. 4,000)

**Description:** Sayr Ulan is the ancient seat of the ul Nervi dynasty. It began as a small oasis village; centuries later, it became a trading point between Darokin and Slagovich. The recent blazing of a caravan trail north of the Amsorak Mountains has added the Principalities of Glantri and the Kingdom of Wendar to the nations that trade with Sind.

At the time the ul Nervi dynasty was struggling to bring all of Sind under its rule, fervent petitions to the Immortals by powerful Rishiyas resulted in a greening of the desert around Sayr Ulan. Nowadays a thousand springs flowing with sweet water irrigate a thousand square miles of fertile croplands.

**Secrets:** King Chandra holds Kiritan ul Nervi, his brother, very dear—and is unaware that Kiritan plots against him with the goal of gaining the crown of Sind for himself. Kiritan lives in (and rules) the town of Palkat. To fund his conspiracies, agents in Kiritan's employ extort "passage fees" from merchant caravans traveling through Palkat.

## Jaibul

**Area:** 8,000 square miles; mostly desert and hills

**Population:** 50,000

**Ruler:** The Black Rajah of Jaibul.

**Capital:** Jaibul (pop. 6,000)

**Other settlements:** Nainpur (pop. 650)

**Description:** Jaibul is a Ryaset (a small kingdom), incorrectly referred to by foreigners as a "rajahstan." A single, powerful wizard rules this independent and chaotic magocracy. Whenever Jaibul's rajah dies, the most powerful wizards of Jaibul compete for the throne. It is a cruel and unforgiving challenge, usually fatal to the weaker candidates. Jaibul trades slaves, gold, and rare oils for anything its wealthy citizens need. Constant clashes take place between Jaibul and the Serene Divinarchy of Yavdlom to the southwest.

**Secrets:** Since Jaibul's successful bid for independence in 609, various rajahs and rajadhiraas have attempted to conquer it. None have succeeded. Although Jaibul is small and can field few warriors, nearly half its population study the magical arts. What Jaibul cannot accomplish by force, it accomplishes by wit, guile, deception, and magic.

But all is not quiet within Jaibul's borders. Bandits in the hills between Jaibul and Nainpur cause endless troubles for the Black Rajah. Many of the bandits are former prisoners who have escaped from the rajah's "justice." They raid caravans traveling between Jaibul and Nainpur to gain the funds they need to purchase food from sympathizers in Putnabad. The harsh realities of outlaw life have forged the bandits into a casteless society, where ex-members of all castes work and live side by side. The bandit's leader, Timingila Uma, is an ex-Rishiya who hopes some day to organize his ragtag band into an army to regain Jaibul for honest, freedom-loving people.

Travelers braving the inhospitable Plain of Fire can gaze out across the stony desert, marvel at the stark emptiness of this region of the Great Waste, and never realize that an entire realm inhabited by unheard-of creatures lies beneath their



## Graakhalia: Land of Fire and Darkness

feet. Admiring fantastic formations carved out of the red brown rocks by the wind, they may never see the shadowy figures wrapped in *elven cloaks* tracking the travelers' progress across the plain.

Such travelers pass through the outermost fringes of Graakhalia, unaware they are trespassing into the home of the Sheyallia elves and the Gruugrakh gnolls.

### History of Graakhalia

When the Gruugrakh gnolls first came to the Plain of Fire (a little after BC 1000), they discovered a strange world of caves, tunnels, mutated plants, and unusual creatures beneath the desert. Having nowhere else to go, they moved in.

Their unfamiliarity with their new environment exacted heavy tolls in the first few years. Many of the strange plants—and some animals—proved poisonous to gnolls. The caves and tunnels were themselves treacherous, with cave-ins and rockslides common dangers. But there was plenty of water in the form of underground rivers, streams, and pools—once the gnolls discovered which water sources were contaminated and which were safe to drink—and enough food to provide for the tribe. They stayed.

Through successive generations, the Gruugrakh gnolls explored the realm they named Graakh ("Harsh"). Trial and error—often fatal—taught them which foods were safe and which areas to avoid. Over the centuries, Gruugrakh shamans and wokani discovered magical and alchemical properties inherent in various rare minerals, plants, and animals in Graakh. These soon became part of the gnolls' magical techniques and lore.

Occasionally, humanoids from the Black Mountains stumbled into Graakh while looking for new territory or on their way to raid Sind. They found themselves facing fierce gnollish warriors armed with poisoned weapons (+1 to damage) and using booby traps, ambushes, and their knowledge of the underground terrain to great advantage. The Gruugrakh gnolls tried to ensure that

no survivors took word of Graakh back to the humanoid tribes in the Black Mountains.

The all-out invasion the gnolls feared came at last, but from an unexpected quarter. In BC 528, three thousand Sheyallia elves fleeing from the Serpent Peninsula stumbled into the Plain of Fire and discovered the intricate networks of caves and tunnels beneath. They entered Graakh from the southeast, in the Season of the Spores (see p. 27).

At first, they thought they'd found the perfect solution to their troubles; an underground wonderland with plentiful water and abundant plant life. The elves were puzzled by the stone buildings they discovered in some of the larger caves, but the area seemed abandoned and there were no signs of the mysterious inhabitants. Trusting to their luck and skills, the elves settled in and began exploring their new home. A few of their seers complained of unsettling dreams, but no one seemed able to interpret them. The Sheyallia sages theorized the strange surroundings somehow affected precognition.

The elves soon learned why there were no animals in the area. In one dreadful afternoon, hundreds of elves succumbed as thousands of yellow mold colonies released in deadly clouds their annual load of spores.

The survivors fled deeper into Graakh's labyrinth. They encountered the Gruugrakh gnolls, who attempted to repel them in a series of bloody skirmishes. But the elves had three very important advantages: superior weapons, superior magic, and some precognitive abilities that had not yet faded.

A number of elves decided to settle in and stick it out. They scouted out areas the gnolls avoided and temporarily camped there while they explored their environment and familiarized themselves with its dangers. Gruugrakh gnolls continued to attack them, but the elves held them off. Eventually, gnollish attacks slowed to occasional raids.

Meanwhile, many elves left in search of more hospitable homes elsewhere. They

were repelled from the Black Mountains by its numerous humanoids, and the Sindhis had no place for elves in their strictly stratified society. A few Sheyallia elves made their way into Glantri or Darokin (and thence to Alfheim), but most turned back to the caverns.

The returning elves found their brethren well established in their new homes. Conflicts with gnolls were still a common problem, but both sides could see the need for negotiation. Slowly, with much mutual distrust and a few near disasters, representatives of the Gruugrakh gnolls and the Sheyallia elves tried to learn one another's language. (At that time, gnolls were a relatively new race; the Sheyallia elves had not yet had any contact with them and could not speak the language.)

At first, the elves and gnolls settled on a compromise that kept the two cultures in separate territories. Negotiations got complicated when the elves realized that territorial rights needed to take Graakh's seasons into account and provide safe areas each race could migrate to when necessary.

As the years passed, many elves and gnolls realized mutual cooperation could benefit both races. Elven magic was a powerful tool for survival, as was the gnollish knowledge of Graakh in all its moods. But distrust between the elves and gnolls remained a constant problem. Leaders of the two communities finally settled on a drastic solution. They ordered their followers to cooperate in a number of joint enterprises, with good behavior ensured by an exchange of hostages. For every gnoll harmed or killed by a violent elf, an elven hostage would suffer, and vice versa.

This exchange of hostages proved to be the key to peaceful interaction between the two races. It also served to expose each race to the customs and ways of the others. Hostages gradually ceased being prisoners and became guests instead. Within a century of the elven arrival, some bands of gnolls and elves had taken to camping together. The leaders of both groups encouraged an



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exchange program in which children of each race spent a year or more living with families of the other race. Hostages as such were no longer needed.

Life in Graakhalia, as the elves called their new home, settled into an ever more steady routine. Elves and gnolls gradually merged into a united Graakhalian society based on mutual cooperation and peace. Members of the two races lived and hunted side by side, their daily life interrupted occasionally by encroaching humanoids or the ever-present dangers of Graakhalia itself.

In AC 610, a band of a hundred elves fleeing their recently conquered Sylvan Lands far to the northwest encountered a group of Graakharians on the Plain of Fire. They decided to stay with their elven cousins and settled into Graakhalia. Their arrival was not without incident, as some of the recent arrivals found it difficult to accept Gruugrakh gnolls as their brothers. But eventually they, too, adapted to Graakhalian society. The few who seemed unable to fit in were asked to leave at sword point.

The delicate balance of Graakhalian society faced a grave danger in AC 722. Jennial, an elven leader from the Sylvan Lands, led an uprising of dissatisfied elves against the elf/gnoll alliance. Jennial believed the Sheyallian elves and Gruugrakh gnolls were conspiring to evict the newcomers from Graakhalia. He cited incidents of discrimination against natives of the Sylvan Lands in recent council decisions. In heated attempts to draw other elves to his cause, Jennial preached that the Gruugrakh gnolls were simply biding their time, waiting for the elves to become too trusting before they'd turn on their "brothers" and kill them all.

Most of the rebels who joined his cause were also originally from the Sylvan Lands. A very few Sheyallia elves jumped into the fray—mostly corrupt elves who saw a chance to increase elven power in Graakhalia, or an excuse to plunder a few gnollish treasure hoards.

The rebellion was quickly put down. The Graakhlian Council tried and executed the rebel leaders—including Jennial—and exiled many of the participants. During the following decade, tension between elves and gnolls remained high.

The intervening centuries have mellowed many Graakhalian's memories of the uprising. However, some of the elven rebels are still alive and are still quick to see dangerous insult in gnollish behavior. And some gnollish parents tell their children of the awful time when, two and a half centuries ago, the elves still living in Grakkhalia killed their many-times-removed great-grandfather.

## The Graakhalian Landscape

Graakhalia encompasses only a small part of an incredible system of caves, tunnels, crevices, and cracks in the limestone bedrock of the Great Waste. Some of these caves extend beneath the Black Mountains; others open up into the lava pits and gas vents of the Burning Waste. Most of them are uninhabited—pitch blackness, lack of any sort of food, and poisonous gases can all combine to prevent creatures from making these caves their home. But other areas, including Graakhalia, receive enough light and life-giving nutrients to sustain complete underground ecosystems.

The actual mapping of Graakhalia and other cave and tunnel systems beneath the Great Waste is left to the DM to tailor to the needs of the campaign. A bit of research into real-world cave systems may help. Famous real-world caves include Carlsbad Cavern in New Mexico (its "Big Room" measures 1,800' x 1,100', with a 255' ceiling); the connecting cave systems of Flint Ridge and Mammoth Cave Ridge in Kentucky; and the cave system found in Gunong Mulu National Park in northwestern Borneo, which boasts Earth's largest known cave.

Here are some points of interest to include when mapping or campaigning in Graakhalia.

### Brekvarg (The Land Above)

To the Graakharians, the surface of the Plain of Fire is a place to be avoided whenever possible. With daytime temperatures reaching 120° Fahrenheit (90° in winter), dehydration and heatstroke are serious threats. Those caught without water in the desert suffer dehydration at an enormous rate. (Use the dehydration and starvation rules—p. 150 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*—but roll for hit point loss three times during the course of a day and once more during the night, rather than once per day.)

**Cracks in the Land:** The numerous canyons and crevasses that break up the otherwise level surface of the Plain of Fire offer some shelter from the heat and burning sun of the desert's surface. Anyone making their way down the steep walls of a gully, arroyo, or canyon can find some shade, decreasing damage rolls for dehydration to two per day. In addition, there's a 10% chance that a small pool of water can be found at the bottom of the canyon, containing 2d6 days' worth of water for one person. There's a 75% chance that the canyon hides one or more openings to the cave systems of Graakhalia. Some of these "breathe"—they whistle and sigh as air passes in or out as the caves equalize their air pressure with changing air pressure above ground.

**Firestone Deposits:** Strange crystalline formations litter the Plain of Fire. Some of these are enormous, extending deep into the bedrock and thrusting upward to 40' above the rocky desert. Others are the size of boulders, or only pebbles. They appear dull black in sunlight. In darkness, however, they radiate heat and light in a subdued reddish glow. Where firestones cluster together in large deposits, their glow can be seen for miles.

## Lahkvarg (The Land Below)

The cave systems beneath the Great Waste are incredibly convoluted and extensive. They reach nearly 1,000' into Myslara's bedrock and include up to a dozen horizontal levels of tunnels and caves. Some caverns are isolated, with entrances to the surface world but no interconnecting cracks or crevasses large enough for man-sized creatures to pass through to the rest of the underground labyrinth.

Graakhalia covers nearly 25,000 square miles directly beneath the Plain of Fire. The Graakharians separate their territory into a number of regions, including *Braatmok* (the southwestern region, dominated by colonies of yellow mold); *Orkmok* (the northern region, where most humanoid incursions from the Black Mountains occur); *Rbialliamok* (the region to the east and southeast, where the elven plan to explore and extend tunnels under the Kingdom of Sind is underway); and *Grongmok* (the central region). In addition, Graakharians refer to the cave systems' lower levels as *Labnmok*, the middle levels as *Gaargmok*, and the upper levels as *Vrasmok*.

**Sun Caves:** Throughout Graakhalia, vents and fissures in the bedrock carry fresh air into the cavern depths. They also provide light, focused and magnified by quartz, mica, and other crystals embedded in the rock. Graakharians long ago developed ways to increase that light by careful placement of mirrorlike metals and crystals attached to the walls of such fissures. This created a number of *vantraks*, or "sun caves," where daylight is strong enough to support small photosynthetic plants (bushes, grasses, flowering plants, and the like).

**The Twisted Forest:** An enormous cavern in the heart of Graakhalia contains the mutated remnants of the ancient forest that once covered the Great Waste. This is *Urggrik-Graastok*, the dreaded "twisted forest," where only the bravest Graakharians venture. It's a place of unknown terrors; carnivorous trees somehow manage to survive in near-total

darkness, preying on animals as twisted and horrible as themselves. Graakhalian shamans and wokani make occasional forays into the outer fringes of Urggrik-Graastok in search of rare spell components. Some never return.

**Bronkhaat.** Within the upper levels toward Graakhalia's western edge, Bronkhaat is home to a tribe of manscorpions (see the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*, p. 191). Graakharians know that to venture into Bronkhaat means almost certain death.

**The Klahktar Caves:** This area is avoided simply because of its fearsome inhabitant—a beholder.

**Underground Waterways:** Water rushing and tumbling through the lower tunnels produce a thunderous roar that can be heard as a low, dull throb even in the upper levels of Graakhalia. As the numerous streams and rivers erode away Graakhalia's limestone, they gradually cut through the bedrock—lowering the water table and leaving behind new, freshly dry caves. The process takes centuries, but is quick enough for the elves to mark the rivers' progress.

In the meantime, Graakharians enjoy the waterfalls and numerous waterslides. The latter are long, smooth tunnels carved by a foot or so of rushing water. Elves and gnolls alike thrill to the ride they get by letting the water carry them down the twisting tunnels.

There are calmer pools, lakes, and springs beneath the Plain of Fire as well. Most of these are safe to drink from or swim in—although aquatic monsters large enough to eat an elf or a gnoll are not unknown. Some, especially near the twisted forest, are unsafe to drink.

**The Moktor Fire Pits:** Deep underground, nearly in the center of the Great Waste, lie the Moktor Fire Pits. Although well outside their normal territory, Graakharians know and fear this region of lava flows, burning gases, and bubbling mud pits. It's the home of an ancient red dragon, Verminthrax, who occasionally hunts for its meals in Graakhalia.

The dragon is a spell-caster, and has collected many magic treasures over the

centuries—some of which allow him to take human form, pass through solid rock, or turn into a gaseous form in order to journey through places his huge dragon body could not.

The Graakharians take what precautions they can: guarded outposts along the most frequent avenues Verminthrax uses to enter Graakhalia, scouting parties to forewarn of the dragon's comings, and occasional parties of Graakhalian heroes attempting to rid the Great Waste of this menace.

## Graakhalian Seasons

Although protected from weather, temperature, and similar forces that vary with the seasons (air temperature is a nearly constant 68°, except near fire pits and similar regions) Graakhalia does experience cyclical changes. It has four major seasons, each rendering part of Graakhalia more dangerous or uncomfortable than usual. They correspond roughly to Sind's Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter.

**Braatkrahrl:** This "Season of the Spores" marks the annual release of mold spores in Braatmok, the southwest region of Graakhalia. Many molds spore, but the most dangerous spores come from the yellow mold prevalent in the area. The molds are unpredictable, releasing their spores any time during this three-month period. Graakharians take their cues from Braatmok's rats, whose hurried exodus from the area signals the beginning of the Braatkrahrl season. Any air-breathing creature caught in Braatmok during a spore release has a 50% chance of being overwhelmed by a cloud of spores. Affected creatures receive 1d6 points of damage and must save vs. death ray or choke to death within 6 rounds. Not all areas of Braatmok are clogged with airborne spores during a spore release, so it is possible to escape the effects unscathed—until the next release occurs.

**Lahnkrahrl:** This "Season of Rising Waters" marks an annual surge in the water level of Graakhalia's deepest caverns. It begins when runoff from the Black Mountains' melting snows ends its





## Graakhalia

journey through the Great Waste's water table. Later in the season, Sind's monsoons deluge the cracked and pock-marked surface of the Plain of Fire. This rain promptly and unerringly finds its way through the cracks and crevices of the limestone bedrock to the water courses of Graakhalia.

By mid-season, Graakhalia's lakes and rivers overflow their confines in massive floods. The rising waters gradually flood the lowest levels of Graakhalia, completely inundating hundreds of miles of caves and tunnels.

At season's end, the waters subside to their usual levels. In their wake they deposit fertile soil composed of silt carried from the Black Mountains, dust and sand washed down from the Plain of Fire, and the organic remains of plants and animals caught in the floods.

**Vraskrahl:** This "Season of the Swarm" marks a stage in the life cycle of Graakhalia's cave crickets. These insects, normally harmless, experience an annual population explosion that coincides with the "flowering" of a number of Graakhalian plants and fungi. Swarms of crickets crawl and leap through the caves, devouring every edible scrap they can find. At the peak of the Vraskrahl season, crickets find their way into in nearly every nook and crevice of Graakhalia. The swarms are most prevalent in Agmok, the northwestern region. They also tend to occupy the higher cave levels, leaving the lower levels untouched.

Graakharians take advantage of this abundant food supply, catching thousands of crickets in nets stretched across tunnels. They're not alone. Spiders, giant and otherwise, spread their webs to benefit from the insect harvest. More than a few creatures feeding on the swarms of crickets find the situation suddenly reversed. Despite elaborate precautions, unfortunate Graakharians may find themselves engulfed by particularly large, hungry swarms of crickets. (See *Insect Swarm*, p. 187 of the D&D® Rules Cyclopedia.)

Few crickets swarm in Braatmok, so this area offers relative safety during

Vraskrahl. The yellow molds are mostly dormant this time of year and pose little danger provided they're left alone. Small shrubs in Braatmok's sun caves produce small edible berries this season, and many Graakharians move to Braatmok.

Some Graakharians, following the receding waters of Lahnkrahl, venture into the lower caverns. These are the *Auduns*, or "planters." They take with them seeds carefully preserved from the previous year and large loads of firestones. Everywhere they find a suitable spot—in level areas in which the floods deposited good layers of silt—they sow their seeds, then set up rings of firestones to provide light and heat. Throughout the Vraskrahl season, the Auduns carry bat guano and recharged firestones down to their carefully tended crops. Graakhalian scouts take turns escorting the planters to protect them from Graakhalia's dangers.

**Trovatkrahl:** This "Season of Good Harvests" finds the Graakharians moving en masse into Graakhalia's lower levels to take advantage of the fruits of the planters' Vraskrahl labors. Except in the rare years when the harvest fails due to disease, insect plague, or some other disaster, Trovatkrahl is the Graakharian's best season. Food is plentiful, danger is at a minimum (although scouts must remain vigilant against scavengers attracted by the rich harvest), and friends and family who have perhaps not seen one another all year are once again united. The elven love of games and carefree living infects nearly every Graakharian, with the result that Trovatkrahl sees almost endless feasting, friendly contests and games of all sorts, and a great deal of merriment.

Many monsters and animals take advantage of the temporary absence of elves and gnolls from the upper cavern levels. They move in from the marginal regions of Graakhalia to partake in feasts and good harvests of their own.

All too soon, the Graakharians must again split up and move on to different regions. Other harvests important to their long-term food stores await them in the scattered fungus forests and sun caves of

Graakhalia, and the upper levels must be reclaimed in the annual monster hunts.

## Encounters

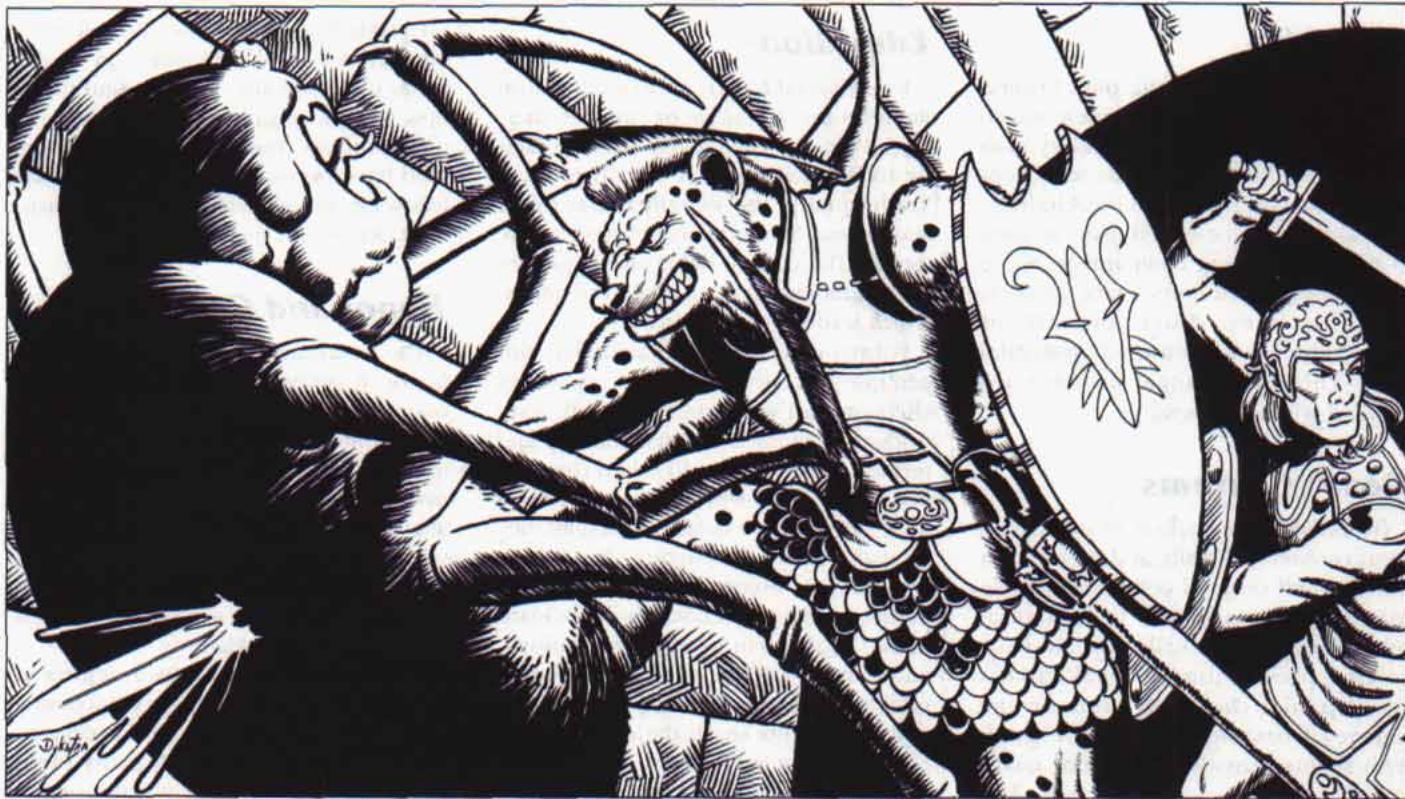
Almost anything common to cavern environments can be found in Graakhalia: basilisks, bats, giant beetles (especially fire beetles), black puddings, blast spores, carrion crawlers, giant centipedes, gelatinous cubes, insect swarms, giant lizards, giant locusts, ochre jellies, rats, rhagodesas, giant scorpions, shriekers, giant slugs, giant crab spiders, sporacles, stirges, yellow molds, and more.

In addition, many creatures and plants not normally found underground have made their way into Graakhalia and survived long enough for their descendants to adapt to the unusual environment. These include rock baboons, giant snakes of various sorts, and a blue-furred breed of giant weasels. The lakes and rivers of the lowest levels of Graakhalia harbor remnants of the abundant life found in the ancient waterways before Blackmoor's destruction created the Great Waste, including blind giant crabs, giant fish, and water termites.

Intelligent inhabitants of Graakhalia include the Gruugrakh gnolls, the Sheyallia elves, and a small tribe of ogres who live near the boundaries of the cave networks. Recent migrations have forced some Black Mountain humanoids into the Plain of Fire. Small bands of orcs, goblins, hobgoblins, and the like hide in little-traveled tunnels and caves, or eke out an existence near the small, widely scattered, unreliable oases found in canyons and sinkholes open to the surface.

The Graakharians meticulously avoid areas inhabited by dangerous intelligent creatures, including the beholder in the Klahktar caves, the huge red dragon of the Moktor Fire Pits, and the manscorpions of Bronkhaat. A small blue dragon lives in the broken lands on the southern edge of the Plain of Fire, but rarely ventures into Graakhalia.

DMs are free to introduce into Graakhalia any weird, mutated forms of monsters, plants, and animals they wish.



## Graakhalian Society

The Graakhilians' unique society blends aspects of both gnollish and elven culture. But the mix of customs and philosophies has not been even. Gnolls have much shorter lifespans than elves. Because youngsters adapt more quickly than adults—and pass those adaptations on to their own children—the Gruugrakh gnolls have been more influenced by elven ways than the other way around.

### Population

Life in Graakhalia is harsh; even the thousands of miles of tunnels and caves can support only 25,000 Graakhilians. The majority are gnolls. Sheyallia elves make up 20% of the population.

Of the 20,000 Gruugrakh gnolls, 20% are children with 1d4 hit points; 20% are teenagers with 1 HD; 50% are adults with 2 HD; and 10% have 3 HD or more.

Of the 5,000 Sheyallia elves, 10% are children less than 20 years old (with 1d4 hit points and no spellcasting abilities), 50% are first-level elves, and 40% have advanced to second level or higher. With a higher mortality rate than most elves experience, the Sheyallia elves have more children than their forest-dwelling brethren in other nations.

### Government

Each band of Graakhilians elects its own leader—someone they trust who will protect them from Graakhalia's danger by strength of arms, quick wit, and experience. Bands camped near one another form larger communities that elect their leader the same way.

In addition, the Graakhilians elect a council of twelve members—six gnolls and six elves. These councillors are almost always individuals who have spent a great deal of time living with and learning the ways of the other race

and who have proven their wisdom and valor. The council decides such things as the guilt or innocence of those accused of serious crimes (murder and abandoning a fellow Graakhalian to his fate in a dangerous situation are considered serious crimes), as well as things that effect Graakhalian society as a whole.

All decisions are reached by majority vote. In deadlocked cases, the council ceremoniously decides by the roll of a sacred wooden die.

### Daily Life

Many Graakhalian customs stem from survival techniques the gnolls developed over the first few centuries they occupied Graakh. Others came with the Sheyallia elves. Some of the most important social customs practiced by the Graakhilians evolved during the early years when cooperation between elves and gnolls took concerted effort on the part of both races.





## Graakhalla

### Animals

The Graakhalians train giant horned chameleons as beasts of burden and to help in giant insect hunts. They also train giant foot-pad lizards to accept riders (see p. 58). The Graakhalians raise and train blue-furred giant weasels as pets and hunting companions. Some keep more exotic pets (bats, snakes, and the like). Most animals of Graakhalia are looked on as potential food. The really dangerous ones are avoided whenever possible.

### Death Customs

Graakhalians cremate their dead amid great ceremony. Family and friends of a deceased elf or gnoll collect flammable plant material and build the funeral pyre beneath a ventilation shaft. A solemn procession of Graakhalians accompanies the pallbearers on the journey from the camp to the pyre, with scouts providing an honor guard and protection against scavengers. Traditionally, at least one family member and the deceased's best friend make short speeches. Everyone who joined the procession stays for the cremation, chanting and singing songs in honor of the dead. When the fire has burned out, friends and family members gather the ashes and carry them to the lower levels of Graakhalia. There they scatter the ashes, which will be swept by the annual floods.

Graakhalian custom dictates that one-fifth of the deceased's possessions be added to the community stores for use by any in need. If the deceased died by violence or accident, the family presents an additional fifth of his possessions to the person (or people) they feel tried hardest to save their loved one. It's considered a great honor to receive such funeral gifts. This custom encourages Graakhalians to come to one another's aid in danger, regardless of race or relation.

### Education

Every Graakhalian child's education includes the *Venallya*, or "time of sharing," when the child leaves his own family to live with one of the other race. Traditionally, the Venallya lasts for at least a year. Some children choose to stay longer. The custom helps ensure greater understanding between elves and gnolls, which leads to greater peace.

Formal education in Graakhalia concentrates on survival skills. Very young children learn which areas to avoid; ways to detect dangerous plants, animals, and terrain; and what to do when they get lost. (Stay right where they are unless there is immediate danger; wait until they hear the scouting parties shout their name before doing anything that might attract predators.) Older students learn basic Graakhalian geography, zoology, and botany. Adolescents learn the nitty-gritty rules of survival and how to hunt.

Many parents teach their children to read and write in the elven script, as well as other, more artistic skills.

### Food

"Civilized" visitors may be disgusted by some of the things Graakhalians eat. But Graakhalians must make do with what they can find. Staples in their diet include insects, various types of fungus, pale-fleshed fish from the underground waterways, and animals such as snakes, bats, and giant slugs.

Firestones provide a favorite way of cooking food. A slug steak can be cooked to medium rare in minutes by placing it on a newly recharged firestone and turning it once. Soups and stews are popular, and firestones carefully hollowed into pots are especially prized.

A number of foods in Graakhalia require special preparation to make them safe to eat. Generations of cooks have found out what works and what doesn't. Certain mushrooms have poisonous caps but edible stems or vice versa; other foods require boiling, skinning, or a long soak in water which must be discarded later.

Graakhalian adolescents' survival training includes intensive instruction on the foods of Graakhalia—how to find them, how to hunt or gather them, and how to prepare them. The lives of Graakhaliens who have become separated from their fellows in an unfamiliar section of Graakhalia depend on such knowledge.

### Honor and Courtesy

The Graakhaliens have a strict code of honor. It governs their behavior toward one another—especially when interacting with someone of the other race—and toward strangers. Above all, it stresses the need to remain calm and free of passionate emotion (anger, hatred, jealousy, etc.) which may lead to hasty judgements. "Wait and see" is the rule of thumb in any situation where someone's intent is not immediately evident.

Graakhaliens thus show a degree of cautious tolerance when they encounter creatures that seem even semi-intelligent. They refrain from attacking any obviously intelligent creature without provocation. On the other hand, creatures that have proven themselves to be enemies in the past may be attacked without warning, with no loss of Graakhalian honor.

One simple offshoot of this code of honor is the custom of keeping to the right when passing someone, especially in narrow tunnels. Right hands—the usual weapon hands—are thus kept as far from the other person as possible. Failing to observe this custom is not only a breach of etiquette; it may be taken as a sign of hostile intent.

### Marriage

The Graakhaliens strictly forbid intermarriage between elves and gnolls. After the disaster with the Tanagoros (see p. 35), due in part to intermingling between elves and humans, the Sheyallia elves were not willing to risk the consequences if gnollish and elven blood mixed.

Gruugrakh gnolls practice polygamy, although this isn't as prevalent as it is among other gnolls. Males and females—



among both races—take equal part in personal relationships and in protecting and providing for the community.

Graakhalian marriage ceremonies are short and sweet. The couple announces their intent to form a family, offers a feast to their friends and family, and moves in together. Divorces are similar—the couple announces they no longer wish to live together, and one or the other (or both) move out.

## Money

Graakhilians rely on barter to trade with one another. They use coins as well, though not in quite the same manner most cultures do. To a Graakhalian, a coin is a convenient item of trade—easy to carry, durable, and recognized by other Graakhilians as being valuable. But Graakhilians don't assign specific values to their coins. Instead, coins are bartered for goods or services just as though they were goods themselves.

A coin is worth more if it is pleasing to the eye and to the fingers. Shiny new coins are worth more than pitted or worn ones; smooth coins are worth more than rough ones; and decorated coins are worth more than plain ones. To most Graakhilians, gold coins are worth more than platinum coins—gold is considered more beautiful than platinum, and can more easily be transformed into jewelry.

Graakhalian coins tend to be a mish-mash of foreign coins found amid the remains of caravans that never made it across the desert for one reason or another. But Graakhilians make some of their own coins as well. Some are simply metal nuggets or raw gemstones found in Graakhalia's depths. Others are smoothly polished, intricately decorated wooden coins crafted by students practicing high elven magic (the *woodform* spell).

A few Graakhilians regularly trade with outsiders. They understand the concept of assigning specific values to different coins and usually keep two sets of coins. They trade one set with other Graakhilians; the second set includes coins considered valuable by foreigners.

## Names

Traditional gnollish and elven names are popular among the Graakhilians, regardless of race. It's not uncommon to find a gnoll named Lunylyn, for example, or an elf named Bratgok.

In general, elven names are fluid-sounding, with primarily liquid consonants—l, m, n, and r—and often have three or more syllables. Gnollish names sound harsher, with “growling” consonants (gr, gl, br, bl, etc.) and sharp syllables (grok, baat, darg, and so on). They are usually short, with only one or two syllables.

## Campaigning in Graakhalia

The Graakhalian elf-gnoll alliance provides ample opportunities to surprise player characters who have never before met courteous gnolls. PCs are likely to mistake Gruugrach gnolls for dangerous humanoids—after all, humanoid raiders from the Great Waste have been causing trouble in Sind—with possibly disastrous results. They won't expect to be dragged before a council of elves and gnolls to answer a charge of murder, just for killing a nasty gnoll!

Player characters are most likely to encounter Graakhilians on the Plain of Fire. The Graakhilians may be members of a hunting and scouting party, or a party bringing expended firestones to the surface to recharge and gathering fresh firestones for Graakhalia. Any such party will consist of 3d6 individuals, with a 50% chance that the party is a mix of elves and gnolls. If more than 15 elves or gnolls are encountered, one of them will be a leader (level 2 to 7 if an elf; 5 HD if a gnoll). As long as the leader is alive, all members of the party will have Morale 10.

Roughly once each year, a party of elves makes its way into Sind—usually crossing the border at Gola Keep—to trade gems, precious metals, and small firestones for useful items they cannot find or make in Graakhalia. While on

these trading trips, the elves take care to represent themselves as merchant adventurers from far western lands. (They fear endless troubles should their human neighbors discover that they live beneath the Plain of Fire—especially if anyone suspected the elves' plan to divert water from Sind's oases and Lake Amsorak).

These merchant parties generally consist of 2d4 first-level elves led by a second- or third-level elf. Each elf has one 1st-level spell (chosen by the DM or at random); the leader has two 1st-level spells, and possibly one 2nd-level spell as well. In addition to their personal treasure (treasure type U), each elf carries treasure type V for use in trading.

Every Sheyallia elf of second level or higher has a 5% chance per level to own a magical item from any one particular subtable on p. 229 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia* (check each elf separately). Some of these items are of elvish make, though most were scavenged from unfortunate caravans and adventurers who fell prey to the dangers of the Plain of Fire. Gnolls have a 5% chance per hit die to own any magical item.

## Sheyallia Elves

Graakhalian elves are quite different from most elves the PCs may have met. For one thing, they live almost entirely underground. Despite their long absence from their traditional forest environment, the Sheyallia elves have retained many elven customs and beliefs. Chief among these are their carefree attitudes and their love of games.

Like the forest elves of Alfheim, the Sheyallia elves have a different attitude toward the passage of time and the urgency of tasks than do shorter-lived beings. This attitude sometimes leads to friction with their Gruugrakhian neighbors. Gnolls who think elves should live up to their promises *now*, rather than in a year or more, may become exasperated by the elven saying that “there's always tomorrow.”

Sheyallia elves don't spend all their time frolicking in the Graakhalia's fungus



## Graakhalia

forests or riding the water slides of the Roaring River (see p. 27), though. They are perfectly capable of intense and difficult work involving matters that interest them. But with lifespans of 600 years or more, elves do tend to make long-term plans. Their most ambitious endeavor to date involves an intricate engineering plan to allow them to control the flood waters of Graakhalia.

Their plans include setting up a series of tunnels and channels controlled by water locks and dams to divert water from the oases of Sind—and even Lakes Hast and Amsorak—in the event of severe drought. Once in place, the irrigation systems should improve Graakhalian crop yields. They could conceivably be used for defense as well. Areas threatened by intruders can be swept clear with controlled flash floods.

The elves—assisted by some gnolls—have been working fairly steadily on these water control systems for two and a half centuries now, and expect them to be completed in a matter of mere decades. Some Graakharians, both elves and gnolls, oppose these engineering projects. They fear tampering with Graakhalia's waterways invites disaster.

**Optional:** In rare instances, NPC (or PC) Sheyallia elves may use gnollish shamanistic magic (casting clerical and druidic spells, see pp. 215–216 of the D&D® Rules Cyclopedia) rather than traditional elven magic. These characters advance on the normal Elf Experience Table, but they cannot go beyond 6th level. They can use the same number of spells per level as normal elves, but choose their spells from those available to gnollish shamans rather than from the list of magic-user spells.

Sheyallia elves who adopt gnollish ways to this degree usually prefer to live in gnollish encampments rather than with their fellow elves. They may be far more reckless and far less lackadaisical than other elves; in short, they usually behave more like gnolls than like elves.

## Gruugrakh Gnolls

Gruugrakh gnolls look like a cross between tall humans and hyenas. Both males and females stand 6' 6" plus 1d12" tall. Their hair is usually very short, ranging from light brown to black. Some have darker spots freckling their fur. Mature Gruugrakh gnolls sport manes—resembling mohawks—that extend from the forehead down to the middle of their backs.

Nearly every Gruugrakh gnoll speaks Elven to some degree, often fluently. Elven influence extends to gnollish behavior, weapon choice, and sometimes even to gnollish spell-casting.

Unlike stereotypical gnolls, Gruugrakh gnolls are not bullies, are only slightly less intelligent than average humans, and are neither lazy brutes nor ferocious monsters bent on raiding and stealing. Alignment tends toward Neutral; some Gruugrakh gnolls are Lawful.

When hunting or patrolling on the surface, many Gruugrakh gnolls prefer to use the longbow (introduced centuries ago by the elves). Few gnolls have the weapon-making or bowyer skill, so most of their weapons are made by elves or plundered from unfortunate caravans lost in the Plain of Fire.

Average expected life span for a gnoll is less than that for a human. Gnolls reach adulthood at about 18 years of age, are considered truly mature at 26, and are elderly by the time they pass the half-century mark.

Due to the elven influence on their culture, Gruugrakh gnolls produce a higher than normal proportion of spellcasters. One out of ten gnolls has the talent and ambition to study spellcasting of one sort or another (as opposed to 1 in 20, as with most gnolls). Of these, 50% choose to become shamans, 25% choose to become wokans, 15% become dual-classed (learning both shamanistic and wokani magic), and 10% follow the elven way (advancing on the Elf Experience Table and casting magic-user spells the same way elves do; see below).

## Gruugrakh Gnolls as PCs (Optional)

At the DM's option, Gruugrakh gnolls may be used as player characters. Gnolls may rarely adopt elven ways to such a degree that they gain levels, fight, and cast spells as though they were elves.

When creating a Gruugrakh gnoll this way, roll all Ability Scores normally. Then, adjust Strength by +1, Wisdom by -2, and Dexterity by +1. (Don't allow any adjustments to drop an Ability Score below 3 or raise it above 18.) Maximum Intelligence for a gnoll is 16; ignore any results of 17 or 18. Minimum Strength is 13. Roll for hit points on 1d8 rather than the elves' normal 1d6. Such gnolls have the same to-hit rolls and saving throws as elves, but cannot advance past ninth level (elves can advance to tenth level). Gnolls are not eligible for demi-human Attack Ranks.

The gnolls' thick fur coats confer a natural AC 8 Dexterity bonuses and penalties affect this AC; armor affects it only if the armor protection exceeds the character's natural AC. Most Gruugrakh gnolls wear leather armor, bringing their AC down to 7, plus or minus any Dexterity adjustments.

If you have access to GAZ10: *The Orcs of Thar*, you may use that material to create player character gnolls instead.





## The Serpent Peninsula

### Geography and Climate

The Serpent Peninsula divides the Sea of Dread from the Western Sea (Izondian Deep) and the Gulf of Hule. In summer, successive storms deluge the area with rain. Monsoons sweep in from the Sea of Dread, while gales and hurricanes make their rounds in the Western Sea. The three-month-long wet season, during which it rains every day, combines with the subtropical climate to produce rich rain forests and muggy swamps.

Although nominally part of the Yavdlom Divinarchy, the Serpent Peninsula has only a few colonies scattered here and there. Most of Yavdlom's population live on Thanegia Island or by the freshwater lakes of the Okwonga Lowlands.

### The Konumtali Savannah

These parklike grasslands receive 30" of rain each year—all of it in the summer months. Temperatures are fairly constant, ranging from 50° in winter to 100° in summer. Nights average 20° colder than days. Along the coasts, savannah gives way to some of the loveliest sandy beaches to be found anywhere on Mystara.

Slagovich merchants established a town named Kladanovic at the mouth of the Throat River as a stopover between the coastal journey and the trek across the peninsula. It's now a thriving port catering to traders who prefer the overland route to the long sail around the peninsula. Sindhi settlers established Tyjaret, an equally active port and trading center, on the eastern side of the neck. This city does a brisk trade in elephants, purchasing them from the Karimari and sending them on to Sind.

**Encounters:** The savannah is home to herds of antelopes, wild asses, elands, elephants, gazelles, giraffes, oryxes, rhinos, warthogs, wildebeests, and zebras. Carnivores include blink dogs, cheetahs, hyenas, jackals, and lions. Giant ants and termites build enormous nests in the savannah, occasionally swarming out of them to attack and eat nearly everything

in their path. Other inhabitants include some blue dragons, a few tribes of centaurs, a herd of pegasi, and treacherous patches of grab grass.

Numerous small tribes of nomadic peoples live in the Konumtali. Chief among these are the Urdukkabilas, copper-skinned descendants of Urduk nomads who moved into the savannah centuries ago. Bands of dark-skinned Karutunda hunters and gatherers also roam the grasslands. These short people (averaging five feet tall) are sometimes mistaken for the legendary Karimari.

### The Nakakande Rain Forest

The Nakakande presents an imposing wall of plant growth to travelers. Along rivers and trails—anywhere sunlight reaches the forest floor—the profusion of vines, trees, bushes, and thorns yields only to machetes and determined effort.

In areas where the thick jungle canopy blocks the sunlight, explorers find their way suddenly clear of the nearly impenetrable ground cover. Most animals live in the canopy and rarely descend to ground level. Brightly plumed birds, raucous monkeys, and other creatures find all they need sixty or more feet above the jungle floor.

The northernmost portion of the Nakakande encompasses the Utajiri Hills. Small streams and waterfalls tumble down these jungle-cloaked hillsides. Mud slides and floods are common in the rainy season. Entire sections of jungle may lose their grip in the slopes and come slithering down, piling boulders and trees in the valleys and leaving wide smears of mud and bare rock behind.

The southern edge of the rain forest, where jungle meets swamp, often floods in the wet summer months. Rivers rise as much as twenty feet, submerging thousands of acres. These floods deposit new loam and soil on the jungle floor, encouraging riotous growth when the water drains away. Even in the drier winter, the jungle floor is soggy here than in the northern rain forest. Translucent black

streams wind their way between the trees. Their peat stained water is too acidic to drink but drives insects away.

Along the coastlines and estuaries, the rain forest gives way to vast mangrove swamps. The trees here are much shorter than those of the jungle proper, averaging only 25' high. Their tangle of roots collect silt from the waters they stand in, gradually creating land where once was river or bay.

Temperatures in the Nakakande range from 55° in winter to 110° in the summer, with the shady depths of the forest providing some relief from the heat. Annual rainfall is roughly 60" in the northern jungle hills, while the southern swampy jungle receives 80" each year.

**Encounters:** The rain forest teems with life. Those who venture into it may encounter beasts such as triceratops or the dreaded Tyrannosaurus Rex. Boa constrictors dangle from tree limbs, hidden among lianas and other vines, while poisonous anacondas glide silently through river waters. Wild pigs, deer, and hares browse on the undergrowth—and occasionally provide meals for jaguars and displacer beasts. Herds of forest elephants eat their way through the jungle, leaving wide elephant paths behind—a boon to creatures trying to make their way through the denser growth. Insect swarms can be particularly annoying; the large ones are dangerous. The forest is known to harbor trolls and orcs and even some green dragons. The elusive Karimari also inhabit the Nakakande, their hidden city protected by a massive ring of Guardian Trees (see p. 56).

### The Okwonga Lowlands

The land here is so low and swampy that it is difficult to tell where the muddy coastlines end and the swamps begin. Seawater mingles with the roots of gnarled mangroves along the coasts. Three freshwater lakes provide the perfect habitat for an abundance of wildlife, fish, and Yavdlom colonies. Most of the streams and ponds within the swamp are fresh water. Along the coastlines and





## The Serpent Peninsula

estuaries, the swamp turns to marsh. Temperatures range from 60° in the winter to a muggy 115° on the hottest summer days. Annual rainfall is about 50".

**Encounters:** Anything that loves mud, muck, and mire can be found in these swamps. Intelligent inhabitants include Yavdlom colonists, lizard men tribes, orcs, and the Mugumba mud-dwellers (see p. 57). Water termites, purple worms, giant leeches, regenerating hydras, a black dragon, and crocodiles also inhabit the swamps. And, of course, the Okwonga teems with snakes of varying sizes, colors, and temperaments.

## Dhiki Namazzi (Dire Straits)

Seasonal hurricanes and low-lying sand bars make the shallow sea between the Serpent Peninsula and Thanegia Island treacherous. Nevertheless, some traders prefer a run through these straits to the long journey around Thanegia Island.

**The Keys:** These low, swampy islets form a rough circle between the coasts of the Okwonga Lowlands and Thanegia Island. They're difficult to chart, as changing tides and shifting sands cause some islets to disappear and new ones to rise above the waves. The keys serve as natural breakwaters and afford some protection to trading vessels hugging the coasts through Dhiki Namazzi. Some of the smaller keys are no more than offshore sandbars. The larger ones harbor salt marshes and abundant waterfowl.

The northern keys are the Kikomo islands (called the Serpent Keys by foreign merchants). The southern keys are the Kipingamizi islands (Sinking Keys).

**Encounters:** In addition to sudden storms and shifting sandbars, travelers may encounter sea snakes, water termites, the occasional sea hydra, and other seagoing vessels. A few merman clans live in the Dhiki Namazzi, but they and their dolphin companions tend to steer clear of travelers.

## Thanegia Island

This large island is mostly swamp and jungle. The central highlands avoid the full force of the seasonal hurricanes and monsoons. Grass and trees cover the highlands. Temperatures on the island range from 50° in winter to 110° in summer. Annual rainfall averages 60".

East of Thanegia lie the islands of the Thanegioth Archipelago. These low, swampy islands support exotic forms of life, including herds of small, hardy horses, survivors of shipwrecked cargo vessels plying between Sind and Slagovich.

**Encounters:** On Thanegia Island, encounters with the Yavdlom people and their communities are most likely. There are still some wilderness lands, however, which harbor the same creatures found in similar terrain on the peninsula—except elephants, triceratops, Tyrannosaurus Rex, and the Karimari.



### Ancient History —

Before the destruction of Blackmoor and the Great Rain of Fire, the Serpent Peninsula stretched unbroken from the forests south of the Black Mountains to its tip near Davania. But with the shifting of Mystara's axis, the peninsula's climate became ever more tropical.

Around 2800 BC, two groups of elves left their ancestral lands (now under the southern polar ice cap). Some, led by Ilsundal, crossed western Davania. By 2300 BC they had crossed the Strait of Izonda to the Immortals' Arm, then headed east along the Savage Coast. Another group, whose leader's name is lost, took another route through the Adakkian Sound, where they rejoined Ilsundal's band and continued with them.

The Sheyallia clan turned south, onto the Serpent Peninsula, and settled in the forest. The Meditor and Verdier clans, disliking the increasingly rainy and hot climate, sailed east in search of better lands. They eventually settled in the Traldar lands (present-day Karameikos). Ilsundal and the other clans moved across the Great Waste to Glantri, then northwest to the Sylvan Lands.

In 2200 BC, some Tanagoro colonists from halfway around the world arrived at the peninsula and decided they, too, liked the abundant rain forests. However, their agricultural methods included slashing and burning the forests to make room for their cattle and crops. The Sheyallia elves regarded the destruction of the forest with horror. Conflict between the two cultures was inevitable. Eventually, they worked out a compromise of sorts. The Tanagoros kept to the coastlines and forest fringes, while the elves withdrew deeper into the forest.

The Sheyallias found the heart of their rain forest already inhabited by small black-skinned humans. The Karimari, as these pygmies called themselves, had developed an advanced civilization independent of Blackmoor and the southern elves. Insulated from the outer world by their beloved forests and their policy of keeping to themselves, the

Karimari had suffered little in the Great Rain of Fire. Their queen asked the Sheyallia elves to respect Karimari territory and refrain from trespassing within the ring of Guardian Trees (see p. 56).

The elves were forced to dwell closer to the Tanagoro settlers than they would have liked. As long as there seemed to be enough room for all on the peninsula, conflicts were kept to a minimum. The Sheyallia elves became middlemen in trade between the Karimari and the Tanagoros. They kept the secret of the Karimari's existence—and the source of their best trade goods—to themselves.

In 1750 BC, the earthquakes that rocked the Sea of Dread drastically changed the Serpent Peninsula. Rising seas flooded most of the central lowlands, forming Dhiki Namazzi. Suddenly deprived of major cities, countless villages, and their best farmland, the Tanagoro culture collapsed into tribes fighting over the remaining land. Some carved out territories on the newly formed Thanegia Island. Others moved north into the rain forest, slashing and burning forest into farmland as they went. Each year, more forest fell to their axes—and each year, the water level rose higher, turning the southern fields into swamp and forcing the Tanagoros farther north. The Sheyallia elves resisted fiercely, but lost more and more ground. Elven pleas for Karimari assistance against the Tanagoros fell on deaf ears. The elves could not sway the Karimari from their isolationism.

Around 1500 BC a group of halflings paused in their northward migration at Thanegia Island. Dismayed by the unrest in the land, they quickly moved on.

After nearly a century, the Serpent Peninsula stabilized into the shape and size it now has. Areas which had once been lush rain forests dozens of feet above sea level were now swamps, marshes, and low-lying islands.

The peninsula's populations gradually stabilized as well. The Karimari, secure in their well-guarded jungle, remained unaffected by the events which spelled catastrophe to the Tanagoros and

Sheyallias. Exhausted by constant warring, many Tanagoros came to terms with the Sheyallia elves. Elves and humans began living side by side. The Sheyallia taught their Tanagoro neighbors non-destructive farming techniques, learning various craft skills in return. In some communities, elves and humans intermarried. Eventually, peace settled on the peninsula.

In 1262 BC, the Karimari were faced with an unexpected problem—visitors from the north. A small band of Urduk explorers from Sindh stumbled upon the ancient city of the Karimari. They came at a critical moment in Karimari history. The old queen had died and the Karimari were faced with choosing a new leader.

Over the centuries, continued attempts by the elves and Tanagoros to interest the Karimari in external affairs had created a minority of citizens who believed the Karimari should broaden their horizons. This increasingly vocal minority wanted a queen who would encourage a flow of goods and knowledge with neighboring cultures. The arrival of men from a far distant land brought the issue to a head.

The Urduk leader, Musafir, was an exceptional diplomat who seized control of the situation. He played on events in Karimari history to foster guilt over past, "selfish" Karimari policies, citing the untold hardships and deaths the elves and Tanagoros suffered while the Karimari sat in their magnificent city, deaf to their neighbors' cries. Those who were not inclined to guilt were persuaded by his arguments that some day—perhaps soon, perhaps in the distant future—the Karimari would face an overwhelming enemy, and their neighbors would refuse to assist them as they refused to assist in the past.

With smooth talking and the judicious use of a few *charm person* spells, Musafir engineered Queen Rehima's rise to power. Less than a decade after the Urduks' arrival, the queen sent Musafir back to Sindh at the head of a small army of Karimari warriors and elephants.





## The Serpent Peninsula

Queen Rehima's reign created new opportunities for trade and cultural exchanges. For the next few generations, Karimari leaders sent ambassadors and merchants to many distant lands, and, in return, welcomed many distinguished visitors from far-off lands to their glorious city.

Meanwhile, the elves and the Tanagoro tribes continued to mingle. The two cultures freely shared their art, language, and lifestyles. New cities arose from tribal centers where humans and elves pursued the study of magic and other scholarly matters. Old grudges occasionally erupted into duels or feuds. But the two races cooperated with one another, especially in time of disasters—hurricanes, floods, epidemics, and the occasional earthquake.

As time passed, elven and Tanagoro children began to exhibit the ability to see the future. Some with minor talents could foresee only catastrophic events, and then only in their dreams. But others could see more clearly, and used their foreknowledge to gain power and wealth. Many people became alarmed as they saw more and more prognosticators abusing their power to see the future.

Then, in 556 BC, a boy named Yav was born to an elven mother and a Tanagoro father. He was the strongest seer yet known, and made himself a hero with many timely warnings of hurricanes and other disasters. He could also see a person's destiny merely by looking at his aura.

When Yav became a man, he joined the clergy and began to preach that seers should never use their powers for personal gain. Most of his words fell on deaf ears. At the same time, increasing numbers of people began to regard the ability to see into the future as evil. This belief was strongest in a group of elven purists who also preached against mingling elven and human blood.

In 529 BC, a series of abuses by the ruling class of seers prompted a revolt. At first, it was a revolt by concerned citizens against only those seers who

abused their power, but it rapidly got out of hand. With a viciousness that surprised their own elven brothers, the purists slaughtered every seer they could get their hands on. A few purists took even more extreme measures, killing people of mixed elven and human blood regardless of their precognitive abilities. Old grudges flared up into a new war, pitting humans against elves. Soon Tanagoros were calling for the complete expulsion of elves. More than ten thousand people died in one bloody year. The revolution ended with the power of the seers broken and the Sheyallia elves fleeing from the Serpent Peninsula. Reacting with horror to these events, the Karimari closed their borders once more.

Sometime during the civil war, Yav disappeared. His followers claimed he was killed by the elven purists, and that he had not resisted because, he said it was the will of the Immortals. They continued to spread Yav's teaching that the ability to see the future was not evil in itself, but that it should be carefully restrained and controlled.

In fact, Yav was still alive and well. His uncanny ability to see a person's soul and destiny merely by looking at them led him to realize that something, somewhere, was influencing his people and corrupting their thoughts. The proliferation of truth-seeing and precognitive abilities among the Tanagoro people was not natural. Whatever was causing it seemed also to turn people's thoughts to greed and selfishness. Even Yav found himself sorely tempted to abuse his powers. Only his strong convictions that such abuse was evil gave him the strength to resist. Yav set out to discover the source of the mysterious influence.

His quest led him to many different cultures, where he met with the most famous seers and soothsayers he could find. In almost every case, the seer's ability stemmed from spell-casting or other magical explanations. Only once did he find a seer whose powers seemed inborn, as his own were.

Yav also realized that the farther from Thanegia Island he traveled, the harder

it became for him to see into the future or into people's auras. He was gradually becoming psychically blind. Convinced that the answer to the Tanagoro problems lay closer to home, Yav returned to the Serpent Peninsula.

He found the Tanagoro culture greatly changed. A handful of mighty seers held absolute power over the Tanagoro cities. Nearly everyone used precognition to gain an edge. Those with no precognitive abilities purchased dreams and foreknowledge from seers who agreed to share their abilities—for a price.

Even more alarming, Yav discovered that well-meaning friends had greatly distorted his childhood feats to make him seem all-seeing and all-powerful. The stories of Yav's death at the hands of an elf during the civil war had the effect of martyring him. Yav's ideas and remarks concerning the duties and responsibilities of seers had taken on the aura of a philosophy of life. They were gathering a large following, especially among the poor and downtrodden.

Not daring to reveal himself as the now legendary prophet, Yav took on a new identity. His own prophetic powers quickly returned, along with thoughts and emotions he found disturbing. He was no longer in doubt—whatever enhanced the prophetic powers of the Tanagoro people also enhanced their greed for power. And it had something to do with the Serpent Peninsula itself.

In conjunction with two good friends whom he took into his confidence, Yav set about to save the Tanagoro people from themselves. He could think of no way to do it but to seize power for himself. Using his phenomenal precognitive and truth-seeing abilities, Yav clawed his way to the top of the Tanagoro seers' hierarchy, fighting against temptations for abuse all the while.

At last, in 500 BC, he was ready. Yav, known as Mulogo, proclaimed himself the herald of the Immortal Yav. He preached that the Immortal was angry because the Tanagoro people had not taken his message to heart. To appease

his wrath, the Tanagoros must abandon their native lands and flee from the peninsula. A devastating earthquake that no other seer had foreseen helped back Mulogo's claims.

Led by Mulogo, the Tanagoro people built an enormous fleet of ships and sailed across the Western Sea to the Immortals' Arm. Yav spent two decades helping the Tanagoro people settle in their new home as the seers gradually lost their powers. In 480 BC, then in his late seventies, Yav left the Tanagoros in the hands of his eldest son and sailed back to Thanegia to search for the cause of the trouble.

He finally found it in a crack in the floor of the shallow sea separating the Serpent Peninsula from Thanegia Island. It was an artifact of the Sphere of Time, buried long ago to keep it from causing mischief. The earthquake of 1750 BC had disturbed its resting place, and successive earthquakes in intervening centuries had carried it closer to Mystara's surface. Originally a time machine made by an Immortal, the artifact had two noticeable side effects. It enhanced precognitive abilities, allowing those born with a mixture of elven and human blood to see into the future; it also twisted thoughts and deeds to greed, selfishness, and an overwhelming desire for power.

At first, Yav did not realize the nature of the artifact. He knew only that the intricately carved stone monolith he found in an undersea cavern was both the cause of the Tanagoro people's precognitive abilities and the bane of their society. Accidentally triggering the artifact's mechanism, Yav found the coastline and islets changed when he returned to the surface. The boat he had sailed from the Immortals' Arm was a rotting hulk. Yav had traveled seventy-five years into the future, to 400 BC.

Yav began the long overland trek back to the Immortals' Arm. He found his great-grandson ruling over a federation of five allied city-states, all populated by descendants of the Tanagoro people. The great seers of the past—including the

"immortal" Yav—were but memories, the topics of legends and stories. The cities were plagued with constant threat of attack by raiding humanoids, mostly orcs and goblins. Neither their farmlands nor their trade routes were safe.

With pressure from the humanoids mounting, Yav decided to move his people back to the Serpent Peninsula. Once again he took the identity of Mulogo, herald to the Immortal Yav, and convinced his great-grandson to order a mass migration back to Thanegia and the Serpent Peninsula. Yav knew that, once there, his people would regain their prophetic abilities. He hoped that strict regulation of those gifted with supernatural sight would defeat the curse—at least long enough for him to discover the artifact's secrets and render it harmless.

At first it worked. Yav, in the guise of Mulogo, issued the Precepts of Yav—a guide to correct behavior and thinking among seers. Newly emerging *ramlas*, or predictors, agreed to abide by the rules and police one another's use of their precognitive powers. Satisfied that the People of Yav were happily resettled, Yav left the government of the new Yavdlom Nation in the hands of his great-grandson and disappeared below the Dhiki Namazzi sea to study the artifact.

His investigations revealed the artifact's innermost workings, including its time-traveling mechanisms. To test his new knowledge and to see what the distant future held for his people, Yav set the artifact's chronometer to four hundred years in the future (roughly AC 1). He discovered two things—that the artifact itself remained in time, continuing to broadcast its influences to enhance precognition and strengthen peoples' greed for power; and that even the Precepts of Yav were not enough to keep the People of Yav from corruption and decadence. Once again, nearly all-powerful seers ruled over the non-seeing populace, thinking only of wealth and power.

Discouraged, Yav returned to the artifact to go back in time and save his people before they slid down the path to tyranny. But the earthquakes which had brought the artifact closer to Mystara's surface had also damaged its ability to move backward in time. The damage was beyond the ability of a mere mortal to repair. In desperation, Yav searched for a way to rid the artifact of its evil influence.

While maintaining physical contact with the artifact, Yav opened his mind to the future. He struggled to see his way through a myriad of decision points to a future in which he fixed the artifact. The flood of possibilities threatened to overwhelm his sanity. But at last he saw the answer—in the past. A piece of the artifact had been lost in a long-ago earthquake. If he could recover the piece and restore it to its proper place, the artifact would work as it was meant to.

Using the magic he had learned during his long wanderings, Yav journeyed deep into Mystara's crust to retrieve the lost piece. After some close brushes with dangerous creatures in those strange dimensions, Yav returned to the cavern beneath the Dire Straits and triumphantly replaced the missing piece.

But when Yav returned to the surface, it was to find his plan had backfired with disastrous results. All ambition and desire for any power had drained from his people. He watched, helplessly, as the once-unified nation crumbled into a number of tribal territories. Even Yav was affected, and nearly gave up his hopes for shaping his people into a strong, precognitive race free from corruption. Running out of time—Yav was by now a very old man—the seer again descended in a last-ditch effort to fix the artifact once and for all.

All this time, the Karimari kept to themselves, oblivious to the trials, tribulations, and migrations of Yav's people. Only the most venturesome Karimari traders left their ring of Guardian Trees to supply the lucrative elephant trade.





# The Most Serene Divinarchy of Yavdlom

For centuries, the artifact's ambition-dampening effects on the People of Yav kept them a tribal society. They had no desire to regain their previous level of civilization, or even to fight for territory or resources with other Yavdlom tribes. They defended themselves from slavers and other exploitative visitors as best they could, but never took the fight beyond their own boundaries.

Meanwhile, Yav was trying to fix the artifact again. Once more calling upon his ability to see into the future, Yav searched the paths of the future for one in which he repaired the artifact for good. Following the images he saw in his mind, he repaired the piece he had found and replaced, and set it in position again.

The repair did indeed remove the curse's effects from Yav's people, but did not fix the problem entirely. The ambition-dampening effects remained, now concentrated around the artifact. Anyone touching it would feel all cares, desires, and ambitions draining away until they desired nothing more than to lie down and sleep. Satisfied that the artifact would now enhance his people's precognitive abilities with no ill effects, Yav caused the collapse of the cavern roof above the monolith, burying the artifact.

When he returned to the surface once more, Yav discovered that his tampering with the artifact had hurled it—and himself—into the future, to the year 750 AC. The various Tribes of Yav now spoke vastly different dialects and followed different customs from one another. They were a far cry from the serene, unified nation Yav envisioned. With a bit of determined searching, Yav found a great-grandson (many times removed) to lead the People of Yav into a new life as a civilized, evolving society.

In 758 AC, Yav was startled by a visit from a wise old seer he'd met centuries before—and was even more startled to learn the old man was an Immortal who had secretly sponsored Yav on his unknowing pursuit of the Path of the Dynast. Accepting the offer of Immortal-

ity, Yav left his mortal body behind and joined the ranks of Mystara's Immortals.

Nowadays, The Most Serene Divinarchy of Yavdlom is a large realm governed by prophets, soothsayers, and seers. With close to a million citizens, Yavdlom has built a thriving civilization in the swamps and jungle-cloaked hills of Thanegia Island.

## Yavdlom Society —

The people of Yav are tall and ebony-skinned; their slightly pointed ears betray their elven heritage. Traces of elven design appear in their art and ornamentation. Even their writing inherited the graceful curves of elven calligraphy.

Centuries-old traditions separate the *ramla* (seers and prophets) from those who have no talent for prediction. A hierarchy ranks seers all the way from the nearly all-seeing Great Prophet down to those who have only latent or sporadic abilities. People without any truth-seeing or precognitive abilities are relegated to the laymen class.

Tradition also divides laymen into the *tukufu* ("those who matter") and the *ogwambe*, or those who don't. Tukufus are people whom the seers determine will affect their environment in some noticeable fashion during their lifetime. Yavdlom citizens recognized as those who matter a lot are automatically inducted into the ranks of the nobility.

## The Seers

Yavdlom citizens who exhibit a talent for prediction or for seeing the truth must join the clergy—especially those who have prophetic dreams and visions as children. The discovery of such a strong talent is celebrated in a joyful ceremony. High-ranking ramlas take over the responsibilities of raising, caring for, and educating the child.

Many Yavdlom citizens have only latent or weak powers of precognition and truth-seeing. They are usually discovered during the *kupiga ramli*, the divination ceremony every child must go through

(see "Festivals and Events," p. 41). These "almost blind" members are admitted into the clergy's lower levels. Even after extensive training, they perceive only minor events within a relatively close future. As these events are considered beneath the attention of the Immortals, such soothsayers may share their visions with the citizenry. The tasks of dealing with the common population—administering to their spiritual needs, answering their requests for divinations, and so on—falls primarily on the shoulders of these minor clergymen. Although their powers of precognition are limited, these soothsayers can generally tell whether or not someone "matters."

At the other end of the spectrum is the Great Prophet of Yavdlom, the head of the clergy. This seer can discern major future events with great accuracy—sometimes as far as a decade into the future. But there are certain things even the Great Prophet cannot see. The Immortals, their heralds, and mortals who are destined to attain Immortality may appear as those who matter, but important future events revolving around their activities remain murky. This has led to some of the biggest misreadings since Yavdlom seers first gained precognitive powers.

**The Precepts of Yav:** According to tradition, the Immortal Yav formulated these laws centuries ago, allowing his people to return to their native lands from their exile on the Immortals' Arm only when they'd sworn to uphold his precepts. (In fact, Yav did not attain Immortality until AC 758.)

Foremost among these rules is one of non-interference: members of the clergy must not interfere with the course of history as set by the Immortals. This restricts ramlas to revealing what they know only under very strictly defined circumstances. The more important the information, the more restrictive the rules surrounding its revelation. If a ramla receives an omen from the Immortals, he's permitted to assist certain causes, but only with riddles and obscure hints concerning the nature of future events.



Another precept requires ramlas to remain free from passion, since emotions cloud and distort the truth revealed in visions. Profound meditation is recommended as the best way to overcome one's personal feelings. As a result, seers are usually dispassionate, passive, and calm. They accept even the most catastrophic events as meant to be.

**Rogue Seers:** There are Yavdlom seers who do not belong to the clergy. Some are simply unaware they have precognitive abilities, whether because the power hasn't yet manifested itself or because they explain their few prophetic dreams away as mere coincidences.

Others deliberately refuse to join the clergy. These *muasis* are hunted down as dangerous criminals. The stronger a muasi's precognitive abilities, the more effort Yavdlom law enforcers put into capturing him, for such rogues could interfere with the course of history. Those who escape the law either flee the Divinarchy or remain fugitives in Yavdlom's undercities or wilderness.

## The Nobility

Yavdlom nobility includes all "blind" citizens whose destinies will profoundly affect at least 1,000 people in their lifetime. People whose destinies don't bring drastic and lasting changes don't count.

A destiny that affects 1,000 people makes a person a *yobar* (equivalent to a baron). At 5,000 people, the citizen becomes a *kwa'a* (count); at 25,000, an *uvundi* (viscount); at 100,000, a *m'doli* (marquis); at 500,000, a *djanbgasa* (duke); at 1,000,000, a *mokubu* (monarch); and, beyond 5,000,000 people, a *somba* (a king of kings—someone destined for Immortality). The noble prefixes his title to his name, as in Kwa'a Chilemba.

Once a noble's destiny no longer affects the world around him, he no longer matters and is stripped of noble rank. These destitute nobles, the *suetangas*, retain an honored status equivalent to knights of other societies.

## The Government

The Yavdlom Divinarchy is a federation of states under the administration of an overlord (the *Mokubu*—the Yavdlom noble who currently matters the most). Only *tukufus* (laymen who matter, including nobility) can serve as government officials. Ramlas act only as advisors.

Governmental positions are awarded through a rather complicated legal procedure. Each time a government post becomes available—either through death or when a government official fulfills his destiny and no longer matters—the *jafis*, or judges, search through the populace for a candidate with the proper level of "mattering" to fill the position. Citizens meeting the requirements are strongly encouraged to accept the post. They'd be denying their own destiny by refusing (an attitude greatly frowned on in Yavdlom society).

Nobles are responsible for enforcing Yavdlom's laws, managing the economy, and defending the land. Ramlas make the laws, collect a tithe from the citizenry, pass judgments on accused suspects brought before the courts, and advise government officials as to the wisest course of action in any weighty matter—all without revealing too much of what they know about the future.

## Economy

Yavdlom's economy is based on trade and agriculture. Merchants come to Yavdlom ports from Slagovich, Sind, Ierendi, and Davania's northern coastal nations. Occasionally, an adventurous merchantman may arrive all the way from the Minrothad Guilds. Yavdlom traders carry some goods overland via the Serpent Peninsula, but most mercantile traffic involves sea-going merchant fleets.

Yavdlom's exports include cocoa (Yavdlom is the only known supplier of this luxury food), coffee, salt-cured fish (both freshwater and ocean fish), mahogany, teak, diamonds (from mines in the hills), and ivory (from northern elephants).

The People of Yav import dates, rice, silk, and cotton cloth from Sind. Davanian merchants bring preserved meat, wheat, corn, and gold. From Ierendi and the Minrothad Guilds come exotic seashell jewelry (popular among the poorer classes) and luxury goods from the eastern lands.

Within its own borders, Yavdlom's largest trade is in simple foodstuffs (meats, fish, and grain) and crafts (household items, clothing, tools, etc.). Not far behind—in terms of money exchanged—is the brisk trade in foreknowledge. The common population tends to consult soothsayers for just about any major decision in their lives. The rich take great pride in the relative accuracies of the seers they patronize. Few people correctly interpret the cryptic hints soothsayers render, however. The practice of purchasing divinations tends to concentrate money in the hands of the seers. Consequently, the clergy disperses money back to the common people in the twice-yearly *masanikto* festivals.

**Coins and Coinage:** Until two centuries ago, the People of Yav had lost the skills (and desire) to mint coins. Since its rise to power as a civilized nation, Yavdlom has adopted the use of foreign coins in lieu of any national currency. All common coins are accepted at face value—including coins from Davania, Sind, and the eastern lands. Most Yavdlom merchants prefer to accept silver from Slagovich's traders, as their *cinnabryl* coins (the usual currency of Slagovich and the Savage Coast) are poisonous to non-natives.

## Law

There is comparatively little crime in Yavdlom. This is partly due to prosperity (theft is rarely a necessity for survival), but mostly due to the fact that in a nation of seers, criminals rarely escape punishment. Indeed, soothsayers often step in to prevent petty crimes their dreams and visions foretell. (Such crimes as stealing a meal or small objects are considered beneath the Immortals' notice, and hence aren't subject to the Precept of non-interference.)



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When a crime has been reported, one or more jajis are assigned to investigate. These ramlas are talented at interpreting peoples' auras or of seeing beyond the outer appearance of the crime scene to the underlying truth (with a natural ability similar to the *truesight* spell).

Once the culprit is identified and apprehended, the jajis hold a public trial where friends (and enemies!) of the culprit can speak for or against him. Based on the testimony of witnesses, the circumstances of the crime, and what they see in the criminal's aura, the jajis will pass sentence. Punishments range from very lenient (performing public service and promising never to break the law again) to very harsh (exile or death).

Sometimes, with terrible crimes such as murder or treason, the common people will get carried away and deal with the suspected culprit before the jajis have a chance to carry the matter to a conclusion. This is especially likely to occur when the people suspect foreigners of the crime.

## Daily Life

Yavdlom culture is an exotic mix of ancient Tanagoro beliefs and practices, Elven philosophy and art, and tribal customs that grew out of the People of Yav's Age of Apathy, when the ancient artifact of Time effectively held the people in a tribal state.

## Animals

The Yavdlom people keep few draft animals. The terrain and climate simply aren't conducive to horses, camels, oxen, or other traditional work beasts. Only the water buffalo can stand the heat, humidity, and swarms of insects that plague Thanegia Island and the southern half of the Serpent Peninsula. Water buffalo are used to pull plows through the thick, often muddy, soil.

Trade caravans must rely on human porters and magical transport instead, especially when carrying goods into swamp or hilly jungle.

Domestic animals raised for food include pigs, guinea fowl, and crocodiles. The People of Yav enjoy a number of different pets, including monkeys, parrots, mongooses, and boa constrictors. Crocodiles and giant snakes sometimes guard private estates from trespassers.

## Death Customs

The People of Yav customarily burn their dead and scatter their ashes on the ocean. They observe a short (one day) period of mourning before the funeral, during which the body is laid out in state for mourners to view. The Precepts of Yav urge the people to view death as an inevitable end to an individual's life on Mystara and to not let grief over a loved one's passing hinder one's own living. It's best to accept death as the good and natural outcome of the will of the Immortals—even if the death seems senseless or premature.

## Education

The clergy provides Yavdlom's formal education. This includes the Precepts of Yav (which every citizen is expected to memorize) and basic ciphering, reading, and writing so the student can be a productive citizen. Further education is usually reserved for the ramlas and for the tukufus (lay people who matter). This higher education includes history, astronomy, engineering, and Yav's lesser-known philosophical teachings.

## Festivals and Events

Most of Yavdlom's festivals are rooted in the various traditions of the tribal cultures that once divided the People of Yav. A few are celebrated by all citizens of Yavdlom. Feasts of fresh fruits and nuts accompany nearly every celebration and festival. Banners and floral wreaths flutter from every building and tree, while the people festoon themselves with colorful feather headdresses, polished shell jewelry, and embroidered robes.

The *kupiga ramli* is the most important ceremony of a citizen's life. When a child approaches adulthood (at about thirteen years of age), the child's parents or guardian brings him or her before a panel of jajis to determine the child's destiny. The judgement of the jajis dictates every child's future occupation and status in Yavdlom society, as well as the training and education they will receive.

## Food

Fish of all sorts form the staple diet in Yavdlom. Fishermen haul in enormous catches from the Dhiki Namazzi sea and the freshwater lakes on the Onkwonga lowlands. Some species are eaten raw, usually with spices—others are first dried or cooked. Rice commonly accompanies the meal.

Yavdlom's jungles provide fresh fruits and nuts. Many Yavdlom gardens boast laden fruit trees, as well as melons and vegetables.

Domestic animals and wildlife add red meat and fowl to the diet. Yavdlom law

prohibits over hunting or over fishing certain areas. The ramlas keep an eye on wildlife populations and warn the fishing and hunting communities of impending declines.

Yavdlom is also known for its excellent coffee and cocoa beverages.

## Inheritance

The Precepts of Yav declare both status and wealth as temporary—neither is to be coveted or clung to when it comes time to part with them. Every Yavdlom citizen is therefore expected to draw up a will concerning the disposition of their material goods after their death. There are no set laws saying who shall get what—those decisions are left to the individual. If a Yavdlom citizen dies without a will, the ramlas confiscate all goods and redistribute them according to the needs of potential recipients.

In most cases, people will their goods to their spouse or to their children. Many allot a certain portion of their legacy to charitable causes, or to the ramlas to distribute as they see fit.

## Marriage Customs

Yavdlom marriages are monogamous, but not necessarily until death. Just as status in the Yavdlom Divinarchy is a temporary thing, love is also seen as temporary. Some loves last a very long time—long enough for a couple to stay together their entire lives—but some disappear with time.

A couple wishing to be married must seek out a jaji to judge the appropriateness of their union. If the jaji sees any conflict between the couple's destinies, or any sign that the marriage is contrary to the wishes of the Immortals, the couple will most likely cancel the wedding. They may approach a higher-ranking rama to act as jaji for them, if they wish, but they are allowed only one such appeal. Deciding to marry one another even after warned of conflict by the jajis is not expressly forbidden, but it is seriously frowned upon.

Weddings are typical Yavdlom celebrations, involving lots of food, decorations, dancing, and singing late into the night. It's customary for guests to give gifts to the newly-married couple.

## Names

Although the Yavdlom Divinarchies no longer recognize tribal boundaries, many parents name their children according to the traditions of their tribal origins. A newborn child is given a *jina la utotoni* (childhood name), usually by an elderly relative. It often refers to events surrounding the child's birth, and is used as a nickname. When one year old, children receive their *jina la ukubwani* (adult name). They can choose a different name anytime after reaching puberty. Most Yavdlom names bear meanings that reflect important events, experiences, or characteristics the individual wishes to identify with.

Here are some common Yavdlom names and their approximate meanings.

**Female:** Asha (Life); Aziza (Precious); Bahati (Luck); Chiku (Chatterer); Hasanati (Good); Jamila (Beautiful); Masika (Born in the rainy season); Mwamini (Honest); Mwatabu (Born in sorrow); Nuru (Light); Raziya (Agreeable); Safiya (Clear-minded); Taabu (Troubles); Zakiya (Intelligent)

**Male:** Birungi (Perfect); Byangireeka (Doomed to failure); Jabari (Brave); Khal-fani (Destined to rule); Machupa (Likes to drink); Mayanga (Lake sailor); Mwanje (Leopard); Nakisia (Child of Shadows); Nuwamanya (All-Knowing); Rashidi (Good Counsel); Ruhakana (Argumentative); Sudi (Luck); Taamiti (Bravery); Wamukota (Left-handed); Wemusa (Never satisfied with his possessions); Zuberi (Strong)

## Recreation

Yavdlom citizens are fond of feasts, celebrations, festivals, and simple daily relaxation. The latter often involves gathering with friends in taverns and cafes to enjoy buffalo-horn mugs of weak ale or





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steaming ceramic cups of coffee and sweetened cocoa milk.

Yavdlom people enjoy smoking a type of wild-grown tobacco, dried and crumbled and wrapped in fresh leaves of the same plant. Some foreigners consider the habit vile and offensive to the nose.

### Yavdlom and the Immortals

Yavdlom citizens primarily honor the Immortal Yav, a Celestial of the Sphere of Time. According to legend, his remains are buried at the ruins of Offo, near the southern coast of Thanegia Island. The ruins are taboo. Ramla guards patrol their perimeter for trespassers. First offenders are severely reprimanded. Repeat offenders are put to death.

**The Annals of Yav:** This mystical book supposedly contains all of Mystara's future history within its pages. Yavdlom's ramlas believe everything written in the Annals of Yav will happen exactly as written. Fortunately for the mortal races of Mystara, many of the events written in the Annals of Yav are mentioned only briefly and without extensive details—thus allowing some measure of free will for those not caught up in the most important plans of the Immortals.

**Other Immortals:** Many Immortals take minor roles in the beliefs and philosophies of Yavdlom. Most are remembered for their patronage before the coming of Yav. Some are honored for their interest in helping Yavdlom citizens who call upon them for favors.

The Immortal Calitha, originally honored by the Sheyallia elves, is popular with Yavdlom fishermen. She's said to calm the ocean waters and grant good fishing to those who ask in the proper manner.

Tiresias is another Immortal who has a popular following among the non-seer population of Yavdlom. As a bard who uses poetry and music to reveal hidden truths, Tiresias offers a way to gain hidden knowledge to those denied the gifts of soothsaying and truthseeing.

## Tanakumba

When they discovered Tanakumba in AC 852, Minrothad explorers named it "the Most Limpid City of Thanopolis." Built over the ruins of an ancient city, Tanakumba was struggling to rise from centuries of tribal apathy and neglect. Only its center was in any way limpid—the rest of the city was a sprawling mass of house boats and stilt-legged huts struggling to stay above the swampy waters. But above the muck and waterlogged dwellings rose *Azizi Berungi*, the Great Prophet's palace. This centerpiece—and the clear, still waters surrounding its island—impressed the explorers more than anything else in Yavdlom.

Made from a giant conch shell discovered in the Sea of Dread before the oceans rose and flooded much of the Serpent Peninsula, Azizi Berungi stands 200' tall. Twenty levels of spiral chambers contain rooms, niches, and stairways carved out of the mother-of-pearl walls. The magnificent edifice stands in mute testimony to the accomplishments of the People of Yav's predecessors.

In AC 791, the People of Yav found the shell half buried in the swamp amid the flooded ruins of other ancient buildings. In the spirit of rebuilding their civilization to the heights once reached by their ancestors, they set about the monumental task of reclaiming the ancient city from the swamp. The project required years of backbreaking labor and the help of magic to channel the swamp's waters into a series of canals and rivers, dredge the bottom, and create habitable islands. Tanakumba was the result.

Today, 25,000 Yavdlom citizens live in Tanakumba. The city spreads over more than 50 small islands surrounded by the meandering waterways of an enormous delta. Ancient stone buildings restored from ruin dominate each island's center. Wooden buildings stretch out toward the canals and riverways, those nearest the waters perched on stilts to protect them from mild floods. Many citizens live on the waters, either in snug shell towers (modeled after Azizi Berungi) or on houseboats.

Palm trees line Tanakumba's paved streets and wide avenues. Bridges built on massive arched supports cross the rivers along the most important thoroughfares. The arches are tall enough to allow small sailboats to pass beneath. Most bridges also have sections which can magically be raised to allow large ships to pass. On smaller thoroughfares, pontoon bridges provide passage over the rivers. The central sections of these pontoon bridges may be untied and temporarily moved aside to allow necessary river traffic, though most boats choose alternate routes. Throughout the city, a ballet of sailboats and pole barges ferry people and goods between the isles.

### The Under-City

Parts of Tanakumba have been built on massive wooden platforms constructed two centuries ago from petrified tree trunks and *woodform* spells. Beneath these platforms lie parts of the city's underworld, home to the desperately poor, the shunned, and to criminals and fugitives. These unfortunate people, forgotten by most living in the city above, survive on the city's trash and the unhealthy fish that swim in the murky, swampy waters.

Other parts of Tanakumba rest on ancient ruins of a city once inhabited by Tanagoro and elven people living side by side. Many of these ruins are flooded with brackish water or buried in the silty muck accumulated over the centuries. However, there are a few abandoned catacombs that remain intact and relatively dry. Few people know these catacombs even exist—brave are the still fewer who ever dare explore them.

**Encounters:** Dangers in Tanakumba's under-city include thieves of all sorts (from desperate people who only steal food to brutal men who'll kill someone for a coin or a good weapon), crocodiles, giant leeches, and snakes. The catacombs may harbor ancient secrets and perils, from fabulous riches to horrible undead monsters.





# Ulimwengu: The Land of the Karimari

For millennia, the Karimari have kept pretty much to themselves within Ulimwengu—the heart of the Nakakande rain forest. A great ring of *karwana mulumbas*, or “guardian trees,” mark their territorial boundaries (see p. 56 for a full description). Few Karimari ever feel the desire to venture into the world beyond, and unwanted visitors are strongly discouraged from trespassing.

## Karimari History —

The origins of the Karimari have been lost in the dawn of time. According to their own history, Ulimwengu has been home to the Karimari since the world began. Their bards tell tales of a long-ago time when the world shook and clouds blocked the sun for many cycles, but Ulimwengu’s magic kept the Karimari safe. Ulimwengu’s magic, the Karimari believe, will keep them safe for all time.

If the Karimari had any desire to keep track of the passing years, interested sages might perhaps be able to piece together their traditional tales and compare them to history as it’s known to the sages of nations such as Thyatis or Alphatia. They might conclude that the Karimari inhabited their small patch of jungle long before the Great Rain of Fire, when Blackmoor and the civilization of the southern elves flourished.

But the Karimari are singularly uninterested in the details and facts historians would want to know. Karimari tales and “histories” ignore dates and epochs, other than in general terms such as “the time of darkness” or “the cycle when no elephants were born.” There are no lengthy genealogies, no written records of events, and few clues to the true history of the Karimari.

What the Karimari have instead is a rich tradition of songs and stories about legendary heroes and events. They also have the oldest human civilization on Mystara; the Karimari survived the Great Rain of Fire virtually untouched, and never lost the knowledge or cultural heritage they’d developed while Blackmoor was young.

## The Dawn Time

Karimari tales tell of a time when the Karimari lived like the animals, without the knowledge of fire or tools or even language. This was not a bad time—just different from the now-time. Ulimwengu looked after the Karimari then, as it does now.

One day, a Karimari woman named Mosi discovered the secret of fire. (How this came about is the subject of a song-cycle which takes three nights to perform. Her quest included a trip to Lightning’s sky home to steal Lightning’s Child and a great many deeds of derring-do.) This led Mosi to discover many other things—how to shape and use tools from wood, bone, and rocks; and, even more important, how to shape sounds and gestures into language. Mosi shared these discoveries with the Karimari, thereby leading them out of the Dawn Time and onto the path to civilization.

## Nyatui and the Time of the Elephants

The next great period in Karimari history came when Nyatui, a Karimari hero, first tamed an elephant. Known as “Tiger Fighter,” Nyatui is said to have rescued a baby elephant from a tiger’s attack. The two became fast friends. Abo, the elephant, taught Nyatui how to capture and befriend other elephants. The elephants provided strength the Karimari had never before had. Later, the Karimari learned that their techniques for capturing and training elephants worked equally well for triceratops.

## The Time of Going Forth

The Karimari know the time when their warriors aided Sind in its fight against the Red Orcs as “The Time of Going Forth.” The Karimari revere the heroic warriors who made the journey to Sind and back. They recognize the warriors’ bravery, however insane it seems to them now.

## Now-Time

Eventually, the Time of Going Forth passed into what’s known as Now-Time. The Karimari no longer concern themselves with the troubles of distant people. Although no large groups of Karimari have left Ulimwengu in Now-Time, traders and curious adventure-seekers have been known to pass beyond the ring of guardian trees, something that never happened before the Time of Going Forth.

## Karimari History as the Immortals Know It

The Karimari civilization arose at about the same time as the humans of Blackmoor attained the height of their civilization (roughly 3000 BC). Originally primitive tribesmen native to the jungle, the Karimari society developed in isolation from external events. Although the Karimari descended from normal human stock, they gradually evolved toward being smaller and slightly more intelligent than average.

Miraculously, the Great Rain of Fire left the Karimari virtually unscathed. The shrinking shores of the Serpent Peninsula didn’t affect them, as they rarely ventured beyond the heart of the jungle. Located on the peninsula’s highest ground, the Karimari remained unaware of the enormous destructive forces at work, turning Mystara on its axis and rearranging lands and climates. Their land remained relatively stable, rocked by occasional earthquakes and shadowed by the great cloud cover thrown up by the Blackmoor explosion, but otherwise unaffected.

The migrations of elves, humans, and humanoids since the Great Rain of Fire inevitably brought other cultures into contact with the Karimari, if only briefly. With the exception of the Karimari aid in Sind’s war against the Red Orcs (and the resulting elephant trade that continues to this day), the Karimari have maintained their isolation as best they can.



## **Ulimwengu**

### **Karimari Society —**

The Karimari are small black-skinned humans (average height 4'). To all outward appearances, they are primitive tribesmen living off the bounty of the rain forest. Their only claim to greatness (in the eyes of foreigners) is their uncanny ability to tame and train the massive elephants of the Serpent Peninsula and the Konumtali savannah.

In fact, the Karimari enjoy an advanced civilization centered around Shani Kijiji, their "marvelous village" (see p. 48). Their society is egalitarian—no professions or families are considered better or higher than others. There is little division of labor between the sexes, women and men being equally welcome in whatever professions they show talent for.

### **Population**

The Karimari maintain their population at around 100,000. They see that nature strives always for balance, but feel that disease and famine—nature's way of bringing populations back into balance—are inefficient and unnecessary. They prefer intelligent management of both resources and population.

Barring natural disasters and catastrophes, Ulimwengu's abundant plant and animal life ensures prosperity for all its inhabitants. The Karimari grow and gather enough surplus food each year to store against times of hardship.

Most of the Karimari live in Shani Kijiji, the "magnificent village" in the center of Ulimwengu. Nearly 60% of the Karimari population can be found in Shani Kijiji at any time, or on the many small farms and dwellings nestled into the jungle surrounding the city.

Five villages provide temporary homes to Karimari scouts on their month-long patrols of Ulimwengu. Some Karimari make their homes in these villages, hosting the patrols. Other Karimari—especially druids—prefer to live simple lives in the jungle year-round. They make their homes in the trees, in small caves, or in isolated huts scattered throughout Ulimwengu.

### **Government**

Karimari society is nominally a matriarchy in that most government positions are filled by women. This is one of the few professions for which the Karimari favor one gender over the other. Karimari societal beliefs hold that women have the patience and compassion necessary for lawmaking and for passing judgment on lawbreakers, while men are generally too hotheaded and impulsive to be administrators.

At the head of the government is the *Tayma*, or queen. The Tayma is elected by popular vote. She rules as long as she wishes (often for life), provided the Karimari people don't vote her out of office in favor of a candidate they think would do better.

The Karimari hold elections whenever the queen dies or abdicates—or when 10,000 or more Karimari petition for a new election. Anyone may run for the office. Candidates make public speeches presenting their qualifications for the position, and explaining why they wish to be Tayma. Everyone who is considered mature (about 15 years old or more) can cast a vote for their favorite candidate. Close ties (within 1,000 votes) are settled by public debates between the close-running candidates, followed by another round of voting.

All other official positions are also filled by popular vote. These include the Keeper of the Food Stores, the Chief of Patrols, Chief Gardener, Jungle Master (an expert on all matters concerning the plants and animals and terrain of Ulimwengu), and many specialists involved in the various Karimari handcrafts and professions. Elections for these positions are held annually.

All government officials and their families live in *Nangoma Kasozi*, an enormous circular stepped pyramid situated in the center of Shani Kijiji. These officials, headed by the Tayma, organize all patrolling parties, hunting and gathering parties, community-wide celebrations and tasks such as harvesting, and every other event that affects the Kar-

mari as a whole. Government specialists offer advice and knowledge to any Karimari who ask. All disputes and disagreements are brought to *Nangoma Kasozi* if the participants cannot come to an agreement between themselves.

Government officials receive no salaries for their duties, although they receive housing in *Nangoma Kasozi* and the Karimari supply them with food.

### **Military Strength**

The Karimari don't have a standing army—they've never needed one. Many Karimari are proficient hunters, and their skills can carry over to combat if necessary. A few Karimari specialize in martial studies. These fighters form the core of the Karimari patrols and are specially trained to determine whether trespassers should be greeted with diplomacy or violence. If the Karimari were ever threatened by outside attack, these fighters could form the core of a Karimari army.

Despite their lack of any formally organized militia, the Karimari would be able to field a sizeable defensive force within a day of any concerted attack. Nearly half the Karimari population would be willing and able to fight to defend Ulimwengu. The Karimari forces would include elephants, triceratops, warriors armed with *moto moto rods* (see p. 64), and spellcasters wielding clerical, druidic, and magical spells. The plants and animals of Ulimwengu would also join in the defense.

See p. 60 for war machine statistics for the Karimari militia.

### **Money**

The Karimari have no currency; they use a barter system. Most families grow what they need or find it in the jungle. All able-bodied Karimari contribute part of their resources to a community store which less fortunate Karimari can draw from. Most Karimari will freely give their surplus to those who need it; receiving such gifts brings no dishonor.

## Daily Life

The Karimari strive to achieve balance and simplicity in their lives, seeing these as important natural qualities. Compassion is considered the greatest virtue, whether toward a fellow Karimari or toward any suffering creature. Attacking another Karimari, either verbally or physically, is considered a serious breach of etiquette.

### Animals

Trained elephants and triceratops are the most impressive animals the Karimari keep. Each animal has a single keeper who is responsible for its care and training. Strong bonds of friendship and affection form between these maluks and their mounts.

There are roughly 1,000 elephants and 500 triceratops kept by their maluks in Ulimwengu. Most are allowed to roam free until they are needed for construction projects or games. At any given time, 20% of the Karimari's elephants and triceratops are working with their maluks at some task or performing in Thunder Arena.

Only inferior elephants are ever traded to foreign merchants or elephant trainers; the Karimari never trade their triceratops. An elephant may be considered inferior if it's old, weak, stupid, or bad-tempered. Occasionally, an elephant may be traded when its maluk dies. Triceratops bond even more strongly with maluks than do elephants. Upon the death of their maluks, many triceratops go berserk and must be destroyed.

The Karimari also have domesticated dogs (a large hunting breed with short brindled coats and no bark), cats (small tawny creatures with black spots, similar to ocelots), and a jungle fowl similar to chickens. Many keep wild jungle animals as pets—colorful birds, monkeys, jaguars, and the like.

### Clothing

Karimari on patrol wear little else besides loincloths made of woven bark or animal skins. Some take short cloaks with them in case of inclement weather.

The Karimari are much more likely to wear elaborate clothing when in Shani Kijiji. They choose decorative rather than protective clothing, as Ulimwengu's climate is usually warm (or hot) and mild. Robes of finely woven materials (cotton or silk, obtained from foreign merchants in return for elephants) or richly furred animal pelts are especially prized. They may be decorated with exquisite needlework, brilliant feathers from native birds, or precious and semiprecious stones found in Ulimwengu.

Jewelry made of precious metals (especially gold) is also popular. Many Karimari, men and women alike, encase their forearms in bangles and bands that jingle and chime as they move. Headdresses of woven feathers or flowers adorn many Karimari during ceremonies and on special occasions.

### Death Customs

The Karimari believe they gain life from Ulimwengu, and that they return to Ulimwengu when they die. Death is a sad time, representing the passing of a friend back into the cycle of life.

When a Karimari dies, friends and family carry the body on a pallet (or, if the deceased was a maluk, on the back of an elephant or triceratops) to the House of Passage (see p. 51) on the southeastern edge of Shani Kijiji. The body lies on a bed of leaves and flower petals for one day, to be viewed by any who wish say their farewells. The next day, a funeral procession led by a bedecked triceratops makes its way down the Road of Passage into the jungle. The deceased person's family chooses a spot—usually an ancient tree or other special place five miles or more from the city—and places the body on a fresh bed of leaves and petals. After a brief ceremony, the funeral procession returns to the city, leaving the body's final disposition to natural processes.

After a Karimari dies, the nearest female relative who is married, of childbearing age, and has had fewer children than other eligible relatives is granted the right to have a child to replace the deceased Karimari. She may give the right to another if she so chooses.

Most Karimari deaths are the result of old age or tragic accident. Karimari healers and clerics are able to prevent death from most injuries and diseases, and infant mortality is low. The annual Karimari death rate is about 1%, or 1,000 Karimari deaths per year. The birth rate is close to the death rate.

### Education

Most Karimari get their education from the bards' tales and songs. Children choose a profession when they're ten years old and begin to learn from experienced practitioners. A person's choice of profession is not permanent; some Karimari try many professions during their lives.

More formal education is available to any who wish it. Karimari bards and sages delight in sharing their knowledge with other Karimari. Students can attend the House of Learning as often and for as long as they like. Subjects taught include reading and writing (although the Karimari consider the spoken word more elegant and important than the written word), traditional Karimari tales and legends, foreign languages (mostly Sindhi and Yavdlom), and natural philosophy.

### Food

The Karimari are experts at growing abundant crops on small plots of land. Special shade-grown crops flourish in small plots scattered throughout the jungle. The most productive fields are the floating gardens of Lake Utajiri, where they grow such sun-dependent crops as melons and tomatoes. Even their city, Shani Kijiji, is filled with gardens of all sizes and descriptions. Well-tended fruit orchards provide the city's inhabitants with more than a dozen types of fruit,



## Ulimwengu

including oranges, lemons, limes, bananas, kiwi fruit, and pomegranates.

Karimari engineers use specially trained elephants and triceratops to clear jungle land to make room for small fields of sun-dependent crops or to encourage new jungle growth. Hunting parties roam Ulimwengu, carefully culling the aged and infirm from the prey animals they encounter. Other parties gather the naturally abundant fruits, nuts, and edible plants the jungle offers.

The Karimari don't raise any animals just for meat. Jungle fowl give eggs, elephants and triceratops give milk, and dogs assist in hunts. But when a domesticated animal or pet dies, it often supplements the family's normal diet.

## Marriage

The Karimari are monogamous and prefer to marry for love. As few Karimari women bear more than two children in their lifetime, society encourages couples to marry relatively late in life.

Most wait until they've become fully proficient in their chosen profession and have met the person they believe will be the perfect mate for them. (Newlyweds are usually at least twenty-five years old.)

Divorces are rare but not unheard of. A couple that has fallen out of love may simply leave one another, going back to their respective parents' homes and giving their own home to a friend or needy family. If only one spouse wants a divorce, the matter is taken to Nangoma Kasozi for deliberation.

## Names

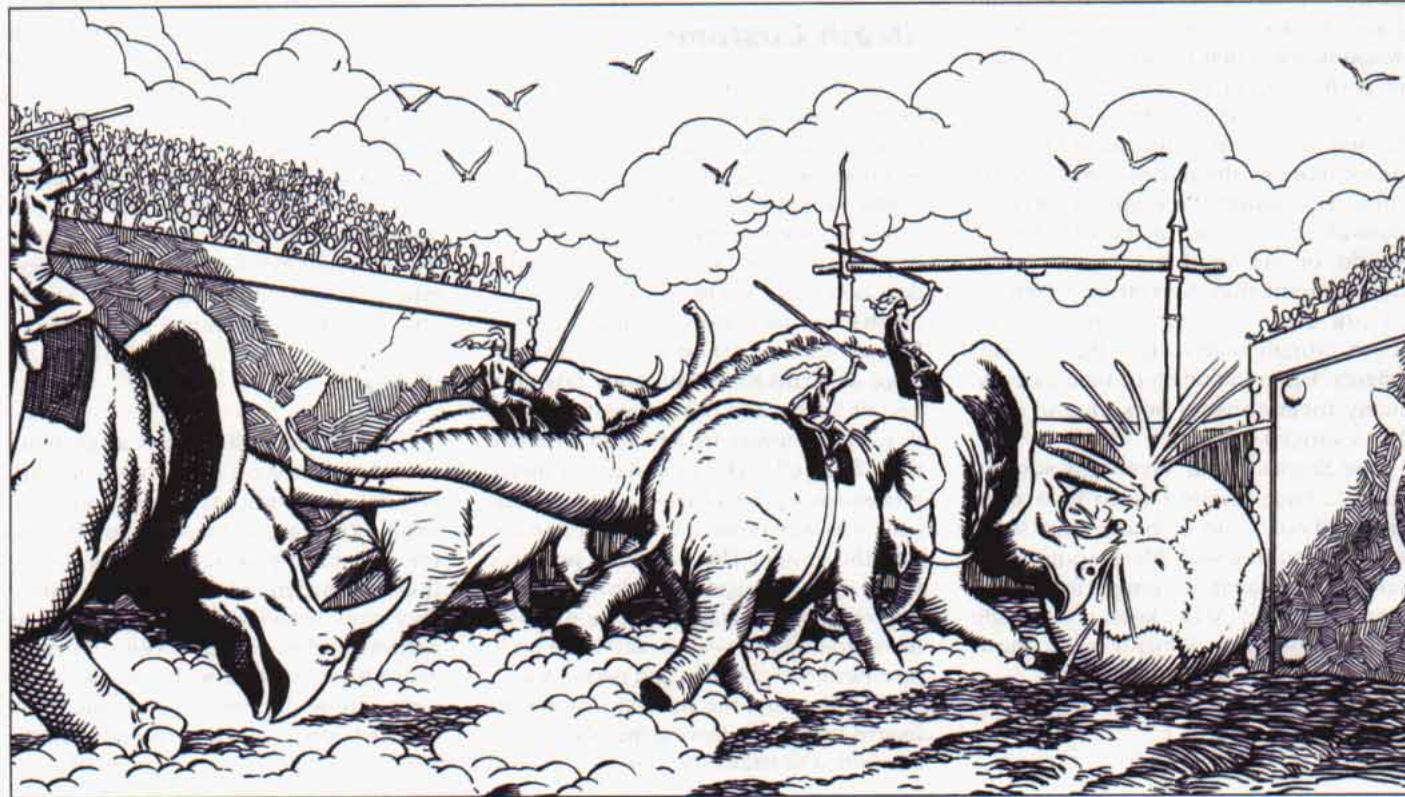
The Karimari often name their children after things found in nature or in reference to circumstances surrounding the birth. Another common custom is to name a child after the deceased Karimari the child is replacing (see "Death Customs," above). Other names are given simply because the parents think they sound nice, and have no meaning

or memories associated with them.

The Karimari also have surnames inherited from the ancestral tribes of the Dawn Time. There are one hundred such names, passed from mother to child (not from the father). These names are used primarily in ceremonies and when distinguishing between people with the same personal name but from different families. Nicknames substitute for personal names when distinguishing two people with the same first and last names.

**Female Names:** Abeni (we asked for her and she came), Abiona (born while on patrol), Dalila (gentle), Fayola (good luck), Kamaria (like the moon), Keshia (favorite one), Mandisa (sweet), Miritika (no meaning), Neema (born in prosperity), Oni (desired), Zahra (flower), Zuyri (beautiful)

**Male Names:** Akin (brave), Atuanya (unexpected), Chanah (weaving leaf), Chilombo (roadside camp), Daren (born at night), Gowon (rainmaker), Iniko (time of trouble), Kayin (cele-



brated), Kontar (only child), Obo (rock), Onani (look!), Orji (mighty tree), Ranamazi (no meaning), Uzoma (born on a journey), Zahur (flower)

## Recreation

The Karimari love games—especially exciting games such as the daily *rukakana* matches between opposing teams of elephants and triceratops.

Rukakana is similar to polo, with the object being to push an enormous leather ball filled with water through a goal post in the opposing team's territory. Attempts are accompanied by shoving matches between mounts and much shouting and gesticulating among the riders and the spectators. Any mount clumsy enough to burst the ball—often soaking nearby players in the process—is disqualified, leaving its team shorthanded. On the third such disqualification, a team forfeits the game.

The Karimari are also fond of social events, whether they're elaborate celebrations or simple gatherings of friends around a pot of mulled fruit juice. Storytelling and singing are favorite pastimes.

Contests of skill are popular as well. Many Karimari gamble on the outcome, though the stakes are seldom higher than the loser hosting the winner for a round of drinks.

## Time

The Karimari see no point in keeping track of time. Nature works in cycles—everything has happened before and will happen again. When necessary, they make references to "when the sun stands up in the sky" (noon), "the next time the moon is full," and so on. Usually such references aren't really necessary. The Karimari live at a leisurely pace and have no need for clocks or calendars. Ulimwengu is productive year-round. Planting and harvest times are determined by the farmer's feeling that the time is right.

## Wealth and Inheritance

The Karimari believe that hoarding more material possessions than one needs is unnatural and disturbs the balance of nature. Their society encourages gift-giving and charity—those who have give to those who don't.

The Karimari are prosperous enough to ensure a comfortable life for all members of their society. No one is allowed to starve. Many possessions are prized more for the fact that they were gifts from a loved one than for any intrinsic value—although such gifts might be worth fortunes in precious metals and gems in the outside world.

When a Karimari dies, his family usually distributes any surplus wealth he may have had to needy members of Karimari society—or donate it in the deceased's name to the House of Healing. Possessions particularly prized by relatives or friends for sentimental reasons are freely given to the people who hold them most dear. Close relatives supervise the distribution and are within their rights to keep everything for themselves if they so desire. Few families keep everything left ownerless by a death, unless they are truly in need.

## Karimari Laws

Karimari law can be summed up in one edict: Thou shalt not harm another.

There is relatively little crime or violence among the Karimari. Societal beliefs discourage jealousy, envy, and covetousness. Poverty is non-existent, except as temporary misfortune. When assistance is readily available from friends and neighbors or from the House of Healing, there is no need to resort to theft or violence to survive.

Most Karimari crimes are crimes of passion—committed impulsively, without forethought. Despite the fact that Karimari society frowns on such behavior, Karimari citizens may become jeal-

ous or resentful enough to strike out at their perceived enemies. There are, of course, murders, although they are rarely premeditated.

A Karimari accused of a crime is brought before the government officials in Nangoma Kasozi. Petty instances of theft, vandalism, disturbing the peace, and the like are usually handled by the official in charge of the accused person's profession, or (if available) a government official who is also a member of the accused person's extended family. If judged to be guilty in the matter, the transgressor is expected to make full restitution—returning the stolen item or a suitable replacement, repairing damage done, and so on. In case of injury, the person responsible must arrange for healing for his victim. If the injury disables the victim in any way, the guilty Karimari must see to his victim's welfare by providing for his needs or arranging for someone to take responsibility for the disabled person's duties. None of this is considered punishment—merely restoring the balance disturbed by the guilty party's actions.

More serious crimes, especially murder, are brought before the Tayma herself. As with lesser crimes, if the queen finds the accused person guilty in the matter, he is expected to make restitution. This may involve taking the victim's place, as much as possible, in matters of duty, work, and family.

The Karimari have only one punishment, and it's mandated only for Karimari who show no remorse or who refuse to make restitution through conventional means. True criminals who can no longer be tolerated in Karimari society are sentenced to exile from Ulimwengu, usually for all time. They are cut off from their friends, their family, their home, and their motherland. Those who seek to return without being pardoned are dealt with as enemies by the guardian trees and by Karimari patrols.

To the majority of the Karimari, this is the worst punishment imaginable.



## **Ulimwengu**

### **The Karimari and the Immortals**

To the Karimari, the idea of honoring an Immortal patron is interesting but not relevant to their way of life. Ulimwengu protects them and provides their every need—why should they solicit Immortal assistance? In fact, the Karimari see no need for the Immortals and don't understand why the Immortals would have any need for the Karimari.

This isn't to say the Karimari have no spiritual lives. Ulimwengu takes the place of the Immortals in Karimari beliefs. To the Karimari, the land they live on is mother, shield-mate, and child all rolled into one. The land protects them and provides for their needs by producing food and raw materials. In return, they care for and protect the land as they do their own children.

Following Ulimwengu's example, the Karimari seek balance in their lives. They strive always to adhere to the laws of nature and avoid disturbing the natural balance.

Karimari clerics gain their spellcasting abilities from the land itself. Through meditation they come to understand nature's balance and link themselves with the life forces of the forest and its inhabitants. With this understanding and close link to nature, Karimari clerics are able to subtly alter the balance—healing injury, curing sickness, and the like. The few Karimari clerics who venture beyond the bounds of the guardian trees do not lose their spellcasting abilities as long as they keep the lessons of Ulimwengu in their hearts. Upon reaching Name level, most Karimari clerics become druids.

The Immortals recognize the Karimari as unusual in that they have never had Immortal patrons, nor have any Karimari ever quested after Immortality. In fact, a few of Mystara's Immortals are now very interested in watching Karimari society evolve independently of Immortal influence. They face the problem of shielding the Karimari from any Immortal interference, without themselves influencing the Karimari or their fate.

### **Atlas of Ulimwengu**

Karimari territory occupies a roughly circular area in the heart of the Nakakande jungle. A great ring of guardian trees encompasses the nearly 9,000 square miles the Karimari call Ulimwengu, which means "the world" in their language.

Ulimwengu is a jungle land riddled with rivers and streams and teeming with wildlife. The northern edge of the ring of guardian trees climbs into the Utajiri Hills, where most of the area's rivers originate. Although Ulimwengu's eastern and westernmost edges are a bare thirty miles from the Serpent Peninsula's coast, few Karimari have seen either ocean. Some of their tales speak of Karimari heroes who left Ulimwengu long ago and gazed upon the face of an endless lake, but the Karimari have no word for "ocean."

There are six permanent communities in Ulimwengu: Shani Kijiji, the Karimari's "magnificent village" (actually a city) and five permanent villages that are temporary bases for Karimari on patrol of Ulimwengu's perimeter. Each village consists of a few dozen wooden huts thatched with broad jungle leaves that are built on stilts to keep them from the mud during the rainy season.

Each village is named after a characteristic which has caught the Karimari's imagination. Tokomeza, for instance, means "driving out," and commemorates a fierce battle against a Tyrannosaurus Rex; Madini is named for the rich deposits of salt, sulphur, and other minerals in the nearby hills; Jabala is named after a large rock shaped vaguely like an elephant that stands in its center; Muujiza is named after the "amazing happening" of a large iron-rich rock falling from the sky onto the village meeting house; while Nabukwasi is named after a "very bad housekeeper" who once lived there.

The Karimari have named many spots in Ulimwengu that they consider beautiful or worth seeing—waterfalls, curious rock formations, stately and ancient trees, and the like—but only one place is likely

to hold much interest to outsiders. This is Onyo Maafa, the ruins of a Karimari city more ancient than Shani Kijiji. The Karimari believe evil dwells in Onyo Maafa, and take care not to go within five miles of the site. Their oldest tales tell of a great disaster that befell the city and its inhabitants—supposedly as punishment for their straying far from the natural ways of the world. Evil things sometimes venture forth from the ruins to plague Ulimwengu, including trolls, dragons, and undead creatures.

### **Shani Kijiji**

Hidden in the depths of the Nakakande, on the shore of Lake Utajiri, lies Shani Kijiji, the Karimari's "marvelous village"—and their greatest secret. Shani Kijiji is indeed marvelous, but hardly a village. With a population of 40,000 (another 20,000 Karimari live within ten miles), Shani Kijiji is larger than most cities on Mystara. It may be also the oldest settlement, predating the Great Rain of Fire and Blackmoor's destruction.

Yet despite its size, Shani Kijiji looks like a huge village. Most of the buildings are small houses built of wood and stone. Each has its own garden, and many enjoy shade from the magnificent trees that line the streets.

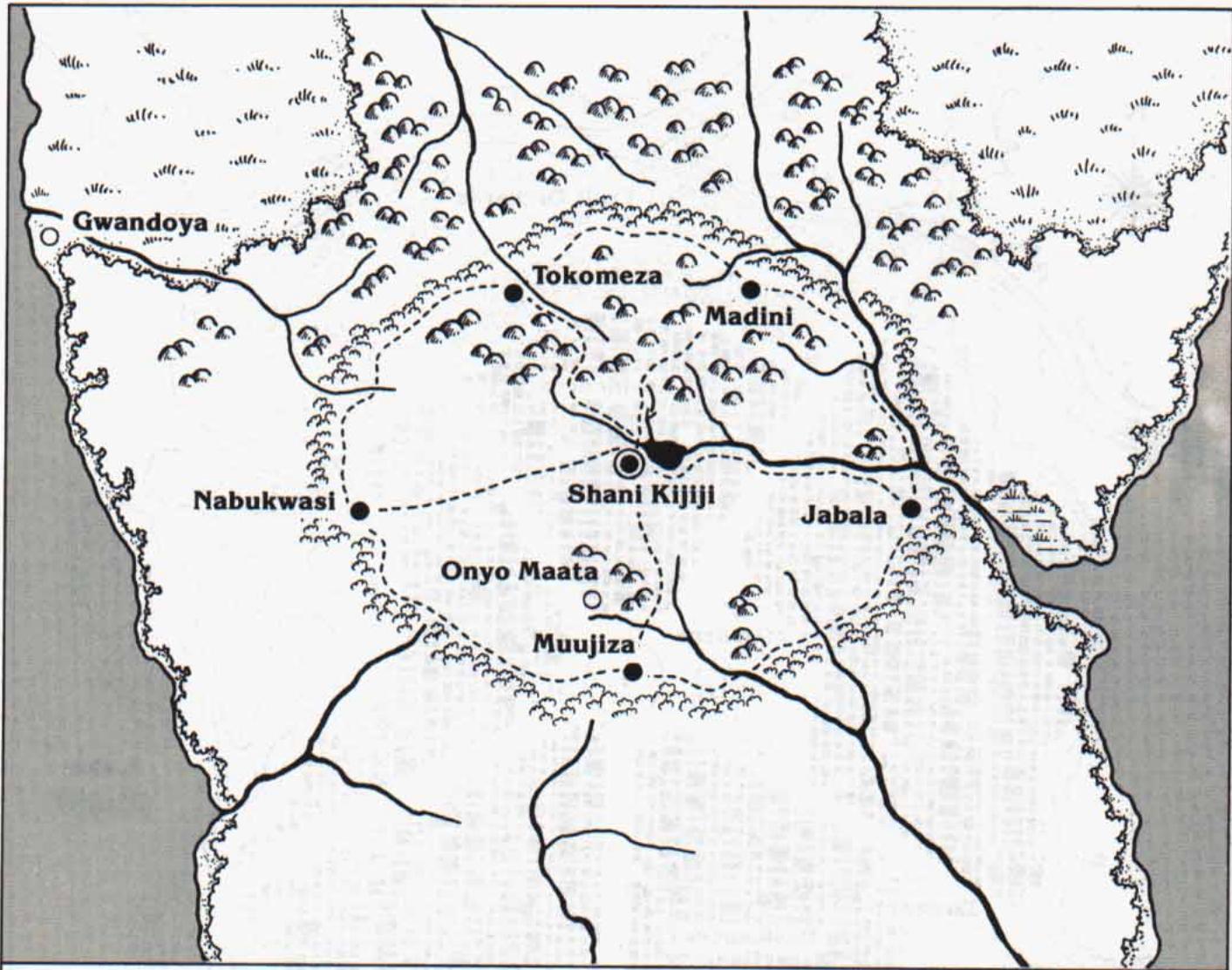
Shani Kijiji is laid out like a wheel with five spokes: five major streets, paved with large stones quarried from the hills, lead to each of the five villages on Ulimwengu's perimeter. Carefully tended fruit and nut trees flank these causeways in neat rows.

**Nangoma Kasozi:** At the hub of the city stands an impressive circular building made entirely of polished stone. It rises to a height of ten stories, each level smaller than those beneath it, forming an enormous circular ziggurat. This is Shani Kijiji's government center. It houses all Karimari government officials and their families.

Within its thick walls twists a maze of living quarters for government officials, offices, meeting rooms, soundproofed rooms for meditation, and what foreign-



## Ulimwengu



## Ulimwengu

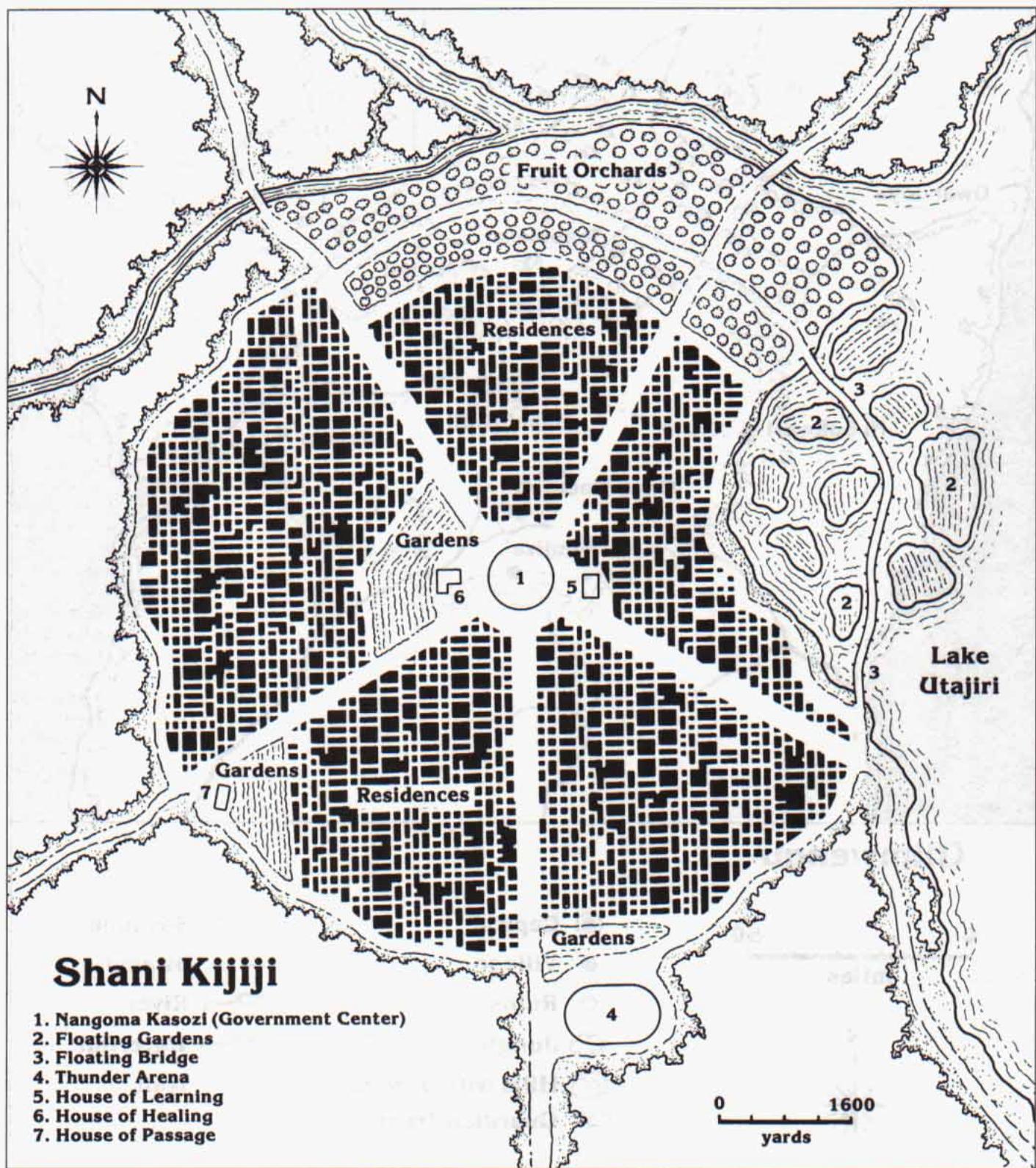
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- Capital
- Village
- Ruins
- Jungle
- Hills with Jungle
- Guardian Trees

- Savanna
- Swamp
- River
- Waterfall
- - Trail

## Ullmwengu



ers would think of as museums containing treasures from distant lands. These latter include weapons, books, utensils, and other items left behind by foreign visitors. They're kept in Nangoma Kasozi for safekeeping, and to prevent them from exerting any bad influences on the Karimari people. Examining these foreign items isn't exactly illegal, or even discouraged, but few Karimari know they are in Nangoma Kasozi; fewer still have any interest in them.

**The Floating Gardens:** Most of the Karimari's food comes from the jungle of Ulimwengu, but the people of Shani Kijiji also grow other plants that don't grow well in the shade beneath the jungle canopy. Karimari farmers long ago perfected a means of weaving large water plants into enormous floating mats strong enough to bear the weight of rich loamy soil, abundant crops, and the farmers. The Floating Gardens consist of many mats, ranging from a few yards in breadth to large plots half a mile in length. The water plants (similar to water lilies of other areas, but much larger) anchor the mats in place, and fertilize the crops when they die. The Karimari grow sun-loving crops such as melons and tomatoes on these floating islands. The beach and floating bridge that cuts through the garden area are lined with Karimari boats and canoes with which farmers ferry themselves to and from their garden plots.

**Floating Bridge:** This enormous pontoon bridge completes the eastern edge of Shani Kijiji's circular causeway. The bridge is two-and-a-half miles long. The Karimari boat builders keep spare sections of the floating bridge to quickly replace any sections badly damaged by storms or other calamities.

**Thunder Arena:** This impressive arena is fully enclosed with a palisade of living trees that support a wall of sturdy logs lashed together with vines. The walls are designed to give way under tremendous pressure, lessening the possibility of serious injury should an elephant or triceratops slam against the wall. Sturdy seats and comfortable perches fill the lower

branches of the surrounding trees, affording spectators full view of the arena's center. Each day, crowds of Karimari enjoy rukakana matches (see p. 47) or acrobatic displays by trained animals, magic, and other spectacles.

**House of Learning:** This large building houses the most learned Karimari sages, magic-users, clerics, and specialists. Anyone who wishes to study any subject has only to find a willing teacher and arrange for daily or weekly meetings. Tuition takes the form of gifts of food or services. Students may move into the House of Learning or commute from their own homes.

**House of Healing:** The second-largest building in Shani Kijiji (dwarfed only by Nangoma Kasozi), the House of Healing is hospital, pharmacy, and welfare office. Resident physicians grow exotic and rare herbs and healing plants in the House of Healing's extensive gardens. Underground vaults enchanted against rot and spoilage serve as storerooms for surplus foods collected from Karimari farmers. Any Karimari in need of medical attention, magical or mundane healing, or food during hard times are welcome here, their needs provided free of charge. Nearly every Karimari donates gifts of food or supplies or volunteers services to the House of Healing.

**House of Passage:** This large stone building is used both as a funeral home and as a place to celebrate marriages or the birth of a new child. Its gardens are filled with beautiful plants, many of which bear flowers, fruit, or nuts. The beautiful gardens provide solace to those who have lost their loved ones and affirm the joy of life for those welcoming newcomers into their families.

## Adventuring in Ulimwengu

The Karimari and their world are best used as a way to foil the expectations of both players and player characters in a campaign that centers around non-Karimari PCs. When first encountered, the Karimari should appear to be nothing

more than surprisingly short and primitive tribesmen inhabiting the Nakakande jungle.

This is, of course, the image the Karimari wish to present to the outside world, as they have found that such a disguise is a good defense against foreigners who usually have nothing but the acquisition of gold and gems in mind. Depending on how the player characters present themselves to a patrolling party (the most likely means of contact), the Karimari may be well enough disposed to the PCs to mention their "marvelous village," but only PCs deemed truly worthy would be invited there.

The Karimari can present challenging diplomatic problems to any characters desiring to enlist their aid in matters concerning the outside world. The PCs would need to talk their way into an audience with the queen herself, and would need to present some pretty strong arguments in order to convince the Karimari leader that the situation warrants opening Ulimwengu's borders to a new Time of Going Forth.

On the flip side, it's possible the Karimari might seek outsiders to aid them with their own troubles. Such situations would call for very troubling times indeed—something along the order of an invasion from hostile foreigners or an unstoppable outpouring of undead and other monstrous creatures from the ruins of Onyo Maafa.

## Encounters

Karimari are rarely encountered outside their rain forest. When they are, it's usually as a group of 2d4 elephant merchants with their trained elephants (two elephants per merchant). Each merchant may be of any human character class, though fighters and clerics predominate, and most are second level or higher.

Travelers are more likely to encounter groups of Karimari on the outskirts of the Nakakande rain forest. Such groups consist of 4d6 men, women, and children dressed in loincloths of animal skins. The warriors (both male and female) carry



## Ulimwengu

bone-tipped spears for hunting and digging sticks for gathering roots. These Karimari "tribesmen" are usually peaceful unless provoked or attacked. If forced into combat, they reveal the true nature of their digging sticks (see "*Moto Moto Rods*," p. 64).

These "tribal bands" are actually scouting parties that live off the land during their month-long patrols of Karimari territory and the surrounding jungle. Each scouting band establishes temporary encampments as they travel through the area they're assigned to patrol.

These encampments are built to look like camps made by primitive nomads, complete with conical bamboo-framed huts thatched in broad jungle leaves. Past experience has taught the Karimari that presenting themselves as simple and primitive tribesmen helps convince foreigners that there's little of interest within Karimari territory. The Karimari scouts are careful to leave all traces of their civilization behind (golden adorn-

ments, finely woven and tailored clothing, and so on), bringing only tools and clothing, primitive tribes would have—with the exception of their easily disguised *moto moto rods*.

Karimari scouts may be of any character class, though fighters predominate, and most are second level or higher. Karimari children accompanying scouting bands are usually students (8 to 13 years old) learning the ways of the jungle. Use the Normal Human statistics for them (see p. 197 in the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*).

You may create detailed Karimari NPCs (or even player characters). Karimari characters may be any human character class, including druids and mystics. Once you've rolled the Karimari's Abilities, subtract one from Strength (minimum 3) and add one to Intelligence (maximum 18). You can also create detailed Karimari NPCs for an encounter by using the statistics for Men (Nomads) given on pp. 193–194 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*.

## Camouflage and Defense

The Karimari are careful to keep their civilization—and the existence of Shani Kijiji—a secret from foreigners. Scouts are always patrolling Ulimwengu's perimeter in search of intruders and other potential dangers. All Karimari are taught how to act primitive in order to fool casual observers who may come upon them in the jungle.

Ulimwengu itself aids the Karimari in their efforts to remain undisturbed and undiscovered. *Kereenyaga*, a great rock in Ulimwengu, possesses great powers to protect and hide the Karimari (see p. 64).

Uninvited guests find their attempts to penetrate Karimari secrets blocked by the vast ring of Guardian Trees (see p. 56). Persistent intruders encounter strange magic and stranger beasts as they progress through a seemingly hostile jungle. If intruders prove hostile, they're met by Karimari warriors mounted on elephants and fearsome triceratops who attempt to turn them back.





## Neighboring Lands

### Slagovich and the Savage Coast

The city-state of Slagovich is a great trading port between western and eastern lands. Merchant caravans from Sind and Darokin regularly ply the desert routes to Slagovich, while seagoing vessels swing around the Serpent Peninsula. Diplomatic ties between Slagovich and Sind or Yavdlom are generally only as strong as is necessary to ensure peaceful trade. Slagovich and most of the Savage Coast is a troubled land, often plagued by wars.

The soil of the Savage Coast bears a poisonous compound called *seed of cinnabar*. It affects everything born there and anyone remaining in the area for more than a few days. Effects include skin discoloration (turning it reddish brown), impairment of mental performance, and a shortened life expectancy.

These effects can be counteracted by *cinnabryl*, a rare metallic substance used in the Savage Coast's coinage systems. It is also used to make *red steel*, which has half the weight and three times the value of normal steel. Few natives would consider selling red steel to foreign merchants, although the latter would be delighted to get their hands on some.

### Hule

A mysterious leader known only as The Master rules the Great Hule—a society encompassing various microcultures engulfed by the nation's slowly expanding borders. He rules from Hule's capital, a fortified city-temple in the heart of the Darkwood Forest. The Master plots to conquer the Great Waste and lands even farther east.

Merchants from both Sind and Yavdlom occasionally trade with Hule, but not often. The Black Mountains provide a formidable obstacle to trade across the Great Waste and Yavdlom sees caution their people against associating with Hule's ruling "Holy Men."

For more information, see X4: *Master of the Desert Nomads*, X5: *Temple of Death*, and X10: *Red Arrow, Black Shield*.

### The Principalities of Glantri

Glantri's mages often require rare and exotic items from the Serpent Peninsula or the far western lands. In return, Sindhi merchants buy such Glantrian specialties as fine wines, perfumes and rare oils, lumber, and pigskin leather goods.

The shared Glantrian/Sindi border is relatively small, and there have been few causes for diplomatic friction between the two countries.

For more information, see p. 269 of the D&D® Rules Cyclopedia and GAZ3: *The Principalities of Glantri*.

### The Republic of Darokin

Darokinian caravans frequently visit Sind's cities, trading grain for luxury goods from the western lands. Caravans plying the trade routes between Lake Amsorak and Peshmir carry yet more grain for Sind's hungry populace.

Diplomatic relations between Sind and Darokin are cordial. The ruling merchants of Darokin see Sind as a rich source of trade, but also a potential source of trouble. Sind is rumored to be suffering from marked increases in raids from desert bandits and wandering bands of humanoids. Darokin fears the trouble may extend to the Lake Amsorak region.

For more information, see GAZ 11: *The Republic of Darokin*.

### The Atruaghin Clans

As the Atruaghin Plateau has no central government (each tribe has its own chief warrior or shaman), there are no diplomatic ties between any of the Atruaghin Clans and Sind.

The ruins known as Atruaghin's Palace mark the spot of an ancient temple—and are a well-hidden entrance to the Hollow World.

For more information, see GAZ 14: *The Atruaghin Clans*.

### The Kingdom of Ierendi

Contact between the Kingdom of Ierendi and Sind or Yavdlom is usually limited to mercantile trade. Occasionally, Ierendi pirates venture into the coastal waters of Sind—and sometimes even as far as Thaneggia island—to stalk the fat cargo vessels that carry luxury goods from Slagovich and the western lands. Diplomatic ties are cordial and brief—except when pirate attacks threaten the sea trade routes.

For more information, see GAZ4: *The Kingdom of Ierendi*.

### The Minrothad Guilds

Although Minrothad doesn't border directly on the Great Waste or the Serpent Peninsula, Minrothad traders are no strangers to the Savage Coast ports of Sind and Yavdlom.

For more information, see GAZ9: *The Minrothad Guilds*.

### Davania: The Southern Continent

The stretch of Davania's coast closest to Yavdlom is inhabited by scattered city-states, the remnants of Thayan and other nations' colonies that have since lost ties with their mother countries. A few are much older cultures, descended from the original Neathar and Oltec inhabitants of the continent. Few of these city-states offer much in the way of trade goods. Many are constantly at war with neighboring city-states—a potentially profitable situation for weapons dealers but not good for normal trade relations.

The city-state of Kastelios (not shown on map) is an exception. A remnant of the Milenian Empire that collapsed more than a thousand years ago, Kastelios is a democratic society governed by elected senators and a king. Kastelian merchants hug Davania's coastline in their small sailing vessels. Kastelios' armorers specialize in an alligator-hide leather armor specially cured and waxed to create formfitting and very hard leather armor (AC 6, 300 cn, 30 gp).



## Future History

Few people but the seers of Yavdlom realize that the Known World is hurtling toward a war of epic proportions. Although this war will center around the eastern lands (especially Glantri and Alphatia), the Great Waste will not remain untouched.

If your campaign will be following the events presented in the *Wrath of the Immortals* boxed set or the annual *Poor Wizard's Almanac* releases, you need to set the stage in the Great Waste and the Serpent Peninsula during the years leading up to the outbreak of war in AC 1005.

The Master of Hule has designs on Sind and is carefully maneuvering his forces into position for a takeover. He has agents throughout the Great Waste working on various tasks for him. Hulean Holy Men posing as adventurers and traders have begun a whispering campaign among the Urduk nomads, stirring up old resentments and turning Urduk thoughts toward Sind's wealth.

For years, far-ranging agents have spread rumors among distant humanoid tribes that the Black Mountains are rich in resources and offer opportunity aplenty for ambitious humanoids. The resulting small migrations into the area have put tremendous pressure on the humanoids already living there. The Master's army keeps the overflow from crossing the border into Hule while more agents urge humanoid leaders to look toward the Great Waste—and Sind.

In Sind itself, Hulean agents work to increase the friction and distrust among the rajahs and maharajahs, and among the various castes throughout the nation. Although Rajadhiraja Chandra ul Nervi is a strong ruler, his brother Kiritan's plots jeopardize his efforts to keep Sind united. One of the Master's agents has Kiritan's ear, he and often hints that Hule might prove a powerful ally should Kiritan manage to gain the throne.

As for Yavdlom, the Master is content to let the Precepts of Yav do his work for him. As long as Yavdlom's seers keep their counsel to themselves, they pose little threat to the Master's plans.

Hulean agents in Yavdlom simply watch for developments, preach against any breaks with the Precepts of Yav, and now and then assassinate someone they think jeopardizes Hule's destiny.

Meanwhile, Immortal plans are set in motion as well. Ixion, embroiled in a conflict with the Immortal Rad, encourages his followers to become unusually active so they will advance in level and be more powerful for the events to come. Many Sindhis who honor him as Ayazi, Himayeti, or Aksyri heed the call. In addition, Ixion subtly stirs up anti-Glantri sentiments—especially in Nag-puri, where Glantrian mages are already blamed for Chandbal's troubles.

All these machinations come to a head in AC 1005. Here is the future timeline of major events in the Great Waste through the year AC 1010.

**Fall, Year 1004:** Humanoids from the Black Mountains invade Graakhalia in force. The Master's spies learned of the routes through Graakhalia to tunnels beneath Sind; his agents made sure the humanoids heard there was rich plunder to be had beneath the Plain of Fire. The Graakhalians fight fiercely, then desperately, as band after band of orcs, goblins, bugbears, hobgoblins, and other humanoids press deeper into Graakhalia's labyrinths.

**Winter, Year 1004:** Humanoids secure Graakhalia's upper levels against the elves and gnolls, paving the way for the Master of Hule's plot to seize Sind. Hulean agents struggle to consolidate the bickering humanoids into an army that can hold Graakhalia while the Master moves additional forces into place.

Kiritan ul Nervi, egged on by Hulean agents, stages a coup against his brother, Rajadhiraja Chandra ul Nervi. The counter-uprising of Sind's people is met by thousands of humanoids and brigands appearing out of the earth itself to fight on the side of the new Rajadhiraja. More humanoids pour into Sind from the Plain of Fire, reinforced by Urduk nomads and a tribe of ogres from the Sind Desert. The civil war sets rajah against rajah as factions fight for control.

Kiritan's forces quickly gain control of Sayr Ulan. Many loyalist Sindhis die protecting their ruler from assassins, and the Rajadhiraja flees to Ulimwengu.

**Spring, Year 1005:** Rajadhiraja Kiritan ul Nervi consolidates his position as Sind's new ruler. He seems blind to the fact that he's merely a puppet, and that the Master of Hule pulls his strings. Many rajahs accept the situation, seeing opportunities to increase their own power. Only Rani Drisana of Jalawar, Rajah Mohan of Baratkand, and Maharajah Kami of Peshmir refuse to recognize Kiritan's claim to the crown.

Elsewhere, Alphatia declares war on Glantri. Backed by the Empire of Thyatis and the Heldannic Knights, Glantri declares on Alphatia.

**Summer, Year 1005:** The three rajahs of Sind who refused to acknowledge Kiritan as Rajadhiraja attempt to overthrow the usurper. Their efforts are hampered by the fact that their mumlykets are separated by mumlykets whose rulers have sworn obedience to Kiritan. Opposed from without by Kiritan's Hule-backed forces and from within by spies and stooges, the attempted coup fails miserably. Maharajah Kabir Rudraksha of Kadesh seizes the opportunity to invade Peshmir, taking 87-year-old Maharajah Kami prisoner and setting his son Hara up as Peshmir's new Maharajah.

Meanwhile, Alphatian mages hiding in Glantri conjure all sorts of monsters to plague their enemy. Many of these monsters spill over the borders into Sind. Some join the Master's forces; others simply roam about looking for trouble.

**Fall, Year 1005:** In Jalawar, Inay Paramesh, a distant relative of the Madhars overthrows Rani Drisana Madhar. Without the help of Kiritan's elite guard, Inay could not have hoped to succeed. Vijay Niranjan, the rani's half-brother, falls in the fighting, as does Rohit, her first husband. Drisana escapes with her husband Bhagwandas. The two flee to Ulimwengu in search of Rajadhiraja Chandra ul Nervi.

**Winter, Year 1005:** On the trail of rajadhiraja Chandra ul Nervi, Drisana Madhar reaches Ulimwengu. She learns



that he passed through Karimari territory on his way to seek help from Yavdlom, then traveled back through hoping to drum up support among the Urduk nomads who did not join the Master's forces. Drisana stays in Ulimwengu, hoping to convince the Karimari to supply warriors, elephants, and triceratops in the event Chandra ul Nervi can form an army to regain his throne.

His power over Sind now relatively secure, the Master convinces Kiritan to invade Darokin. The combined forces of Sind's armies and the Desert Nomads overwhelm Darokin's defenses and drive the Republic's armies before them. Akesoli falls within weeks.

**Spring, Year 1006:** Chandra ul Nervi hastily pulls together his own army of Urduk nomads, mercenaries, brigands, and outlaws from the Barren Plains and the Sind Desert to retake Sind while its fighting forces are occupied in Darokin. His ragtag army includes nearly 100 Karimari warriors armed with their *moto moto rods* and mounted on elephants and triceratops, a number of Yavdlom warriors disgusted at their nation's policy of non-interference with "destiny," and loyal Sindhis who fled their homes when the civil war broke out.

Panicking, Kiritan withdraws his armies from Darokin to meet his brother's threat. The Master's forces, weakened by this sudden loss of manpower, begin to lose the ground they had gained in Darokin.

**Summer, Year 1006:** As the eastern armies drive the Desert Nomads from Darokin, Kiritan's armies barely manage to hold off Chandra ul Nervi's irregular troops. Disgusted with this turn of events, the Master diverts his reserve forces to reinforce Kiritan's armies—rather than sending them to Darokin as he'd originally planned. The sudden influx of humanoids turns the tide against Chandra ul Nervi. His forces decimated and scattered, the rajadhiraja flees back through Ulimwengu. The Master relinquishes his hold on Darokin, but tightens his grip on Sind.

Days after Chandra's defeat, an enor-

mous meteor smashes through the sky-shield and slams into northern Darokin. The impact creates an enormous crater north of Lake Amsorak. The resulting earthquake knocks down buildings in Akesoli and devastates the village of Chandbali. The dust cloud rising from the impact is larger than some countries. It covers all of southern Glantri and northern Darokin and extends over northeastern Sind. For days it blocks the sun. When it finally settles, ash and dust cover everything, smothering plants and fouling drinking water. The harvest is ruined, and a winter famine threatens.

**Fall, Year 1006:** The Master of Hule decides that Chandra ul Nervi must be eliminated as a potential threat to his conquest of Sind. He sends ten divisions across the Great Waste to Ulimwengu, certain that 10,000 soldiers would be more than enough to overrun the primitive Karimari forces and drive the deposed ruler out of his hiding place.

The few soldiers and humanoids who survive the resulting massacre bring word of Ulimwengu's magical defenses back to Hule. The Master is surprised to learn that the Karimari are far more than they appear. His magics penetrate the illusions that had kept the truth of Shani Kijiji and the Karimari from him.

The Master's attack on Ulimwengu is enough to convince even the most progressive-thinking Karimari to close their borders once more. All refugees are politely asked to leave—immediately. Chandra ul Nervi and Drisana Madha seek shelter among the Yavdlom people.

**Spring, Year 1007:** Kiritan vows to root out the last of his brother's supporters and begins a systematic program of oppression. The Master of Hule and his agents are more than happy to assist.

Meanwhile, the Graakharians stage a last-ditch effort to drive the humanoids from Graakhalia. They're soundly defeated. Nearly half their population has died fighting or of starvation (no time for harvests) since Graakhalia was invaded. The survivors retreat deep underground, into territory hitherto unexplored.

**Summer, Year 1007:** Thousands of humanoids from the Broken Lands move into Glantri and Darokin; some enter northeastern Sind, adding to its misery. A few spill over into Graakhalia.

**Fall, Year 1007:** Alfheim elf clans escaping Shadow Elf conquerors flee to the north and south. Bands break away to brave the Desert Nomads in search of the long-lost Sheyallia elves. They find no sign of their brethren.

**Winter, Year 1007:** An elf from Alfheim stumbles on a Sheyallia elf sheltering with a Sindhi family in Baratkand. The two gather together as many elves as they can and enter Graakhalia in search of the scattered Graakharians.

**Year 1008:** Countless uprisings, civil unrest, riots, and assassination attempts disturb Kiritan ul Nervi's rule. The Master orders him to tighten his control of his nation or suffer the consequences.

**Year 1009:** Chandra ul Nervi, sick at heart at the abuses his brother has been heaping on the Sindhi people, surrenders himself to an agent of the Master of Hule. He agrees to return as Rajadhiraja—under Hule's control—in order to stop the worst abuses. The Master sees this as a way to quiet Sind's unrest and promptly replaces Kiritan with Chandra ul Nervi.

This fall, magic ceases to work for one week. Members of magical races, such as elves, grow ill and lose their strength. Magical wards and barriers fail; people whose lives had been magically extended age and die.

**Year 1010:** The eastern lands attempt to rebuild after the past years' devastation. Sind is still occupied by the Master's forces. Chandra ul Nervi is a virtual prisoner in his palace; the rajahs and maharajahs are no more than puppet rulers. Unusual amounts of snow runoff from the mountains flood Graakhalia, Darokin, and the Five Shires. The Master licks his wounds and launches more attacks against Darokin—from the sea.

For more information and detailed events occurring in AC 1010, see *The Poor Wizard's Almanac & Book of Facts*.



# Monsters

## Karwana mulumba (Guardian Tree) —

### Armor Class:

Trunk: 2

Branch/Root: 5

Vine: 7

### Hit Dice:

Trunk: 25

Branch/Root: 10 hp each

Vine: 5 hp each

Move: 0

Attacks: 1 branch/1 root/1 vine per opponent  
(max. 15 attacks)

plus *growth of plants*  
Damage: 1d8+5/1d6+5/1d4+3

& deflect/delay/entangle

No. Appearing: 1 every 200'  
(in a line)

Save As: F25

Morale: 12

Treasure Type: U

Intelligence: 6

Alignment: Neutral

XP Value: 9,500

### Monster Type: Monster (Very Rare)

Guardian trees are huge, ancient trees magically enhanced to guard Karimari territory. They grow in a rough circle around Shani Kijiji (Karimari's "marvellous village"), surrounding an area nearly 100 miles in diameter. Each tree stands about 200' tall and has a trunk diameter of 50' and a 100' radius canopy. Each tree is spaced about 200' from its neighbors. The canopies of Ulimjwengu's 8,000 guardian trees form an unbroken ring 300 miles in circumference.

Although guardian trees cannot move from their positions, they can animate their branches, vines, and roots to attack or ensnare—with a weapon proficiency equivalent to master level. Up to three attacks can be directed against a single target (one each from branches, vines, and roots). A guardian tree can make as many as fifteen attacks in a single round, provided it has at least five opponents.

Guardian trees use their branches as staves (each branch doing 1d8 + 5

worth of damage). In addition, each tree can deflect up to three attacks against its branches per turn with successful saving throws vs. death ray.

Guardian trees can use their roots as clubs (damage 1d6 + 5) with the special ability to delay rather than deflect, as normal clubs wielded at the master level would. A victim hit by a root must save vs. paralysis or lose initiative the next round.

The trees' vines act as whips. Damage is 1d4+3, and on a successful hit the victim becomes entangled. An entangled victim cannot attack, cast spells, or move until he makes a saving throw vs. death ray at a -3 penalty (one saving throw allowed each round). A guardian tree can also strangle a victim with any vine which hits with an unadjusted roll of 18-20 on 1d20. The victim must make a successful saving throw vs. death ray or become paralyzed and die in 1d6 + 2

rounds. If the victim is rescued or released, he survives the strangulation but remains paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.

Guardian trees also have the ability to affect normal plants around them. The effects are identical to the *growth of plants* spell and its reverse, *shrink plants* (see p. 49 of the D&D® Rules *Cyclopedia*).

A guardian tree's trunk has an AC 2 and 25 hit dice. When damaged, it exudes a sticky sap that gradually hardens, restoring 1 hit point per hour. Each branch or root has AC 5; 10 points of damage severs the branch or root from the tree. Branches and roots which are not completely severed also heal at the rate of 1 hit point per hour. Vines have an AC 7, and can be severed with only 5 hit points of damage. They have no sap to restore their hit points. Instead, the damaged portions of a vine wither and fall off after about a day. The vine then grows at a rate of 1' per day until it's restored to its former length. Damage done to branches, roots, and vines do not count against the 25 hit dice of the trunk itself. Guardian trees can only be killed by massive damage to their trunk, or by the severing of all branches, roots, and vines (in which case the tree dies within a month if not restored by magic). Severing five adjacent branches, five roots, and five vines clears a 10' x 10' area into which the guardian tree cannot reach to attack.

Guardian trees understand and obey orders given by any Karimari and they know that orders given by the Karimari queen supersede all others. They are polite (but firm in their duties) when spoken to with *speak with plants* spells. Guardian trees get a saving throw vs. spells to resist any *charm plant* spell, or to oppose the passage of a druid using a *plant door* spell. The druidical spells *anti-plant shell*, *pass plant*, and *transport through plants* work normally.

*Terrain: Jungle (around Karimari territory only)*



## Mugumba Mud-Dwellers —

Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	2 (M)
Move:	120' (40')
Swimming:	60' (20')
Attacks:	2 claws or 1 weapon
Damage:	1d4/1d4 or by weapon
No. Appearing:	1d6 (4d4)
Save As:	F2
Morale:	8
Treasure Type:	D
Intelligence:	7
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	20

*Monster Type:* Humanoid (Very Rare)

The mugumbas are humanoids adapted to living in wetlands. They have webbed hands and feet, sleek fur covering their bodies, and whiskered muzzles. They can hold their breath for an entire turn before risking drowning, and swim 60' per round underwater.

Mugumba society is primitive. They live in extended families of sisters, their

mates, and their children. Mugumbas practice simple engineering skills to alter streams and ponds to their liking. This usually involves damming the stream with intricately woven branches and reeds. They break and rebuild their dams as needed to regulate water level and prevent stagnation. Ambitious mugumba families dredge muck out of swampy areas to increase the depth and freshness of the water flowing through their homes.

Mugumbas build houses similar to beaver lodges. These large domed structures are woven from sticks and reeds, just like their dams. The underwater entrance leads up a tunnel to an inner chamber, which is above the water level and remains dry. Most mugumba lodges have a single central communal room. At night and during bad weather the entire mugumba family huddles together in the lodge to sleep.

Mugumbas are relatively peaceful creatures, but will fight to protect family and home. Their blunt claws are ideal for scooping mud but also capable of

slashing unprotected flesh. When angered or frightened, they may pick up a stick to use as a club. Mugumbas bearing metal weapons such as swords and knives have been encountered, though it's thought that they found the weapons rather than fashioned them on their own.

Mugumbas are omnivorous; their diet includes fish, snakes, eels, and the many plants (roots, fruits, berries, and nuts) they can find in the swamp or in surrounding woodlands. They sometimes drape themselves in weeds and algae as a form of camouflage (can surprise on 1-3 on 1d6)—or perhaps as decoration.

Scholars who encounter or hear about the mugumbas argue over whether they evolved naturally from indigenous beaver-like creatures, or whether they are the product of magical experimentation.

DMs may allow mugumba spellcasters (see the D&D® Rules Cyclopedia, p. 215).

*Terrain:* Rivers, lakes, swamps, and ponds of the Okwonga lowlands.





## Monsters

### Snakes

The following snakes are common in the Serpent Peninsula and in the Great Waste. All other snakes listed in the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia* may also be found in the area.

#### Constrictors

The Serpent Peninsula is home to many different types of constricting snakes. The two most dangerous to human-sized creatures are the giant boa and the giant anaconda. Both average about 30' long, but can be larger if the DM desires (6' per hit die).

These snakes have the same statistics given in the *Cyclopedia* for the rock python. Like the rock python, the Serpent Peninsula's constrictors attack first with a bite. If they hit, they hold on to the victim while coiling themselves around the torso. They do 2d4 hit points of squeezing damage every round until the snake dies or releases the victim.

Giant boas are lime green with black and yellow diamond patches. When lying motionless amid hanging vines, they are nearly invisible (surprising on a roll of 1-4 on 1d6). Their favorite hunting grounds are vine-festooned trees along game trails and paths. If they miss a bite attack, they must save vs. breath attack or fall to the ground.

Giant anacondas are dark green with black oval spots. Their favorite trick is to lie perfectly still in shallow water near a riverbank or ford, attacking suddenly and without warning (surprising on a roll of 1-4). Victims must make a Strength ability check when first wrapped in the snake's coils. If the check fails, the victim is dragged into the water and is in danger of drowning (see p. 89 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*).

Check a constricting snake's Morale as per p. 103 of the *Cyclopedia*; on a failed check the snake releases the victim and attempts to flee.

**Terrain:** Jungle, Swamp (Serpent Peninsula)

#### Vipers

Poisonous snakes are common in the Great Waste and the Serpent Peninsula. Most are small or deliver painful but not dangerous bites. Some types of vipers are dangerous, however. These snakes use the same statistics as those given for the spitting cobra in the *Cyclopedia* (but without the spitting attack). Although they avoid attacking human-sized or larger opponents unless startled or threatened, careless travelers may accidentally startle a viper without realizing it—until it's too late.

The Great Waste is home to the large and deadly tik polonga. This 5' long viper is sand-colored with reddish-brown spots outlined in black and ringed with white. Tik polongas are dangerous both because they're abundant and because their venom is deadly (save vs. poison or die in 1d6 turns). They strike without warning at anyone who disturbs them.

Cobras are also common in Sind and the Great Waste (as are spitting cobras—see p. 204 of the *Cyclopedia*). They rear up and flare their hoods as a warning. If bitten, the victim must save vs. poison or die in 1d10 turns.

The Serpent Peninsula has only one venomous snake that poses any serious danger to travelers. This is the musoke fitina, or rainbow viper. Measuring 4' long, the musoke fitina is green and gray with dazzling patterns of black, blue, red, purple, and yellow along its back. Anyone seeing a musoke fitina must Save vs. Paralysis or be hypnotized by the snake's skin patterns—effectively immobilizing them. The musoke fitina is usually encountered on the edge of a river or stream, and its bite is deadly (save vs. poison or die in 1d6 turns).

**Terrain:** Tik polonga: Any open terrain (not forests or swamps). Cobra: Any. Musoke Fitina: Jungle, Swamp (in or near rivers or streams)

### Monsters from the D&D® Creature Catalogue

#### Giant Foot-Pad Lizard

Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	2+1 (L)
Move:	120' (40')
Climbing:	60' (20')
Attacks:	1 bite
Damage:	1d6
No. Appearing:	1d3 (1d4 + 1)
Save As:	Fighter: 2
Morale:	7
Treasure Type:	Nil (see below)
Intelligence:	2
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	25

**Monster Type:** Giant Monster (Common).

These slender giant lizards have long, spindly legs with toes which flatten out to form round, sticky pads. Foot-pad lizards are excellent climbers due to their toe pads, agility, and light weight. They can cope with all but the smoothest of surfaces, at any angle up to the vertical.

When captured young and properly trained (with the Animal Training—Lizards skill), foot-pad lizards can be used as mounts or pack animals. However, they cannot climb slopes steeper than 60 degrees when mounted or burdened with a pack.

Graakhalian lizard-riders make a sturdy leather saddle with safety straps that prevent them from falling off when the lizard traverses steep slopes or makes sudden twists or moves. Even so, the foot-pad lizards are difficult to control, requiring successful skill checks against the Riding (Lizards) general skill to do more than point them in a general direction.

**Terrain:** Cavern, Desert (Graakhalia)

**Load:** 2500 cn at full speed; 4000 cn at half speed. Foot-pad lizards are stronger than other giant lizards, hence their greater carrying capacity (see p. 189 of the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia*).



## Giant Poisonous Frog

Armor Class:	7
Hit Dice:	2** (S)
Move:	90' (30') or leap (see below)
Attacks:	1 tongue or 1 bite
Damage:	Entangle or 1d4 + poison
No. Appearing:	1d6 (1d6)
Save As:	Fighter: 1
Morale:	9
Treasure Type:	Nil
Intelligence:	2
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	30

*Monster Type:* Giant Animal (Rare)

This giant frog has slimy-looking moist skin which is bright yellow on its belly and lurid green elsewhere. It can wrap its long tongue around victims up to 15' away (normal chance to hit). The frog's tongue is strong enough to drag trapped victims weighing 150 lbs or less to its mouth. The frog's bite attack is at +2 against victims trapped in its tongue. The tongue is AC 8; the frog releases its victim if the tongue receives any damage. Six or more points of damage from an edged weapon severs the tongue.

The frog's bite does 1d4 points. Its saliva is poisonous; victims must save vs. poison or suffer 2d8 points of damage with each successful bite.

Its skin secretes the same poison, which does 2d8 points of damage on contact unless the victim saves vs. poison. The poison can be collected from a dead frog, though it quickly loses its effectiveness. Each frog yields enough poison to coat three weapons, adding +1 damage if the victim fails to save vs. poison. The poison loses all its properties within a week, and no longer affects the damage done by any weapon coated by it.

Giant poisonous frogs are common in the swamps and marshes of the Serpent Peninsula. They can also be found in the lower, wet caverns of Graakhalia, where they lie submerged with only their eyes showing above the surface.

*Terrain:* Cavern, River/Lake Swamp, Jungle

## Giant Sand Spider

Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	2+1* (M)
Move:	120' (40')
Attacks:	1 bite
Damage:	1d6 + poison
No. Appearing:	1d4 (1d4)
Save As:	Fighter: 1
Morale:	7
Treasure Type:	U
Intelligence:	0
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	35

*Monster Type:* Lowlife (Rare)

Sand spiders are carnivorous creatures 6' long. They are beige with an orange and black blotch on their stomachs. They live in underground burrows, usually near rocky structures, stones, or paved roads in deserts or barren areas.

Sand spiders do not build webs. Instead they burrow just below the surface of the ground, then burst out to attack as the prey passes overhead (surprising on 1-4 on 1d6). A sand spider bite causes 1d6 points of damage. The victim must make a saving throw vs. poison or be paralyzed for 1d4 + 4 hours.

*Terrain:* Cavern, Desert, Ruins

## Giant Serpentweed

Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	9 per stalk (L)
Move:	0'
Attacks:	1 bite per stalk
Damage:	2d6
No. Appearing:	0 (1)
Save As:	Fighter: 9
Morale:	12
Treasure Type:	D
Intelligence:	0
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	900 per stalk

*Monster Type:* Lowlife (Rare)

The giant serpentweed is a flesh-eating plant found in bogs and areas of standing water. Most of the plant lives under water, rooted to the bog bottom, but 1-6 stalks reach above the surface. Each thick, scaly stalk ends in a digestive sac resembling a toothed mouth.

From a distance, the stalks look like giant snakes.

The stalks normally lie just under the surface of the water. When they detect the vibrations of creatures passing within 20', they attack. When a stalk loses all its hit points, it's severed from the main plant. When all the stalks are severed, the plant can no longer attack but it is not dead. The only way to kill a serpentweed is to burn its underwater roots. (A severed stalk can grow back in six months.)

*Terrain:* River/Lake (shallow), Swamp

## Strangle Vine

Armor Class:	9
Hit Dice:	1 (8 hp) per 1' square (S to L)
Move:	0'
Attacks:	1
Damage:	Special
No. Appearing:	See below
Save As:	Normal Man
Morale:	12
Treasure Type:	U
Intelligence:	0
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	10 per 1' square

*Monster Type:* Lowlife (Rare)

A strangle vine looks like 1-10 ordinary creepers (20' long) dangling from a tree's branches. The strangle vine is sensitive to touch, and attempts to entangle anything moving into or through it. Entangled victims suffer 1d4 points of strangulation damage per round and may even be pulled off their feet.

A character with a Strength of 6 or more has a 5% chance of breaking free of the vine, but the more a victim struggles, the tighter the vine clings. Weaker characters have a greater chance of escaping than strong ones. For each point of Strength under 6, the chance increases by 5% (e.g. 20% for Strength 3).

Characters caught in the vine may attack it with a penalty of -4 to attack rolls. The vines can be cleared with an edged weapon at the rate of 1 square foot per 8 points of damage inflicted.

*Terrain:* Jungle, Swamp, Woods



# Armies of the Great Waste

The following *War Machine* statistics reflect military strength—as of AC 1000—of the most prominent areas of the Great Waste and the Serpent Peninsula.

**Division Type** describes the unit as Elite, Regular, or Reserve. **Number of Such Units** lists how many divisions the nation maintains or could muster.

**BR** is the unit's Battle Rating. **Personnel** tells how many troops are in each unit of this type, including officers. (Staff and support personnel are not counted—at least one for every 10 soldiers.) **Troop Class** rates the unit's quality.

**Division Breakdown** describes how each division is arranged and provides information on the division's regiments.

## Sind

Roughly one percent of Sind's military are Name level. Reserve Himaya divisions can swell Sind's forces to 10% of the population (roughly 60,000 troops total); spellcasting Rishiyan and Jadugeryas can supplement the force. Sind can also field two reserve units per mumlyket.

## Beland Hafiz

**Division Type:** Elite (the Rajadhiraja's guard); **Number of Such Units:** 1; **BR:** 149; **Personnel:** 206; **Troop Class:** Excellent; **Division Breakdown:** *Mahaser* (commander): F20, Int or Wis +1, Cha +1.

Regiments 1–5: 40 elite *balis* (warriors), F5 heavy infantry, chain mail, spear, sword; 1 *zareb* (lieutenant), F10.

## Mumlyket Division

Each mumlyket has a standing army. The following statistics are for Baratkand. Other mumlykets' divisions have fewer or more troops based on population and location (the farther from the dangerous western borders, the fewer active troops).

**Division Type:** Regular; **Number of Such Units:** 11 (1 per mumlyket); **BR:** 123. **Personnel:** 2641. **Troop Class:** Good; **Division Breakdown:** *Raji* (commander): F15; Int, Wis, or Cha +2. *Jaya* (deputy commander): F14.

Regiments 1–5: Each has 300 *bhumis* (soldiers), F2 light infantry, leather armor and shields, scimitars (normal swords) and spears; 12 *sabins* (sergeants), F6; 3 *sharans* (captains), F12.

Regiment 6: 500 *bbumis*, F2 bowmen in chariots (each with one non-fighting driver), leather armor, long bows and spears; 10 *sabins*, F6, five *sharans*, F12; 1 *zareb* (lieutenant), F13.

Regiment 7: 300 *bhumis*, F2 light camel riders, leather armor, scimitars and spears; 12 *sabins*, F6; 3 *sharans*, F12.

Regiment 8: 150 *sevars* (horsemen), F2 light infantry on horses, leather armor, scimitars, spears (do not fight on horseback); 6 *sabins*, F6; 1 *sharan*, F12.

Regiment 9: 50 *bbumis*, F3 light infantry mounted on elephants, leather armor, long bows and spears; 5 *sabins*, F7; one *sharan*, F12; 10 armored elephants (AC 4) and their handlers.

## Yavdlom

Because of its terrain, Yavdlom has no mounted forces. The standing military is small (1% of the total population), but only the neighboring slavers of Jaibul cause recurring problems. Roughly 20% of Yavdlom's troops have magical items.

## Ramla Gwaride

The *ramla gwaride* are the personal guard of the Great Prophet. Every guard member has at least one magical item.

**Division Type:** Elite; **Number of Such Units:** 1; **BR:** 239; **Personnel:** 426; **Troop Class:** Elite; **Division Breakdown:** Leader: F28, Int, Wis, or Cha +5, banded mail +3, sword +2, dagger +1.

Guardianships (regiments) 1–5: 20 crossbowmen (F7), chain mail, crossbow, bastard sword; 20 heavy footmen (F7), chain mail, two-handed sword, hand axe; 20 heavy footmen (F7), banded mail, shield, sword, dagger; 20 light footmen (F7), leather armor and shield, sword, spear; 4 guardian leaders (captains) (F14), chain mail and shield, sword, dagger; 1 guardian lord (commander) (F18), banded mail, bastard sword, dagger.

## Warriors of Yav

**Division Type:** Regular; **Number of Such Units:** 1; **BR:** 135; **Personnel:** 10,000; **Troop Class:** Good; **Division Breakdown:** Commander: *Bwana Gwaride* (Great Guardian) Kondu Pako, "the Arm of Yav" (F28), Int, Wis, or Cha +4, banded mail +2, spear +2 of returning, two-handed sword +1, +3 vs. undead (see p. 64 for NPC statistics). Aides include: the Voice of the Prophet (C28), the High Sage (M27), and the Agent of Yav (F24).

Regiments 1–2: 960 footmen (F2), chain mail, sword, spear; 320 heavy footmen (F2), plate armor, sword, pike; 320 archers (F2), leather armor, short bow, short sword; 50 force leaders (sergeants) (F6), scale mail, sword, dagger; 5 force masters (captains) (F9), chain, sword, dagger; 5 *ramla* advisors (C9), chain and shield, mace, staff; 5 sages (M9), robes, staff; 1 force lord (F16), banded mail, shield, sword, hand axe.

Regiment 3: 640 heavy footmen (F2), chain mail, shield, sword, dagger; 320 spellcasters (M4), no armor, staff, dagger; 320 archers (F2), leather armor, short bow, short sword; 50 force leaders (F6) scale mail, sword, dagger; 5 force masters (F9), chain mail, sword, dagger; 5 *ramla* advisors (C9), chain mail and shield, mace, staff; 5 sages (M9), no armor, staff; 1 force lord (F16), banded mail and shield, sword, hand axe.

Regiments 4–6 (naval units): 10 troop transports each with 32 archers (F2), leather armor, longbow, sword; 64 light footmen (F2), leather armor, sword, spear; 3 sea leaders (F6), leather armor, sword, dagger; 20 non-combatant sailors. 5 troop transports with 96 light footmen (F2), leather armor, sword, spear; 3 sea leaders (F6), leather armor, sword, dagger; 20 non-combatant sailors. 5 large sailing ships with 32 light footmen (F2), leather armor, sword, spear; 1 sea leader (F6), leather armor, sword, dagger; 1 sea master (F9), leather armor, sword, dagger; 1 *ramla* advisor (C9), leather armor, mace, staff; 1 sage (M9), no armor, staff. The sea lord (F17), leather armor and shield, sword, hand axe, travels on one of the 5 large sailing ships.



## Graakhalia

Nearly 15% of the Graakhalian population patrols Graakhalia's borders, clears monsters from tunnels, and polices Graakhalia. Roughly two-thirds are gnolls; the rest are elves. In times of war, all able-bodied Graakhalians will defend their territory. One to three percent of the force has magical items (armor, weapons, or miscellaneous magic items).

### Graakhalian Regulars

**Division Type:** Regular; **Number of Such Units:** 1; **BR:** 121; **Personnel:** 3322; **Troop Class:** Average; **Division Breakdown:** *Braashnags* (co-commanders): E9, Int or Wis or Cha +3; 9 HD gnoll, Int or Wis or Cha +3.

Regiments 1–4: 200 2 HD gnolls, leather armor, shield, sword or spear; 100 E2, leather armor, shield, sword or spear; 20 *griffnals* (sergeants), E3 or 3 HD gnolls; 10 *vrashdons* (corporals), E4 or 4 HD gnolls; 1 *bradjak* (lieutenant), E5 or 5 HD gnoll; 1 *rordark* (captain), E7 or 7 HD gnoll.

Regiments 5–7: 200 2 HD gnolls, leather armor, sword or lance; 100 E2, leather armor, sword or spear; 20 *griffnals*, E3 or 3 HD gnolls; 10 *vrashdons*, E4 or 4 HD gnolls; 1 *bradjak*, E5 or 5 HD gnoll; 1 *rordark*, E7 or 7 HD gnoll; all mounted on giant footpad lizards.

Regiments 8–10: 160 2 HD gnoll archers, leather armor, short bow, sword; 60 E2 archers, leather armor, short bow, sword; 40 2 HD gnolls, leather armor, sword or spear; 20 E2, leather armor, sword or spear; 20 *griffnals*, E3 or 3 HD gnolls; 10 *vrashdons*, E4 or 4 HD gnolls; 1 *bradjak*, E5 or 5 HD gnoll; 1 *rordark*, E7 or 7 HD gnoll.

## Karimari

The Karimari could assemble these forces in time of war. Every Karimari has a *moto moto rod* (see p. 64) as a second weapon or magical item. The Karimari can also field nine reserve divisions in times of crisis.

## Thunder Brigade

**Division Type:** Elite; **Number of Such Units:**

**BR:** 200; **Personnel:** 3925 Karimari,

542 elephants, 251 triceratops;

**Troop Class:** Excellent; **Division Breakdown:**

Thunder leader (commander): Akin (see NPC statistics, p. 62), F34, Int and Wis and Cha +7, riding personal triceratops. Aides mounted on same triceratops: 2 advisors (C25, M25), spotter (D15), warrior (F10). Associate Commanders: 2 F20, riding elephants. Aides mounted on same elephants: 2 advisors (C20, M20), spotter (D10), warrior (F10).

Regiments 1–10 (shock troops): 20 elephants, joust barding; 10 triceratops, plate barding; 30 maluks (F5), scale mail, spear; 1 captain-maluk (F15), scale mail, on elephant with joust bardings.

Regiments 11–25 (mounted infantry): 20 elephants, no armor; 10 triceratops, no armor; 30 maluks (F5), leather armor, sword; 110 warriors (F4), leather armor, spear; 60 archers (F4), leather armor, short bow; 20 spellbinders (M4), dagger; 10 healers (C4), leather armor, staff. Two unarmored elephants with co-captain (F12), leather armor, spear; maluk (F8), no armor, sword; lieutenant (F10), leather armor, spear; spellbinder (M10), dagger; healer (C10), staff.

## Desert Nomads

The Master will field these forces when he invades Darokin in AC 1005. See also X10: *Red Arrow, Black Shield*. Villains always seem to have endless troops: the Master can call up at least eight reserve units.

## The Legion of Doom

**Division Type:** Elite; **Number of Such Units:**

**BR:** 232; **Personnel:** 1932;

**Troop Class:** Excellent; **Division Breakdown:**

Legion Commander: (M19).

Regiments 1–2 (Janizaries): 240 elite F2 human cavalry on warhorses, bows & swords, 6 sergeants (F3), one captain (F4).

Regiments 3–4 (Zafiries): 80 M3 skirmishers on foot, daggers.

Regiment 5 (Bone Smashers): 40 Stone Giant skirmishers on foot.

Regiments 6–7 (Marids): 480 regular F2 human infantry, bows & swords, twelve sergeants (F3), one captain (F4).

Regiment 8 (Doomflyers): 10 airboats crewed by 20 skeletons, each carrying 40 regular F2 human bowmen, commanded by captain (M6).

## The Master's Minions

**Division Type:** Elite (Headquarters);

**Number of Such Units:** 6; **BR:** 153; **Personnel:** 395; **Troop Class:** Excellent;

**Division Breakdown:** Division Commander (F12); Deputy Division Commander (F10).

Regiment 1 (Marids): 240 regular F2 human infantry, bows, swords, 6 sergeants (F3), 1 captain (F5).

Regiment 2 (Reavers): 20 regular Hill Giants, 1 Hill Giant captain.

Regiment 3 (Janizaries): 120 elite F3 human cavalry, bows & swords, 3 sergeants (F), 1 captain (F6).

## Regular Division

**Division Type:** Regular; **Number of Such Units:** 25; **BR:** 103; **Personnel:** 1162; **Troop Class:** Good; **Division Breakdown:**

Division Commander: F10; Deputy Division Commander: F8.

Regiments 1–2 (Fangriders): 120 regular goblin cavalry, bows & swords, riding dire wolves, 3 goblin sergeants, 1 goblin captain.

Regiments 3–4 (Faris) 120 regular F1 human cavalry, bows & swords, riding warhorses, 3 sergeants (F2), 1 captain (F3).

Regiments 5–6 (Foe Shredders): 160 regular bugbear infantry, spears, 4 bugbear sergeants, 1 bugbear captain.

Regiments 7–8 (Reavers): 40 Hill Giant skirmishers.

Regiment 9–10 (Devourers): 40 Troll skirmishers.





## Movers and Shakers

These NPCs are characters the PCs may meet in Sind, the Great Waste, or on the Serpent Peninsula. Each nation's ruler appears here, as well other important or interesting figures. DMs are encouraged to alter these descriptions to fit their own campaigns.

**Akin.** Karimari maluk (elephant trainer). Akin captures and trains both elephants and triceratops. He and his favorite elephant, Boudi, have won many championships in the games in Thunder Arena. Akin is a passionate rock collector, and has a large collection of gems, minerals, and pretty stones in his home in Shani Kijiji. Akin is well thought of by most of the Karimari, and would make a good general if the Karimari needed to mobilize for war. He is 3' 11", with curly dark brown hair and steel-gray eyes.

*Combat notes:* F34; AC 5 (*leather armor +3*); hp 98; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon; Save F34; ML 11; AL N. S13 I16 W16 D13 Co17 Ch18. *Magical Items:* *bola +2, leather armor +3, moto moto rod of thunderous compliance* (see p. 64), *spear +3 of returning, ring of regeneration*.

**Brarknar.** Graakhalian warrior. A proud gnoll warrior with bright rust red fur and sharp gray eyes, Brarknar stands out both among the elves and among his own kind. He spent most of his youth living with an elven family, and has adopted many elven customs and traditions. Both gnolls and elves hold Brarknar in great respect, as he is the only survivor of an attempt to destroy the dragon Vermithrax. Brarknar's party was almost successful; Vermithrax will kill Brarknar on sight. The gnoll's most prized possession is a dagger made from one of Vermithrax' teeth—a tooth Brarknar cut out personally! He prizes another souvenir of the battle—a shoulder-to-thigh scar.

*Combat Notes:* E5 (Brarknar gains experience as an elf); AC 8; hp 30; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 weapon or spell; Dmg by weapon or spell; Save E5; ML 11; AL N. S18 I10 W11 D17 Co15 Ch7. *Magical Items:* *dagger +2 of extinguishing*.

**Brishnapur, Anand.** Mystic of the Shehid Order. Anand Brishnapur was born in AC 980 to elderly parents, the youngest son of seven sons and three daughters. From a young age he was a very serious boy. Pampered as a youth, Anand felt there was little meaning in his life. He became a Shehid mystic after witnessing a Shehid protect an elderly crippled Kuliya from an angry soldier on a rearing warhorse. After two years of traveling with the Shehid, Anand set off on his own through every mumlyket in Sind, righting wrongs and searching for good and true men and women.

Anand has brown hair and clear, pale brown eyes. He bears a scar on his chest given him by a violent young Himaya. A tall, thin, young man, Anand always wears a serious expression. He dresses in beggar's rags to show that he is not ashamed to be mistaken for a Kuliya.

*Combat Notes:* M6; AC 4; hp 21; MV 170'; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 + 1; Save M6; ML 11; AL L. S17 I12 W16 D14 Co11 Ch12. *Magical Items:* *ring of quickness, rod of weaponry*.

**Inko.** Karimari scout. Inko is tough and rugged. He's 4' 2" tall, with green eyes and many scars from past fights. He is cautious and distrusts outsiders. Inko is fond of small furry animals; a small spotted cat named Oseya is his pet and constant companion. Inko is highly skilled and knowledgeable in jungle lore, including hunting and tracking. He strives always for a clean kill, hating to see any creature suffer. He cannot stand to see any animal abused (something Karimari rarely do, but that foreigners are notorious for).

*Combat Notes:* F18; AC 3 (with dexterity and ring bonus); hp 81; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon; Save F18; ML 9; AL N. S17 I13 W10 D18 Co13 Ch8. *Magical Items:* *blowgun +2, moto moto rod of mighty lifting* (usable three times per day, duration three turns, gives wielder Storm Giant strength), *spear +1, +2 vs. reptiles, ring of animal control, ring of protection +3, potion of super healing, potion of speech*.

**Jahi, Bwana Ramla Msiba:** Bwana Ramla (Great Prophet) of Yavdlom. Msiba was born in AC 926 (her mother died in childbirth). Her father died on her twelfth birthday in a boating accident while purchasing a birthday gift. Msiba saw a vision of his death and tried to stop it, but was too late. Yavdlom's ramlas promptly adopted her into their ranks and taught her the Precepts of Yav. Her precognitive powers are astounding, though they seem always to focus on death and other calamities. Her most disturbing visions are those of future events that would change the very nature of the Divinarchy. Msiba has never had a vision of her own future. A devout believer in Yav and his Precepts, Msiba will help others, but never in a way that might affect the future she has foreseen. She became Yavdlom's Great Prophet on the 27th of Ambrymont, AC 1000, after the Great Prophet Yarani was assassinated.

*Combat Notes:* C31; AC 8; hp 54; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon or spell; Dmg by weapon or spell; Save C31; ML 10; AL L. S11 I16 W18 D13 Co11 Ch14. *Magical Items:* *amulet of protection from crystal balls and ESP, ring of holiness, rod of health, staff +2 of translating*.

**Leyalani:** A Sheyallia elf of Graakhalia. Leyalani is a passionate explorer and researcher, well regarded among the community for her knowledge of Graakhalia's strange plants, animals, and minerals. Her greatest failing is her mistrust of gnolls; she believes they will one day rise up against the elves and drive them from Graakhalia. Leyalani especially hates Brarknar, for her brother was killed on the ill-fated expedition against Vermithrax which Brarknar alone survived. She believes Brarknar deliberately left the party to die. Leyalani opposes Brarknar at every opportunity, both in public debate and private ventures.

*Combat Notes:* E7; AC 6; hp 32; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon or spell; Dmg by weapon or spell; Save E7; ML 10; AL N. S13 I18 W9 D13 Co11 Ch16. *Magical*





## Movers and Shakers

*Items: arrows of blinking (2); elven cloak; sword +1, +2 vs. gnolls.*

**Maruti, Jarita:** Court Jadugerya (mage) to Chandra ul Nervi, the Rajadhiraja of Sind. Jarita, one of the most honored and respected of the Jadugerya caste, is 62 years old. Many people fear her, for she can be hot-tempered, stubborn, and impulsive. Jarita likes nothing better than to learn new magic and research long-lost spells. Unfortunately, much of her time is spent fulfilling her duties to the Rajadhiraja. The king calls upon her spell-casting abilities to aid in gathering information, gaining allies, and entertaining guests. Casting *phantasmal force* and similar spells to amuse visitors is one of Jarita's least favorite duties. Enchanting magical items for the Rajadhiraja is less onerous, although she gets annoyed when he asks for the same items—*chain mail +1, scimitars +1*, and *wands of lightning bolts*—over and over again.

*Combat notes:* M30; AC 8 (dexterity bonus); hp 42; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon or spell; Dmg by weapon or spell; Save M30; ML 9; AL N. S8 I18 W14 D13 Co11 Ch16. *Magical items:* amulet of protection from crystal balls and ESP, ring of memory, ring of spell storing, staff of power, wand of illusion.

**ul Nervi, Chandra:** Rajadhiraja (King of Kings) of Sind. King Chandra is 35 years old. Although a member of the Himaya caste, Chandra felt the call of spirituality while still a young boy. He became a cleric rather than a fighter—something Himayas are allowed to do if they truly feel they must. He became Rajadhiraja in AC 992. Chandra ul Nervi is an honest man and a just ruler. His greatest failing is an inability to see evil in people—Chandra is quick to forgive and forget. (His spy network is his only concession to the reality of evil.) He delights in his family and spends as much time with his wives and children as his duties and responsibilities allow.

*Combat Notes:* C14; AC 3 (*chain mail +2*); hp 55; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 weapon

or spell; Dmg by weapon or spell; Save C14; ML 10; AL L. S13 I14 W18 D11 Co13 Ch13. *Magical Items:* chain mail +2, war hammer +2 of returning.

**Paka, Bwana Gwaride Kondu:** The "Arm of Yav;" Bwanna Gwaride (Great Guardian) of Yavdlom. Kondu Paka is the commander of Yavdlom's army. He is a superb tactician, and both loved and respected by Yavdlom's soldiers. Kondu has a tendency to want to take on the most dangerous tasks and missions himself—a tendency his officers oppose at every turn. But Kondu can be maddeningly stubborn. Whenever his second-in-command points out the folly of the army's commander constantly putting himself in such danger, Kondu replies, "And how do you know that isn't my destiny?" They argue about this frequently, with the result that Kondu actually undertakes only a tenth of the missions he'd like.

*Combat Notes:* F28; AC 2 (*banded mail +2*); hp 88; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 weapon (up to 3 attacks per turn if an attack roll of 2 will hit); Dmg by weapon; Save F28; ML 11; AL L. S16 I12 W16 D9 Co13 Ch 16. *Magical Items:* banded mail +2; ring of life protection (5 charges); spear +2 of returning; two-handed sword +1, +3 vs. undead.

**Yetunde.** Tayma (queen) of the Karimari. Yetunde's father, a great Karimari wizard, gave her a *staff +3 of wishing* when she came of age (15 years old) in AC 950. She used one *wish* many years ago—to save the life of a Karimari child trampled by a raging triceratops. The Karimari elected Yetunde as Tayma in AC 984, when the aging queen Abiade abdicated. She has governed the Karimari wisely, and is a popular queen. Although her complexion is weathered and gray strands highlight her jet black hair, Yetunde looks more like an athletic woman in her mid-forties than someone two decades older. Her dark blue eyes have lost none of their sparkle, and seem able to see into the truth of any matter. Yetunde speaks slowly and with

carefully chosen words. While abhorring the chaos of the outside world and fervently desiring to shelter Ulimwengu and her people, in her innermost thoughts she longs to visit distant lands. When well-meaning outsiders intrude upon Ulimwengu, she may disguise herself as a Karimari scout (in primitive garb) and escort them safely through the jungle in return for stories of their home lands. If the outsiders impress her favorably, she may invite them to Shani Kijji.

*Combat notes:* level 29 druid; AC 5 (*ring of protection +3*); hp 65; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 staff or spell; Dmg 1d6 + 3 or by spell; Save C29; ML 9; AL N. S9 I13 W18 D13 Co12 Ch16. *Magical Items:* staff +3 of wishing, ring of protection +3, ring of truth.

**Yavswano, Mokuba Jibada.** Mokuba (ruler) of Yavdlom. Jibada Yavswano, at sixteen years old, is a long way from fulfilling his destiny as Yavdlom's overlord. Nevertheless, the Great Prophet Yarani (the predecessor of Bwana Ramla Msiba Jahi, see above) proclaimed him Mokuba in AC 997, replacing Mokuba Abasi, who died of injuries after fulfilling his own destiny—foiling a plot by a group of doppelgangers bent on replacing Yavdlom's most important seers and nobles.

Jibada is a cheerful young man who loves to laugh but who knows when situations call for seriousness. He takes his role as Mokuba very seriously, and studies every day with tutors, teachers, and weapon-masters to improve his skills and knowledge to levels worthy of a good Mokuba. He doesn't hesitate to ask the advice of his elders, but refuses to be swayed (except by overwhelmingly logical arguments) once his mind's been made up. He wonders what the Great Prophet Yarani saw in his future, but accepts that it must be kept secret.

*Combat notes:* F2; AC 1 (*chain mail +2* and dexterity bonus); hp 13; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon; Save F2; ML 9; AL L. S16 I12 W12 D16 Co16 Ch16. *Magical Items:* chain mail +2 (with the *cure wounds* special power), spear +3.





## Magic Items

### Moto Moto Rods —

These magical rods are a specialty of Karimari enchanters. They can be used by any character class, but are tailored to their wielders and will not work for anyone else. A *moto moto rod* is 3' long and usually looks like a straight wooden stick with the bark peeled off. As with all rods, *moto moto rods* are permanent items and do not require charges when used.

Some *moto motos* are enchanted along the lines of normal rods such as *rods of parrying*, *rods of weaponry*, or *rods of the wyrms* (see the D&D® Rules Cyclopedia, p. 237). Others are unique to Karimari enchanters. Nearly every Karimari warrior has a *moto moto rod*.

**Moto Moto of Strength:** When activated with a command word, this *rod + 2* adds +2 to the wielder's Strength bonus (or penalty). The effect lasts for one turn, and may be activated three times per day. During this time, the rod may be used as a melee weapon, inflicting  $1d8 + 2$ , plus or minus any adjusted Strength bonuses or penalties. Whenever the Strength effect is not activated, the rod may be used as a simple *club +2*. Although Karimari of any character class may wield a *moto moto of strength*, Karimari fighters most often use them.

**Moto Moto of Thundering Compliance:** Once per day, the wielder of this rod may summon all elephants and triceratops within three miles. The summoned animals will run at their top speed to reach the summoner. The sound of these enormous beasts crashing through the jungle should be enough to send all but the bravest opponents running. Once the animals arrive, they will understand and obey the rod's wielder. Each animal remains under the wielder's control for 4d6 turns, or until it fails a Morale check. In the Nakakande jungle, the rod will summon 2d6 elephants and 1d4 triceratops which arrive in  $1d6 \times 10$  rounds.

**Moto Moto of Concealment:** This rod allows its Karimari wielder to disappear into the surrounding jungle without a trace. With the appropriate

command words, the rod can produce each of the following magical effects once per day.

**Vanish:** The wielder vanishes and instantly reappears in another place up to 120' from the spot where he vanished. Control is precise, with no chance of appearing in mid-air or inside solid objects.

**Camouflage:** The wielder and his equipment takes on camouflaging coloring (mottled greens and browns in jungle). Whenever the wielder remains motionless, he is nearly invisible (roll 1d6; seen only on a 1). The effect lasts for 6 turns.

**Softfoot:** The wielder may move with nearly complete silence (roll 1d10; heard only on a 1). The effect lasts for 6 turns.

**Hide Trail:** All signs of the wielder's passage through the jungle (footprints, broken plants, scents, etc.) disappear without a trace within 100 yards.

**Plant Path:** As per the druid spell *plant door*, this opens a path through growth, no matter how dense. The path closes behind the rod's wielder.

**Moto Moto of Beguiling:** This rod enables the wielder to befriend any creature with Intelligence 2 or greater. With the appropriate command words, the rod can produce each of the following spell effects once per day: *charm person*, *charm monster*, *charm plant*.

### Kereenyaga (Mystery Rock) —

Kereenyaga, the "rock of mystery," stands at the exact center of the ring of Guardian Trees. Just five miles south by southwest of Shani Kijiji, the 100' granite spire is the object of reverence, awe, and a bit of fear among the Karimari. They call it by many names, including "Ulimwengu's Heart" and "Lightning's Child." The Karimari believe Kereenyaga is the resting place of Ulimwengu's soul, and that it protects and provides for the land and its people.

The Karimari are right. For millenia, Kereenyaga has served as a receptacle for Karimari hopes, dreams, and fears.

The more the Karimari believed their land was alive, the closer to the truth this became. Although Ulimwengu does not technically qualify as an Immortal—it has no personality or individuality, other than what Karimari beliefs give it—the land has taken on many of the functions and abilities of an Immortal Patron. Kereenyaga is, in effect, an artifact created by Ulimwengu to protect itself and the Karimari.

Chief among its powers are abilities to hide the Karimari and Shani Kijiji from prying eyes. The rock projects a sort of *hallucinatory terrain* effect over all of Ulimwengu, making it appear from the air to be nothing more than endless jungle, streams, and hills. This hides Shani Kijiji from intelligent flying creatures, crew members aboard flying ships, and the like. (Characters actively searching for something unusual in the jungle beneath them may save vs. spells to see through this illusion.) The *hallucinatory terrain* does not affect any creatures at treetop level or below.

Kereenyaga also protects Ulimwengu and the Karimari from prying eyes using *crystal balls* and similar magics. Creatures attempting to see Ulimwengu through such means see the same endless jungle as can be seen from the air. (As above, characters may save vs. spells to see through this illusion if they suspect the view does not show the truth.)

The rock has a third effect that is also always active. It acts as a clerical *bless* spell, giving the Karimari and anyone else Ulimwengu considers friendly a +1 bonus to morale and to all attack and damage rolls. Enemies of the Karimari are at -1 to morale, attack rolls, and damage rolls. There is no saving throw allowed.

If the DM wishes, Karimari clerics can draw on additional powers through ceremonies conducted on the rock. Such powers may include any druid spell (cast as a 40th-level cleric) or effects such as directing all of Ulimwengu's creatures to attack intruders. Each ceremony costs the cleric a permanent loss of 1d4 hit points.



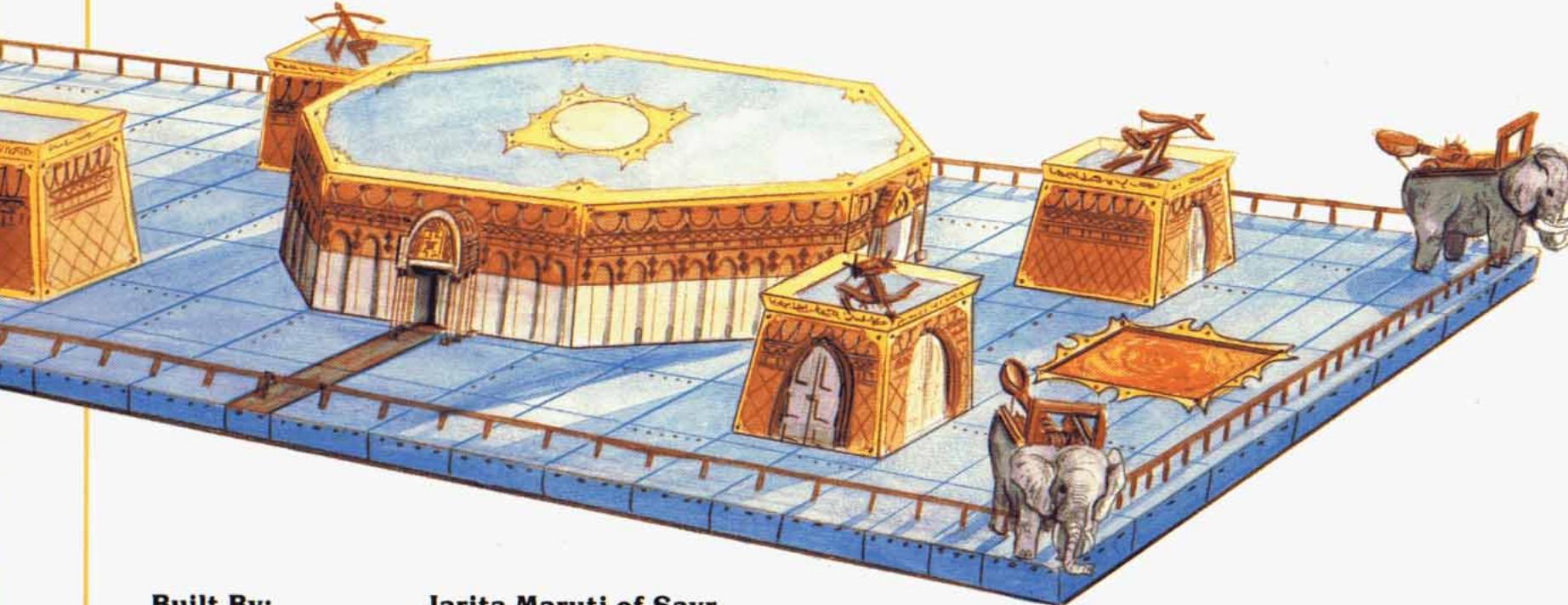


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# The Flying Barge of Sayr Ulan



Built By:

**Jarita Maruti of Sayr**

**Ulan**

Used By:

**The Rajadhiraja of  
Sind**

Tonnage:

**362**

Hull Points:

**173**

Armor Class:

**6**

Lift Capacity:

**563 tons**

Cargo Capacity:

**120 tons**

Motive Power:

**Fly enchantment**

Air Speed:

**360' (120')**

MF:

**1/3**

Length:

**100'**

Beam:

**60'**

Depth:

**2'**

Hull:

**Wooden (Blue)**

Enchantments on Hull: *Fly*.

Artillery: The barge is equipped with a *lightning wheel* that fires *lightning bolts* down through a hole in the center of the barge. The wheel fires five consecutive bolts (60' long, 5' wide, 8d6 damage each) once per turn, with a range of 900 yards. (Targets are random; the DM should choose.) In addition, the barge carries ten siege weapons:

- 4 Ballistae (AC4, hp 9, damage 1d10+6)
- 4 Light Catapults (AC 4, hp 18, damage 1d8+8)
- 2 Heavy Catapults (AC 0, hp 27, damage 1d10+10)

Defense Notes: The barge's sky-blue hull makes her nearly invisible from the ground (except during monsoon season); she is seen from below only on a roll of 1 on 1d6. The barge also has a *phantasmal force* effect that can create the illusion that the barge (and her occupants) is anything from a monstrous flying creature to nothing but sky (six uses per day).

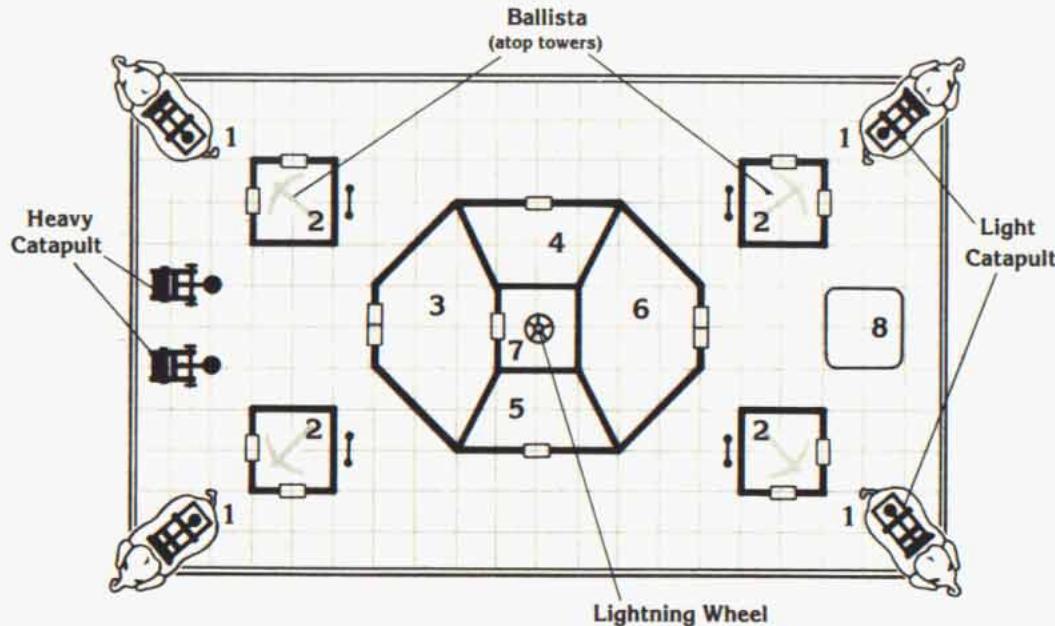
# The Flying Barge of Sayr Ulan

One Square = 5 Feet

The flying barge of Sayr Ulan is Sind's first attempt in several centuries to create a flying ship. When Rajadhiraja Chandra ul Nervi of Sind heard of the Princess Ark's visit to Putnabad, he directed his premier Jadugerya (magic-user) to design and build a flying vessel. A year and a half later, the flying barge was ready.

Jarita Maruti, the designer, learned a lot in the process of designing and enchanting her first flying vessel. Although the Rajadhiraja is delighted with his flying barge (despite materials costs that added up to more than one million gp), Jarita is already working on new and better designs.

- 1 Elephant-shaped Platform with light catapult
- 2 Ammunition Storehouse (swivel-mounted ballista on roof)
- 3 Command Bridge/Officers Room
- 4 Armory
- 5 Emergency Infirmary/General Storage
- 6 Food & Water Stores
- 7 Lightning wheel Room
- 8 Teleport Pad



## Building the Flying Barge

The process began with Jarita's research into the techniques used to enchant such a huge construction. The initial research took fifteen days. (This was a DM's ruling, as there are no specific rules covering this type of research. The task was equated with researching an 8th-level spell, resulting in a time period of one week plus eight days. As with enchanting huge magical items, 8th-level spells cannot be mastered until the magic-user reaches 18th level.)

There were no costs involved at this stage, as material components were not yet necessary (DM's ruling again). Jarita had a 72% chance of learning the necessary techniques by the end of the fifteen days (based on her Intelligence of 18, 30th level of experience, and the fact that the knowledge she sought was the equivalent of an 8th-level spell).

Next, Jarita had to design the flying vessel. After discussing the matter with Chandra ul Nervi, she decided a flying barge would be best. But she didn't know enough about barge design to do it on her own—she needed expert advice.

Initial consultations with the Salmanin family of barge-builders took two days. Jarita explained what she needed and the Salmanins discussed the ramifications of flight on the general design. After three more days, the first draft of the barge's construction plans was finished.

Meanwhile, Jarita had determined that enchanting the barge would require flame from a greater phoenix. Rajadhiraja Chandra ul Nervi sent an expedition of Jadugeryas (magic-users) and Hilmayas (fighters) to seek out a phoenix in the Burning Waste. Jarita insisted that the phoenix was not to be harmed in the process, as that would destroy her source of phoenix flame. In fact, Jarita decided to lead the expedition herself to make sure nothing went wrong.

Three weeks later, Jarita returned with five vials of phoenix flame. In return, she left behind five Sindhi warriors to guard the phoenix from other treasure-seeking adventurers. (Magic-users seem always to be hunting phoenixes for their feathers or other body parts.)

Immediately upon her return, Jarita commandeered a large building near the elephant stables and ordered three Jadugeryas and a dozen experienced barge-builders to assist her. There were no wages involved (the labor counts as taxes in Sind), but the royal treasury paid for their meals.

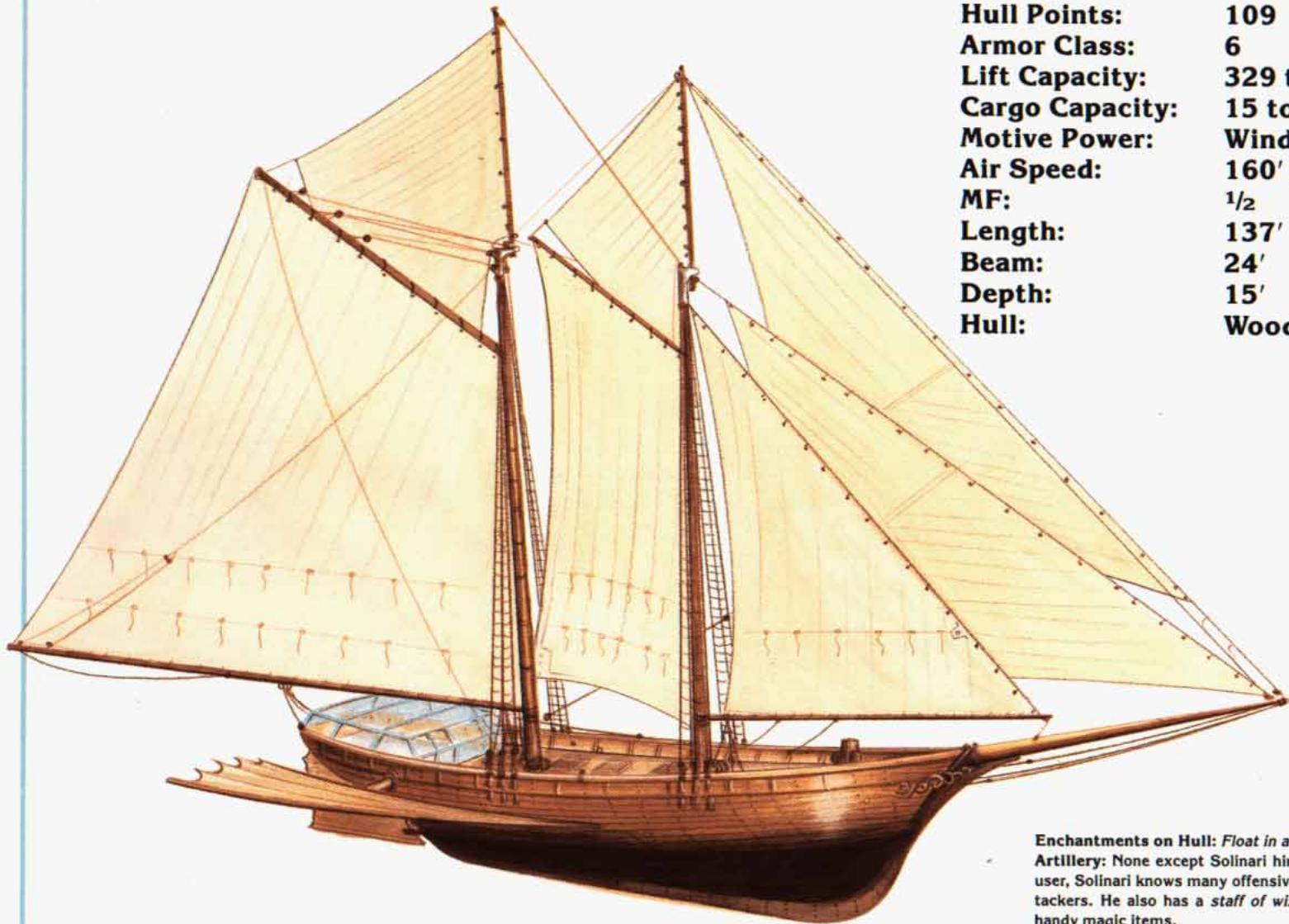
The barge required 48 sections. Cost to enchant each section was 12,200 gp (3000 gp for fly and 3,200 gp for *phantasmal force*); time to enchant was a little over 19 days. Jarita's chances of success were 87% for the fly enchantment and 90% for the *phantasmal force*. Her colleagues' chances of success averaged 73% and 76%.

The enchanters failed on 20 of the first 48 sections they tried during the first eight and a half months. (Had Jarita been working alone, it would have taken her nearly three years, although she would not have failed with quite so many segments.) In the same time period, the overseeing specialist (with a barge-building skill of 18) failed his supervising rolls five times (checking only once per week, but each failure caused a problem).

This added five days to the construction time as extra woodform spells were cast to correct the mistakes. In addition, one of the specialist's skill rolls was a natural 20; the DM ruled that one entire section had to be replaced. The 21 replacement segments took an additional 105 days and 256,200 gp. Frustratingly, they failed with 11 of the replacements. Jarita was beginning to regret the two special effects placed on the woodform segments—the barge would have been finished months ago if she had kept the design to only 12 sections, or even 24! Even worse, they were out of phoenix flame.

Construction ground to a halt while Jarita journeyed back to the phoenix's lair. After a bit of negotiation (protection in perpetuity in return for periodic access to the flame), she returned with enough phoenix flame to finish the job. Eighteen segments, 90 days, and 219,600 gp later (there were more failures), they finished the barge's frame. There were still the accoutrements to do...

# Alphatian Yacht



Built By:	Solinari Astriadan of Alphatia
Used By:	Solinari Astriadan
Tonnage:	275
Hull Points:	109
Armor Class:	6
Lift Capacity:	329 tons
Cargo Capacity:	15 tons
Motive Power:	Wind (Sails)
Air Speed:	160' (80')
MF:	1/2
Length:	137'
Beam:	24'
Depth:	15'
Hull:	Wooden

**Enchantments on Hull:** Float in air; create air; climate.

**Artillery:** None except Solinari himself. As a 22nd-level magic-user, Solinari knows many offensive spells he can use against attackers. He also has a staff of wizardry and a number of other handy magic items.

**Defense Notes:** The Enchanting's only defenses are Solinari's spellcasting and the expertise of her captain and crew.

# Alphatian Yacht

## One Square = Five Feet

The *Enchanting* is an Alphatian Windrider built like a schooner. She requires a crew of 12, including a Captain, first and second Mates, a Cook, and a Steward (who manages all culinary affairs and sees to the comfort of the owner and his guests). She's actually quite large, although landlubbers would undoubtedly find her belowdecks quite cramped.

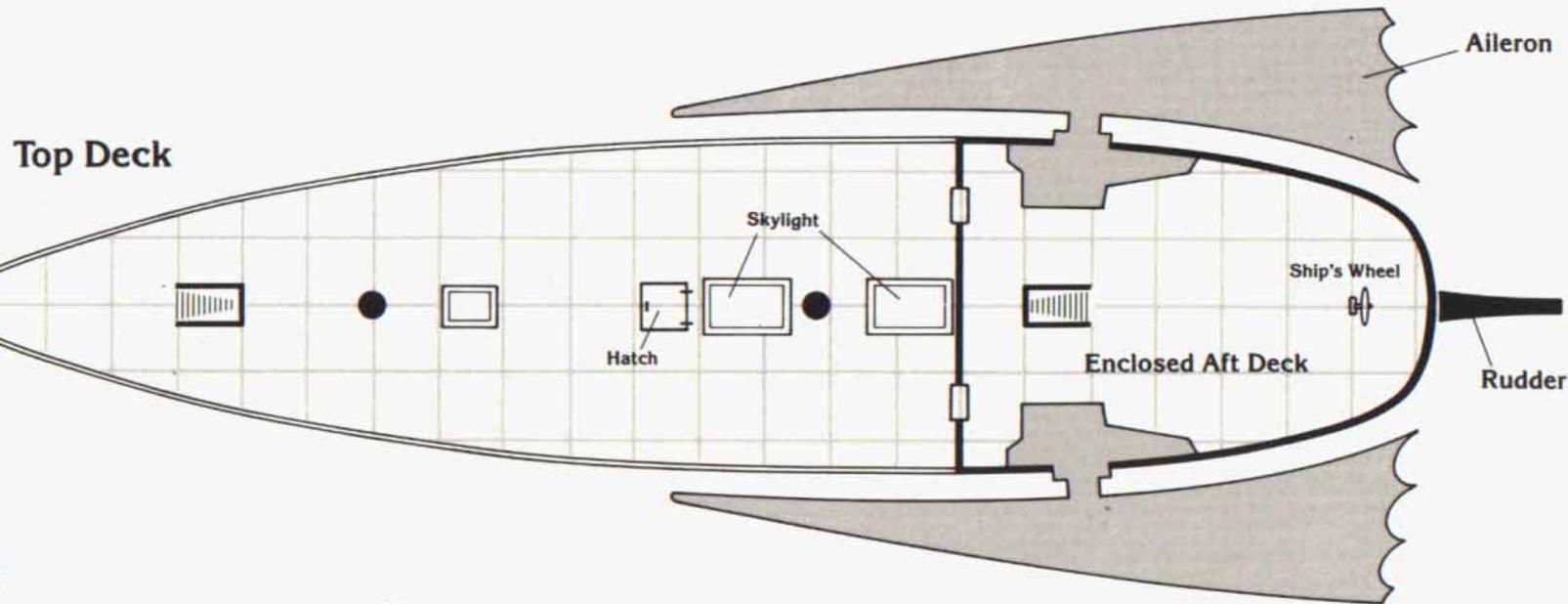
The ship's controls—a wheel for steering and ailerons for controlling altitude—are on the aft deck. From here, the helmsman can set a general course for the ship, although two people may be necessary to work the controls during emergency maneuvers. The aft deck is enclosed under a glass and steel canopy that protects the helmsman from the wind and weather without obstructing the view too much.

The real work of executing maneuvers rests on the shoulders of the crew. They must adjust sails and rigging to catch the wind at the correct angles for speed or maneuvers. The *Enchanting* can carry 18,000 square feet of sails controlled by nearly three miles of running rigging (the ropes used to set and trim the sails). The Captain shouts orders from the aft deck via a magically amplified megaphone, and the crew responds.

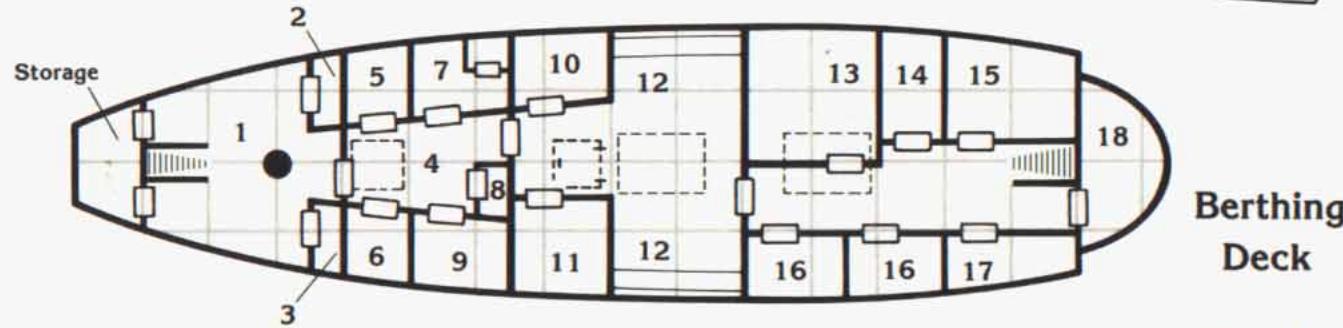
### A Typical Maneuver

Turning 30° to the right to tack against the wind might require the following series of commands:

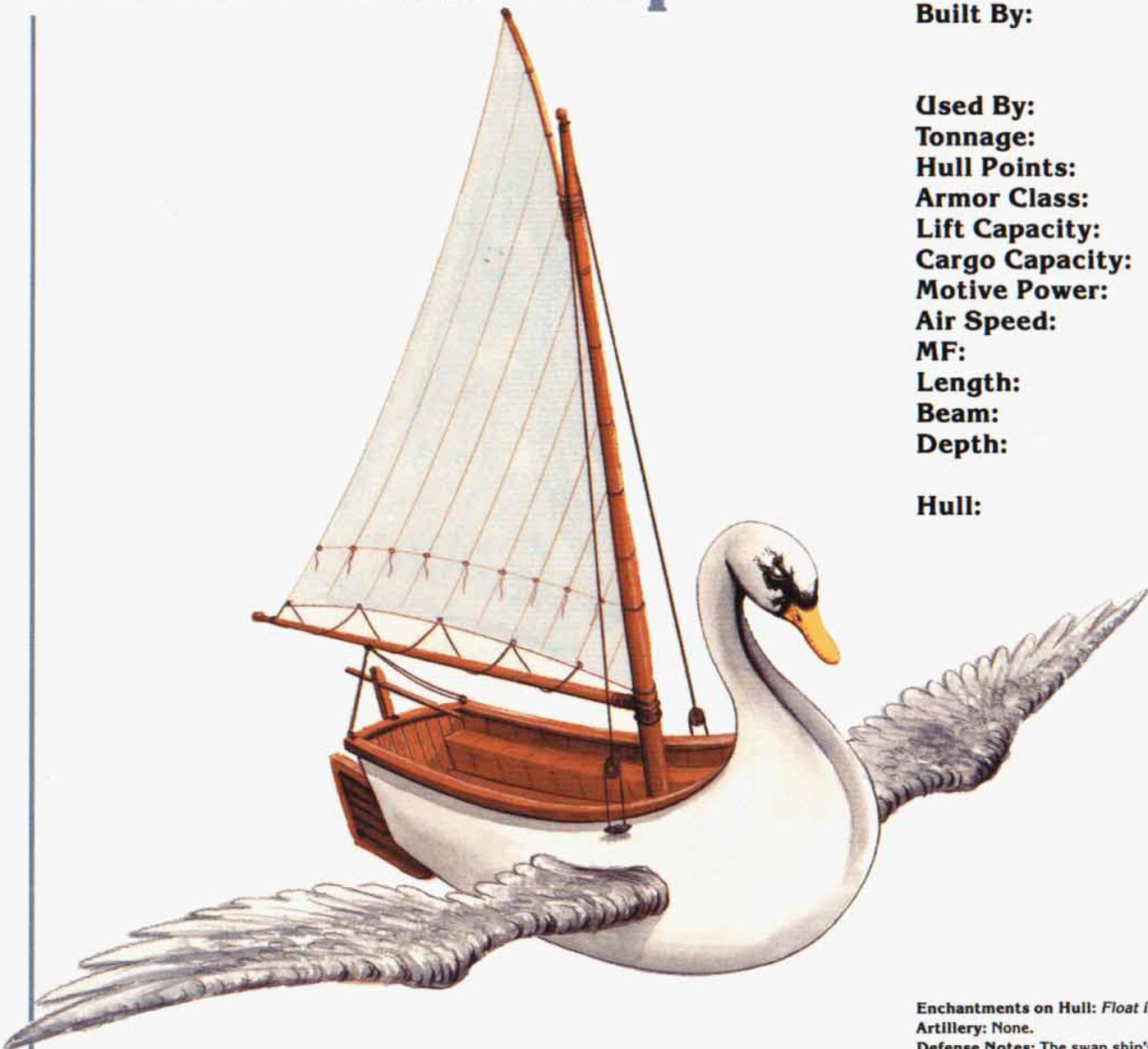
"Ready About!" (to which crew respond "Fore manned and ready," and "Mainmast manned and ready, sir!")  
"Helm's alee! Right full rudder!"  
"Ease the headsail sheets!"  
"Haul spanker amidships!"  
"Rise tacks and sheets!"  
"Mainsail haul!"  
"Shift headsail sheets!"  
"Ease spanker! Ease the helm!"  
"Let go, and haul!"  
"Set the main!"



- 1 Crew's Quarters
- 2 Carpenter's Stores
- 3 Water Closet
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Pantry/Coal & Wood Bin
- 6 Wash Room
- 7 Main Pantry (with ice box)
- 8 Crew's Weapons Locker  
(Captain keeps key)
- 9 Cabin: Cook & Steward
- 10 Cabin: 1st & 2nd Mates
- 11 Cabin: Captain
- 12 Main Lounge
- 13 Owner's Cabin
- 14 Water Closet
- 15 Library/Study
- 16 State Room
- 17 Private Pantry
- 18 Aft Lounge/Guest Cabin



# Elven Swan Ship



Built By:

Asvoria Treesearcher  
(an elf of the Feadiel  
clan)

Used By:

Asvoria Treesearcher

Tonnage: 4.8 tons

Hull Points: 3

Armor Class: 1

Lift Capacity: 5.8 tons

Cargo Capacity: 1 ton

Motive Power: Wind (Single Sail)

Air Speed: 240' (120')

MF: 1

Length: 15'

Beam: 6' (35' including wings)

Depth: 3' (8' including  
figurehead)

Hull: Wooden

Enchantments on Hull: *Float in air; shield (+5 to AC).*

Artillery: None.

Defense Notes: The swan ship's only defense is her improved Armor Class.

# Elven Swan Ship

One Square = 5 Feet

Asvoria Treesearcher, an elf of the Feadiel clan, created this flying vessel to aid in her search for the lost Trees of Life. (The Trees of Life are elven clan relics. Of the ten Mother Trees thought to exist, only eight are accounted for.)

The ship resembles a giant swan, with a swan's head figurehead on the bow and two wing-like ailerons. Asvoria laboriously trained a live oak tree to grow wide, flat branches from which she carved the ailerons. She attached the wings to the hull when she cast the *woodform* spell to create the ship. Asvoria enchanted the hull with *float in air* and *shield* spells. She enchanted the wings with a modified version of the *entangle* spell, which allows her to control their position by command words. A single triangular sail with a manually adjustable boom provides propulsion. Asvoria controls the ship's course with the sails, the ailerons, and a simple rudder.

The swan ship is designed to land primarily on water. Although the bottom of her hull is flat enough to land on solid ground, she cannot be safely landed in rough terrain. On level ground, she lists to one side, resting on a wingtip.

Although the swan ship can seat six elves fairly comfortably, Asvoria usually flies alone.

## Elven Enchanters

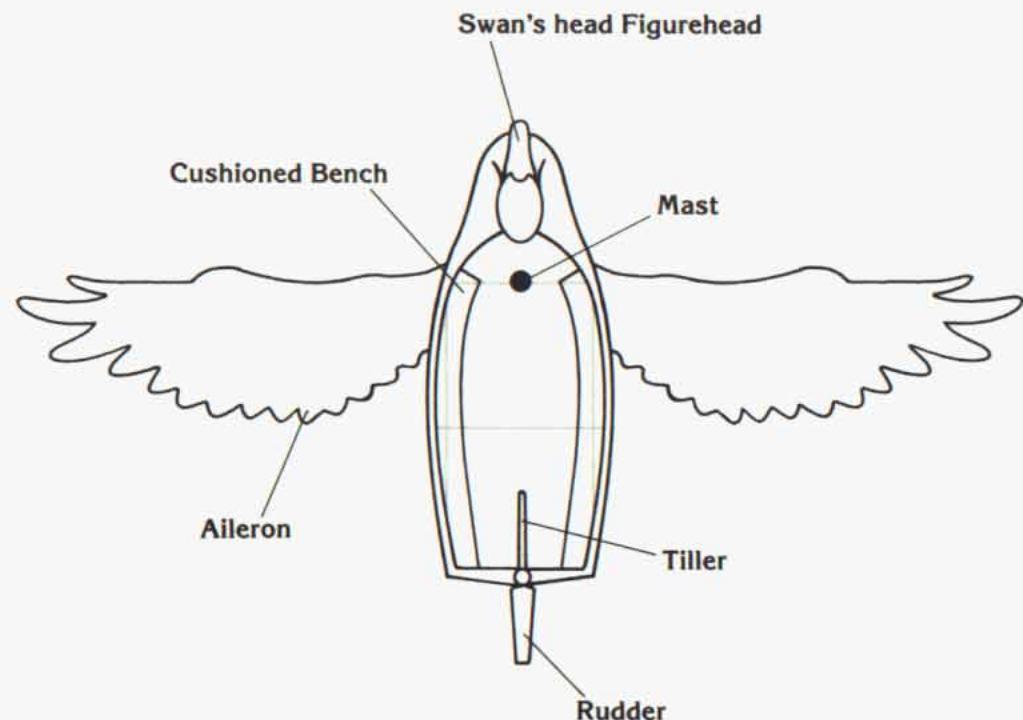
Elves cannot enchant huge magical items such as skyships through normal means (they cannot advance to 18th level, the normal requirement for enchanting huge magical items). There are a number of ways around this restriction, however.

One optional rule presented in the *Designer's Manual* allows DMs to treat small skyships (5 tons or less) as normal magic items, enchantable by 9th-level spellcasters. With this optional rule, name-level elves can create flying craft such as Asvoria's swan ship. They can create hulls with *clothform* and *woodform* spells (although the other form spells are beyond their capabilities). And they can enchant them with simple spells such as *float in air*, *levitate*, or *fly*.

Another optional rule presented in the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia* (pp. 266-267) allows elves to advance to 36th level, just as the human character classes can. High-level elves could then use spells through ninth level, and could begin enchanting skyships and other huge magical items when they reach 18th level. This may unbalance your campaign, however, making elves more powerful than you may like.

If you have the gazetteer *The Elves of Alheim*, you may use the rules under "Secrets of the Elves" to allow Treekeepers and their students to advance beyond 10th level in their magics. These rules also expand the number and type of spells available to elves, including some druidlike spells and spells known only to elves.

Finally, you may decide to stick with all the normal rules—elves cannot advance beyond 10th level, and only 18th-level spell-casters can enchant huge magical items. In this case, elves must rely on their clan relics to create anything like a skyship. The procedure for creating an elven *lightboat* is given in the *Cyclopedia*, p. 146. The same procedure can be used to create a flying swan ship like Asvoria's. A swan ship, being smaller than a *lightboat*, requires 50 ounces of *oil of sunlight*—and hence takes 50 years to create. A swan ship created this way could fly only in daylight, when the *oil of sunlight*'s magic can work. The ship would still use wind as her Motive Power, however, with an Air Speed of 240' (120').



## Elven Lightboats

The actual design of an elven *lightboat* is left up to the DM. The *Cyclopedia* hints that a *lightboat* is large enough to carry 10 elves (roughly the size of a sailing ship's lifeboat). It also states that the hull is made of enchanted leaves from the Tree of Life (the *lightboat* is very lightweight), and that the *lightboat* flies only in sunlight. The boat's Air Speed should be 360' (120').

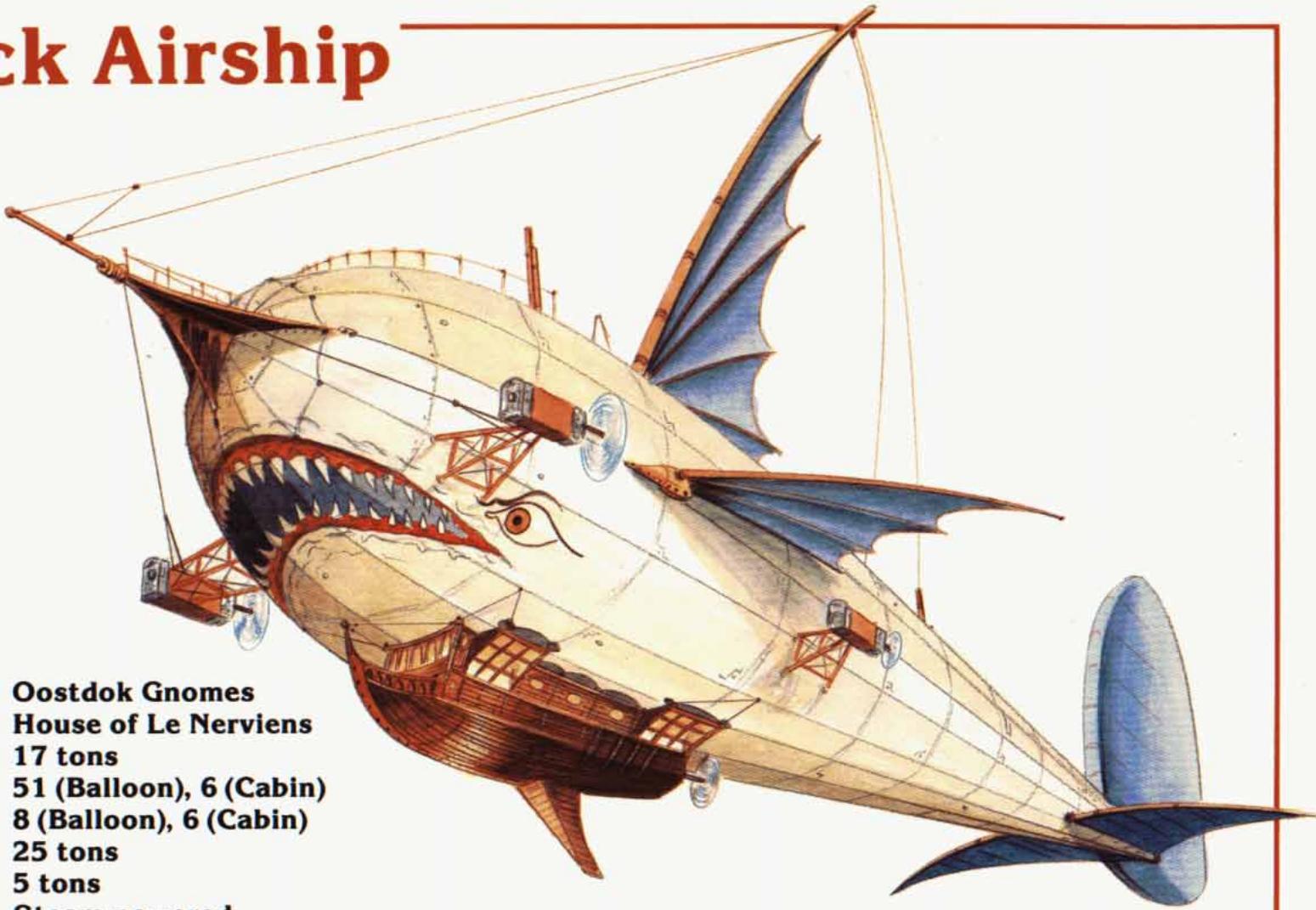
But a *lightboat* takes a minimum of 100 years of preparation—the Treekeeper must distill the required *oil of sunlight* from the sap and leaves of the Tree of Life. To make the elves' efforts worthwhile, the *lightboat* should have some special properties. As the ship is enchanted with the essence of sunlight itself, she should have a Maneuvering Factor of 3 (or even 5!). And the hull could be immune to all forms of damage except fire or darkness...

## Asvoria Treesearcher

Asvoria is an experienced elf well into her fifth century of life. She served as assistant and apprentice to Clan Feadiel's Treekeeper for many years. She has had a nearly life-long desire to find the lost Trees of Life, but had always felt duty-bound to her clan. At last her longing to find the lost Trees grew too strong for her to ignore. She crafted the swan ship and embarked on her quest.

**Combat Notes:** E10 (Attack rank D); AC 2 (*chain mail* +2, Dexterity bonus); hp 38; MV 120' (40'); #AT 2 weapons or 1 spell; Dmg by weapon or spell; Save E10; ML 10; AL L, S13, I17, W12, D14, Co11, Ch13. **Magical Items:** elven boots, elven cloak, ring of invisibility, wand of negation.

# Oostdock Airship



Built By:	Oostdok Gnomes
Used By:	House of Le Nerviens
Tonnage:	17 tons
Hull Points:	51 (Balloon), 6 (Cabin)
Armor Class:	8 (Balloon), 6 (Cabin)
Lift Capacity:	25 tons
Cargo Capacity:	5 tons
Motive Power:	Steam-powered propellers
Air Speed:	360' (120')
MF:	1/2
Length:	180' (Cabin 40')
Beam:	40' (Cabin 15')
Depth:	55' (Cabin 15')
Hull:	Silk over Wood & Metal Frame (Balloon) Wood (Cabin)

Enchantments on Hull: None.

Artillery: None.

Defense Notes: The airship's only defenses are the quick wits and imaginative engineering abilities of its gnome crew. They can do amazing things with a grappling hook on the end of their winch!

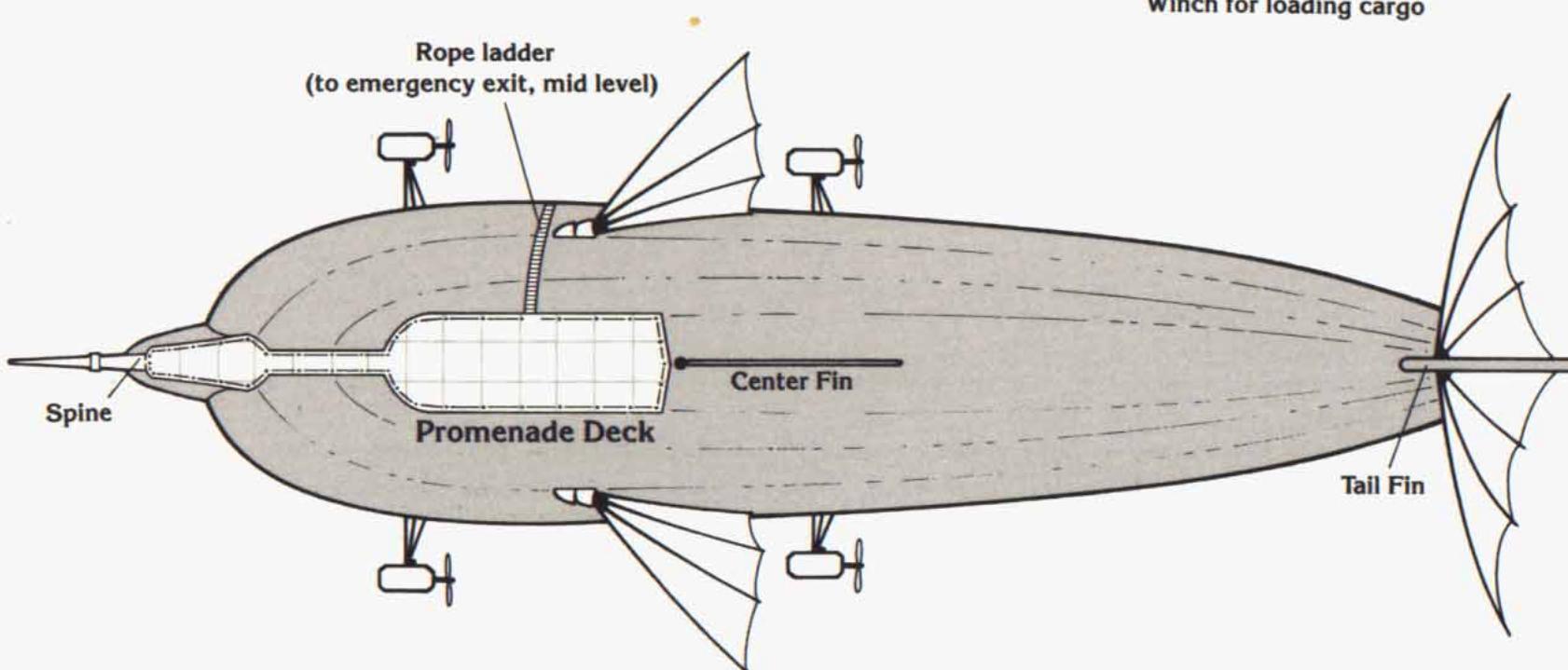
# Oostdock Airship

One Square = 5 Feet

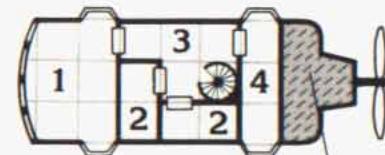
The gnomes of Oostdok (a floating continent in the Hollow World) have mastered the art of building airships held aloft by enormous hot-air balloons. These balloons are made of sturdy, lightweight, and naturally waterproof cloth woven from silk produced by a small silkworm native to the floating island. The balloon is stretched over a wooden and metal frame and filled with air pumped in by steam-powered machinery. A cabin attached to the underside of the balloon frame contains all the machinery and controls for operating the airship, as well as quarters for the five-gnome crew and a bit of cargo space. A typical cabin has three levels (5' per level leaves plenty of head room for the gnome crew).

There is an engineering section on every floor of a typical Oostdok airship. These rooms are always filled with the hissing and shrieking of pressurized air and steam leaking through many pipe seams. Gears whir, belts whiz, and unidentifiable (except to gnomes) machines shake, wheeze, and gyrate in an intricate dance. Somehow, it all manages to feed hot air into the balloon, turn the propellers, and operate the fins and stabilizing wings.

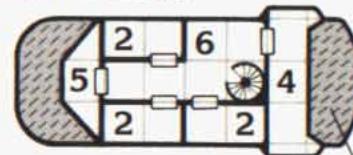
The secret to all the machinery lies in the engine, housed on the top level. This is a carefully crafted container enchanted with the *conjure fire elemental* spell (the only bit of enchantment the gnomes use in their airships). The engine can summon and contain one elemental per day for a period of one day minus 1d4 hours. Air and water are fed into the engine, and are heated by the fire elemental. The heated air is pumped up into the balloon while the steam travels under high pressure through a convoluted series of pipes to the other engine rooms. Complicated turbine, belt, and gear systems drive the air pumps and the many external propellers and fins.



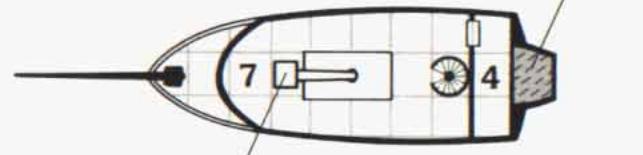
Cabin, Upper Level



Cabin, Mid-Level



Cabin, Lower Level



Machinery

Winch for loading cargo

# Oberack's Dragon Prow Longship



**Built By:**

**Oberack  
of Ostland**

**Used By:**

**Oberack  
22.25 tons**

**Tonnage:**

**13**

**Hull Points:**

**1**

**Armor Class:**

**27 tons**

**Cargo Capacity:**

**4 tons**

**Motive Power:**

**Four Huge White  
Dragons**

**Air Speed:**

**360' (120')**

**MF:**

**1/2**

**Length:**

**45'**

**Beam:**

**15'**

**Depth:**

**3'**

**Hull:**

**Wooden**

**Enchantments on Hull:** *Float in air; shield (+5 AC); phantasmal force (illusion that the vessel is an enormous white dragon); protection from normal missiles* (to protect the crew, but not the dragons). The woodform hull was crafted with a special lightweight wood for a weight reduction of 40%.

**Artillery:** 2 ballistae (AC4, hp 9, damage 1d10 + 6). Each dragon can also use a breath weapon (a cone of cold) three times per day.

**Defense Notes:** The longship's hull is enchanted with a better Armor Class (taking the maximum +5 to AC possible with enhancements of the *shield* spell). In addition, a command word can cause the illusion of an enormous white dragon to appear around the ship, making the longship and her harnessed dragons look like five white dragons flying in formation. Another command word dispels the illusion, but it can be recalled at any time.

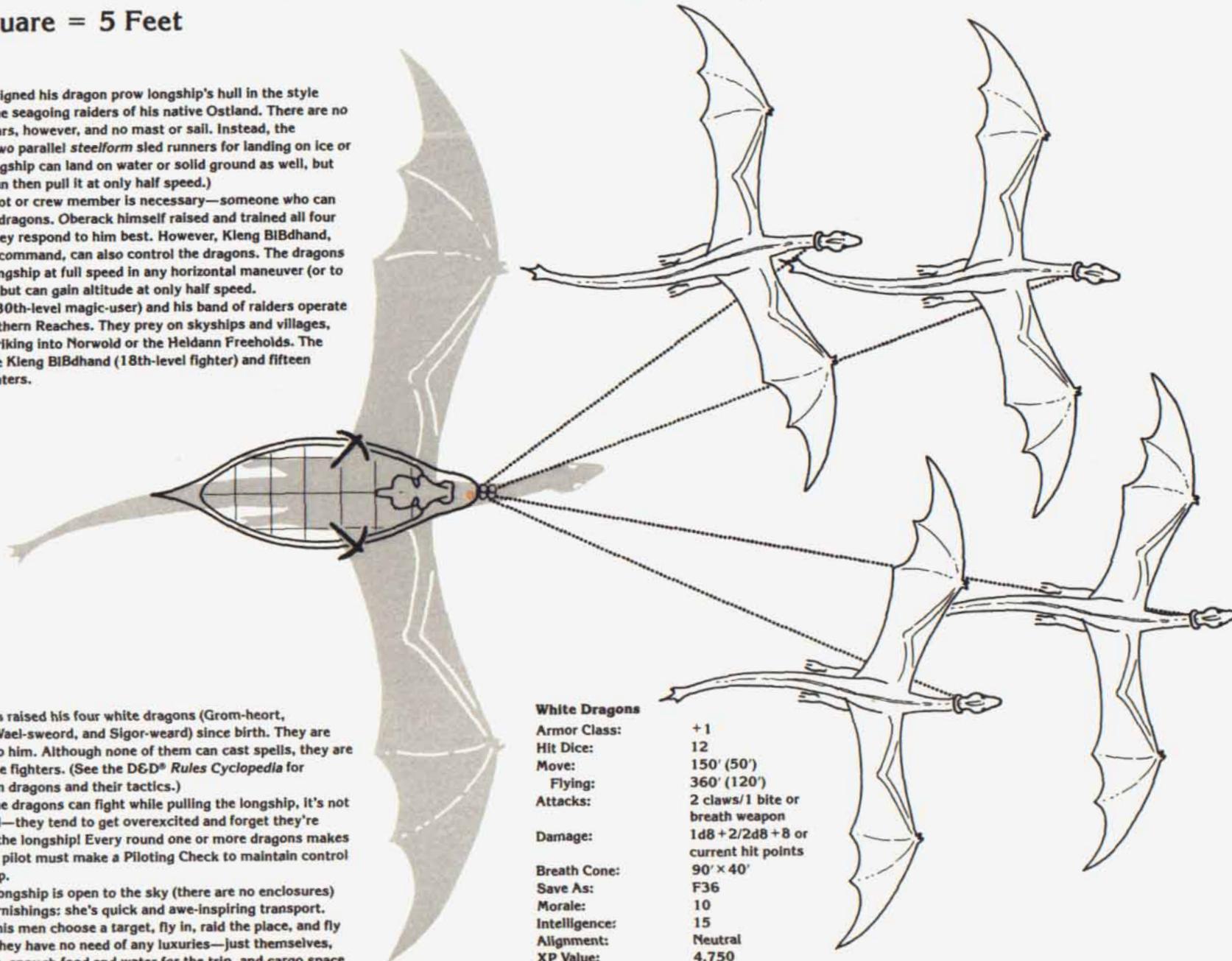
# Oberack's Dragon Prow Longship

One Square = 5 Feet

Oberack designed his dragon prow longship's hull in the style preferred by the seagoing raiders of his native Ostland. There are no oarlocks for oars, however, and no mast or sail. Instead, the longship has two parallel steelform sled runners for landing on ice or snow. (The longship can land on water or solid ground as well, but the dragons can then pull it at only half speed.)

Only one pilot or crew member is necessary—someone who can command the dragons. Oberack himself raised and trained all four dragons, so they respond to him best. However, Kleng BiBdhand, the second-in-command, can also control the dragons. The dragons can pull the longship at full speed in any horizontal maneuver (or to lose altitude), but can gain altitude at only half speed.

Oberack (a 30th-level magic-user) and his band of raiders operate out of the Northern Reaches. They prey on skyships and villages, sometimes striking into Norwold or the Heldann Freeholds. The raiders include Kleng BiBdhand (18th-level fighter) and fifteen 10th-level fighters.



Oberack has raised his four white dragons (Grom-heart, Hilde-wyrm, Wael-sword, and Sigor-weard) since birth. They are utterly loyal to him. Although none of them can cast spells, they are still formidable fighters. (See the D&D® Rules Cyclopedia for information on dragons and their tactics.)

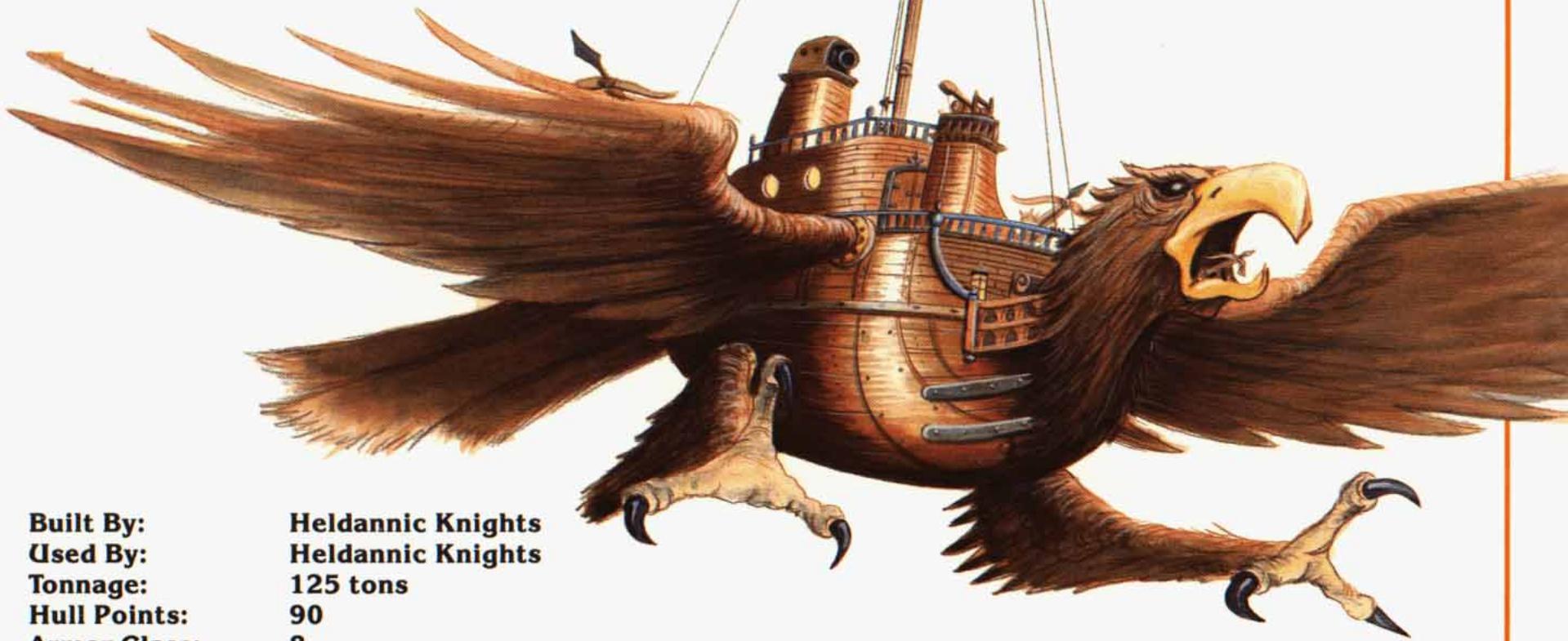
Although the dragons can fight while pulling the longship, it's not recommended—they tend to get overexcited and forget they're harnessed to the longship! Every round one or more dragons makes an attack, the pilot must make a Piloting Check to maintain control of the longship.

Oberack's longship is open to the sky (there are no enclosures) and has no furnishings: she's quick and awe-inspiring transport. Oberack and his men choose a target, fly in, raid the place, and fly away again. They have no need of any luxuries—just themselves, their weapons, enough food and water for the trip, and cargo space for their plunder.

## White Dragons

Armor Class:	+1
Hit Dice:	12
Move:	150' (50')
Flying:	360' (120')
Attacks:	2 claws/1 bite or breath weapon
Damage:	1d8 + 2/2d8 + 8 or current hit points
Breath Cone:	90' × 40'
Save As:	F36
Morale:	10
Intelligence:	15
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	4,750
Load:	12,000 cn

# Light Heldannic Warbird



Built By:	Heldannic Knights
Used By:	Heldannic Knights
Tonnage:	125 tons
Hull Points:	90
Armor Class:	8
Lift Capacity:	175 tons
Cargo Capacity:	10 tons
Motive Power:	Immortal Artifact (additional Air Speed provided by single mast with sails)
Air Speed:	360' (120')
MF:	1/2
Length:	175' (including tail)

Beam:	225' (including wings)
Depth:	40'
Hull:	Canvas and leather over wooden frame

Enchantments on Hull: None.

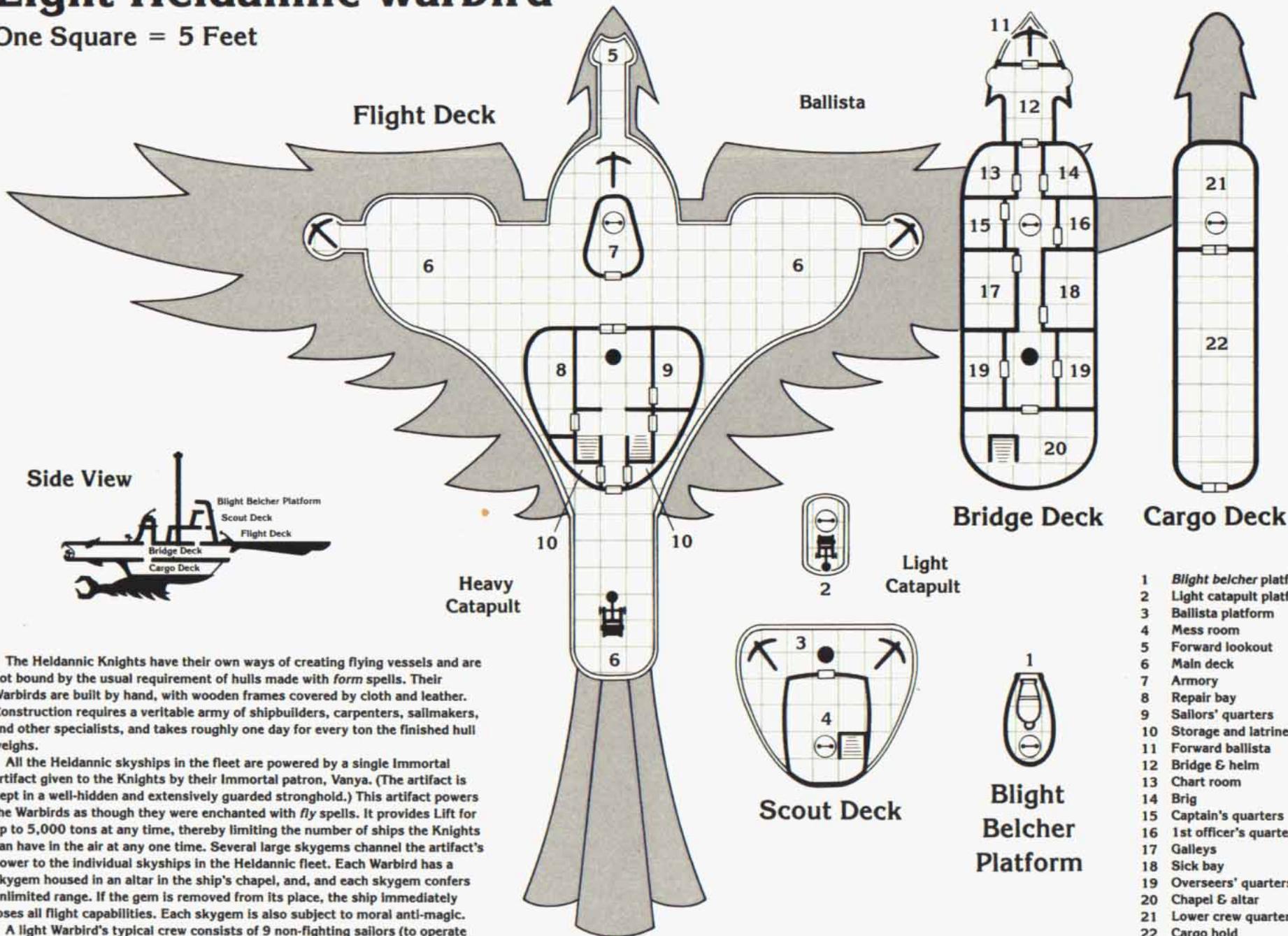
Artillery: The light Heldannic Warbird's most devastating attack comes from her *blight belcher*. Treat the attack as a *disintegrate* spell with a 300' range. The *blight belcher* can be used once per day. In addition, the Warbird carries eight siege weapons:

- 6 Ballistae (AC4, hp 9, damage 1d10 + 6)
- 1 Light Catapult (AC 4, hp 18, damage 1d8 + 8)
- 1 Heavy Catapult (AC 0, hp 27, damage 1d10 + 10)

Defense Notes: The light Heldannic Warbird has no special defenses.

# Light Heldannic Warbird

One Square = 5 Feet



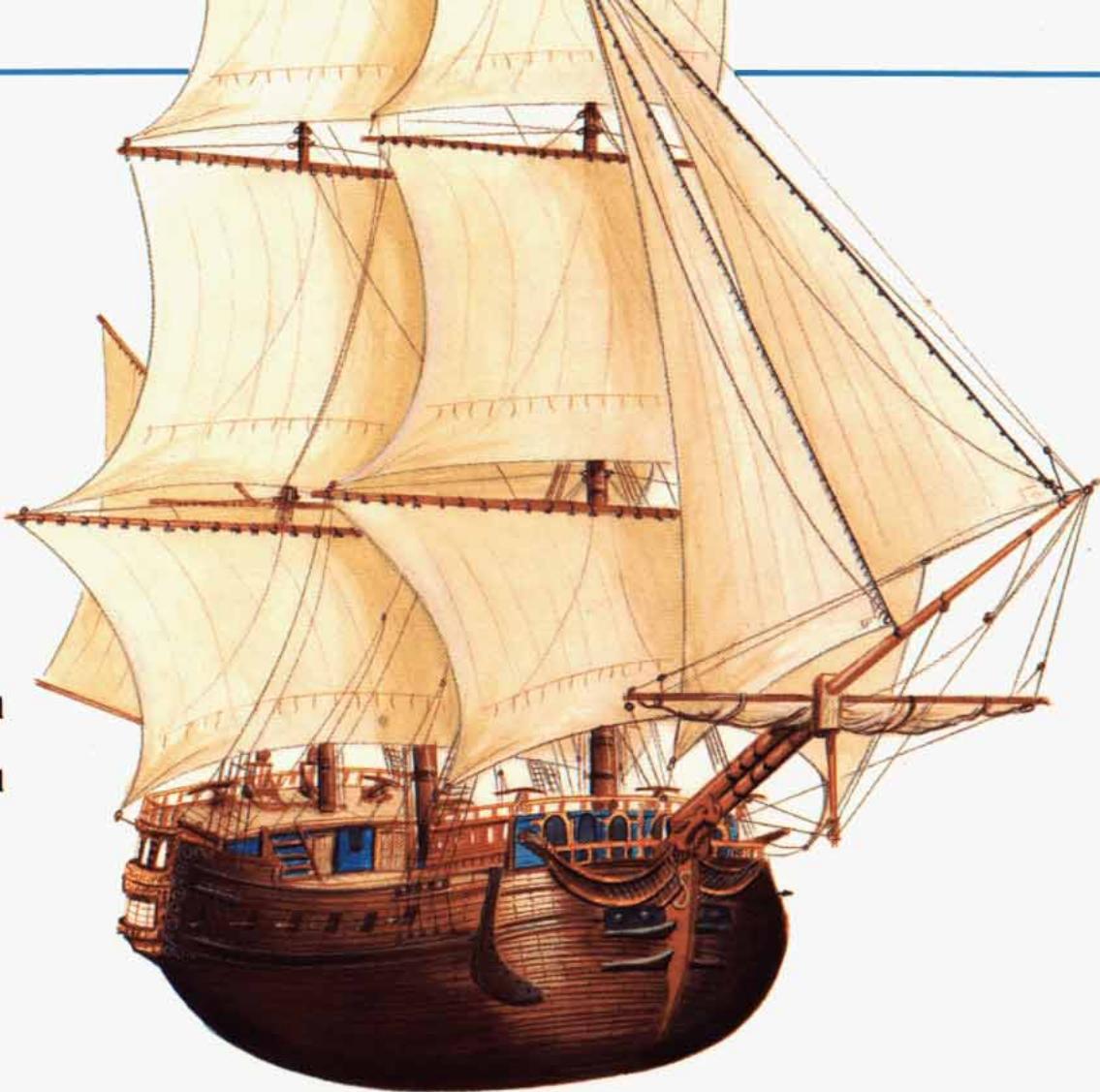
The Heldannic Knights have their own ways of creating flying vessels and are not bound by the usual requirement of hulls made with *form* spells. Their Warbirds are built by hand, with wooden frames covered by cloth and leather. Construction requires a veritable army of shipbuilders, carpenters, sailmakers, and other specialists, and takes roughly one day for every ton the finished hull weighs.

All the Heldannic skyships in the fleet are powered by a single Immortal artifact given to the Knights by their Immortal patron, Vanya. (The artifact is kept in a well-hidden and extensively guarded stronghold.) This artifact powers the Warbirds as though they were enchanted with *fly* spells. It provides Lift for up to 5,000 tons at any time, thereby limiting the number of ships the Knights can have in the air at any one time. Several large skygems channel the artifact's power to the individual skyships in the Heldannic fleet. Each Warbird has a skygem housed in an altar in the ship's chapel, and, and each skygem confers unlimited range. If the gem is removed from its place, the ship immediately loses all flight capabilities. Each skygem is also subject to moral anti-magic.

A light Warbird's typical crew consists of 9 non-fighting sailors (to operate the sails) 24 elite marines, 6 knight overseers, and a captain.

# Alphatian Man-of-War

Built By:	Alphatian Imperial Navy
Used By:	Alphatian Imperial Navy
Motive Power:	Wind (Sails)
Length:	220'
Beam:	70'
Depth:	55'
Hull:	Wooden
Tonnage:	1,530
Cargo Capacity:	1,400 tons
Lift Capacity:	3,000 tons
Armor Class:	1
Hull Points:	595
Air Speed:	160' (80')
MF:	1/2



**Enchantments on Hull:** *Levitate, shield (+5 AC), protection from normal missiles, create air, climate, spell turning, mind barrier, invisibility, detect invisible* (so the crew can see when the ship is *invisible*), *teleport* (ship and crew once per day).

**Artillery:** Marines are armed with wands of fireballs (20%), lightning (20%), confusion (10%), and death (10%). The remaining marines are fighters who man the siege weapons.

21 Ballistae (AC 4, hp 9, damage 1d10 + 6)

20 Light Catapults (AC 4, hp 18, damage 1d8 + 8)

**Defense Notes:** *Mind barrier* continuously protects crew from confusion and similar attacks. *Protection from normal missiles* is as per the spell, and protects the crew. *Spell turning* counteracts spells targeted at the ship. *Invisibility* hides the ship and all aboard until the ship enters combat (five uses per day).

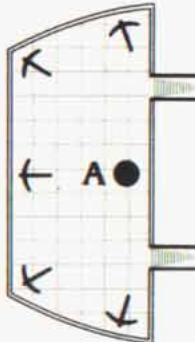
# Alphatian Man-of-War

One Square = 5 Feet

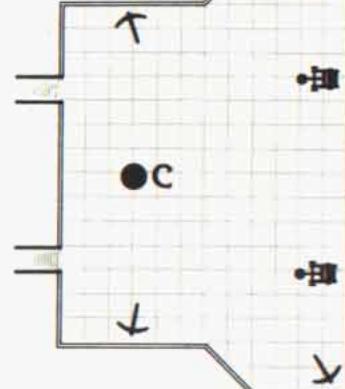
The Alphatian Man-of-War is a heavy-duty fighting skyship. She carries a crew of 200 airmen and 400 Imperial Marines (most with spellcasting capabilities). Officers include a captain and at least one high-level enchanter capable of making repairs. Base cost to enchant (excluding accoutrements, failed attempts, and wages): 5,610,000 gold pieces.

A	Foremast
B	Mainmast
C	Aftmast
D	Bowsprit
1	Bow (Anchors & winches)
2	Bolt Storage
3	Pantry
4	Galley
5	Main Deck
6	Officers' Lounge
7	State Room
8	Captain's Cabin
9	Chart Room
10	Library
11	Chief Enchanter's Cabin
12	Marine Quarters
13	Armory
14	Marine Commander's Quarters
15	Ships' Stores
16	Crew Quarters
17	Petty Officers
18	Physician's Quarters
19	Surgery
20	Medical Stores
21	Brig
22	Cold Storage
23	Cargo Hold
L	Storage Locker

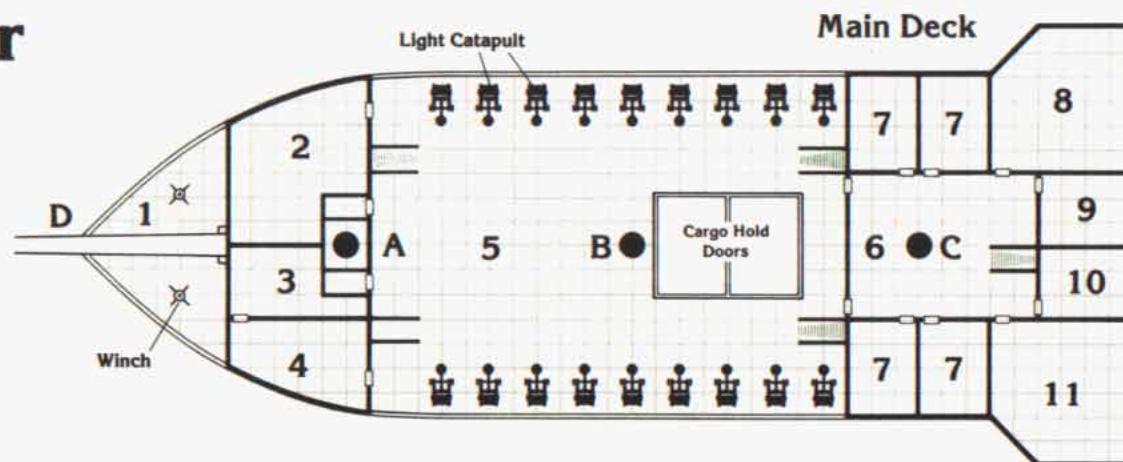
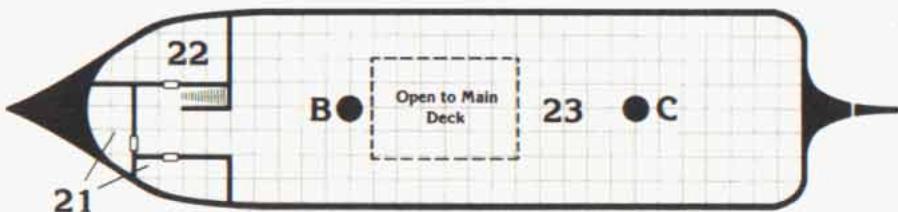
Forecastle



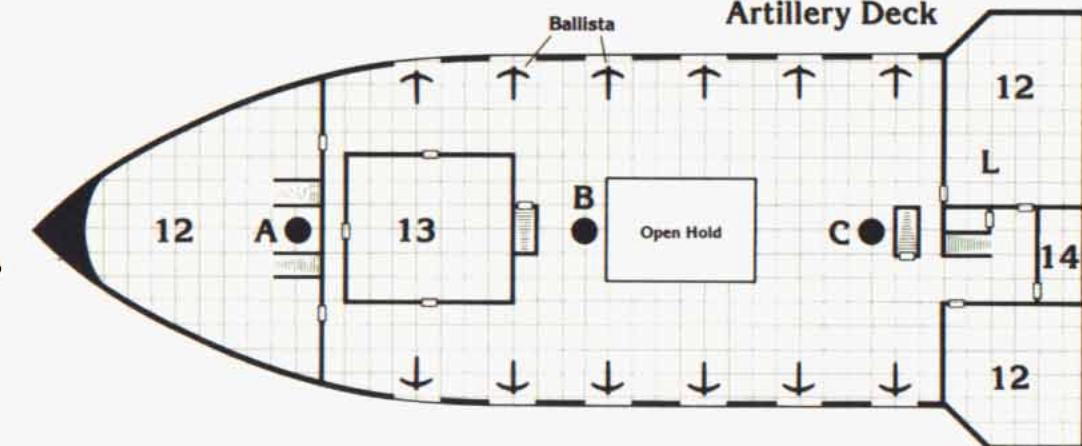
Stern Castle



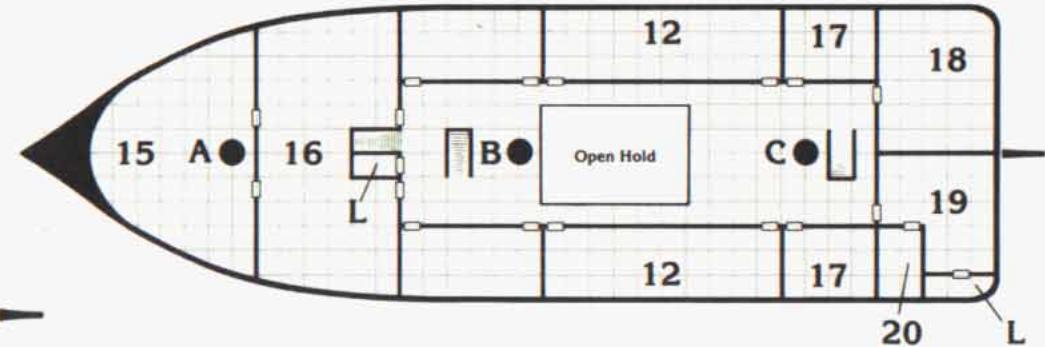
Cargo Deck



Artillery Deck

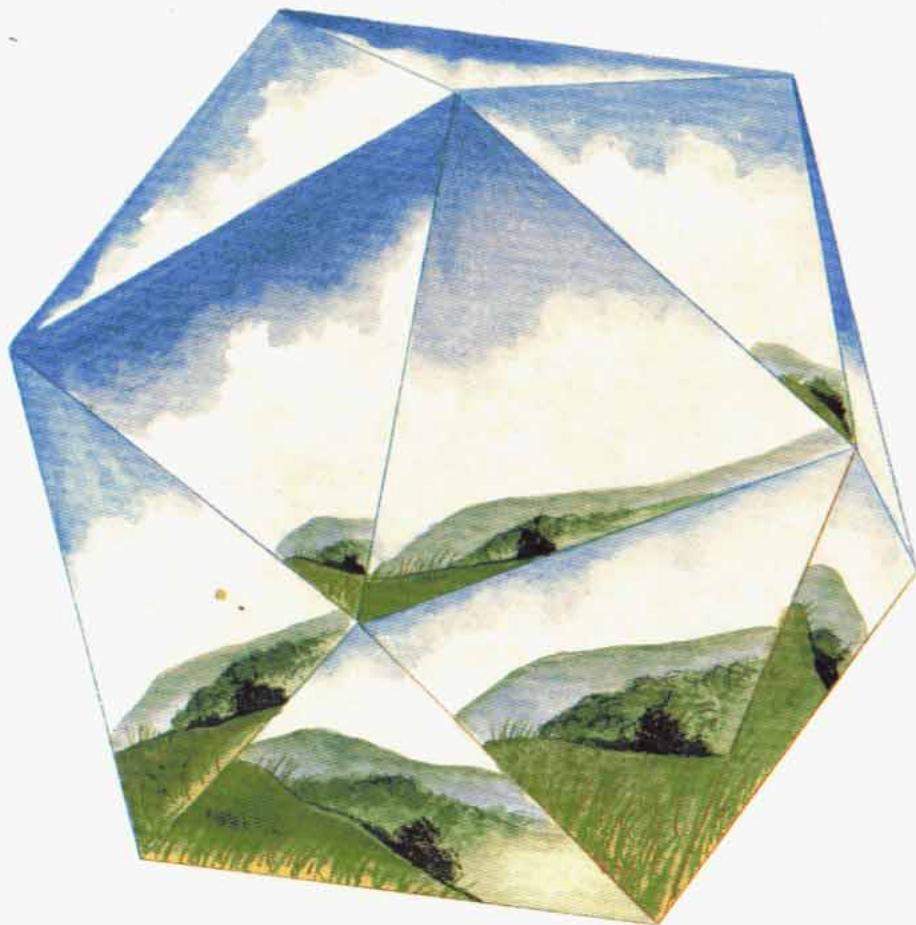


Mid Deck



# Azlum Swith's Geodome Airship

Built By:	<b>Azlum Swith, Explorer</b>
Used By:	<b>Azlum Swith</b>
Tonnage:	<b>281</b>
Hull Points:	<b>63</b>
Armor Class:	<b>1</b>
Flight Capacity:	<b>563 tons</b>
Cargo Capacity:	<b>100</b>
Motive Power:	<b>Greater Dynamo of Flying</b>
Air Speed:	<b>360' (120')</b>
MF:	<b>1/3</b>
Length:	<b>80'</b>
Beam:	<b>80'</b>
Depth:	<b>93'</b>
Hull:	<b>Mirrored Stone</b>



**Enchantments on Hull:** *Float in air; shield (+5 AC); survival; anti-magic shell; flesh to stone; meteor swarm; prismatic wall.* Three of the geodome's faces are also enchanted with *passwall*.

**Artillery:** On the appropriate command word, any chosen face can cast a *meteor swarm* spell (the ship as a whole has 5 uses per day). Azlum Swith can also command one face (or all faces, with a different command word) to cast *flesh to stone* on the first creature to gaze upon its surface (5 uses per day).

**Defense Notes:** The airship is permanently enchanted with an *anti-magic shell* that encloses the geodome in an invisible barrier 1" from its surfaces; a command word disengages the *shell* so that the *meteor swarm* or *flesh to stone* capabilities may be used. When activated, the *prismatic wall* defense covers the entire ship's surface and has a duration of 6 turns (5 uses per day).

# Azium Swith's Geodome Airship

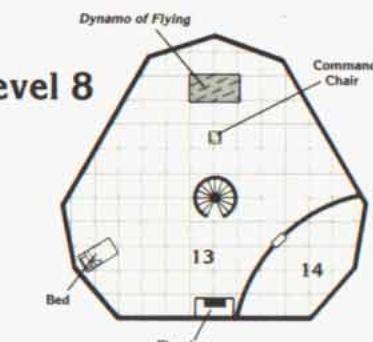
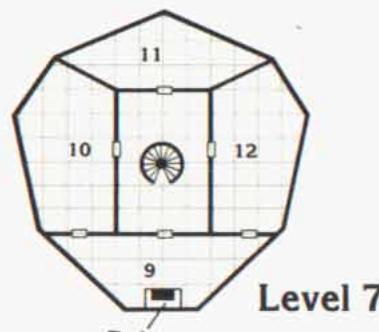
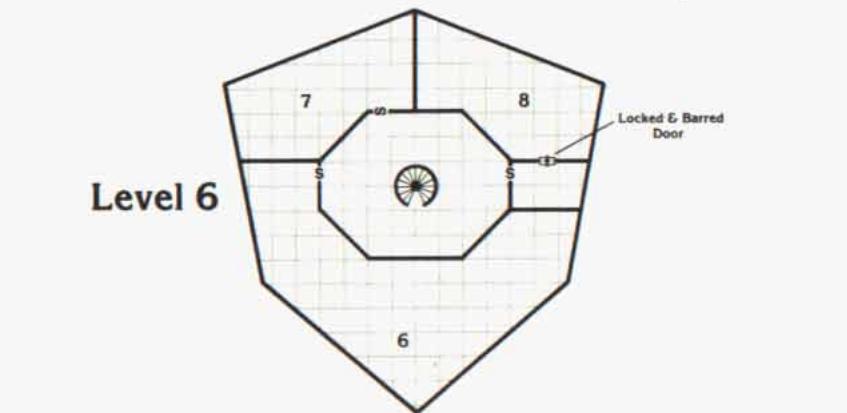
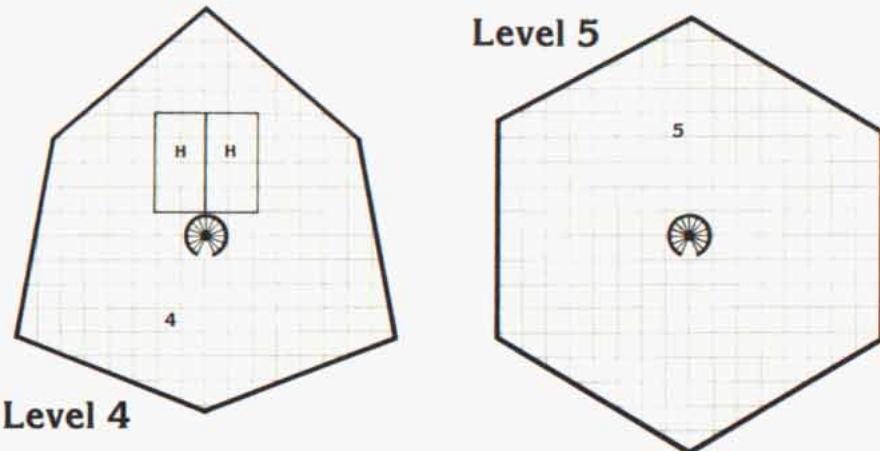
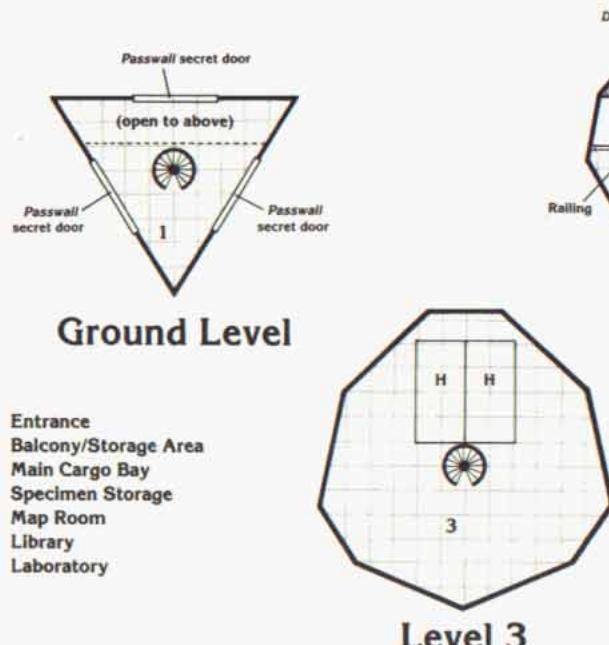
One Square = 5 Feet

Azium Swith designed his airship in the shape of an icosahedron (a twenty-sided regular polyhedron). He placed two special effects on the *stoneforms* he cast to construct the frame: the outer surfaces are mirrored and the walls are transparent from the inside. (Tapestries and curtains can be drawn across most walls to shade a room.) The entire ship is powered by a *greater dynamo of flying* that Azium enchanted with *fly* and *travel* capabilities. As a safeguard, Azium enchanted the ship's frame with *float in air*. If the *dynamo* ever fails, the frame's enchantments should keep the ship from crashing.

With *survival* enchanted onto the frame and the travel capabilities of the *dynamo*, Azium's geodome airship can travel in atmosphere, under water, in the Void beyond the Skyshield, and through other dimensions and planes. For now, however, Azium is busy exploring Mystara. He's covered roughly a third of the planet's surface (including the continent of Brun) and intends to explore and map the rest thoroughly before venturing beyond the Skyshield or into other dimensions. He has gathered an enormous wealth of cartographic data. The map room on the airship's central level is littered with three-dimensional miniature models of regions Azium has explored, complete with 6" high mountains carefully crafted with *stoneform* spells and rivers simulated with a modified version of the *hallucinatory terrain* spell. Map cases hold thousands of hand-drawn maps and charts and sketches.

Swith also collects specimens during his explorations. His collection includes unique and unusual minerals, soil samples, marine shells, and preserved plant and animal specimens. He keeps a very few intriguing live specimens of small plants and animals as well.

The base cost to enchant the geodome (excluding accoutrements and failed attempts) was 406,000 gp. When he enchanted the geodome, Azium Swith was a 31st-level mage (with Intelligence 18). Even so, the three 9th-level spells he enchanted on each frame section—*survival*, *meteor swarm*, and *prismatic wall*—significantly dropped his chances of success. In the end, creating and enchanting the geodome cost 1,231,000 gp and took more than three years. The *greater dynamo of flying* cost 160,000 gp and took six months to enchant.





1094XXX0701



## The Plain of Fire

Kesret Oases

## The Sind Desert

win Oases

D

Nawmmid  
Sand  
Flats

Sulf River

The  
Burning  
Waste

The Barren Plain

The Sea of Dread

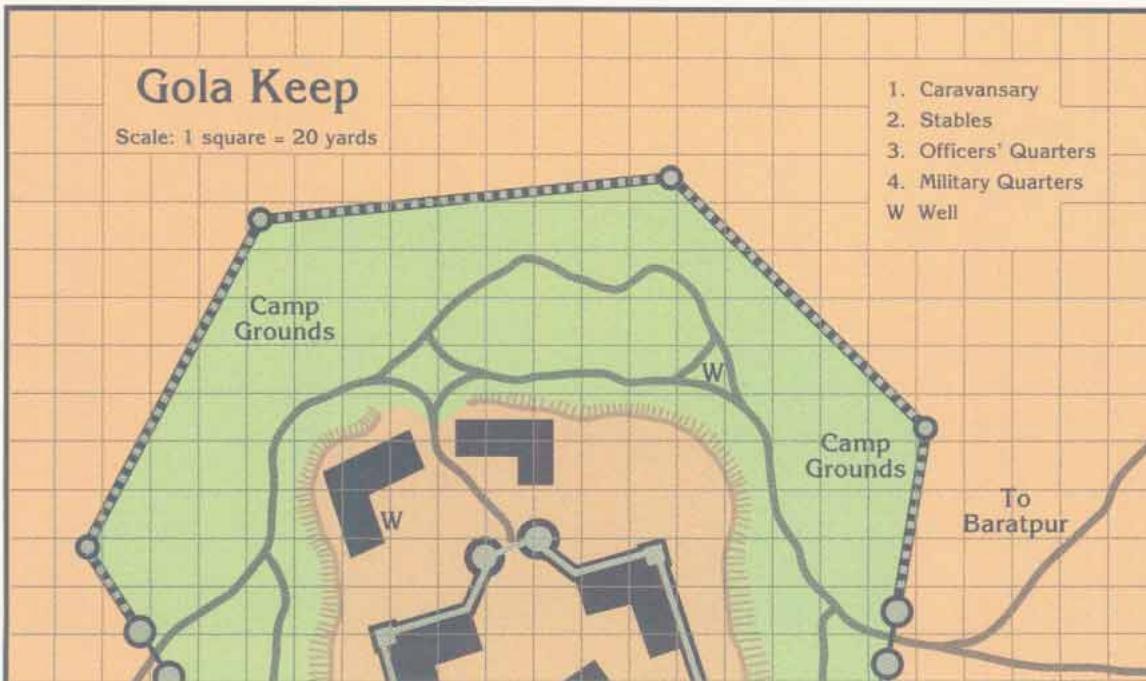
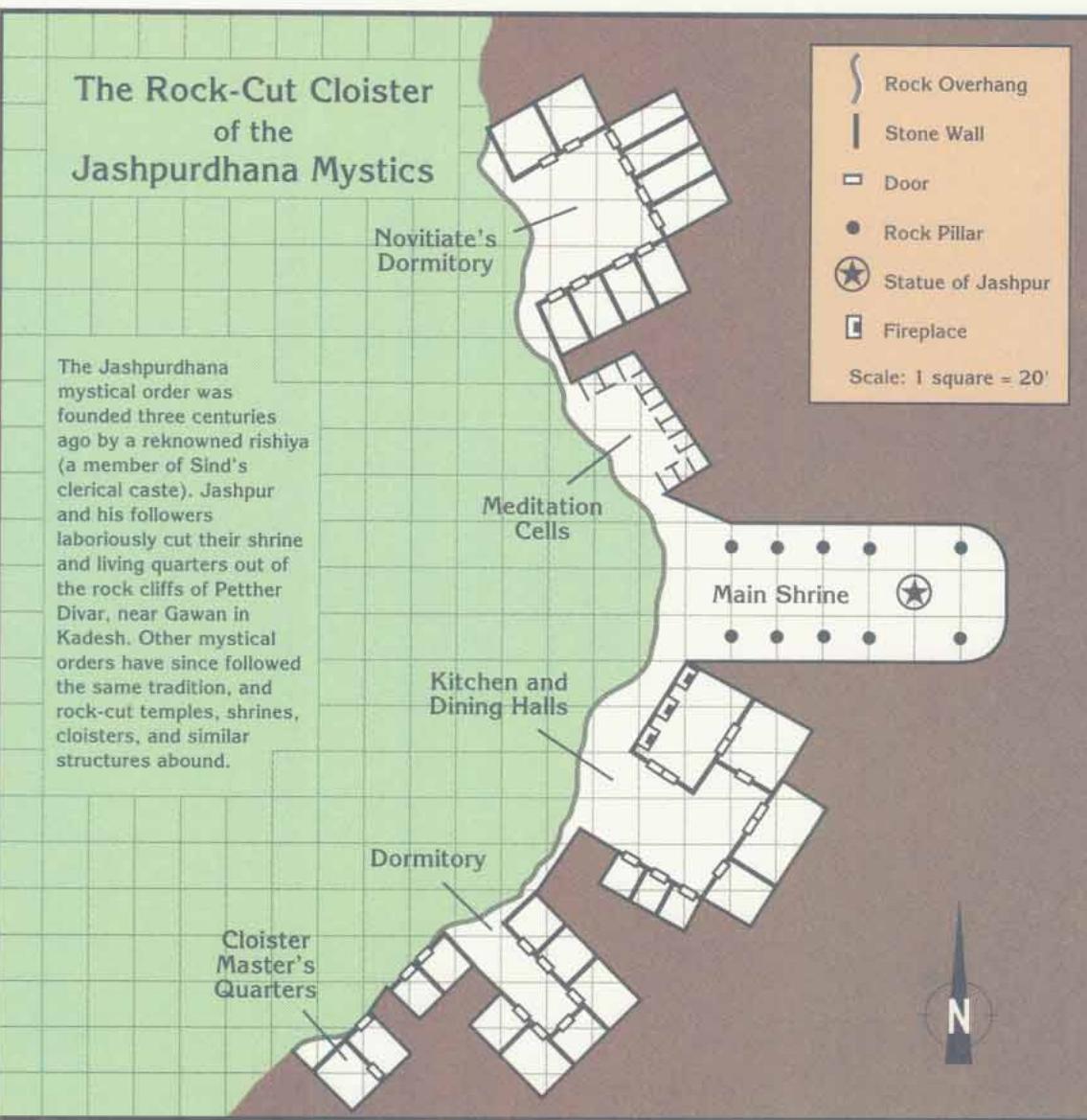
The Great

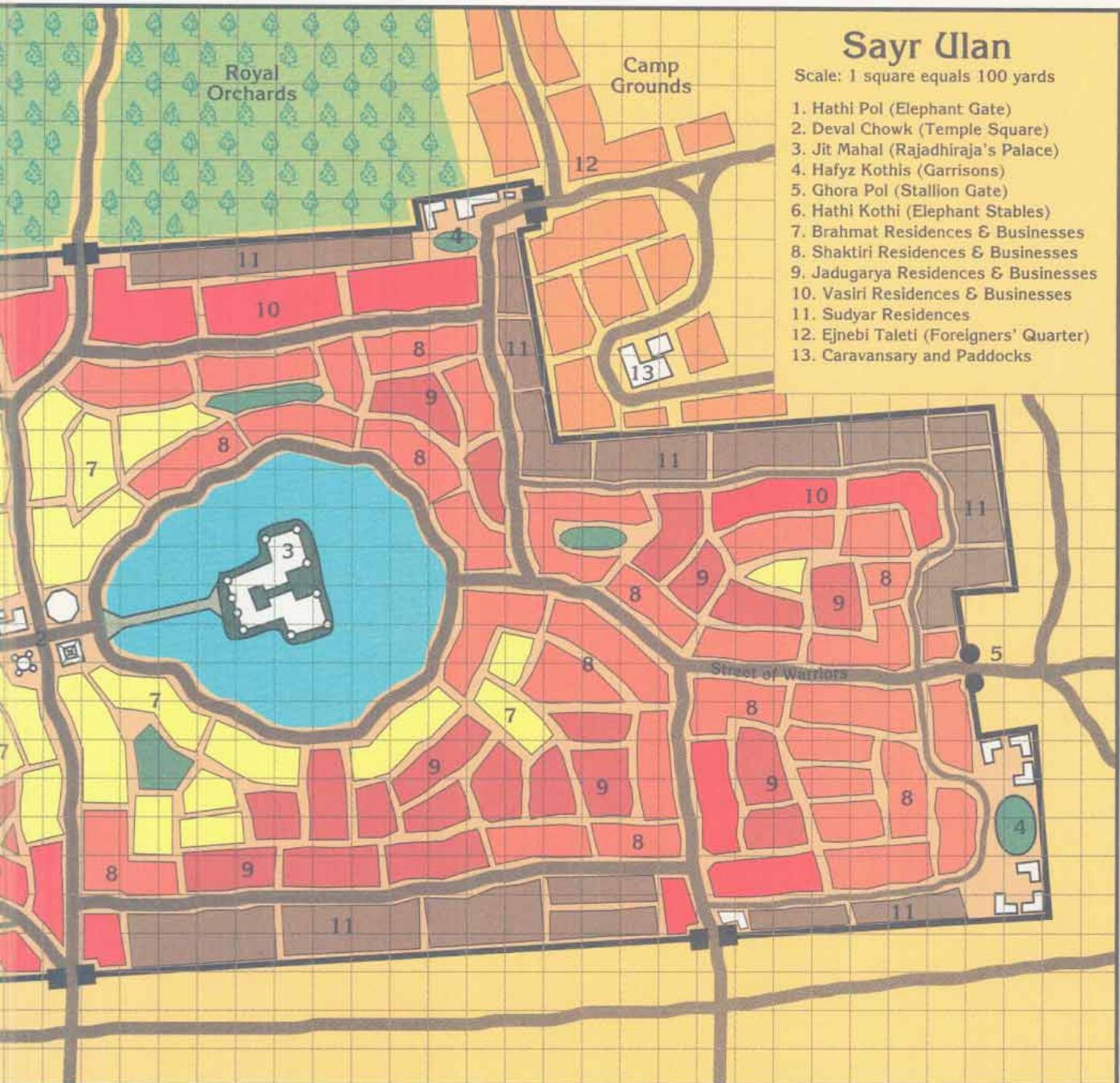
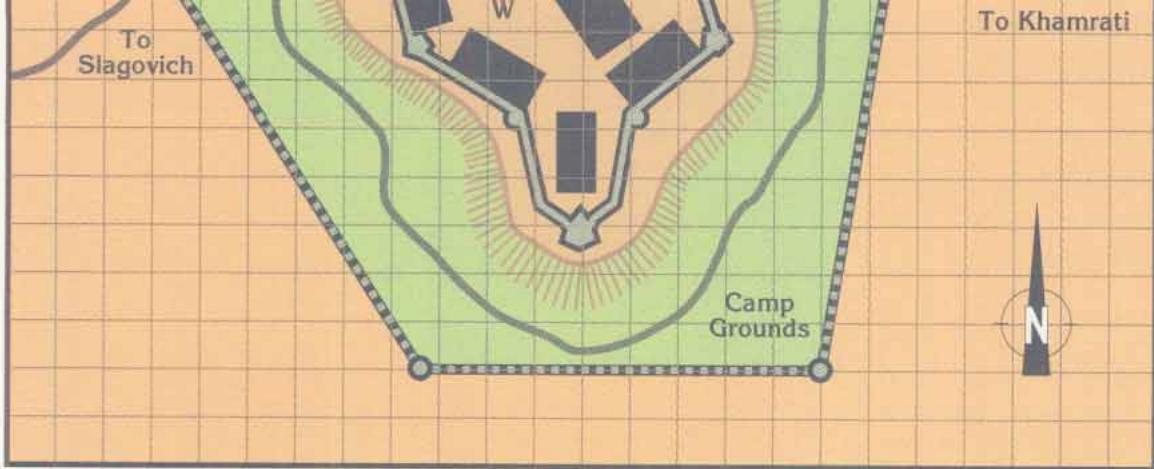
Scale: 1 hex equals 24

# Adri Varm Plateau

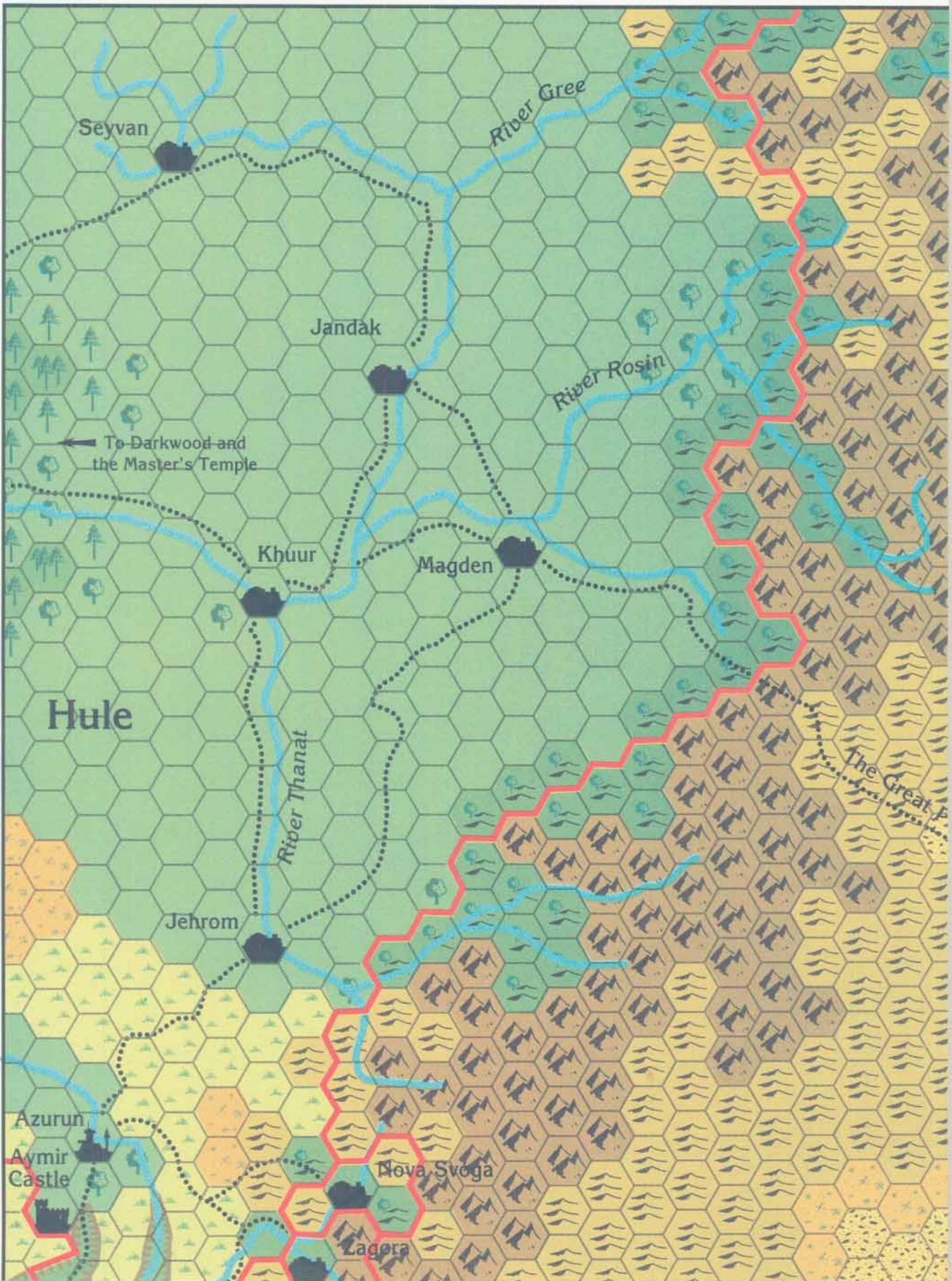








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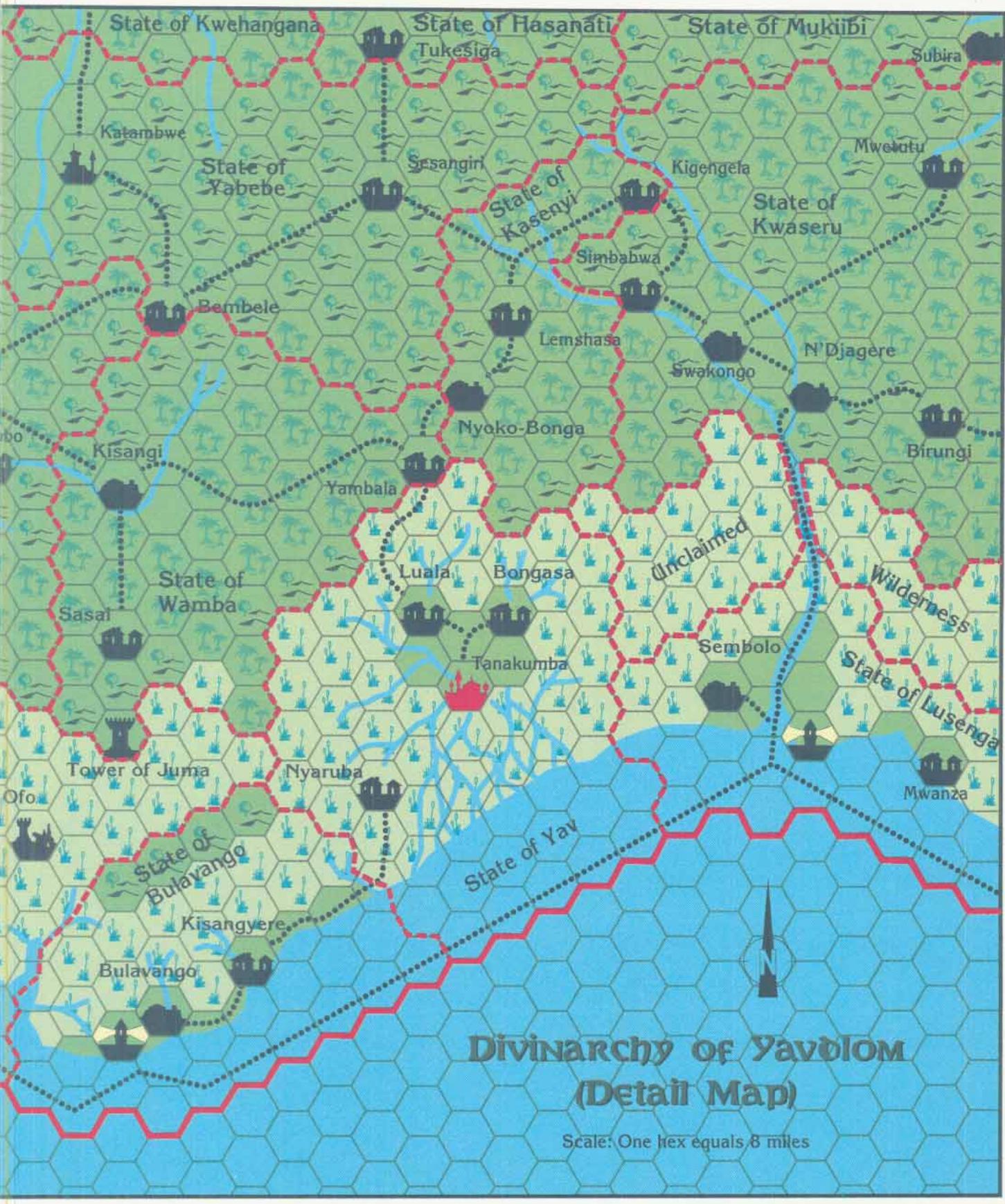
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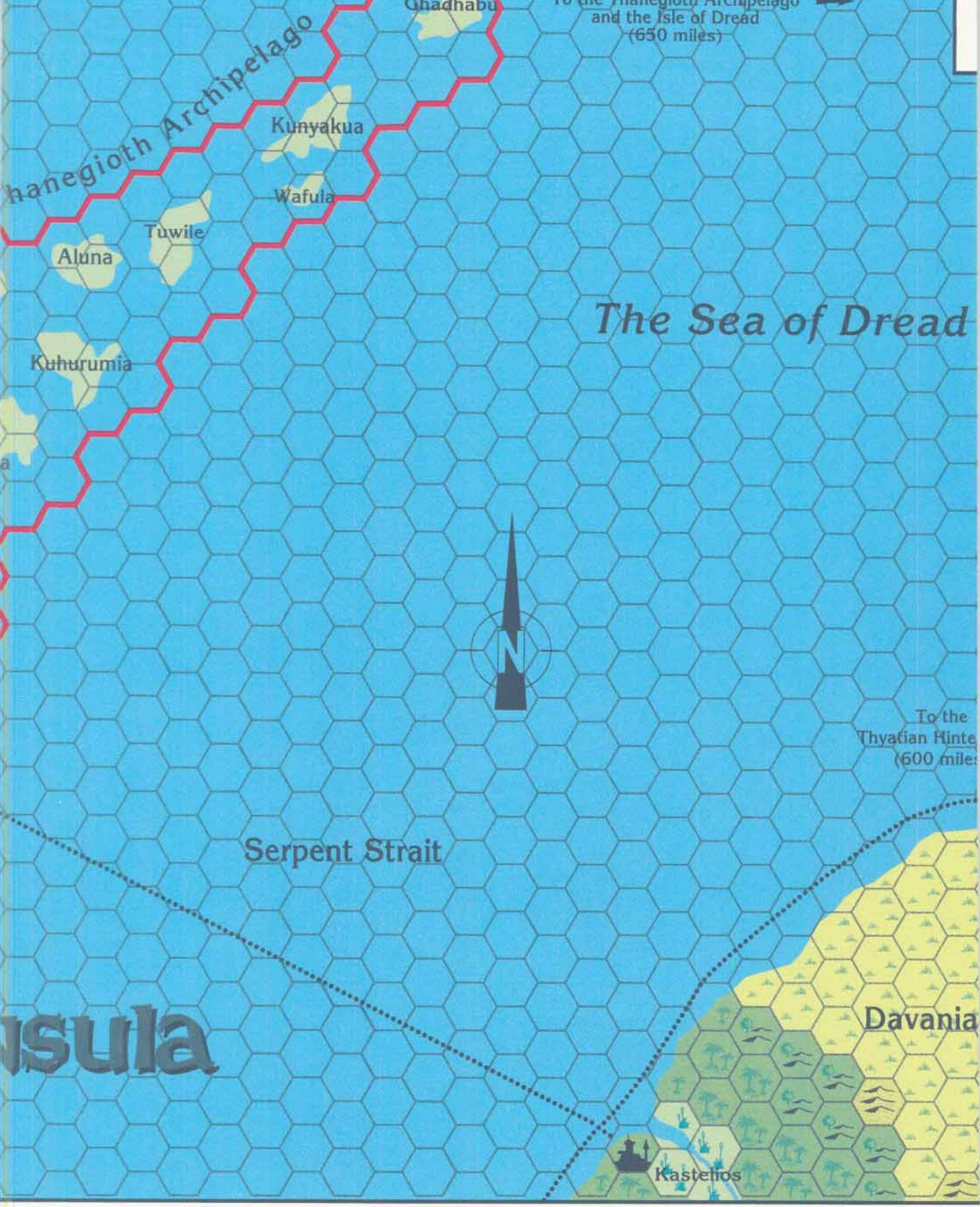


1094XXX0702









# Tanakumba

(The Most Limpid City of Thanopolis)

Scale: 1 square = 100 yards

1. Azizi Berungi (Great Prophet's Palace)
2. Biashara Island (Merchant Quarter)
3. Lutalo Jamii (Military Quarters)
4. Chuo Kikuu (Tanakumba University)
5. Mtaalamu Jamii (Scholars' Quarter)
6. Mayanga Bandari (Main Port)

Residences	Shell Tower
Merchants	Paved Road
Military Grounds	Arched Bridge
Scholars' Quarter	Pontoon Bridge
Warehouses	Canal
Training Grounds	Docks



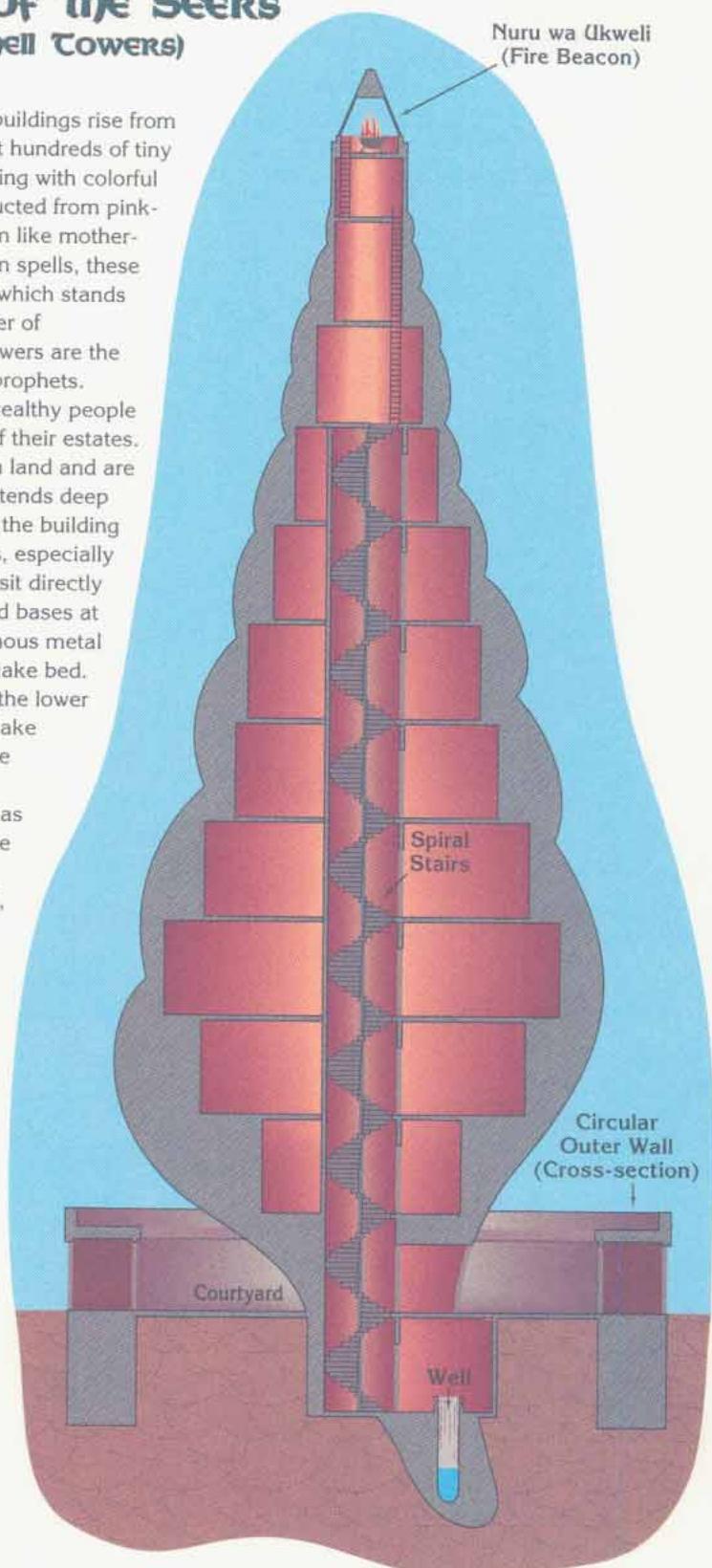
## The Abodes of the Seers (Yavdlom's Shell Towers)

These graceful shell-shaped buildings rise from 30' to 100' or more. Many sport hundreds of tiny windows, and balconies cascading with colorful tropical flowers. Usually constructed from pink-veined marble polished to gleam like mother-of-pearl or crafted with shellform spells, these buildings mimic the great shell which stands on an artificial island in the center of Tanakumba. Yavdlom's shell towers are the traditional homes of seers and prophets. Although other important and wealthy people may have shell towers as part of their estates.

Some shell towers are built on land and are encircled by a thick wall that extends deep into the ground to help stabilize the building (see illustration at right). Others, especially in Tanakumba, are designed to sit directly in water. These latter have broad bases at water level, supported by enormous metal or stone columns sunk into the lake bed. The circular outer wall protects the lower levels from being inundated by lake water, even in storms, and serve as docks.

By custom, each shell tower has a special chamber occupying the uppermost level of the building. This houses the *Nuru wa Úkweli*, or "Light of Truth," a brazier which is kept burning at all times to signify wisdom. It's a common belief in Yavdlom that bad luck is sure to fall on any household which fails to keep their *Nuru wa Úkweli* lit.

The greatest shell tower in the Divinarchy is the Great Prophet's Palace—a natural but enormous conch shell erected in Tanakumba centuries ago. This marvel stands an impressive 200' tall. Carved into its spiral chambers are twenty stories of rooms, niches, and stairways. The palace houses the most important seers of Yavdlom, plus a host of servants and administrators.



Starboard Side View  
(Lifeboats not shown)

Aft

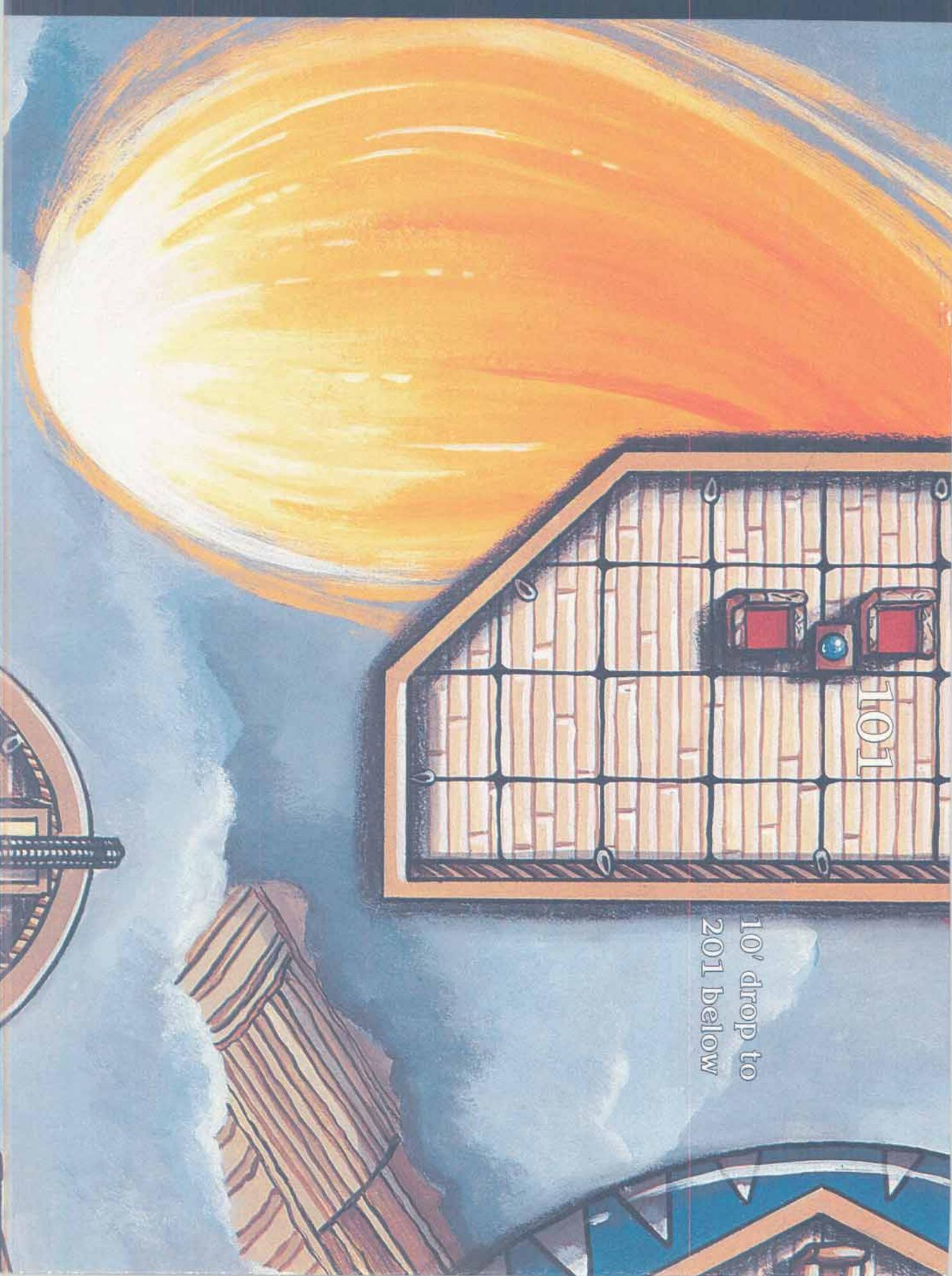
Fore



Scale: 1 Square = 5 Feet

101, 201,  
Deck Areas  
(Note: Except for the Commanders  
202, 203, and 401, all areas  
are open-air decks.)

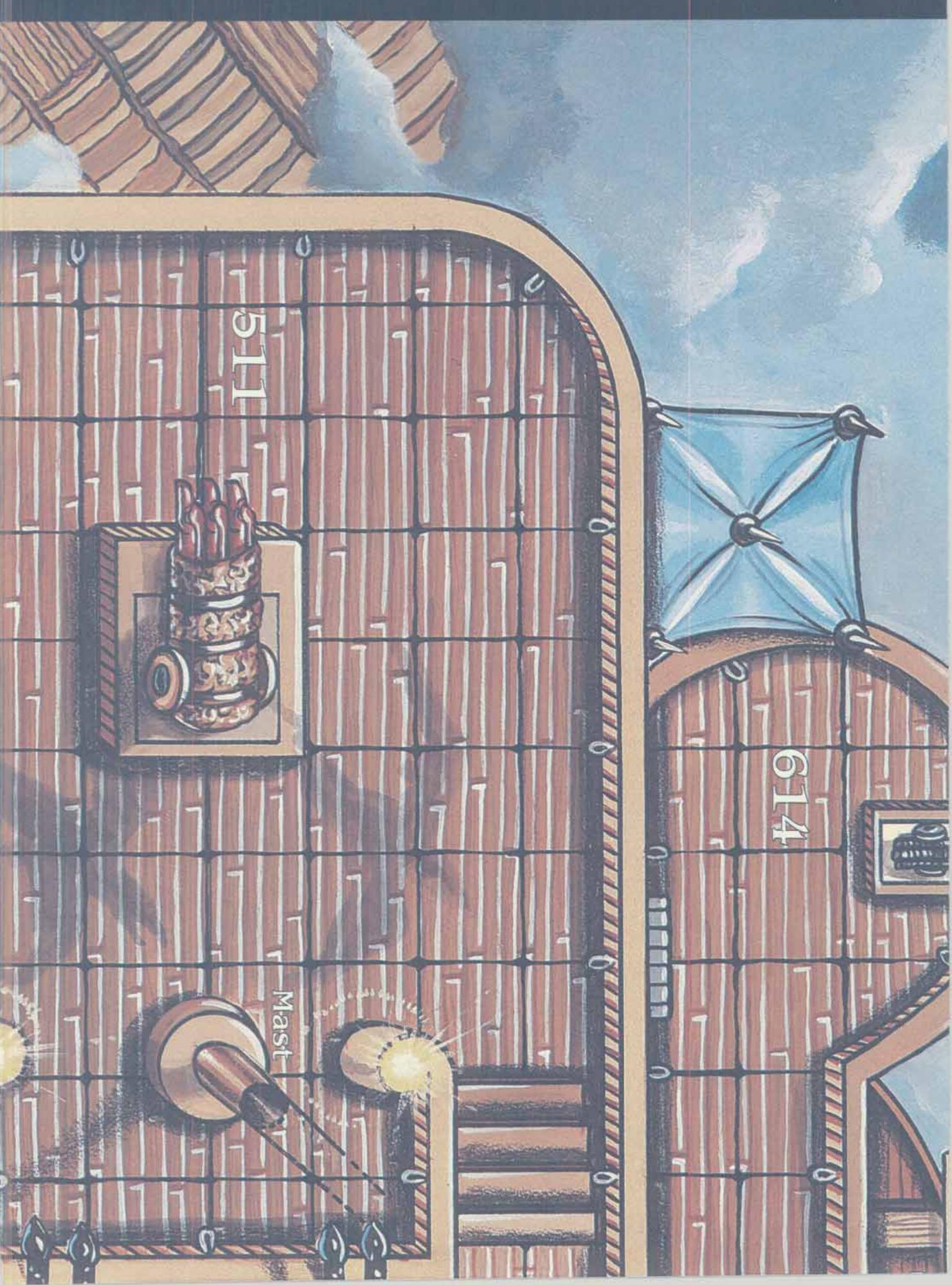


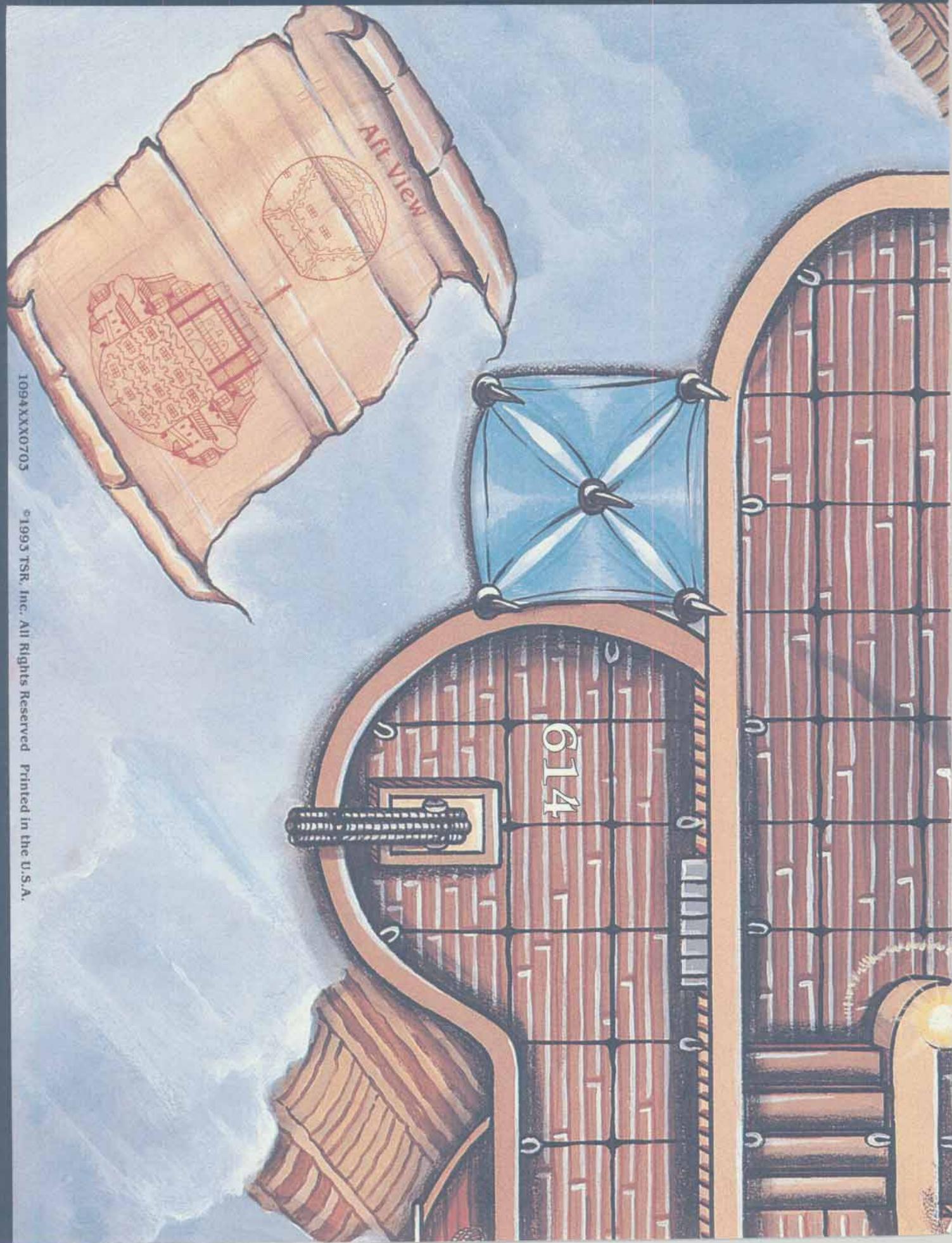


A vibrant illustration of a roller coaster track against a sunset sky. The track is a bright yellow-orange curve that descends from the top right towards the center. In the foreground, a wooden building with a black metal fence and a window featuring a red train mural is visible. A blue car with a red roof is on the track. The background shows a large, setting sun with a fiery orange and yellow glow, casting long shadows. The overall style is colorful and dynamic.

101

10' drop to  
201 below

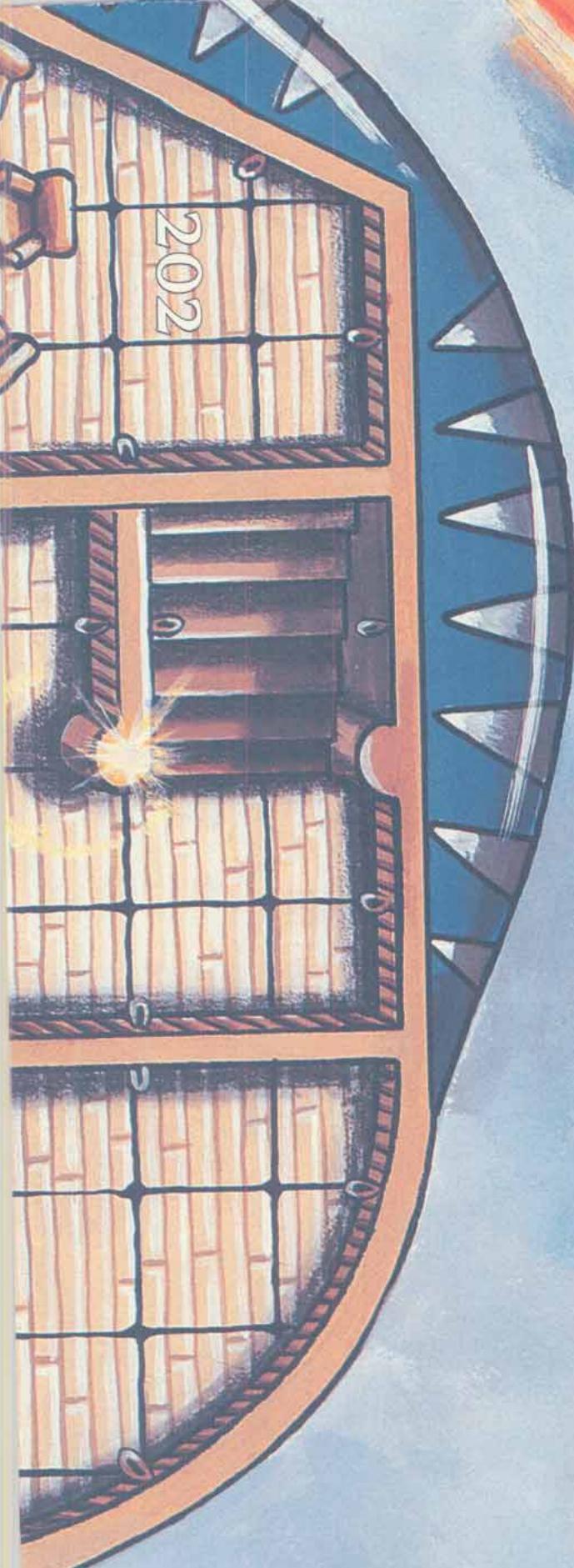




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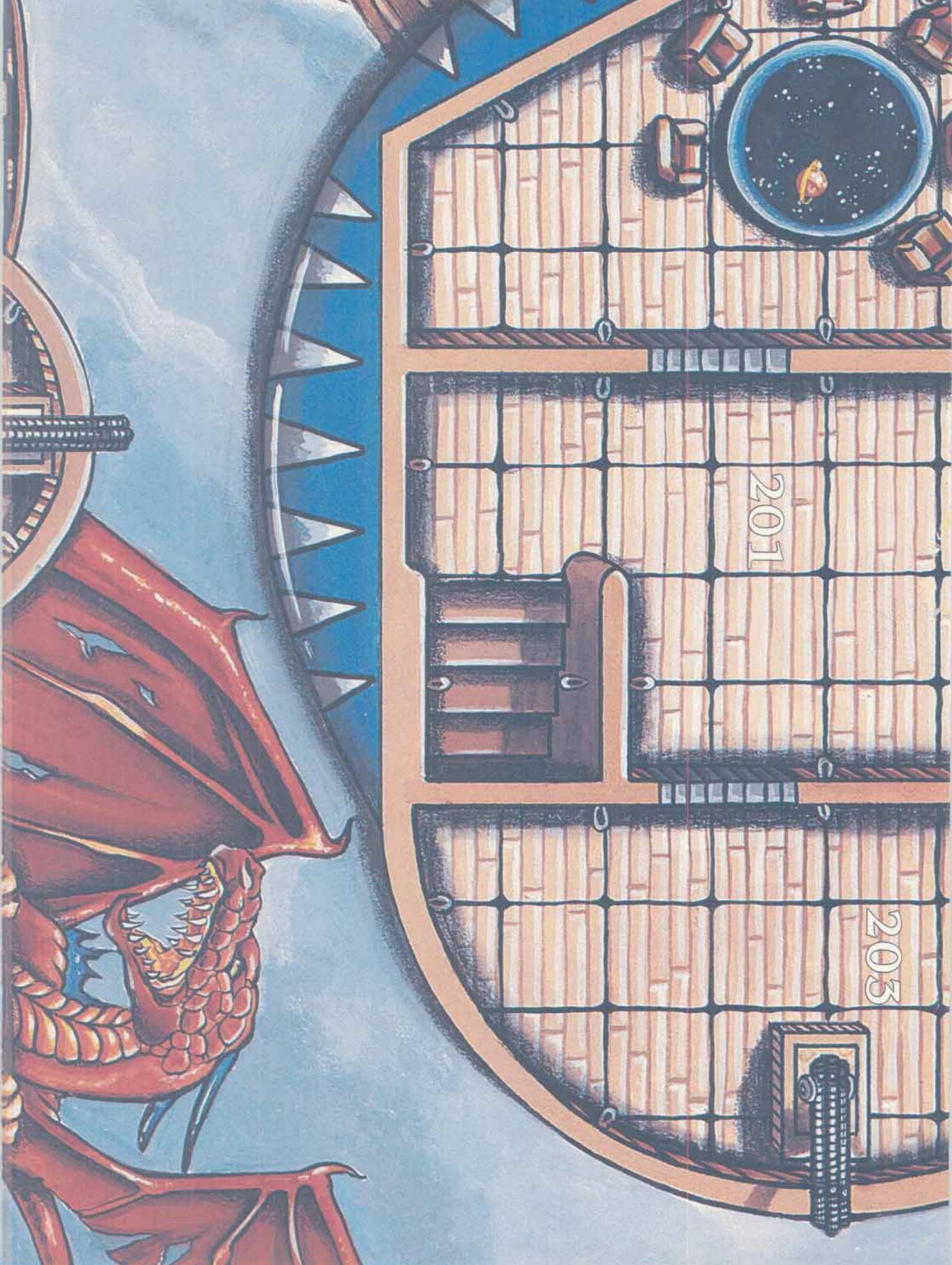
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# PRINCESS ARK

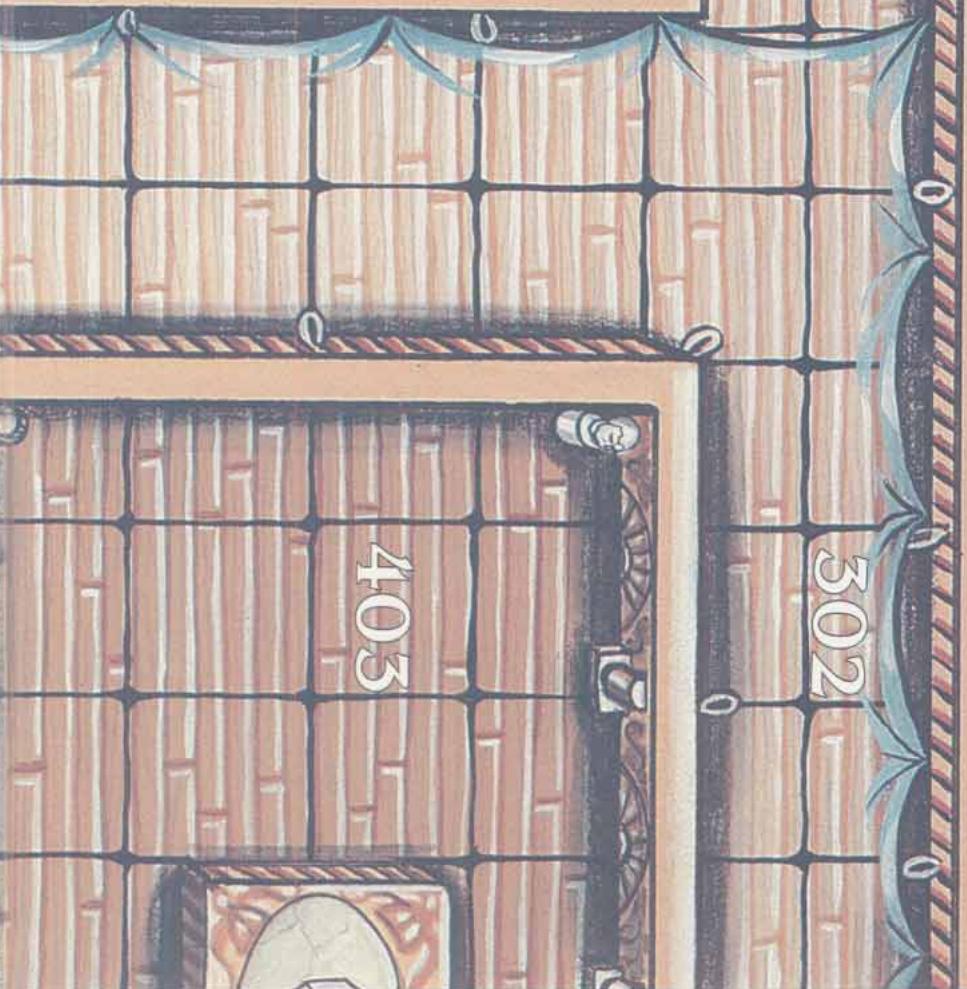
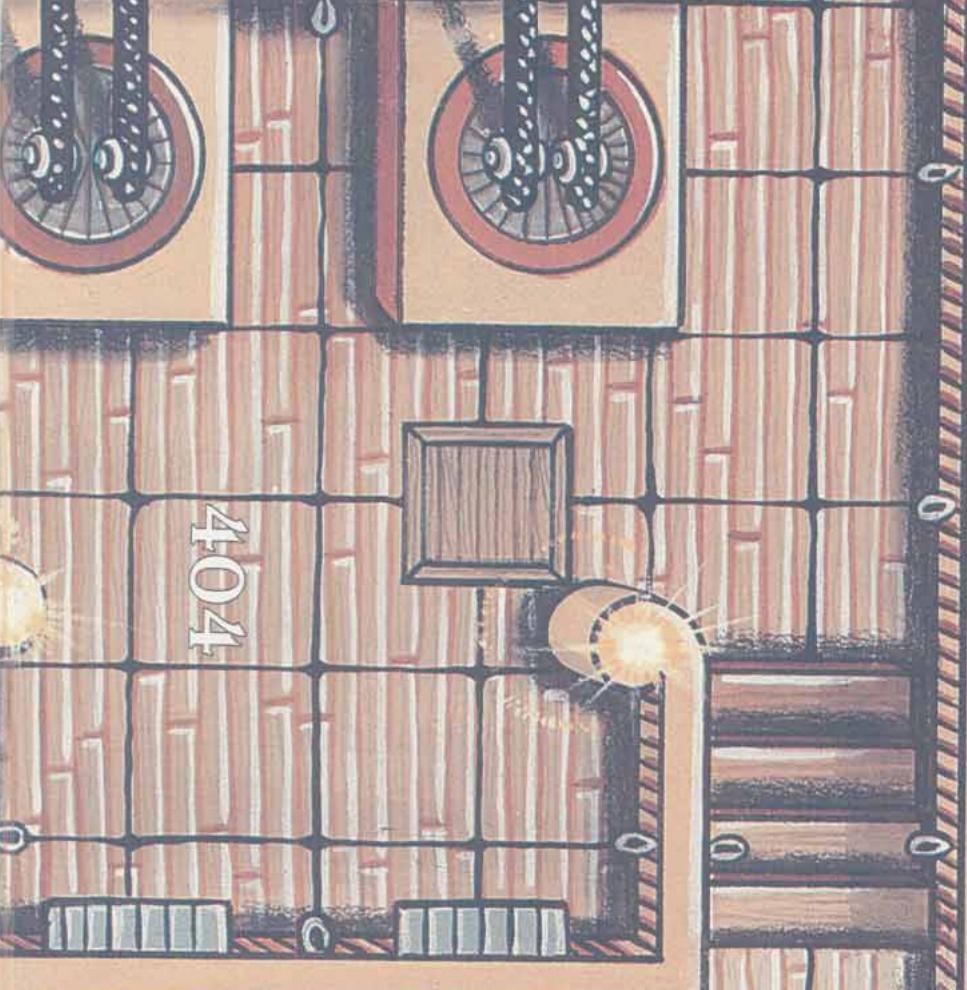
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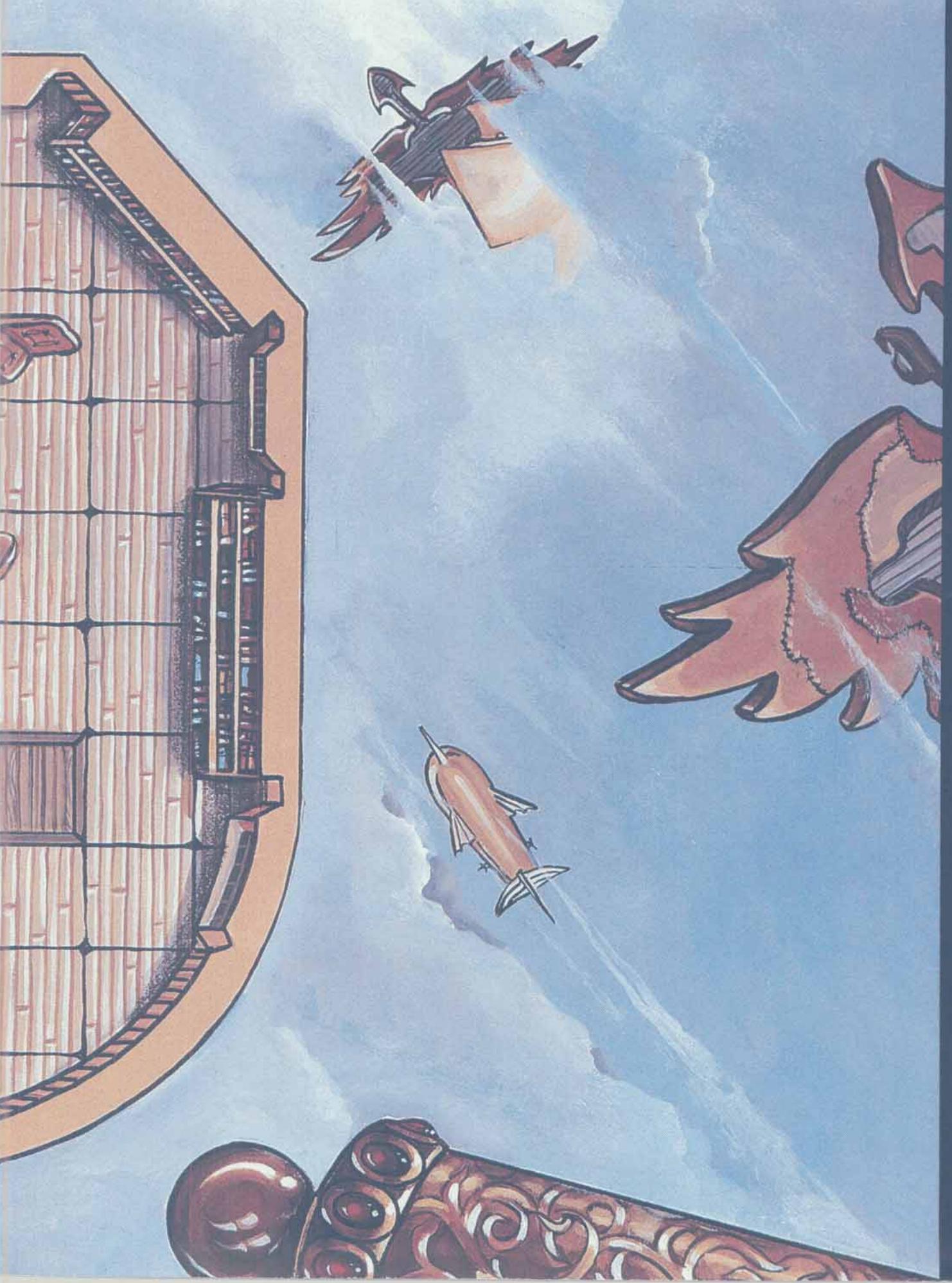


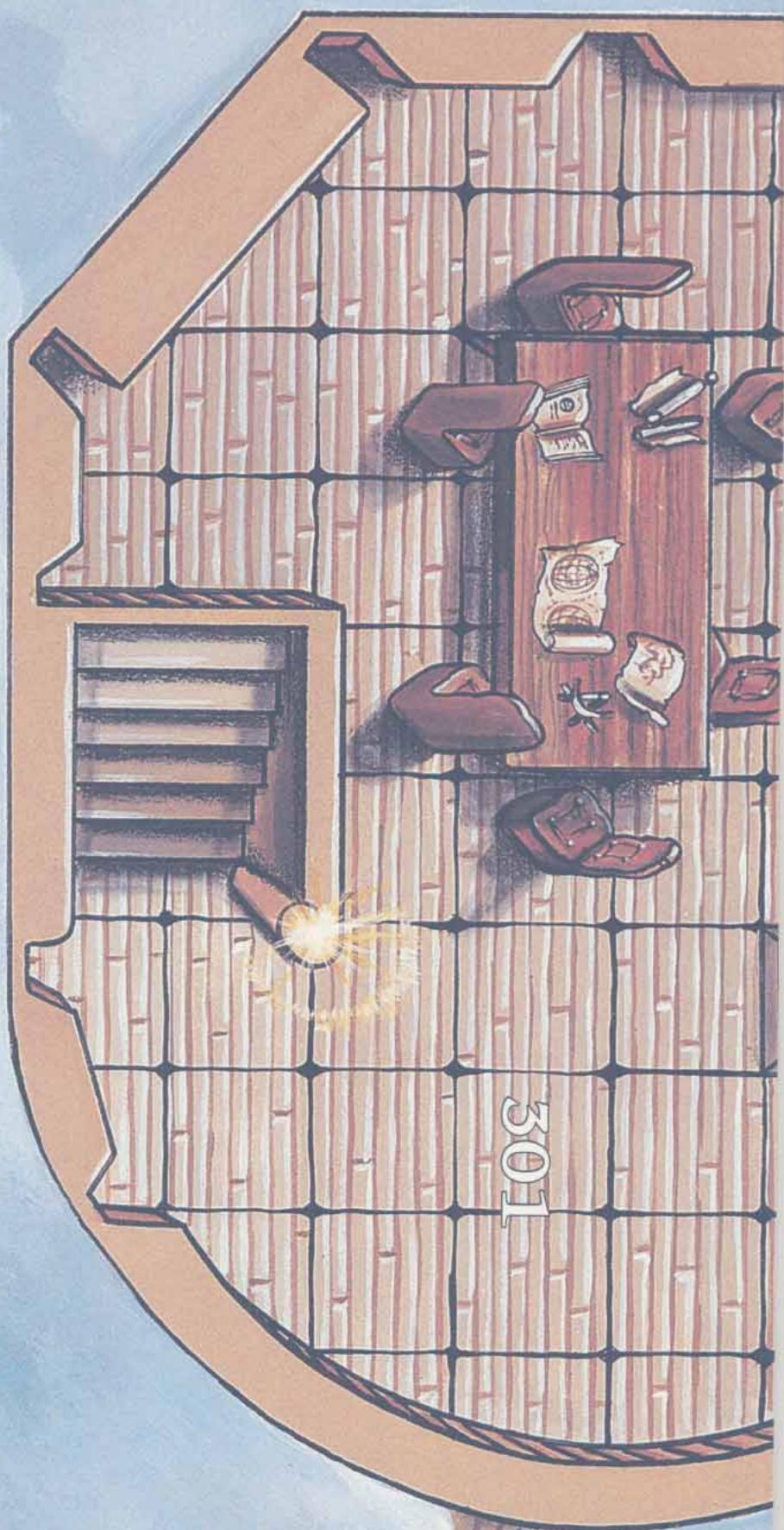
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203









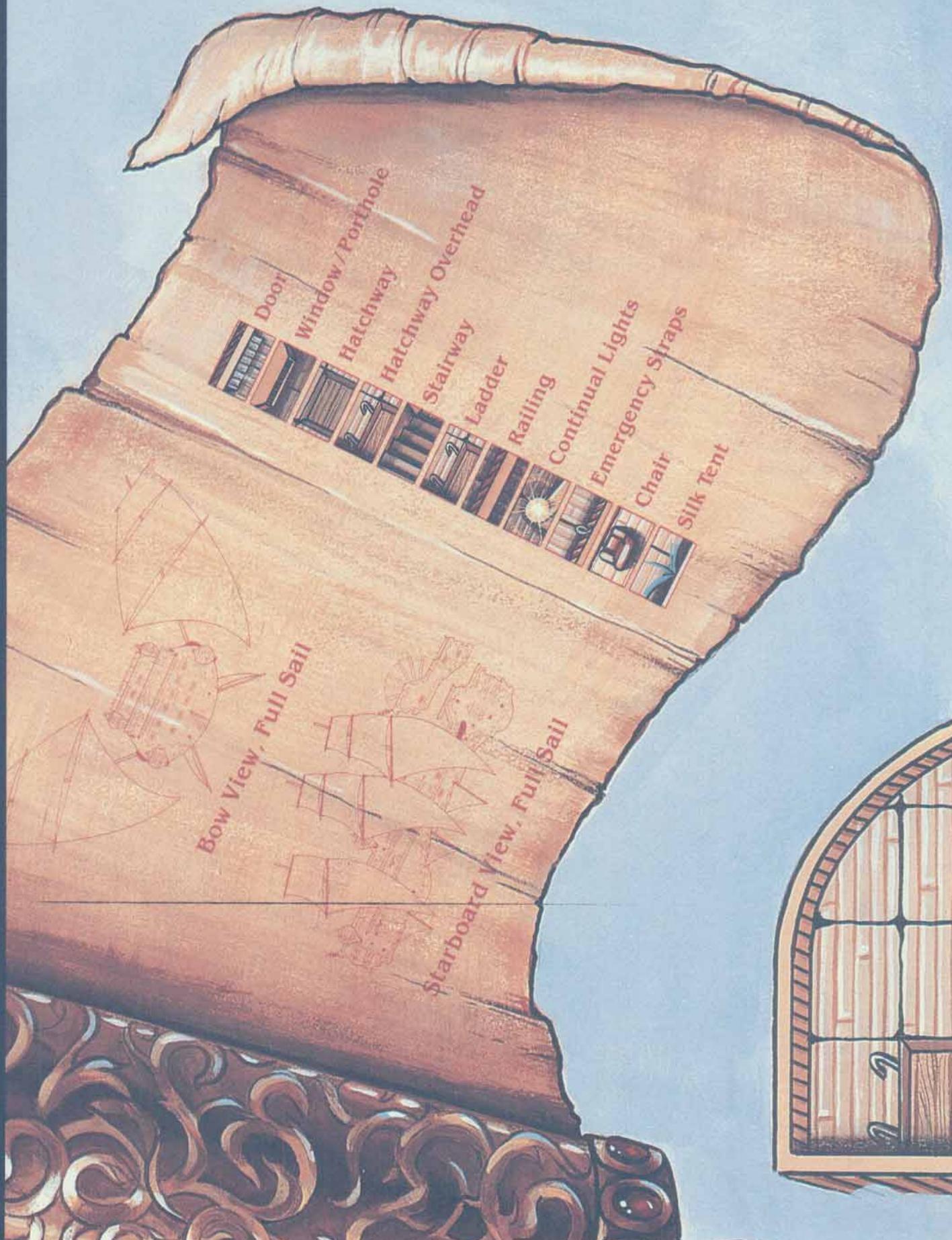
512

503

302

512







401

501

402

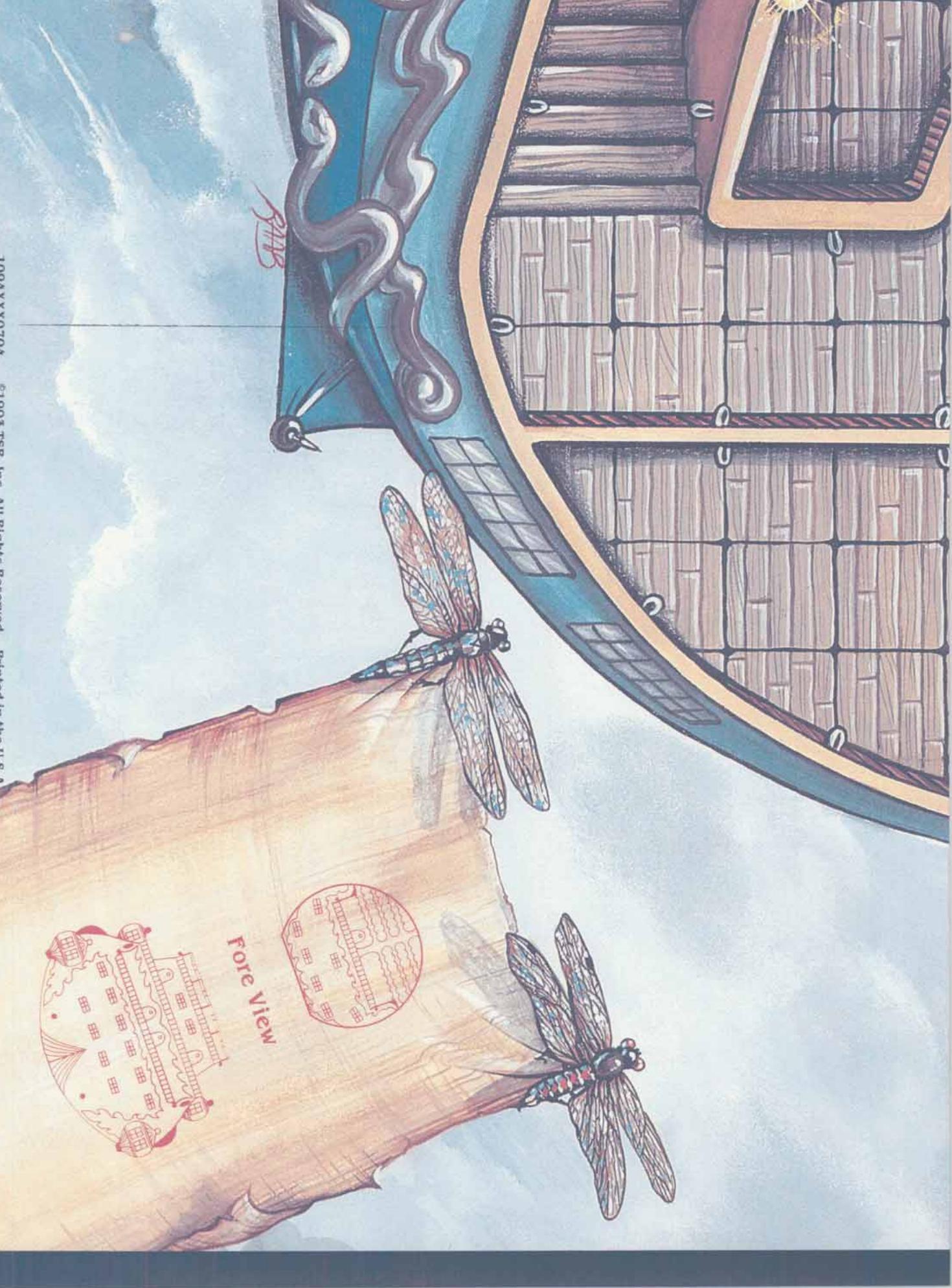
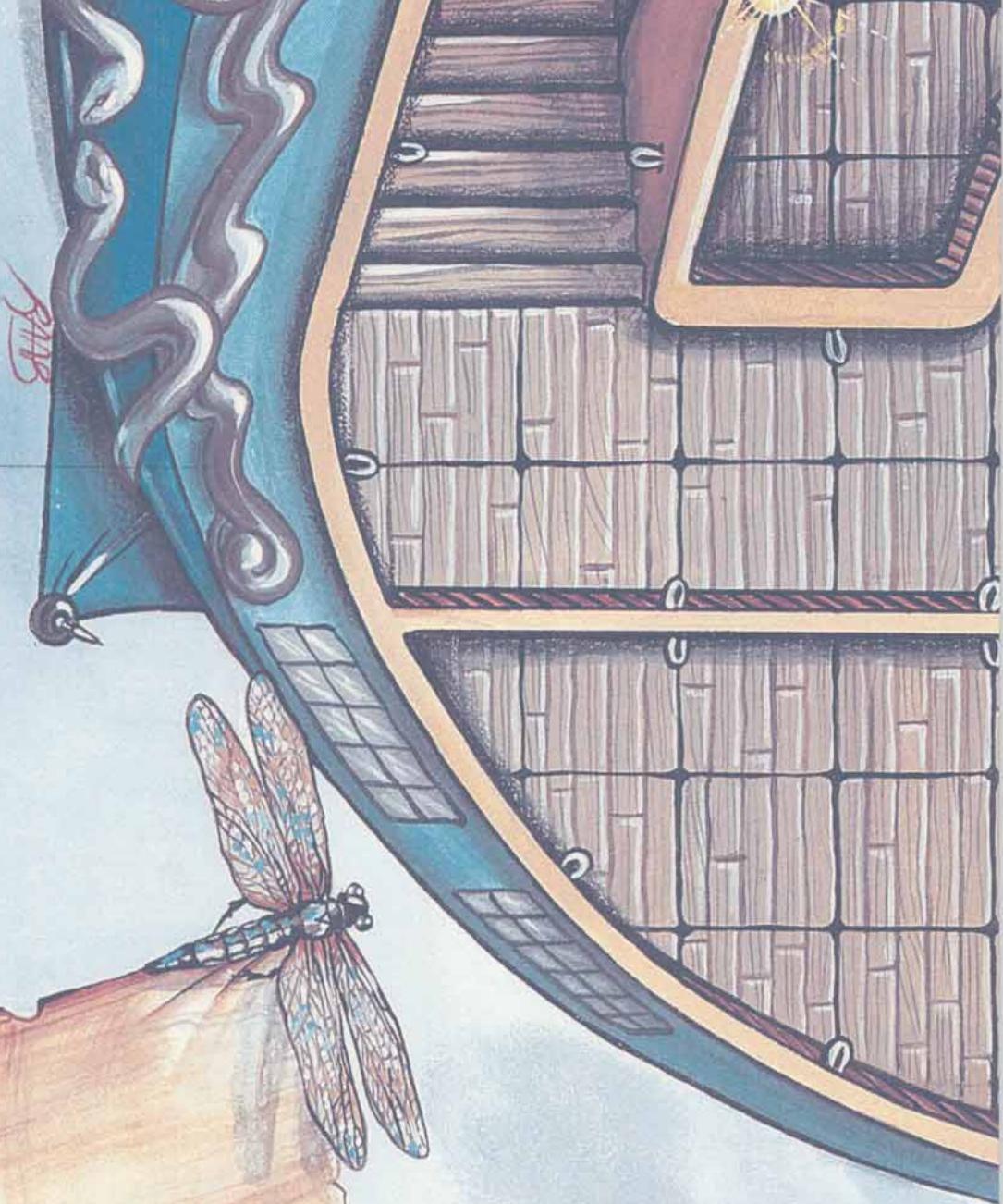


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Fore View



Challenger



# Champions of Mystara™

Heroes of the Princess Ark

by

Ann Dupuis

*...Finally, she is airworthy again! It took no fewer than 35 master-crafters and 300 artisans to refit the beautiful skyship. Her five masts stand majestically over her black hull, bearing sails that will trap the magical wind. One can almost feel a strange life emanating from her as she gently pulls on her mooring lines in her desire to cast off and head into the sky.*

*—from the journals of  
Prince Haldemar of Haaken,  
Captain of the Ever-Victorious  
Princess Ark*

Developed from the original DRAGON® Magazine series, *Champions of Mystara™* is a major compilation of the *Princess Ark* adventures, a magical flying ship that explores the World of Mystara. Discover the heroes of this legendary skyship, their deadly foes, and their wondrous ships. Packed with background information and adventure ideas, this set allows DMs and players to run a long-lasting, globe-trotting campaign based on a unique flying ship.

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ISBN 1-56076-615-8



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