

Campaign - Birth of Heroes

This campaign is based on quests from the first of the Fabled Lands game books called The War-Torn Kingdom. Liberties have been taken to extend the material and form a coherent story. It was balanced for play with a party of around four characters, all at Rank 2, who have just completed the Lair of the Ratmen quest from the Appendix in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book. It can be enjoyed with a smaller or larger party, but it is best with characters who have at least a little experience adventuring.

If you are not the Gamesmaster, then **STOP READING NOW**. What follows is for the Gamesmaster only!

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

The characters have already performed a quest for Guildmaster Vernon in Yellowport, killing King Skabb of the ratmen. They should now be at Rank 2.

Quest 1 - The Cannibals. Just as with the ratmen, a group of cannibal cultists from Ankon-Konu is interfering with business. Guildmaster Vernon wants them removed from a series of disused warehouses. This is relatively straightforward, but, along the way, the characters are visited by a sneaky thief named Lauria. After trying to rob them, she offers them a chance at making some 'real money' by her side.

Quest 2 - Stealing from the Fire. This quest is optional because the characters could refuse to work with Lauria. If the characters refuse, other quests will be slightly lengthened to provide the missed experience points. Lauria wants to rob a town house owned by Talanexor the Fireweaver. She says the characters will be her 'muscle,' but the truth is closer to 'patsies.'

Quest 3 - A Long Sea Voyage. Guildmaster Vernon offers the characters a cut of whatever profit they make from the transit of a barque and its cargo. Delivery is to Aspen, the Trading Post. Along the way, the characters fend off pirates to rescue an Ankon-Konu ship, befriend its captain, Moon of Evening. The characters also dream of visiting the court of the gods Alvir and Valmir, where they receive an unidentified blessing. Vernon directs the characters to inquire about the blessing at the House of Priests in Marlock City.

Quest 4 - The Ghouls. No longer working for Vernon, the characters learn about their blessing at the House of Priests. It is a very old and vague one: some nonsense about 'changing the world.' The warden of the temple of Nagil offers a topic of more specific interest: a necromantic experiment has recently gone awry. It would be nice to handle the resultant ghoul before the city militia got to hear of it. A party of four should end this quest at Rank 3.

Quest 5 - Slaves of the Faeries. A half-dead mining slave, escaped from the Bronze Hills, comes into the House of Priests. A terrible power of faerie origin was unleashed from the bottom of a mining operation. Faerie powers are opposite godly ones, and so the escaped slave sought the house of the holiest for aid. The characters find that an elf lord, Ilundial, is mind-controlling the slavers with magic. Lauria is also in the mine, serving out a prison sentence. She is not particularly nice to them this time, either.

Quest 6 - A Test of Loyalty. The Bronze Hills are one of Marloes Marlock's places of choice to put criminals, so he notices the good work of the characters. He summons them, then tasks them to seek Nergan Corin and retrieve evidence on rebel groups within Sokara. They find Corin in the Coldbleak

Mountains and learn that half of the soldiers in Fort Brilon are loyal to him. Corin wants to help these soldiers seize control. The characters can choose to help either Captain Forin Hale (loyal to Marlock) or Sergeant Taun Jacobs (loyal to Corin) in a coup. The coup happens during a manbeast attack on Fort Brilon.

Quest 7 - To Serve a King. This is 'optional' in that the characters either do this quest or quest 8, based on their choice in quest 6. Nergan Corin tasks the characters with killing Marloes Marlock.

Quest 8 - To Serve a General. This is 'optional' in that the characters either do this quest or quest 7, based on their choice in quest 6. Marloes Marlock (and, by extension, Grieve Marlock) tasks the characters with killing Nergan Corin.

This is the conclusion of the campaign. A party of four should now be at Rank 4. The chosen patron, Nergan Corin or Grieve Marlock, rewards them with a title and powerful connections: namely, with the Ravayne clan of Golnir. He sends them to serve Baroness Ravayne in the name of Sokara. To continue into this new campaign, refer to Source Book 2: Golnir - Cities of Gold and Glory.

Quest 1 - The Cannibals

INTRODUCTION

As always, you the Gamesmaster have work to do before play. Be sure to read this entire quest before beginning, if not the whole campaign. The opening quest is particularly tricky because of Lauria's interference, which has implications in Stealing from the Fire (quest 2) and elsewhere.

Before the quest begins, characters who completed the Lair of the Ratmen should be given time to rest at home and heal themselves. Having lived in Yellowport for years, the characters have a house in the southern parts of the city, east of the Stinking River and west of the main harbour. Determine a good in-game date to resume adventuring. Roll on the weekly weather table if appropriate (Chapter 9 - For the Gamesmaster in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). If the players are using new characters, and/or have not worked for Guildmaster Vernon before, then the Gamesmaster will have to edit this introduction before beginning.

Any passages written in bold italics, *like this*, are to be read aloud to the players.

Life since your expedition beneath Yellowport has changed palpably. Where once you had thought that excitement came only from tales told by troubadours of foreign lands, you now see that a chance meeting can lead to adventure even in your home. This was truly what you had wanted: the danger and the reward. Now every familiar sight in the streets, from the majestic buildings of the Plaza of the Gods to the scummy side roads of the Poor Quarter, is a nest of mysterious possibility. The only shortcoming is that your 'next great adventure' has not quite happened yet.

What seems like quite awhile ago, you left word with the Merchant's Guild that you were interested in further employment. In the passing time, you have rested injuries, spent earnings in what you hope to be a wise manner, and eaten good meals. It is after one such meal in the early evening that a messenger arrives. The man's tunic bears the insignia of TIH, The Iron Horn; the parent guild that oversees almost all guild activity in Yellowport. He informs you that Guildmaster Vernon, the powerful

man who had given you your first taste of adventure, wishes you to come speak with him. Now, if at all possible.

The players could delay at this point; perhaps they do not want to be out in the evening. When the players are ready to answer the summons, note the weather and mention it along with the following:

Previously, you had met with Vernon where you did your banking, at the Kalesk guild building near to home by the docks. This meeting is to be held in The Prancing Horse, the main Iron Horn building, nestled among the wealthy of Castle View close to the East Gate. The walk from your home takes some time, but soon you arrive and push open the door. The guild house is as impressive inside as you'd imagined. You present at the front desk and are shown down a long hall to the Guildmaster's office, which you enter alone.

Guildmaster Vernon is delighted to see you; which, of course, is a marked lift in attitude from the apathy with which he took leave of you before. 'My favourite adventurers!' he declares. 'I trust you have been well. We have not forgotten the service you did in scattering the ratmen of the sewers, that plague which had spoiled our business. Your minds and blades seem sharp.'

His expression becomes more dark. 'And if there's one thing I comprehend from hard work, it's to match the tools to the task. As you know, or should know, we rent warehouses around the docklands to all manner of clients. The past few years have seen slow business, I'm afraid, and a number of buildings have fallen to disuse. Therein lies a problem. All manner of people come to Yellowport, where there is room for the amoral to slip through the cracks. Sometime, we know not when, a cult of unsavoury scum has taken residence in our property. They are . . . cannibal cultists, by the reports of the survivors. Just as the ratmen before, they raid from the merchants of our guild; and should word get out about our problem, the impact on business would be just as great.

'They prowl somewhere in the warehouses far east of the port near the ship yards. If you can find and eliminate them, the guild will pay you another 450 Shards. Return when the task is complete, and direct us to what remains of their lair, and that will be clear proof of success. Do you agree to the proposition?'

If the players accept they will be advised that the cannibals seem active both day and night, but surely would be most daring at night. Vernon has no other information and urges the characters to make this quest their top priority. Once the characters agree to the task, they may wish to prepare further; but first go directly to scene 1.

1 - A CHANCE MEETING

Select a character at random without explaining this to the players. The Gamesmaster may do this by assigning a number to each character (1, 2, 3 . . .) and rolling dice. When done, read the players the following:

You are seen to the door of the guild house and step out again onto the King's Way, the main street through Yellowport. As you do, you very nearly collide with a pale woman in black leather. She brushes past you, casting you an enigmatic look.

Have the selected character do an Intelligence (Difficulty 12) test. On failure, the woman passes out of sight down the street without incident. Only later, when this character has some in-game reason to check

his or her money, should the Gamesmaster reveal that all Shards have been stolen (or some other random valuable if the character is broke). It is too late to find the thief on the street and the characters would be advised to remember the cannibal quest is their ‘top priority.’ Continue to scene 2. If a character with the Divination lore of magic is truly insistent on hunting her down, she will give the same offer (see below) if caught.

On success, read the following:

She is trying to pick your pocket. You grab the woman’s wrist a split-second before she can take your money. You drag her around to face you, but she meets your outraged scowl with a swashbuckling grin. ‘You’ve got good reflexes,’ she says. ‘Most of the people around here are too drink-sodden or dimwitted to notice the loss of a few Shards. Want to earn some real money?’

This is Lauria. A full description of this encounter and its implications is in scene 10. Once the characters have settled the matter, for good or for ill, continue to scene 2.

2 - HUNTERS AND HUNTED

Unless the characters deliberately delay, their search begins at night. They may develop a search plan. If they interview people working at the ship yards, they will find the warehouses nearby have all been deserted and no one can pin down a trouble area. If they scout around the buildings, little will happen until they start wandering among the smaller warehouses (see below).

If the characters just head to the area directly, read the following:

Night has fallen. Yellowport isn’t much quieter at night unless one is walking down the right streets, but one might argue those are the wrong streets, too. You stick to main roads, passing by well-known places like the Sea Horse Tavern on the southeast side. Over here, the rotten egg smell of the Stinking River has nearly all faded, to be replaced with the scent of the sea.

Soon you walk among the first of the warehouses: smaller ones, with the more mammoth assortment closer to the ship yards. There is hardly a soul out anymore. Then you hear a muffled cry of distress from a dark alley.

See the alley ambush map. There is a huddled, moaning figure on the ground at the location marked with the scene number. This is an Unspeakable Cultist in disguise. There are others hiding in rubbish at the mouth of the alleys north and south; men and women dressed in clothes lined with fur - or possibly hair - and with all-too-sharp teeth. If the characters enter this alley, the others will approach and initiate combat from behind, gaining a +4 bonus to strike order for the first combat round only. If the characters listen for anything suspicious, let them do a Scouting test; but they will hear nothing until the trap is sprung. They must physically search the nearby alleys to find the enemies.

Unspeakable Cultists (1 attacker per character, plus 1 on the ground): They each carry a cudgel (Combat +1), a net, and no armour. They have the same statistics as bandits: please refer to Chapter 10 - Monsters and Enemies in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book.

Special Rules

Net: These operate like the Herbcraft spell: Entangle (Chapter 3 - Spells & Sorcery in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book), but in close combat. An attacker makes a Combat (Difficulty 10) roll to net a target. Netted victims may not do anything that requires movement until they make a Muscle (Difficulty 9) test to destroy the net and break free. These nets are EV 2 and would cost 10 Shards if bought from a store.

Nonlethal Combat: These cultists are not attempting to kill the characters. If a character is reduced to 0 Stamina then he or she will collapse with exhaustion. After the fight, characters may restore all Stamina.

Combat begins with the ambushers throwing nets. The one on the ground will then rise to throw one more. If a druid character has Animal Friendship, the cultists will attempt to capture any animal companion and then not bother knocking it out. If the cultists are victorious, then they will drag unconscious characters (and protesting animal companions) to scene 9. Remember that weather affects combat outside (Chapter 9, core rules).

The characters may kill the cultists or try to subdue some and interrogate them. The cultists are from the jungles of distant Ankon-Konu, the Feathered Lands, and they have come here to find new sacrifices for their god. Persuasion requires a Muscle (Difficulty 12) test to uncover the location of the nearby lair. Charisma will also do, as will other routes like the Telepathy (or, as appropriate, Necromancy) lore of magic. Captured cannibals may be turned over to the guild for deportation at the end of the quest.

If the characters search for the lair themselves, e.g., by retracing the cultists' steps, they must make a Scouting (Difficulty 11) roll. There is no adjustment for lighting in this case because the key feature is about to be silhouetted against the sky (see scene 3).

3 - ARRIVAL AT THE LAIR

When the characters find the lair, read the following:

This area is supposed to be deserted, so you may spot the lair by anything unusual. You come to a pair of two-storey warehouses a little larger than those you passed earlier. They both are disused, and the eastern one looks to be so neglected that its doors are rusted shut. Overhead, connecting the two rooftops, someone has laid planks to make a flimsy footbridge. The Merchant's Guild would have no need for such a thing in their own buildings, and so this can only be the handiwork of people who do not belong.

See the lair of the cannibals map. The buildings are windowless and have metal doors. The western building may be entered with ease. The doors on the eastern building may only be opened by force: anybody foolish enough to break one down must make a Muscle (Difficulty 17) roll, and either success or failure will alert all remaining cultists (scenes 4 through 8) to come running.

The Gamesmaster may judge that other disruptive acts (combat, explosions) prompt a random encounter. At such times roll 2 dice and consult the following table:

2-3 Wrath of the god

4-10 No encounter

11-12 Cultist investigation

Wrath of the God

Badogor the Unspoken, the god of the Unspeakable Ones, may interfere. Maintain a counter starting at 0: each time 'wrath of the god' is invoked, add 1 to the 'wrath counter' and roll 1 dice. On a roll equal to or less than the counter total, the eyes on any nearby idol of Badogor will flash with light, and each character must make a Sanctity (Difficulty 13) roll or receive a Muscle curse. Victims have their Muscle reduced to 0 for the next 24 hours. Badogor will only inflict the curse once, so ignore the wrath counter afterward.

Cultist Investigation

Cultists arrive by crossing the rooftop bridge (scene 6). This takes enough time that the characters may perform a few other actions before the incident. For simplicity, do not roll yet again for investigation of noise from a previous investigation. Unlike the cultists from scene 2, all cultists from here on out fight to kill.

Unspeakable Cultists (x2): Both carry either hunting spears or shortswords (Combat +1) and no armour. They have the same statistics as bandits: please refer to Chapter 10, core rules.

4 - CEREMONY HALL

These next several scenes correspond to specific locations marked on the map. The descriptions assume that the players explore in numeric order. The Gamesmaster may shift and edit pieces like this depending on the actual order:

The warehouse is filled with flickering light and a chanting voice. Nailed to the walls are sconces with burning oil, casting light over a space clear open to the ceiling. In the northeast corner is a walled room, presumably an office, atop which is a second-storey observation platform with a ladder to the roof.

Against the south wall a table has been set, covered with a terrifying cult display of feathers, skins, and bones. The centrepiece is a squat wooden idol of a grossly fat half-man, half-ape with ivory needles for teeth. There seems to be a plaque at the base of the idol, but your view is obscured by the dancing forms of a cannibal congregation, holding some sort of ceremony as lead by a cantor.

The chants wish good fortune to the hunting team and will last for half an hour, after which the congregation will stand around talking idly. The characters may use stealth here, especially if it is nighttime and so no light marked their entry. The plaque reads 'Badogor the Unspoken,' though no cannibal states this out loud: see scene 9 for the effect if the characters say the name.

Unspeakable Cultists (x5): All carry hunting spears (Combat +1) and do not wear armour.

Cultist Cantor: Knife (Combat -1, strike order +2) and no armour.

They have the same statistics as bandits (for the cultists) and a bandit leader (for the cantor): please refer to Chapter 10, core rules.

There is no loot on the table which any sane Sokaran would buy. If the characters disrespect the idol, such as by smashing it, they tempt the wrath of the god (scene 3).

5 - PRAYER SPACE

When the players reach this area, read them the following:

Every wall is hung with grisly skins, chains of animal skulls, and objects taken from the dead. The floor is strewn with hay that has visible depressions in several places, possibly from figures kneeling in prayer. There is a ladder against one wall that goes to an observation platform overhead and then an open hatch in the roof above that.

Have the characters each do a Magic (Difficulty 12) roll. On success, they notice religious runes that hold magical power painted on some of the skulls. Once warned, anyone may search the room while avoiding these skulls: a Scouting (Difficulty 7) roll uncovers jewellery pieces (EV 0.25) worth 100 Shards hung on the walls plus 2d6 loose Shards in the hay.

Incautious search triggers a trap and tempts the wrath of the god (scene 3). The painted skulls crack and the victim feels as though he or she were being bitten all over. Unless the searcher makes a Sanctity (Difficulty 10) roll, he or she loses 1 Stamina and screams in pain for a combat round (10 seconds). Screaming alerts the congregation (scene 4), if still alive.

The observation platform has only a railing, so characters need to sneak to avoid being heard by a still-living congregation. A Thievery (Difficulty 11) roll would do.

6 - ROOFTOP CROSSING

This is an excellent place to meet onrushing cultists investigating a noise. When the players reach this area, read them the following:

From here you can see the wooden footbridge you noticed earlier. It really looks rickety.

Only one person may safely cross the bridge at once, which is difficult to do if, say, the characters are being chased. If more than one tries, roll 1 dice: a roll equal to or less than the number of characters means the bridge breaks and they fall, taking 2 dice damage to their Stamina. With no bridge, characters may try climbing walls directly with a Scouting (Difficulty 10) roll, suffering 1 dice damage per fall. Check the weather to see if the surface is slippery (Chapter 9, core rules).

7 - SLEEPING QUARTERS

This area mirrors scene 5, complete with the observation platform which is open to the warehouse space. It may be necessary to read the description for scene 8 before entering the sleeping quarters. When the players enter the first-storey room, read them the following:

Looking about in the gloom, you see you are not alone. This space is filled with crude cots, maybe fifteen or twenty, and scattered with personal possessions. Two cots are occupied.

Two cultists, an ordinary one and the head chef, are sleeping here. Characters could sneak by with a Thievery (Difficulty 6) roll.

Unspeakable Cultists (x2): Both are unarmed and unarmoured, with one shortsword (Combat +1) and one knife (Combat -1, strike order +2) nearby. They have the same statistics as bandits: please refer to Chapter 10, core rules.

Finding loot in the rubbish takes a Scouting roll at Difficulty 12 to be silent (failure by 4 or more wakes the sleepers), or Difficulty 9 otherwise. There are 70 Shards, the above weapons, and a small chest hiding in a corner under rags.

The chest is not technically locked, but a trap goes off if opened without the cultist leader's key (scene 8). If the characters detect the trap (in low light; Chapter 9, core rules), they may disarm it with a Thievery (Difficulty 10) roll. When triggered, the trap makes a shrill whistle that alerts all remaining cultists in the building. The chest holds 25 Shards, a potion of healing, and a potion of aggressiveness.

8 - FEAST HALL

This area mirrors scene 4. When the characters see it, read the following:

Wall sconces shine on the heart of the cannibal lair: their feast hall. To the northwest is a large cauldron with firewood ready. Before it rests another grotesque idol to their god, carved of wood and with a plaque at its base. In the main space stands a dining table where several cultists are in quiet conversation with a man who must be their leader.

The leader's appearance is unsettling. He is bare except for a few feathered garments, showing his personal strength but also the toll exacted by the lifestyle of his cult. The skin on his face looks almost cracked and his eyes are a strange pale yellow.

The leader, Song of Entrails, is talking politely about cult policy: he says they cannot eat their own people no matter how lean the times. The plaque reads 'Badogor the Unspoken,' though no cannibal states this out loud: see scene 9 for the effect if the characters say the name. All loot is in their quarters (scene 7). The cauldron is filled with dark water, but fortunately no 'food.' If the characters disrespect the idol, such as by smashing it, they tempt the wrath of the god (scene 3).

Unspeakable Cultists (x4): All carry shortswords (Combat +1) and do not wear armour.

Song of Entrails: Spear (Combat +2), no armour, the key for scene 7, and a glass bottle containing plague spores.

Special Rules

Plague Spores: The leader may throw the bottle (like a dagger), causing a cloud of spores 15 feet wide. Effects are detailed in Chapter 9, core rules. If the characters are spotted on the observation platform, the leader will throw the bottle to flush them out. Then they all will rush for the ladder, waking anyone in scene 7. The spores will dissipate.

They have the same statistics as bandits (for the cultists) and a bandit leader (for Song of Entrails): please refer to Chapter 10, core rules.

9 - PRISONERS OF THE CULTISTS

This is an alternate version of scene 8 that occurs if the characters are defeated in scene 2. They wake at full Stamina in the location marked with the scene number. Any druid animal companions struggle in nets in the corner. The hunting team (with cudgels) is not present in the lair; but the cultists from scene 7 are awake, armed (the chef has the knife), and in this room. Read the players the following:

You come round inside a disused warehouse, enmeshed in nets. You have been stripped of all your possessions - they are in a tidy pile nearby. Several of the cultists surround you.

Describe the warehouse and leader as in earlier scenes, then continue:

'Hallo,' the leader says reasonably. 'We are the Unspeakable Ones - it is our way to eat people in sacrifice of our god.' He points to the idol, where you see the name 'Badogor the Unspoken' inscribed on the plaque at the base. You also see another cultist tossing herbs and garlic into the cauldron beyond. He stares at you and licks his lips.

The chef will work for several minutes then pronounce the cauldron ready. All present cultists will cluster around the characters and remove the nets. If they do nothing, they die in the boiling water.

Until then, the leader will cheerfully discuss their homeland and mission (scene 2). Players who have read the original game book may try to join the cult: here, the cultists refuse. If the characters say 'Badogor' out loud, read the following:

'Do not speak his name!' shouts the leader, 'Or you will be forever cursed!'

This tempts the wrath of the god (scene 3), once for each character who blasphemes. If a character spends 1 AP in combat doing nothing but shouting 'Badogor,' the cultists clap their hands over their ears, hopping about in horror for an entire combat round before coming to their senses. Meanwhile, they do not make opportunity attacks.

10 - A CALCULATED MEETING

If the players succeed and return to The Prancing Horse, read them the following:

Guildmaster Vernon is waiting for you and reaction is swift. Upon your instruction, a contingent of guild police heads out with a record keeper to inspect the location. When a runner comes back to report the lair secured, Vernon is again pleased. 'Fine work! We can see to it that lingering members of that unspeakable cult are deported, and none too soon for the sake of our business.' A clerk presents another 450 Shards which the Guildmaster rewards to you to be divided as you see fit. 'I don't foresee much need for similar services in the days to come,' he says as you accept the money. 'Perhaps you could take the time for yourselves.' With that he is finished and he walks away.

This may not be the end. If the characters have already dealt with Lauria (scene 1), for good or for ill, then go to the conclusion. If not, then determine what the characters would like to do next, and interrupt with the following:

You've not taken ten steps from the guild building before you are brought up short. A pale woman in black leather stands in the middle of the road, hands folded. This is none other than she who robbed you earlier. The woman grins a mischievous grin and speaks. 'Good day. Would you care to earn back your purse?'

She introduces herself as Lauria: an independent thief, but a proper dues-payer to the Black Hood Thieves' Guild. Whether they speak now or in scene 1, she has the same offer: join her on a housebreak at a town house and get all the loot they can carry. The characters cannot get any stolen money back (she has spent it), but the burglary will pay dividends. If the characters have moral objections, she petulantly protests that the head of the house, one Talanexor, is a criminal under investigation by the Marlocks: his goods will be seized by a corrupt government anyway (she is making this up).

If the characters accept, she will tell them to contact her when they want to begin. They may leave a note with the owner of the Sulphur Inn in the Poor Quarter. Having handled the cannibals and Lauria, this is the end of the quest, and the players may continue with Stealing from the Fire (quest 2) after the conclusion.

If the players still refuse, and especially if they want to turn her in to the city militia, go to scene 11.

11 - TO CATCH A THIEF

This section counts as a secondary quest when calculating the experience reward for this adventure (see conclusion). It only happens if the players refuse Lauria. Read them the following:

Lauria seems to pout and says no more. Then she picks up her feet and walks briskly, brushing by you as she passes down the street.

Select a character at random and have him or her do an Intelligence (Difficulty 12) test. On failure, Lauria steals all the character's Shards. If the players are not fools, they will check their possessions and see what happened immediately. If the test succeeds, the character prevents the theft; but either way, Lauria dodges and starts running.

Characters who chase must make tests for running similar to those for swimming (Chapter 9, core rules). The chase first goes southwest through the centre of Yellowport, requiring one Muscle (Difficulty 6) test. Then it crosses the Stinking River at the Port Bridge, and Lauria takes it into the unpaved side streets of the Poor Quarter heading north. Check the weather: Difficulty is 9 or 12 depending on how muddy the roads are. Adjust both tests for armour, just like with swimming. Any who fail must stop running to catch their breath.

The characters may attempt other tactics, such as magic. Her character sheet is in Stealing from the Fire (quest 2), but she will not physically fight even if attacked, preferring not to tempt a killing blow.

If the players pursue and succeed in their rolls, read the following:

Lauria doesn't appear winded in the slightest, but perhaps a little worried that you have not given up the chase. Soon you come to the front of the Sulphur Inn, where Lauria attracts the attention of two burly men. 'Henri! Rickart! Some help here!' They draw blades on you without question as she vanishes down an alley.

Henri and Rickart: Both carry a sword (Combat +2), leather armour (Defence +1), and 50 Shards. They have the same statistics as bandit leaders: please refer to Chapter 10, core rules.

Lauria is out of sight after the interruption. The characters could subdue these amateur rogues and interrogate them to find Lauria's hiding place (no-one in the Inn will help). They may track her through the mud with a Scouting (Difficulty 12) roll, or use the Divination lore of magic as appropriate.

She lives alone in a small one-room shack near the river gates. Not expecting the characters to find her, she is inside behind a locked door. The characters may pick the lock with a Thievery (Difficulty 14) test, or just smash it with a Muscle (Difficulty 10) test. She will surrender and allow herself to be taken to the city militia for a 100 Shard reward. Her only valuable possessions are the equipment listed in Stealing from the Fire (quest 2), and she has no Shards unless she just stole some. Having handled the cannibals and Lauria, this is the end of the quest, and the players may continue with A Long Sea Voyage (quest 3) after the conclusion.

CONCLUSION

Next give out experience points. Experience rewards in this campaign are based on two things: the number of challenges that the players can face (both set and random) in a thorough play session, and the goal of getting a party of around four Rank 2 characters up to Rank 4. If you want to stretch out play, feel free to lower the awards, and/or add your own scenes to the quests.

It is suggested that the Gamesmaster start with a fixed experience reward of 15 for this quest. Add 5 experience if the characters did the secondary quest: that is, they refused Lauria and completed scene 11. Once calculated, the total fixed experience is divided among the characters, with rounding to come to an equal amount for each.

Extra points should then be rewarded for individuals that fought valiantly against the foes with magic or weapons, showed great skill or cleverness in solving problems, and/or role-played well and added to the gaming experience. As a guide, these might average 2 experience points per character, or 3 if they completed the secondary quest and therefore did more gameplay.

Quest 2 - Stealing from the Fire

INTRODUCTION

This quest is optional. It only happens if the characters agreed to work with Lauria in The Cannibals (quest 1). Lauria has established a drop point for the characters to contact her with Brun Thargoes at the Sulphur Inn, whom the characters do not know is Brun Lightfingers, the leader of the Black Hood Thieves' Guild (Chapter 9 - For the Gamesmaster in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). She expects a job at night. The characters should recuperate, choose a meet-up location, and choose a date. The weather in this quest is predetermined (see below). When ready, read the following:

Guildmaster Vernon doesn't need you, so you're on your own for finding adventure. To be honest, though, the Sulphur Inn looks like more adventure than you want. The drunks, bullies, and cheats give you death glares when you enter. The man behind the bar, Brun apparently, nonetheless accepts your note without comment and you leave to meet Lauria that evening.

She arrives at your meet-up location without fail and without sound. 'Good,' she says, not smiling this time, 'the house is empty tonight. Now let's be clear before taking another step. I am the thief. You

are the muscle. When we enter, I will ascend to the second storey while you sweep the first. The second storey is one room: it's the master's chambers, and that means it's trapped. I don't know how good you think you are, but I will not work with you bumping my elbows in a trapped room. You will loot what you can, keep watch, and deal with anyone who comes home. We will not speak while inside. Understood?'

The players may ask questions. What should the characters do when they are done? 'Wait for me to come down.' What about fencing any goods, and/or will the Thieves' Guild take a cut? 'That is my concern and I will handle it afterward.' When they agree, read the following:

And now her grin is back. 'The evening only gets better,' she says. 'Come along now, and try not to get lost in the fog.'

Lauria (Rogue 4): Charisma 5, Combat 4, Intelligence 4, Magic 5, Muscle 3, Sanctity 1, Scouting 3, Thievery 8, Stamina 25.

Equipment: Rapier (Combat +1, strike order +2), dagger (Combat +0), leather armour (Defence +1), and lock picks (Thievery +1).

Powers: Lucky Escape II, Master Thief I.

Additional Notes: Lauria is coy, selfish, and methodical. She makes 'friends' within the criminal underworld of Yellowport and then uses them to keep herself in money and out of law's reach. Once she has money, though, it passes through her hands like water. She may not use her talents visibly in this quest, but this sheet will also be referenced in The Cannibals (quest 1) and Slaves of the Faeries (quest 5).

1 - BREAK AND ENTER

Read the players the following:

A yellowish fog is descending with the coming of night. She leads you stealthily through winding cobblestoned streets to a town house standing at the back of a small tree-lined square. Soon the haze is thick enough to shroud your activities from any stray passersby, and Lauria jemmies a downstairs window. Within seconds you are inside, and she bounds silently up to the next floor.

Continue reading at scene 2. During the adventure, characters who spy on Lauria find she is combing every object in the upper floor for traps, proceeding very slowly. If they do so unstealthily, she will halt and glare at them until they leave.

There are few real 'random encounters' in this quest. When the Gamesmaster feels it is appropriate (e.g., the characters make noise), roll 2 dice and consult the following table:

2-3 Odd sounds

4-10 No encounter

11-12 A curious boy

Odd Sounds

The characters overhear something that does not otherwise affect play. Options include: voices outside, but it's no one important; a bang from somewhere, possibly upstairs, but nothing really happened upstairs; a creaking sound like a door opening, but it's just the house settling.

A Curious Boy

Any character that makes a successful Intelligence (Difficulty 9) roll will notice an incoming candlelight within the house, a few moments before Tomas arrives (scene 3). A Charisma (Difficulty 9) test will be necessary to convince him to return to the kitchen.

2 - SITTING ROOM

Read the players the following:

Lauria has left you in a sitting room. There are several comfortable chairs around low tables, probably well-used by stuffy guests, and a closed ornate trunk against the east wall. There is no door in the east, just an open space clear through an entry hall and into some farther room.

Searching is easy: there are parchments with unimportant writings, such as government proclamations or business solicitations, and many small portraits on the walls which look cheap but saleable. Characters may steal up to 1d6 EV worth of portraits (see conclusion).

The trunk is locked and has a poison needle trap (see Chapter 9, core rules, throughout this paragraph). The needle is coated with Gril's oil. If the characters detect the trap (note the low light), they may disable it with a Thievery (Difficulty 12) roll, then open the lock with another Thievery (Difficulty 12) roll. Inside are 55 Shards, a flute (Charisma +1), 1d6 EV of rolled-up tapestries, and wooden children's toys (EV 0.5; see conclusion).

3 - KITCHEN

If the characters have already met Tomas, then the Gamesmaster might edit the following before reading it:

This is the kitchen, at the far back of the town house. You won't want to carry pots and pans; too heavy, too noisy. However, you are distracted from this thought by a faint flickering light at floor-level, seeping from a mostly-closed cupboard on the south wall.

Searching everywhere but that one cupboard requires a Scouting (Difficulty 8) roll. There are 3 knives (Combat -1, strike order +2), 10 candles, and a lot of cutlery that look not to be worth it. If the characters open the cupboard, read the following:

There's a little boy inside! Small snacks are scattered around him in his hidey-hole. Instead of screaming, mercifully, he blinks at these strangers in the light of his candle. 'Hullo?'

This is Tomas. He is curious and trusting, and assumes the characters are just odd visitors. He is old enough to understand crime, though, and will run screaming out of the house if he sees theft or violence. Otherwise, he will remain here except as noted in scene 1. In conversation he reveals the following:

Tomas just lives here and helps out for food, and doesn't know his parents. The master plays with him sometimes, and says Tomas is smart and pays good attention, and shouldn't let nasty thieves take anything behind his back. He doesn't mind staying alone in the house like this. The only other person usually in the house is the cook: a nice lady who has the night off.

If the characters press for more information on 'the master,' they must make a Charisma (Difficulty 9) roll each time. The wooden children's toys from scene 2 are an adequate bribe (Chapter 9, core rules). First, he reports that the master is 'Talanexor the Fireweaver,' and Tomas has watched him do amazing things. Next, that Talanexor often goes to the study and stays there all day, and sometimes isn't even there anymore when Tomas looks again; the boy doesn't know where he goes.

If Lauria called Talanexor 'a criminal under investigation by the Marlocks' in The Cannibals (quest 1), and the characters ask, Tomas will be confused and deny it. You can't just break the law!

This child should not require ability values (i.e., for fighting), but has Defence of 3 and 3 Stamina.

4 - DINING ROOM

When the players enter this room, read them the following:

The dining room is immaculate and mostly empty; objects must be stored in the kitchen. The table does have candlesticks on it, though.

Searching is easy: the candlesticks are silver-plated. Characters may steal up to 1d6 EV worth (see conclusion).

5 - STUDY

When the players enter this room, read them the following:

Here, on the other side of the open entry hall, is either a study or a private library. There are bookshelves that reach overhead along the walls in the northern half of the room and a big desk with a drawer against the southern wall.

There are too many books to carry. An Intelligence (Difficulty 10) roll will reveal which ones might be saleable, and the characters may take 1 EV for each point rolled above the Difficulty (see conclusion). The characters may try repeatedly until one person succeeds.

The drawer in the desk is trapped. If the characters detect the trap (in low light; Chapter 9, core rules), they may disarm it with a Thievery (Difficulty 10) roll. Characters who open the drawer otherwise will have it slam shut on their hand, causing 1 Stamina damage and a -1 penalty to Combat and Thievery until the character heals (any source of healing will do). Inside are 90 Shards, a compass (Scouting +1), 15 pieces of blank parchment, and countless other parchments with uninteresting writings.

A character who searches for a secret door must make a successful Scouting (Difficulty 13) roll to find it.

6 - HIDDEN ROOM

If the players find the secret door, read them the following:

Your deft fingers find a false spine of carved wood among the titles in the bookcase on the northwest wall. Pressing it, you hear a click and the bookcase swings out, releasing a gust of hot air. Beyond lies a hidden room with a single desk, placed underneath a small vent in the ceiling and in the centre of a carved floor pattern. The carvings glow white, lighting the room.

Either a Magic or Thievery (Difficulty 12) roll will detect that the drawer on this desk is trapped. Disarming it takes a Thievery (Difficulty 16) roll. If triggered, the trap is like a fire trap (Chapter 9, core rules), but differs in that it uses a blast of heat to minimise harm to the contents.

Inside are several unsaleable spell components (including local sulphur), a potion of sorcery, and a scroll with ancient Shadar runes on it (EV 0.25). The runes have the Pyromancy spell: Wizard's Fire (Chapter 3 - Spells & Sorcery in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). Any character, magician or not, that can make a Magic (Difficulty 10) test will be able to work this out and cast the spell from the runes. He or she must physically look at the scroll and make the normal Magic test every time. Such a scroll has no selling price, but perhaps 500 would do.

7 - ABANDONED TO THE FIRE

The quest ends with this scene. It can be precipitated in many ways. If Tomas runs from the house (scene 3), the characters may try to contact Lauria and escape. If the characters loot the whole house and finish in the hidden room (scene 6), the Gamesmaster may decide Tomas appears behind them, screams, and then runs. The players may fail to find the secret, decide that they are done, and get impatient. Players who have read the original game book may try to abandon Lauria before she can betray them.

The fact is that Lauria is already gone by the time the characters finish: she has knotted a rope and descended from a window. She cannot be found anymore: among other things, she looted an artefact called the Medallion of Secrecy which forces Divination spells to fail against her. The following assumes the characters remain near the staircase while planning what to do, and the Gamesmaster should edit as appropriate:

You hear nothing from upstairs, but that is no shock, given Lauria. What does shock is a sound that drifts through the opened window: Lauria's voice echoing leadenly from far off in the fog. 'There are thieves at Master Talanexor's house! Quick!' There is no time to react, as she must have calling for some time already: pounding footsteps on the front path are followed an instant later by a smash at the door, and three militiamen armed with swords burst in. Behind them stands a tall gentleman. There is something clearly unnatural about him. He is dressed not too unlike normal nobility, but he crackles with magical power barely contained in his fury. 'Thieves in my house!' he rages. 'Do your duty!'

Caring players won't want to kill anyone in front of Tomas, if present. Characters could escape out the second-storey window with the rope: they must do a Scouting (Difficulty 7) roll or fall and suffer 1 dice damage. They could go out a nearby window: smashing with a weapon takes 1 AP, while jumping through an intact window causes 1d3 Stamina damage to the first person through. They may easily lose pursuers in fog this thick.

If they fight, more soldiers will be heard shouting outside after a few rounds, so the characters must flee or risk defeat. They have no time to loot corpses (except possibly to pick up dropped swords). For purposes of this scene, soldiers reinforce without end.

Militiamen (Warrior 1) (x3, plus unlimited reinforcements): For information on typical Yellowport soldiers, please refer to Chapter 9, core rules.

Talanexor the Fireweaver (Mage 3): Charisma 3, Combat 2, Intelligence 6, Magic 6, Muscle 3, Sanctity 2, Scouting 3, Thievery 5, Stamina 18.

Equipment: None that matters.

Powers: Counterspell II, Sorcery I (Pyromancy).

Additional Notes: Talanexor is self-important and vindictive. He has completely forgotten about the stranger who directed him here, and is focused only on destroying the characters. He nonetheless is secretly a coward and will attack with magic from the rear in a fight, staying behind soldiers and their reinforcements if he can.

CONCLUSION

When the players escape, read them the following:

The fog covers your flight from the scene. You wind around Yellowport for awhile, just to be safe. This gives you plenty of time to think. Lauria intended to play you for patsies; this much is sure. She carried off the lion's share of the treasure, leaving you behind to face the music. You can only hope that the local Thieves' Guild expects a cut from her instead of you, because you no longer want anything to do with her. Except possibly revenge.

Eventually you return home. Now, however bitter you may be, you have a second concern: selling stolen loot without whatever fence Lauria may have had. The process is to take days as you scatter goods across the city, surely getting worse deals than you would have otherwise. In the end, you find yourself wondering whether Guildmaster Vernon will have more employment soon: at least his pay is reliable.

Attempts to find Lauria will fail, including magical ones thanks to her new artefact (scene 7). Notes may be left with Brun Thargoes but she will not respond. If the characters attempt to force information out of the regulars at the Sulphur Inn, dozens of rough thugs will beat them, rob them, and throw them into the river.

To calculate the value of loot, consult the following table:

Portraits, 10 Shards per EV.

Tapestries, 30 Shards per EV.

Children's toys, 5 Shards total.

Candlesticks, 20 Shards per EV.

Books, 30 Shards per EV.

Next give out experience points. It is suggested that the Gamesmaster start with a fixed experience reward of 10 for this quest, divided among the characters and rounded to come to an equal amount for each. Extra points should then be rewarded for individual skill and role-playing, which might average 2 experience points per character.

Quest 3 - A Long Sea Voyage

INTRODUCTION

This quest is somewhat tricky because it is linear and focused on story. Most scenes in previous quests were attached to specific locations, and exploration could vary with no harm done. Creative thinking is to be rewarded in any quest, and the Gamesmaster should adjust to accommodate. Here, however, the Gamesmaster may need to ensure certain story elements occur as listed: namely, the conclusion of the engagement at sea in scene 6, and the strange dream in scene 10.

Before the quest begins, the Gamesmaster might do some dice rolls. Rolls for sea travel (primarily scenes 1 and 8) do not require much player input, so they could be prepared early.

The characters should be given time to rest at home and heal themselves. Their last outing may have been either The Cannibals (quest 1) or Stealing from the Fire (quest 2), but that does not impact anything. Determine a good in-game date to resume adventuring. Roll on the weekly weather table if appropriate (Chapter 9 - For the Gamesmaster in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). When ready, read the players the following:

As time goes on, you take to exploring the docks again. You are very familiar with the docks in this city, but the appeal never dies. From east to west, the scent of the sulphur-laden river and the salty sea rise and sink in a pungent clash, calling to something you have long held in mind: you may have had days of danger and excitement within the walls of Yellowport, but you still desire to sail off into the world of adventure beyond the horizon. As you pass sailors moving their cargo and snacking on trifles from vendors, you wonder when you will have that opportunity.

Early one morning, you are greeted by the messenger in the TIIH tunic whom you had met once before. Guildmaster Vernon again wishes you to come speak with him, though this time back at the Kalesk guild building by the sea.

When the players are ready to answer the summons, note the weather and mention it along with the following:

Of course, the walk is brief and familiar, as you had always done your banking at this establishment. When you arrive, you nod to the clerk at the desk, and look around for the Guildmaster. He stands to one side with many other individuals, some of wealthy and some of working classes, deeply engrossed in business dealings. People come and go from the group at a quick walk, and the minutes pass. The Guildmaster does not seem to notice you.

Eventually you approach of your own accord. You open your mouth only to have the Guildmaster pull you into the flow of conversation without a break in stride. 'This is where we need you,' he says. 'My adventurers, meet Captain Tellon.' Across from you, a man with parched skin and a well-worn captain's uniform nods but does not speak. 'We have a barque with a shipment of grain we acquired

for cheap,' the Guildmaster continues, 'and everyone knows that grain in the northern continent moves east. The issue is that we always send ships out with a contingent of marines, and our most trained people are otherwise engaged. I say we make a special sort of arrangement.

'Join this crew,' he tells you. 'See them to Aspen, the Trading Post on the Isle of Druids, where the price on grain is high. Use your shrewdest business skills to manage the cargo and bring goods back to Yellowport for another profitable sale. And, most importantly, keep the vessel safe. Do this, and the guild will let you keep a cut of the profit you make on the cargo. It will depend on you,' he says, somewhat sternly. 'Upon your return, we can negotiate exactly what you take from the deal. What say you to the proposition?'

The players may ask for more information, but the exact profit cannot be known due to fluctuation in cargo prices. Guildmaster Vernon recognises that this is a very different deal from previous times. If the players accept the quest, read the following:

'Good,' the Guildmaster says, and turns to rejoin his fellow merchants. Captain Tellon steps out of the group with wide strides and gestures for you to come with him. You walk out of the building and down the docks toward where the barque in question must be waiting. On the way, he speaks at last. 'Let me show you the ship. You'll be welcome to board whenever you are set to sail. It's not the most efficient hauling run, being on a little ship with a long distance to go, but between the lot of us I expect we will see a successful voyage. I've sailed everything the guild puts to sea. I'll get us all to the Isle of Druids in one piece. Just pay no mind to the name on the thing.'

You stand before the vessel. As the captain boards, you can read the name: 'The Corkwood.'

Captain Tellon (Warrior 2): Charisma 3, Combat 5, Intelligence 6, Magic 1, Muscle 3, Sanctity 2, Scouting 4, Thievery 1, Stamina 14.

Equipment: Sword (Combat +2), sextant (Scouting +3), and 2 potions of restoration.

Powers: None. (Has the skills of Navigation and Piloting.)

Additional Notes: The captain is a practical, hard-working fellow with a bit of a romantic streak. He is very aware of his limitations and those of this vessel, but strives to do his best work and keep those who employ him satisfied.

The Corkwood (Barque): Capacity 1 cargo unit (currently grains), Hull Points 20, Crew (as follows), Crew Quality normal. For number of crew, note the number of characters in the party: there will be enough crew members to total 30 people on the ship, including the captain. So, with a party of four, there will be 25 crew.

1 - TO THE ISLE OF DRUIDS

The journey averages 5 days each way. Total up days actually spent in this quest, as there is a risk of a break-in at the characters' home while out (Chapter 7 - City Services in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). As Captain Tellon said, the players may prepare first. A wise move would be to check local cargo prices and write them down (Chapter 9, core rules). The captain will handle all Navigation and Piloting so the players do not need to prepare for that. When ready, read them the following:

All hands are aboard and the crew springs into action. The Corkwood gently pulls away from the dock, marking the beginning of your first sea voyage. Soon the ship is sailing in the coastal waters beside Yellowport. There are a number of other ships, mostly merchantmen, but there are also a few warships of the Sokaran Imperial Navy. 'At least we won't be plagued by pirates with the navy around,' says Captain Tellon. With everything firmly underway, the captain shows you below deck, where you will be able to rest in reasonable comfort as the days pass. Now you need only wait and see what those days bring.

It is 150 miles from Yellowport to the Isle of Druids. Consult Chapter 9, core rules for the process of sea travel. Note the sailing conditions each day and roll for distance travelled. The Gamesmaster should narrate this to the players. The first 90 miles are in the Violet Ocean. The first 40 of those are open ocean, then the next 50 miles are along the coast south of Scorpion Bight. The subsequent 60 miles are in the open waters of the Sea of Whispers. The smell of sulphur fades very quickly on the first day of travel. No other ships will be spotted until the players reach scene 2.

As stated, Tellon's statistics are the ones to use for rolls. If the characters lose faith in him during a storm, those with Piloting skill can try and convince him to let them pilot instead. Don't forget that having a priest of Alvir and Valmir in the party will prevent any storms (Chapter 6 - Deities & Religion in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book).

However, unknown to all involved, this sea voyage is blessed and would not be stopped by the forces of nature anyway (scene 10). The captain will succeed in all Scouting rolls for Navigation, so the vessel will never get lost and will never suffer a distance penalty when sailing in a storm. Any storm strong enough to destroy the ship weakens before it can do so: for example, a hurricane can deal 4d6 damage in an hour (potentially more than the maximum 20 hull points for a barque), so it becomes a severe storm. If the captain fails Intelligence rolls for Piloting and the vessel becomes more and more damaged, the weather weakens as far as is needed to prevent the hull from reaching zero.

As soon as the rolls indicate the players will reach the 90-mile mark, go to scene 2.

2 - ENGAGEMENT AT SEA: APPROACH

After dealing with any storm, read the players the following:

So far, you find you adjust well to travel by sea. You have become accustomed to a diet of fish as provided by a rather abundant catch from the sailors. Spirits seem high, which you gauge as you get to know the people onboard. Captain Tellon keeps everyone working hard to maintain good time.

But today, as you begin to sail beyond the limits of the Violet Ocean and into what is known as the Sea of Whispers, the voyage is interrupted. You notice a commotion and head out on deck to see the captain and crew peering off to starboard. The captain spots you and points with one hand. Out in the distant waves you spy what looks like a huge ship with far too many masts. Then you realise your mistake: it is actually two ships, each a brigantine, drifting together side-by-side.

'They're lashed together with rope,' says Tellon. 'No one stands on deck. Any flags have been taken down. I feared we would see the red pennant of the Kingdom of the Reavers, but there is no sign. If this were a pirate attack, where are the pirates now?'

The crew seems disquieted. No one like a ghost ship. The captain turns to you and speaks. 'It's worth the risk, I say. We make this voyage for the money, and goods on a lost vessel are ours by law of salvage. There are enough hands we could take a whole ship; leave our barque, claim a brigantine, and return to Yellowport with more cargo than when we left. Come back later with more crew and try to rescue the rest. What say you?'

The players may wish to investigate more before boarding. Each brigantine sails higher in the water than the barque does, so one cannot easily see above the bulwark. If the characters send people up a mast, they will observe the decks are almost completely clear, except for heaps of canvas around the outer sides of each vessel (just within the port bulwark on the port vessel, starboard on the starboard). Those who listen for unusual sounds will hear nothing, but the Gamesmaster should note the Scouting rolls that the characters make.

Captain Tellon intends to pull the Corkwood alongside the mystery vessels. At the last moment, characters who are listening and made a Scouting roll at Difficulty 7 will hear voices coming from the farther ship: 'Stay away! Stay away!'

3 - ENGAGEMENT AT SEA: OVERRUN

See the engagement at sea map. It assumes the players pull up to port; but since the ships are symmetric, either way will do. Whichever brigantine is immediately next to the Corkwood turns out to be the Scarred Skull, a pirate ship sailed by Reavers from the Unnumbered Isles in the Violet Ocean. Read the players the following:

Suddenly battle cries resound from bow to stern of the nearby brigantine, and an armed horde rises from beyond the bulwark, tossing aside canvas that had kept them hidden from view. 'Reavers!' the shout goes up among the sailors of the Corkwood. 'To arms!' bellows the captain.

The pirates heft crossbows that launch grappling hooks at your vessel, catching on the railing at the edge and in the rigging overhead. They pull on the ropes in unison and the lurch almost takes you off your feet. Behind them, more pirates emerge from hatches and still more cross over from the deck on the far ship. In seconds, your vessel is lashed to theirs, and pirates start leaping down into your ranks.

Reavers (x45): Charisma 2, Combat 4, Intelligence 3, Magic 1, Muscle 4, Sanctity 1, Scouting 5, Thievery 4, Defence 5, Stamina 8. They each carry a shortsword (Combat +1) and wear ring mail (Defence +2). Crossbows have only grappling hooks, no quarrels, and are left behind.

Combat is simplified: pirates stream onto the ship and engage at random, and the Gamesmaster need only run full combat for the characters and Captain Tellon. They are clustered near the bow with the captain, but manoeuvring does not actually matter. Each combat round, roll 1 dice for each person and consult the following table:

1-3 No new assailant

4-5 One new pirate approaches with an engage combat action

6 Two new pirates approach if the character is a strong melee fighter, one if otherwise

The definition of 'strong melee fighter' is up to the Gamesmaster. To help keep Telson standing, do not count him as 'strong.'

When not engaged, characters may help friends with their own engagement or do other actions like pick a target on the enemy ship to attack at range. If any characters made a Scouting test and heard the cries (scene 2), the group will have a full combat round for this before the first roll. An enemy attacked at range will go into a 'queue,' as it were, and will be next in line to engage the next round. Flanking is assumed to happen whenever one side of an engagement outnumbers the other (Chapter 5 - Combat in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). Total up enemies defeated by characters for loot purposes (scene 6).

The crew fights with cudgels, short swords, and bare hands. Each combat round, roll 1 more dice: on a roll of 1 or 2, inform the players that a crewmember has fallen. Crew will not kill many pirates.

If Captain Telson falls, a crewmember will drag him away to administer one of his potions of restoration before he can die. If a character falls, and Telson is not engaged, he may use his other potion on that character.

It should be obvious the characters will soon be overrun. When the crew threatens to drop below 20 alive, or the engagements on the characters become absurd, go to scene 4.

4 - ENGAGEMENT AT SEA: DESTRUCTION

Read the players the following:

The pirate numbers seem to replenish without end. You can see them lining up along the edge of their vessel, snarling as they jockey for position. Then there is a flash of light. Eyes on both sides turn to the main-mast of the Reaver vessel as fire races up into the sails. Combat falters. Then you see a burning object arc through the air in the distance. It lands on the enemy deck and bursts into flame, igniting the canvas they had used to conceal themselves. Somebody is throwing firebombs from the farther vessel! The Reavers shout in rage and set about fighting the fire, and many on the Corkwood turn around and leap back to their ship.

Combat nonetheless continues. Each combat round, roll 1 dice for each pirate in an engagement and consult the following table:

1-3 Remain in combat

4-6 Make a defensive withdraw, incurring an opportunity attack

No more crew on the Corkwood will die. After one round, read the players the following:

Yet another firebomb is let fly, headed to the deck between two masts, but then you don't see it land. It has gone down a hatch left open by the pirates.

Wait for players to start freeing themselves from engagement. Then, go to scene 5

5 - ENGAGEMENT AT SEA: RESCUE

Read the players the following:

The blaze is only spreading, but some Reavers are giving up on fighting it and heading straight to the far vessel. Distant cries go up: 'Help! Help!' The edge of the enemy ship is clearing of pirates and you can see places you might leap through.

If the characters truly need a push, Captain Tellon can order them to help whomever is throwing the bombs. With a run up start, characters must make a Muscle (Difficulty 10) roll to ascend to the Scarred Skull. If they fail, they must make a Scouting (Difficulty 8) roll to catch the edge and climb up. Success in climbing means a delay of one combat round; failure means tests for Swimming until the entire battle is over (Chapter 9, core rules). Read the following to the first person on the Reaver ship:

You ascend as far from the conflagration as you can. Most of the pirates are engaged in beating out the flames, and from somewhere you hear a man's voice barking commands. The voice breaks off when you come face to face with a man wielding a shining rapier, his face a mix of anger and disbelief. 'Get off of my ship!' screams the captain.

Captain Jorreye: Charisma 3, Combat 4, Intelligence 5, Magic 2, Muscle 4, Sanctity 2, Scouting 5, Thievery 5, Defence 6, Stamina 13. Magical rapier (Combat +2, strike order +2) and ring mail (Defence +2).

This rapier is akin to normal ones (Chapter 4 - Equipment in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book) but with an extra +1 bonus. If the players are wise enough to loot it before the ship sinks, let them discover the bonus on their own, such as by Mage Sight or by using it in battle. Players who have read the original game book may try to take the pirate captain's head: it is EV 0.5 and is good for a bounty of 75 Shards in port.

Others characters who land on deck may help in the fight. No other pirates will engage them. Running and jumping to the farther vessel takes a Muscle (Difficulty 8) roll; Scouting (Difficulty 8) roll to climb after failure. The jump is easier because this vessel, the Enchanted Sky, is at an even height. Upon success, read the players the following:

The deck on the far ship is almost empty. There is a woman with skin shades darker than that of the Sokarans who generally sail here, dressed in fancy clothes. One pirate's body lies burning on the deck, and two others are confounded as they try to lay blows on her, their would-be victim squirming away at every turn.

This is Moon of Evening. Careful characters may win the fight with ease: the Reavers have not noticed them and each only have 4 Stamina left. Afterward, read the following:

The Reaver vessel is afire clear through. The woman makes a single glance between you and it, and speaks plainly: 'Separate the ships.' Back on the Corkwood, it seems the crew has the same idea, and they bring blades to bear on the ropes that hold them.

The defeated pirates had bladed weapons if the characters need them. Characters still on the pirate vessel had better choose some other place to stand. Jumping back down to the Corkwood takes a Muscle (Difficulty 6) roll; Scouting (Difficulty 8) roll to climb after failure. Proceed to scene 6.

6 - ENGAGEMENT AT SEA: REWARDS

Read the players the following:

With new purpose, all hands start hacking at the ropes. Pirates still remaining on the Corkwood are overpowered, but they fight to the last, preferring death to enslavement or execution. This is what the rest of their crew receives as the ship becomes a funeral pyre. Your barque and this mysterious brigantine slowly separate and you watch the Reavers sink beneath the waves.

Note that any characters who fell overboard are rescued and proceed with the following:

Tellon brings the Corkwood over as the crew begins tending to the wounded. The woman, apparently the captain, directs you below deck where her own crew waits in bonds. With them rescued, you all assemble on the brigantine, where the woman finally makes introductions and expresses her thanks. She tells you her name is Moon of Evening and that she comes from Smogmaw, the city at the Misty Estuary, in far-off Ankon-Konu. She tells you to visit her, if you are ever in Smogmaw, so that she can repay the debt.

For now, she is not sure how to begin repaying. The Reavers had already taken her cargo of textiles, and it would seem that firebombing made short work of it. All she has left is a cargo of spices.

Trading the grain for the spices is simple, given that all involved want to go to Aspen. Tellon will gladly explain to uncertain characters how profitable this is. He will also explain that the deal with Guildmaster Vernon was for cargo profit: all loot from pirates defeated by the characters is theirs to keep. A good target is 10 sets of shortsword and ring mail.

The ships sail together the remaining distance to the Isle of Druids. Resume rolls and narration, assuming that Moon of Evening succeeds in all tests. Don't forget natural healing over days (Chapter 9, core rules.)

7 - ASPEN AND THE DRUID'S ISLE

When the players reach their destination, describe it per Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book.

The characters may sell the cargo unit of spices at the Trading Post. Recall from Chapter 7, core rules that cargo selling prices are subject to fluctuation. For this quest, the Gamesmaster should force a positive fluctuation, leading to massive profit for Vernon. The characters must buy a new cargo unit out of that profit for the return trip.

Once business is done, Moon of Evening will thank the characters again and depart to fill a hold with furs. Read the following:

Captain Tellon, looking rather relaxed, approaches you as you finish. 'Not been to the Druid's Isle, have you? Will we be heading back with the Guildmaster's cargo as soon as it's onboard, or will you call for a day to see the land?'

Describe the island's locations as directed by the players. If the party goes exploring in the old forest, the Gamesmaster should check for encounters. Ideally, even players who are the most eager for adventure should be prevented from using the Gates of the World and messing up the quest.

If the characters spend any time at all on the island, go to scene 8. Otherwise, skip to scene 9.

8 - DEEP WOODS

Eva at the shrine to Lacuna has a request. Either she will speak when the characters visit the shrine, or she will hear about them during their visit on the island and seek them out at the dock. Helping her counts as a secondary quest when calculating the experience reward for this adventure (see conclusion). Read the players the following:

You are met by Eva, the young woman who tends to Lacuna's tasks at the shrine. She inquires whether you would make a delivery for her to the City of Trees, hiding within the Old Forest on this island. It might be tricky finding the place, but you look adventurous enough to manage.

She would like somebody to deliver a sealed envelope (EV 0.25) to the Oak Druid. The druids let people barter for cheaper goods at their market in return for this service. If the characters accept, but then snoop into the envelope, they will find it contains a request for assistance with initiation ceremonies at the shrine. Whoever opens the envelope suffers the curse of Lacuna (Chapter 6, core rules).

Reaching the City of Trees is an hour's trek, so roll once for random encounters (Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book). Remember that a wayfarer can skip an encounter with Secret Ways. Whoever leads the journey must make a Scouting (Difficulty 10) roll to reach the destination, where failure means wasting the hour then re-rolling. Describe the thorn wall of the city per the source book, then add:

Circling it, you find there is a break in the hedge, but it is filled by a large tree. To your surprise, a face forms in the trunk and speaks. 'None can pass; begone, humans!'

Broosh, the Spirit Tree, is also described in Chapter 3, Sokara Source Book. Persuading it to allow entry takes a Charisma (Difficulty 10) roll, where showing it the sealed envelope counts as an 'adequate bribe' (Chapter 9, core rules). Describe the city inside and the Oak Druid per the source book. The Oak Druid graciously accepts the message; and, if it is still sealed, allows each character a 20% discount on one item at the market.

Returning to Aspen is another hour's trek. If the characters have not had any risky animal encounters (boars or a bear), the Gamesmaster should force one before leaving. The characters become lost, encroach on animal territory, and are attacked.

Eva will have more to say so long as either the envelope was not opened or the characters do not tell her they opened it. Read the players the following:

Eva expresses her gratitude, then immediately comes back to you with another sealed envelope. It seems she has decided you are her couriers today.

In this case, she would like delivery to her contingent at the House of Priests in Marlock City. The contents are not urgent. Eva believes that the priesthood has paid couriers 75 Shards for past deliveries. Anyone who snoops will find it is a basic report on activities on the island, both at the shrine and the City of Trees, and then suffer the curse of Lacuna (Chapter 6, core rules). The characters will have a natural opportunity to earn the 75 Shards in The Ghouls (quest 4).

9 - RETURN TO YELLOWPORT

When the players depart Aspen, the Enchanted Sky will already be gone. Read them the following:

You set sail again. You are only halfway on the sea voyage, and already it has seemed long. Captain Tellon leads the crew in their familiar tasks and soon you see Aspen fade in the distance behind you.

See scene 1 and narrate as before. Again, this sea voyage is blessed; and as soon as the Corkwood reaches the 90-mile mark (that is, once they have mostly passed Scorpion Bight and are almost to Yellowport), the players will discover how. Proceed to scene 10.

10 - A STRANGE DREAM

This scene holds a sequence of events. After dealing with any storm, read the players the following:

That night, your sleep is restless. You dream a most vivid dream. You are attacked by a gigantic sea monster, a mighty octopoid thing that encircles the ship with tree-like tentacles and pulls it under the waves.

The characters must make an Intelligence (Difficulty 10) roll. If they all fail, the dream remains terrifying, and they all must roll again. As soon as one succeeds, read the following to that player (or those players):

You realise that it is a dream and the monster cannot harm you. You still experience a world undersea, but the fear has passed.

Keep doing rolls if needed. As soon as more than one player succeeds, continue with the following:

Now you see each other and know that this is not an ordinary dream at all. Together you sink into the bottle-green depths. Then you are caught in a glowing golden net, and the dream becomes a blur. You seem to 'wake' in an undersea palace of multi-coloured coral, with mermaids to attend you; they lead you past trident-armed merman guards into a great hall. Seated upon two giant shells, like thrones, are the king and queen of the deep, with scales and skin the richest sea blue. Shoals of iridescent angel fish dart about in an intricate flashing dance of colour, dancing for the rulers of the land beneath the waves.

If there is a priest of Alvir and Valmir in the party, read the following:

In awe, you recognise your own gods.

Give anyone who keeps failing one more chance to pass the Intelligence test. Read the following to anyone who succeeds at this time:

You find yourself whisked through the water to the side of your comrades, where you view the same scene.

Those who still fail remain in the nightmare until the morning. For the others, continue reading:

A silver flute appears suspended in the water before you. The queen indicates that you should entertain them!

All present wait for the characters to accept the challenge and will give no other instruction. Whoever plays the flute must make a Charisma (Difficulty 11) roll. On failure, read the following, then continue at the final paragraph at the end of this scene:

Your music seems weak, and the king cuts you short. 'We have heard enough,' he says in a voice that booms through the great flooded hall. The king turns to the queen. 'These mortals can accomplish much,' he says, 'but not in matters of the heart.' 'They may struggle with our gift,' she answers him, 'yet perhaps they are of the greatest need.' 'We agree,' he replies. 'Let it be so.' He looks out across you again.

On success, however, read the following:

You play like never before. The king and the queen are enchanted by the haunting melodies you are able to coax from the silver flute. Unfortunately, you have played too well. The king looks into your eyes and you find you cannot stop.

The character must make a Sanctity (Difficulty 11) roll. On failure, read the following, then continue at the final paragraph at the end of this scene:

It feels like you are playing the flute for an eternity. Your comrades see you lose track of yourself, to collapse after great exertion and drop into silence. In the pained quiet, the queen turns to the king and speaks with a voice that rings clear beneath the waves. 'These are not the most devout servants,' she says. 'They may struggle with our gift; yet perhaps they are of the greatest need.' 'We agree,' he replies. 'Let it be so.' He looks out across you again.

On success, however, read the following:

You are so devout that the king's spell cannot affect you for more than a few seconds. You complete the tune and willingly go silent, allowing the gentle echoes of your music to fade in the underwater palace. The queen, recognizing your faith in the gods, thanks you for entertaining them. She looks to the king.

All scenarios end with this paragraph:

'You have already known our favor,' says the king, 'for your little ship will not fail you on this voyage. Such is the blessing of Alvir and Valmir.' Then the queen speaks. 'But there is another blessing the gods may give. One which only the strongest of mortal souls can bear. One which will guide you and your companions in the greater voyage; the voyage of your lifetime. We give now this blessing unto you.' You see nothing else occur; at that moment, you awake onboard the ship.

If the character succeeded in both Charisma and Sanctity, add that he or she awakes holding the silver flute (Charisma +2). The characters may speak with Captain Tellon and the crew: their reaction is amazement, of course, because their livelihood depends on the favor of these gods. They know nothing about the mystery blessing. The Gamesmaster should conclude narrating the return to Yellowport.

CONCLUSION

Upon return, read the players the following:

You may find it anticlimactic, or perhaps just relieving, to see the plain sight of the Yellowport docks after so many days of adventure. Once ashore, Captain Tellon immediately sets the crew to handling cargo.

Check the selling price on whatever the characters brought back, including fluctuation (Chapter 7, core rules). If it is not worth selling, Tellon will just send it into a warehouse to be sold at a later time. The Corkwood will also go under repairs, if necessary, which the players do not handle. Continue with the following and edit if the listed reward seems unreasonable:

Together you head to the guild building to make your report. Guildmaster Vernon is less busy this time. Upon your arrival, he snaps his fingers and an employee runs up with a ledger. The Guildmaster listens intently to the tale of just how strange the run was. When you explain the unusual cargos, he snatches the ledger out of the clerk's hands and sets to scrawling down sums himself. Then he holds a private conversation with the captain.

'I can see this was a profitable venture,' he says, turning to you again. 'I also see you have made a relationship with a crew that respects you. I think it best to call this the last of our business dealings, and I know just the parting gift: what say you to 300 Shards plus the very sailing vessel you brought back intact?' Captain Tellon leans in and adds 'You can change the name if you like.'

Captain Tellon himself will not come along, as he has other work to do, but the crew will remain for the characters' employ if they are interested. The crew has already been paid for one week starting now. If this were turned down, Vernon could just give another plain 450 Shards. Read the following:

You are not done with the story, though. You relate the experience under the waves and ask about the peculiar blessing you received. 'I have no idea,' Vernon answers. 'Go ask at the House of Priests.' With that, money changes hands, and Guildmaster Vernon turns his back on you one last time. Captain Tellon lingers a bit longer and gives you a nod. 'Hope to see you on the seas.' He then excuses himself as well.

Captain Tellon also mentions that the House of Priests is in Marlock City if the characters do not know.

Next give out experience points. It is suggested that the Gamesmaster start with a fixed experience reward of 15 for this quest. Add 5 experience if the characters did the secondary quest: that is, they helped Eva in scene 8 and are carrying away a second envelope. Once calculated, the total fixed experience is divided among the characters, with rounding to come to an equal amount for each. Extra points should then be rewarded for individual skill and role-playing, which might average 2 experience points per character, or 3 if they completed the secondary quest and therefore did more gameplay.

In a party of four, some characters who began this campaign at Rank 2 may achieve Rank 3 now. The players will need to make decisions about advancement as outlined in Chapter 1 - Character Creation in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book. If they accept the ship, but have not yet trained in Piloting, they would be wise to do so.

Quest 4 - The Ghouls

INTRODUCTION

Before this quest begins, the Gamesmaster might do some dice rolls. Rolls for crypt content (scenes 6 and 7) could be left to chance, or they could be prepared early so the Gamesmaster can enforce reasonable variety.

The actual beginning is whenever the players wish. They do not know what the next job is: only that the House of Priests in Marlock City might have information on this 'other blessing' from Alvir and Valmir. Yellowport has its own temple to Alvir and Valmir, but the priests there are baffled.

If the characters have a ship and Piloting skill, they might wish to spend time shipping cargo first. They must pay their crew weekly and deal with weather as per normal rules; they are only immune to storms if they have a priest of Alvir and Valmir in the party (Chapter 7 - City Services, Chapter 9 - For the Gamesmaster, and Chapter 6 - Deities & Religion in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book).

When the players are ready, determine the in-game date and roll on the weekly weather table if appropriate (Chapter 9, core rules). The 'introduction' is really in scene 2, but here the Gamesmaster should read something like the following:

Guildmaster Vernon has no more ratmen or cannibal cultists who could use evicting, and all he needs for protecting his ships are the guild's own marines (hired at a lower price than you). It seems you are on your own to find your next adventure. Thus it is that you depart Yellowport once again, this time destined for the House of Priests in Marlock City. The first task is getting there.

1 - TO MARLOCK CITY

Note the date the characters leave Yellowport, as there is a risk of a break-in at the characters' home while out (Chapter 7, core rules). Also keep track of the weather.

It is 60 miles from Yellowport to Marlock City by sea. It is 20 miles from Yellowport to Trefoille, then another 20 miles from Trefoille to Marlock City, both by road. It is also 20 miles to the Shadar Tor then 20 miles to Marlock City, all off-road in easy terrain. Consult Chapter 9, core rules for the process of sea travel and rates of overland travel.

If the characters go by sea, they need only worry about storms. There will be no encounters except merchant or military vessels who ignore them.

If the characters go overland, describe locations per Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book. Random encounters will occur from time to time (remember that a wayfarer can skip an encounter with Secret Ways). For every day spent in southwest Sokara (except special regions like the Curstmoor), the Gamesmaster should roll 2 dice and consult one of the following tables. The first is when on a road:

2-3 Bandits

4-6 Travellers

7-10 No encounter

11 Military patrol

12 Wild animals

The second is when off-road:

2 Bandits

3-9 No encounter

10-12 Wild animals

Bandits

A group of 1d6+2 bandits are hiding nearby. The characters must make a successful Scouting (Difficulty 12) roll to see them; otherwise, the bandits gain a +4 bonus to strike order for the first combat round. These bandits have non-magical weapons and armour of the Gamesmaster's choice up to a maximum of Combat +2 and Defence +2, including some ranged weapons. For more information on bandits, please refer to Chapter 10 - Monsters and Enemies in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book.

Travellers

The characters pass a group of 2d6 ordinary citizens. Possibilities include merchants heading to any big city, pilgrims heading to Blessed Springs, masons and carpenters heading for Trefoille, and so on. 1 in 6 of these groups includes 1 pickpocket like those in Marlock City (Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book).

Military Patrol

The cobbled road between Yellowport and Marlock City is well-kept by the Sokaran military and has regular guard posts. This is a group of 1d6+2 typical soldiers from either Yellowport (Chapter 9, core rules) or Marlock City (Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book), heading somewhere for a shift change.

Wild Animals

This region is not as wild as some. It nonetheless has dogs (1d6+3), hawks (1d3), and horses (1d6), which are usually not hostile. There are also giant rats (1d6) and wolves (1d6+3), which might attack in hunger. For more information on these animals, see Chapter 10, core rules.

2 - THE HOUSE OF PRIESTS

When the characters reach Marlock City, describe it per Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book. They may wish to rest and heal if they had a fight on the way over. They may also sightsee. Note that random encounters in the Poor Quarter can include a helpful beggar: such a beggar gives directions to the House of Priests. Further, the beggar says 'Oh, you got one of them funny blessings? Lots of folks go in there with funny blessings.'

As stated in the source book, the characters must pay 10 Shards at the House of Priests to go see the High Priest Clerk for Alvir and Valmir. However, if they are delivering a message for Eva from A Long Sea Voyage (quest 3), the Gamesmaster should read the following:

The reception staff sees your envelope and waives the entrance fee. In short order, you are brought to the offices for the followers of Lacuna, where you deliver the message and are paid 75 Shards. As long

as you're in here, your escort doesn't seem to mind if you step over to the Alvir and Valmir people for a bit.

This delivery does not affect experience rewards as the scene was considered in the reward for A Long Sea Voyage (quest 3). Whichever way the players get to their goal, read them the following:

You are led through the House of Priests to a large room, where several groups are gathered at tables. Your escort points to one table where the High Priest Clerk for Alvir and Valmir is working. You notice some heated discussion off at a nearby table in a group bearing sombre clothes.

If there is a priest of Nagil in the party, identify these as priests of Nagil. Continue with the following:

You present yourselves and relate the situation. The High Priest Clerk finds himself hemming and hawing, not quite able to answer your questions. Shortly, a grey-whiskered priest of Elnir appears behind you and exclaims with displeasure, 'Another one?!' He is apparently Altun, the Chief Administrator, and he berates the sheepish Clerk as though he were a failing schoolchild. Eventually he speaks to you. 'Every year, adventurers come by with "the other blessing the gods may give." It's always the same: some nonsense about being "destined to change the world." And then we never see them again! You'd do yourselves well to forget about it and find something less vague to occupy you.'

'I might have a suggestion,' comes a stammering voice. All present turn to face a man in black robes, stepping away from the nearby table. 'We could use the services of an adventuring party.' 'What have you done this time, Smuggs?' groans the Chief Administrator. 'Well, we have had an unfortunate, umm . . . accident, at the temple of Nagil. In the crypt below the temple we sometimes experiment with the corpses of the dead; you know, the occasional zombie, part of the rituals in honour of the aspect of Nagil we revere here. It seems a ghoul has escaped from these pits, and is terrorizing the city at night. We'd rather someone like you sorted the problem out before the city militia got to hear of it.'

Dirklore Smuggs is described in Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book. It is up to the players to notice he gave neither directions nor reward. If they agree with no questions asked, read the following:

'Are you joking me, Smuggs?!' Altun interrupts. 'You send people off to do your dirty work, and that's all you give them?' 'Oh,' he replies. He faces you blankly. 'What would you like to know?'

For reward, see the conclusion. For information, he knows everything about ghouls from Chapter 10, core rules, and knows that pouchfuls of salt and iron filings can be purchased in the market for 15 Shards each (EV 0.5). Despite the title of this quest, he does not know anything about there being more than one ghoul. If the players accept, read them the following:

'Splendid, splendid!' Smuggs exclaims. 'Now, I hate to think there will be any complications, but you must investigate thoroughly to ensure the ghoul's release won't mean lasting repercussions for the city. Please retrieve proof that the danger has passed.' Altun, ever displeased, adds the last word: 'And return to the House of Priests when you are finished with this man's grisly task. We will make an official record of the incident.' Your escort leads you out of the building.

3 - SEEKING A GHOUL

If the characters search by day, they find nothing whatsoever. If by night, they have two challenges: first, to find the ghoul's trail in general; second, to find the exact hiding place. They have 8 hours to do so.

It is logical to start around the temple of Nagil in the south. Characters may interview and/or interrogate passersby with Charisma or Muscle rolls. People vary, so Difficulty is determined as 1d6+7, and an adequate bribe (Chapter 9, core rules) is that same 1d6 times 10 Shards. One attempt is allowed per hour. Success reveals many people saw a frightful character heading northeast, leading the characters through the middle of town, past the market and the Three Rings Tavern, before they need more information. Alternately, characters may track with Scouting rolls. Difficulty is 9 or 12, depending on whether they have a light source, with one attempt per hour. Success reveals the chewed corpses of stray animals and odd spatters of blood on walls, leading across town as above.

Having succeeded once, the characters approach the Poor Quarter: roll on the random encounter table in Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book each hour, but disregard the +4 (for roaming around at night) during this quest. The helpful beggar would report ‘Something bad’s been out at night, for sure. No one on the street wants to go near the east gate cemetery.’ If not tipped off like this, the same rules for Charisma, Muscle, and/or Scouting rolls apply. Success reveals gruesome murders and tales of terror that lead to the east gate cemetery.

Failure to reach the goal within 8 hours means the players must start another two-step process tomorrow. Characters with the Divination lore of magic may skip to the end at the Gamesmaster’s discretion. Characters who just try to search every cemetery in Marlock City find there are more places than can fit in a night.

4 - LITTLE WAIF

The east gate cemetery is south of the eastern entrance to Marlock City. When the players reach this area, read them the following:

At the gates of the cemetery, you find a small girl sitting on a rock. She seems a bit flushed, as if she had just been running, and she looks like she might be about to run from you as well.

This is Elsie. A Charisma (Difficulty 10) roll is needed to keep her from fleeing. She can tell the characters that she was placing flowers at the grave of her father when a horrible monster came for her. Fortunately, she was able to run away. She points out a tall mausoleum, easily visible against the sky, in the general location the thing was hiding. If the characters somehow went out at night without a light source, Elsie will also give them a lantern; she intends to head home by the best-lit streets.

This child should not require ability values (i.e., for fighting), but has Defence of 3 and 3 Stamina.

5 - GHASTLY CONFRONTATION

The mausoleum is an obvious landmark, so the characters will pass it one way or another. When the players approach, read them the following:

You thread your way through the pitted tombstones and brooding crypts of the cemetery under a grey night sky. Suddenly, a foul stench fills your nostrils, and a figure rises up out of the shadows! Yellow eyes glow with feral bloodlust, and the creature’s talons reach for you hungrily. You’ve found the ghoul!

Ghoul: Its only ‘equipment’ is a ruined funerary wrap. For more information on ghouls, please refer to Chapter 10, core rules. Do not forget ghoulbite disease (Chapter 9, core rules).

Special Rules

Salt and Iron Filings: When a ghoul is in the open, a character may use 2 AP to empty a pouchful of salt and iron filings around it. When a ghoul is in an enclosed space, like the rooms in scene 6, a character may use 1 AP to empty a pouchful across the ghoul's way out. This may only be done by characters not engaged in combat. A trapped ghoul may be attacked with projectiles, or, at the Gamesmaster's discretion, melee attacks with a -2 penalty.

The Artefact: Scene 7 mentions the Necromantic Focus. Any character killed from here on out will come back as a ghoul after 1 combat round. The animated character will stop moving when killed once.

See the mausoleum map. The ghoul starts at the location marked with the scene number. If the characters were not warned by Elsie (scene 4), the ghoul gets a +4 bonus to strike order for the first combat round. When they win, read the following:

The rogue ghoul ceases its struggle and collapses in on itself, leaving only a mound of putrescent matter, atop of which rests its head. In the ensuing silence, you wave away the stench and contemplate heading back. You also take a closer look at the mausoleum. It says 'Feldeston' on a plaque over the door. The door is open.

There is no light in the mausoleum. Those who listen right now must make a Scouting (Difficulty 9) roll to hear moaning noises from within. Characters who don't listen and just want to leave should be treated to a particularly loud moan. Smart characters will block the door with salt and iron filings, but they must still bring back 'proof that the danger has passed,' and to be honest they have no idea what is going on. If they take the ghoul's head (EV 0.5) and leave anyway, Dirklöre Smuggs will point out (in horror) that this ghoul is not the one they released, and require that the characters return immediately.

6 - THE DEPTHS OF THE PROBLEM

Night and day do not matter inside: the characters must have a light source to be able to see and avoid death. The immediate mausoleum entry is a simple place with religious statuary. When the characters can see the level at the bottom of the stairs, read the following:

You enter the Feldeston family tomb. Decaying filth clogs every corner, but these crypts are not dead; not anymore. The doors of the individual chambers are all ajar and you can hear echoes of shuffling, scraping, and moaning. You cannot pinpoint the sounds, but surely the single ghoul released by the priesthood does not represent the full depths of the problem.

The contents of this floor are determined at random. For every chamber, roll 2 dice and consult the following table:

2-4 Two ghouls

5-7 Ghoul

8-9 Trap

10-12 Unguarded treasure

Ghouls

Ghouls are as described in scene 5. Note that loud sounds (combat, traps) will not attract ghouls from other chambers because of the confusing acoustics. The Gamesmaster may rule some ghouls still go wandering because of the characters' light. They have loot similar to 'unguarded treasure,' below.

Trap

Select from these three options: a normal-quality arrow trap (see Chapter 9, core rules, throughout this paragraph) in the entry to the chamber, a normal-quality gas trap in wall carvings, or a magical trap on a coffin. The magical trap triggers if someone disturbs the coffin (i.e., by searching), and fills the victim's head with hallucinations, causing violent seizures. The victim must make an Intelligence (Difficulty 11) roll or begin suffering 1 Stamina damage every combat round from bumping into objects, with another opportunity to roll each round. These rooms have loot similar to 'unguarded treasure,' below.

Unguarded Treasure

Searching the filth takes a Scouting (Difficulty 7) roll. Select from these six options: 100 Shards in jewellery pieces (EV 0.25), 2 random potions, a holy symbol (Sanctity +1), a scimitar (Combat +2), a shield (Defence +1), or chain mail (Defence +3).

7 - STILL AS THE TOMB

As the players descend to the second level, read them the following:

Descending the spiral staircase, you see a large and open crypt. Alcoves along the north, east, and south walls contain coffins, and one ornate sarcophagus is presented as a centrepiece in the west. Before it stands a ghoul surrounded with a sort of dark halo, twitching as though struggling against invisible bonds. Unfortunately, it is the only ghoul so restrained.

Roll for contents of the three alcoves just like the chambers in scene 6, but re-roll if the dice happen not to indicate any ghouls. The trapped ghoul is the one created by the priests of Nagil and it may be destroyed easily. It is bound by the first of the defences on the sarcophagus.

The sarcophagus is powerfully enchanted; 'disabling traps' does not work. The first person to inspect it, or even stand near it in combat, will trigger two defences in sequence.

The first paralyses the character and inflicts a steadily-growing curse. The character must make a Sanctity (Difficulty 13) roll to break free, with another opportunity to roll each round. Each failure reduces an ability value by 1: choose at random from all abilities except Magic and Sanctity. Once the character succeeds, or is physically dragged out of this room (taking three rounds), the paralysis ends and the ability reductions are finalised. Only one curse removal is needed to eliminate it (Chapter 6, core rules).

The second creates a fire blast. The party feels the room get hotter and sees orange magical energy gather over the sarcophagus. Each character may make one Magic (Difficulty 12) test to interact with the trap and disperse the energy. On total failure, the room will explode in fire, dealing 2 dice damage to everyone, but leaving the sarcophagus untouched.

Afterward, the defences run out of power forever. Inside are the remains of the necromancer Nevick Feldeston, along with an ebony wand (Magic +2) and an artefact: the Necromantic Focus. It is a piece of obsidian shaped like a raven's feather that appears to have a dark halo (EV 0.25). Removing it from Nevick's touch makes the halo vanish, and those who die will no longer come back as a ghoul (scene 5).

If someone with the Necromancy lore of magic talks to Nevick, he is annoyed that the fools who buried him failed to turn off the artefact.

CONCLUSION

Upon return to the House of Priests with the artefact, read the players the following:

The reception staff knows you have important business and escorts you directly to the offices of Chief Administrator Altun, where Dirklone Smuggs also waits. They listen to your story: Altun, gravely; Smuggs, nervously. 'Feldeston?!' Smuggs eventually exclaims. 'We know old Nevick, of course! He was one of our necromancers and a very religious fellow. His whole family was like that. His studies meant that he was the last to pass away of the lot, and we buried him ourselves. This was, oh, less than a year gone.'

Smuggs deduces what you may have suspected: the ghoul they created broke into this mausoleum and stumbled upon a situation brewing within. You present the artefact and the both of them handle it gingerly. 'Smuggs,' asks Altun, 'what does this do?' Smuggs shuffles his feet. 'Nevick invented it; called it a Necromantic Focus. We, umm, might not have known how to turn it off.'

Altun harrumphs and puts the object in an engraved box. He speaks to you. 'We can handle matters from here, including clean-up at the east gate cemetery. You are to be commended for your hard work. In fact, if you remain in Marlock City, we would like to maintain contact: should other situations come up, having competent adventurers on-call can save lives. Think it over. For now, this fool owes you a reward.'

The characters get a choice: either 600 Shards or a free resurrection deal. The deal is for the temple of Nagil in this city to resurrect the next slain character brought in, free of charge. At the Gamesmaster's discretion, this can save a defeated party: if all characters die within a reasonable distance of Marlock City, one of them wakes up at the temple of Nagil to find that kind strangers brought in the bodies.

Next give out experience points. It is suggested that the Gamesmaster start with a fixed experience reward of 10 for this quest, divided among the characters and rounded to come to an equal amount for each. Extra points should then be rewarded for individual skill and role-playing, which might average 2 experience points per character.

In a party of four, all characters who began this campaign at Rank 2 should achieve Rank 3 by now.

Quest 5 - Slaves of the Faeries

INTRODUCTION

This quest requires some advance preparation. The Gamesmaster should prepare the Transmutation results for scene 3 ahead of time, as this may require many dice rolls (or, of course, the Gamesmaster's own choice). The Gamesmaster should have all characters do an Intelligence roll and note the one who rolls the lowest (without explaining this), to be referenced in scene 7. The Gamesmaster should also be aware of Lauria's return. Note whether the players accepted her offer in The Cannibals (quest 1) and so worked with her in Stealing from the Fire (quest 2): if they refused to work with her, then Lauria will be vindictive, and 'vindictive Lauria' will act differently from 'normal Lauria' in certain scenes.

As with the last quest, characters who have a ship and Piloting skill may wish to ship cargo before proceeding. They should certainly get time to rest and heal. The characters were offered work at the House of Priests at the end of The Ghouls (quest 4), and are likely interested in this, so the adventure will resume sometime when they are in Marlock City. Note they do not have a house in this city unless they buy one (Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book).

Determine the in-game date and roll on the weekly weather table if appropriate (Chapter 9 - For the Gamesmaster in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). When ready, read the players the following:

Marlock City, you have to admit, has its own allure. You never saw it when it was still called Sokar, even though the violent uprising that put Grieve Marlock in the place of old King Corin was little more than a year ago. No, you spent your youth in Yellowport and the environs.

Thus you find yourself drawn to the unique attractions of the capital city. The Poor Quarter holds a temple to Sig, god of troubadours, lovers, and rogues; it reminds you of the unpleasant run-in with that thief Lauria, but there had not been such a temple in Yellowport, so at least you observe it. The House of Priests, on the opposite side of town, is a structure unique in all of Sokara; each time you pass its bizarre multi-coloured walls, you wonder if the folk there will strike upon more 'work' for you sometime soon.

The answer is 'yes,' for early this morning a runner comes and urges you to report to the House of Priests. You are encouraged to come prepared.

When the players are ready to answer the summons, read on. If the characters have ever visited Trefoille and met Oliphard the Wizardly, the Gamesmaster will need to edit the following before proceeding:

You arrive, enter, and present yourselves to the reception staff. In moments you are brought to the offices of Chief Administrator Altun, where this time you see both Altun and an aging man who wears an old pair of spectacles and long flowing ornate robes. 'Greetings, young adventurers' Altun says, briefly rising. 'Your punctuality is appreciated. Between this and the efforts of my associate here, we should be able to address a grave problem that has days in lead of us.'

He introduces Oliphard the Wizardly, a mage come from Trefoille on short notice. Oliphard quietly nods to you. 'The issue,' continues Altun, 'is in the Bronze Hills, miles north of here. Just yesterday, a slave working the silver mines collapsed on our doorstep. He had drifted down the River Grimm from a mine in the southwest regions of the hills, near the Forest of Larun. Though he could not explain everything before he . . . passed on, he described a terrible power that had been unleashed from the depths. Some force of faerie origin seized control of the mine, killing the head slaver Dunwick who owned the operation. Faerie powers are opposite godly ones, and so the slave came here, to the house of the holiest, for aid.'

The Chief Administrator gently clears his throat. 'We do not fully understand the situation. We believe that time is of the essence to save those still trapped within the mine. As such, we called for the renowned Oliphard to teleport aid to Caran Baru, from which it is a journey of one or two days to Dunwick's mine.' 'They are, of course, funding the effort,' interjects Oliphard in a dry tone. 'Yes, yes,' continues Altun. 'We understand that risk brings expense. We could offer you 600 Shards, payable if and when you return. Notice from the merchant's guild, which oversees all mining claims, will do for proof. Can we count on you to face the perils of the mine?'

If the characters accept, Altun wishes them luck. Oliphard comments how he enjoys seeing adventurers off to do good in the world, then commences the spell.

1 - CARAN BARU TO THE BRONZE HILLS

Note the weather and mention it along with the following:

The House of Priests appears to vanish from around you in a flash of red, and the next thing you see is the outer wall of Caran Baru. You stand by the well-defended western gate, with the Bronze Hills at your back.

If the characters enter town, describe locations per Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book.

They may seek information at the merchant's guild. A clerk blandly confirms that, yes, Dunwick's mine is in the southwest of the hills near the Forest of Larun, about 30 miles away. The claim was catalogued just a few months ago and so the operation is probably small. However, notes indicate that caverns were discovered underground during prospecting, so who knows?

If the characters suggest that the guild get involved with this ill-defined emergency, the clerk will dismiss it as an 'occupational hazard.' If the characters seek help from the army, Captain Ashton (see Sokara Source Book) will refuse: his priority is to defend the city, and one does this best while still inside the city.

It is 30 miles in a straight line to the mine, skirting the north edge of the forest. Consult Chapter 9, core rules for rates of overland travel. There is a random encounter table for the Forest of Larun in Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book; however, when on the perimeter like this, the Gamesmaster need only roll once every day instead of every hour.

2 - WORK CREW

Once the characters have travelled the distance, read the following:

A number of silver mines have been visible in the distance, active to varying degrees. You should arrive at Dunwick's mine soon. But first, you spot activity at the forest's edge just ahead. A line of ten poor souls, dressed in rags and chained to the person in front and behind, works under the whip of a huge man. They are uprooting shrubs for some reason.

Characters that make a Magic (Difficulty 12) roll will detect the slaver is affected by a new Enchantment spell called Mind Control (scene 12). The slavers find it 'natural' to push around slaves and fight off anyone who interferes, so by the rules of that spell they are under complete control and will attack on sight. When this one attacks, some slaves cheer on the characters while others simply collapse.

Slaver: Shortsword (Combat +1), whip, leather armour (Defence +1), the key for these chains, and 30 Shards. Whips are EV 1, would cost 15 Shards if bought from a store, and do exactly 1 Stamina damage on a successful hit. For more information on slavers, please refer to Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book.

The slaves want to run west into Golnir and they will snatch the key from the slaver's corpse as soon as he is dead. They may be persuaded to talk with a Charisma or Muscle (Difficulty 9) roll, with food and water an adequate bribe (Chapter 9, core rules). They report dozens of slaves still labour in the mine. This group doesn't understand what happened, but the place is overrun with a horde of chalk-white goblins, and the slavers are commanding the slaves to do new and bizarre things. Some carve designs in the stone; groups like this one collect vegetation which apparently is used to decorate.

Either the characters get directed to the mine by the slaves, or they find a footpath to it with a Scouting (Difficulty 7) roll, or they just stumble on it eventually.

3 - GUARDS AT THE GATE

Read the players the following:

Circling a low hill, you spy metal tracks for a mine cart coming to the surface on the north side. The noise of heavy labour echoes from within. Unusual for a mining operation, there appear to be healthy plants growing in the entry.

Just down the tunnel are six goblins who have spotted the characters and gotten ready. This encounter requires the Transmutation preparation mentioned in the introduction: the Gamesmaster should require at least one spell (as detailed below) to succeed, then describe the attack as though it were a group of goblins plus whatever comes from the spellcasting.

Goblins (x6): They each carry a dagger (Combat +0) and leather armour (Defence +1). See special rules below and see statistics in Chapter 3, Sokara Source Book.

Once inside, random encounters will occur from time to time. It is suggested that the Gamesmaster check for an encounter in empty chambers and dead ends. Roll 2 dice and consult the following table:

2 Cave-in

3-9 No encounter

10 Slave group

11-12 Goblin patrol

Cave-in

These caves have been destabilised by the mining. The Gamesmaster may pick one or more characters at random to be caught under falling rocks, and victims must make a Thievery (Difficulty 12) roll to dive out of the way in time or suffer 2 dice damage. If the Gamesmaster chooses, a cave-in may be large enough to block a path. A character may unblock it with a test to move heavy items, i.e., a Muscle (Difficulty 12) test.

Slave Group

A slaver brings a group of ten chained slaves into this area to distribute more collected vegetation. There is exactly one group like this in the mines; any subsequent rolls of 'slave group' should be treated as 'no encounter.'

Slaver: Shortsword (Combat +1), whip, leather armour (Defence +1), and the key for these chains. Whips are as described in scene 2. All slavers are under Mind Control (scene 12), which the characters may detect with a Magic (Difficulty 12) roll. For more information on slavers, please refer to Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book.

Goblin Patrol

Goblins wander the caves in small groups. They have been driven to be even more aggressive than usual and attack immediately.

Goblins (x4): They each carry a dagger (Combat +0) and leather armour (Defence +1). For more information on goblins, please refer to Chapter 3, Sokara Source Book.

Special Rules

Transmutation: They spend their first AP casting one spell: half cast Alter Appearance, half cast Shape Change (Chapter 3 - Spells & Sorcery in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). They do this to frighten and confuse their foes.

Alter Appearance: If a goblin makes a Magic (Difficulty 12) roll, select an image from these six options: ape, bear (standing upright), elf, ghoul, ogre, troll. This is an unorthodox use of the spell, giving the goblin Combat +1 due to confusion. The effect lasts until the goblin hits an opponent or vice versa.

Shape Change: If a goblin makes a Magic (Difficulty 14) roll, select a shape from these six options: boar, giant spider, gryphon, ker'ilk, repulsive one, snake (constrictor). For more information, see Chapter 10 - Monsters and Enemies in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book.

4 - MAIN PASSAGE

When the characters descend into the mine entrance, read the following:

You follow the metal rails into the depths. There must be magic at work inside, as it is lit with a steady glow.

Characters that make a successful Intelligence (Difficulty 10) roll will notice that not all the stone has been worked by tools: much of the area is natural cavern. Continue with the following:

The mining noises get louder and the tunnel opens into a wide room. It's a startling sight: a human slaver works alongside a pack of goblins, keeping perhaps twenty slaves at task. They are not hacking away at silver veins: instead, the goblins direct them to carve lines, swirls, and odd shapes into the rock. Further, a scattering of plants grows here too: shrubs and trees stick straight out of the floor, walls, and ceiling as though it were natural to grow there.

The tunnel exit in the southeast is obscured by the Illusion spell: Permanent Illusion (Chapter 3, core rules) to look like a solid wall. Do not describe it unless a character makes a Magic (Difficulty 12) roll. This is separate from any Magic (Difficulty 12) roll to detect Mind Control (scene 12).

The tunnel exit in the west is clogged with an overgrown shrub created by the Herbcraft spell: Plant Growth (Chapter 3, core rules). Characters may force their way through with a Muscle (Difficulty 9) roll or destroy the blockage outright with a Muscle (Difficulty 12) roll. A character with this lore of magic may take advantage of the abundant plants down here to disrupt combat similarly: dealing with overgrowth halts an enemy in place for the remainder of a combat round.

Slaver: Shortsword (Combat +1), whip, leather armour (Defence +1), the key for these chains, and 25 Shards. See the description of whips in scene 2 and Mind Control in scene 12. For more information on slavers, please refer to Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book.

Goblins (x4): They each carry a dagger (Combat +0) and leather armour (Defence +1). See special rules in scene 3 and statistics in Chapter 3, Sokara Source Book.

After combat, go immediately to scene 5.

5 - VOICES OF TODAY AND YESTERDAY

Read the players the following:

The slaves immediately scramble to free themselves; but within the crowd you notice one person watching you instead of the key. When she undoes her own chains, you realise it is Lauria, the thief who gave you trouble in Yellowport. She calmly approaches you through the chaos.

The characters might give her a harsh ‘greeting.’ Continue as appropriate:

‘Sorry about the last time,’ she says. ‘Business, you know. But it looks like we’re on a common cause now, so now’s my chance to make it up to you.’

If the players turned her in to the city militia in The Cannibals (quest 1), her presence is easy to explain. If they didn’t, she was recently captured while on another robbery and sentenced to punishment here. In conversation, she explains she arrived just a few days before disaster struck: an elf appeared from somewhere in the depths, leading the faerie horde, and seized control of the mind of the slavers. He’s commanded the slaves to ‘beautify’ the caverns ‘in preparation’ for something, carving strange art into the walls and bringing in plant cuttings which then grow by magic. He also has cast illusions everywhere; Lauria argues that the characters should bring her with them as a guide. Read them the following:

‘Look, I’m in better fighting condition than anyone here; and believe me, I’ve committed the entire mine to memory. Just give me a weapon and I’ll keep you from being broadsided by an ambush. Let me pay you back, alright?’

Her character sheet is in Stealing from the Fire (quest 2), minus all equipment. The Gamesmaster should play her as a normal character in combat and try to avoid lethal injury. If they accept her, she will report the illusory wall to the southeast, saying the slaver resting area is on the other side.

If they refuse her, normal Lauria (see introduction) will just sneak out of the mine when they aren't looking. Vindictive Lauria, though, will still reappear at scene 13.

All other slaves just want to flee to Golnir, taking their pickaxes to sell. They know nothing that Lauria doesn't.

6 - WRONG WAY

When the players reach this area, read them the following:

You have come to a natural cave with sloping floors and dripping stalactites. There are no lights, no carvings, no plants, and no slaves.

If Lauria is present:

Lauria seems confused. 'This is the wrong way,' she says. 'The slavers never let us go into these caves. It was forbidden.'

The characters must have a light source to proceed safely. Giant spiders have woven webs in the depths: two in the far east cave, one in the passage between the two caves.

Giant Spiders (x3): For information on giant spiders, please refer to Chapter 10, core rules.

Special Rules

Web: If the characters enter without a light source, they will be trapped and bitten until dead. Characters who have a light and approach for close combat must make a Thievery (Difficulty 10) roll each combat round; those who fail are partially stuck by webbing and suffer a -1 to their Combat attribute for that round.

Some months-old corpses are scattered on the far side. They carry two pickaxes (the non-combat version as per Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book), a potion of thievery, and 75 Shards.

7 - SLEEPING SLAVER

When the players enter, from either direction, read them the following:

This dirty area is not terribly 'decorated' yet, and is still just a cooking and sleeping chamber for the slavers. You can tell because one of them is snoring loudly on a straw mat.

The far exit is obscured by another Permanent Illusion (Chapter 3, core rules) to look like a solid wall. Do not describe it unless a character makes a Magic (Difficulty 12) roll (or did so already in another scene). If Lauria is present, note the character selected by a low Intelligence roll (see introduction) and address that player with the following:

Lauria is standing next to you, so you hear the most clearly when she speaks in a quiet but urgent voice. 'You can sleep and wake and still be under the faerie's sway! Just cut his throat and be done with it!'

She has already stolen all Shards from this character. He or she should only notice when there is some in-game reason to check. If caught, Lauria will ‘sheepishly’ explain that she needed more funding.

Characters could sneak by the slaver with a Thievery (Difficulty 6) roll. Searching the cluttered floor takes a Scouting roll at Difficulty 12 to be silent (failure by 4 or more wakes the slaver), or Difficulty 9 otherwise. There is a stockpile of 20 torches (not in use due to magical lighting), a potion of healing, a potion of strength, and the slaver’s equipment.

Slaver: Unarmed and unarmoured, with a shortsword (Combat +1), whip, and leather armour (Defence +1) nearby. See the description of whips in scene 2 and Mind Control in scene 12. For more information on slavers, please refer to Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book.

8 - BOOBYTRAP

When the players reach this area, read them the following:

The noise of mine work echoes from the distance, but this room is empty of people. It is heavily carved, mostly along the walls, and the patterns seem to twine like the branches of the plants.

If Lauria is present:

Lauria points sharply to the floor in the middle of the room. ‘Right there. That’s an illusion. There’s a pit trap all the way across the middle of the chamber, made to look like normal floor. It’s only safe to pass near the walls.’

This is true, as a Magic (Difficulty 12) roll reveals. Lauria also points out the illusion concealing the tunnel to scene 7 if the characters do not know already. Anyone who crosses the room without knowing about the pit will fall in and suffer 1 dice damage, dispelling the illusion. It is easy to climb out.

9 - QUIET BEAUTY

When the players reach this area, read them the following:

As you enter, you are startled to see the sky. This space is an arboretum: there is a hole in the ceiling in the middle of the chamber and silent sunshowers fall upon the lush plants growing below.

The hole, sunlight (even at night), and rainfall are another Permanent Illusion (Chapter 3, core rules), but do not say so unless a character makes a Magic (Difficulty 12) roll or walks through the nonexistent rain.

Lauria does not explain this. If questioned, she smiles and says ‘I was going to let you figure that one out for yourself.’ For normal Lauria (see introduction), the truth is she was going silent so it would be easier to escape from the characters before scene 10.

10 - AMBUSH

When the players reach this area, read them the following:

The carvings increase until nearly every surface has been touched. The patterns begin to bother your eyes. Much is concealed by plant matter, though, and here and there flowers bloom on small trees.

Normal Lauria (see introduction) has turned and fled. The Gamesmaster should enforce this no matter the results of other scenes, and let the characters discover it too late. She does a force march for Caran Baru, then makes her way to Yellowport, where she eventually retrieves the Medallion of Secrecy. It works as described in Stealing from the Fire (quest 2), so the characters cannot find her again.

Vindictive Lauria remains. She informs the characters that the wall in the northeast is an illusion covering a tunnel and there is a team of goblins getting their weapons ready on the other side. If the characters are not informed, and do not pass a Magic (Difficulty 12) test to detect the Permanent Illusion (Chapter 3, core rules), the goblins gain a +4 bonus to strike order for the first combat round only.

Goblins (x4): They each carry a dagger (Combat +0) and leather armour (Defence +1). See special rules in scene 3 and statistics in Chapter 3, Sokara Source Book.

11 - MANY WAYS

When the players reach this area, read them the following:

Now you come to a four-way intersection. The sounds of dozens of people pounding on rock are very loud nearby.

If vindictive Lauria (see introduction) is present:

Lauria glances around. 'I do not recall this,' she says. 'I did not often work this deep, and I do not remember these routes.'

Both the south and east tunnels are illusory. Have all characters and Lauria do a Magic (Difficulty 12) roll to detect the Permanent Illusion (Chapter 3, core rules). Anyone who walks into a solid wall by mistake loses 1 Stamina. Characters may listen to the noise and determine it comes from the north with a Scouting (Difficulty 6) roll.

12 - TOMB OF THE FAERIES

When the players reach this area, read them the following:

You come to the tallest cavern yet, one that looks like a natural cathedral. A night sky appears overhead, the drifting stars streaming light down on a carpet of flowering plants. Near the south stands a low stone structure, rather like a set of sealed double-doors laying flat on the earth. Thirty slaves toil under the whip of two slavers around the stone object, carving a massive spiral shape in the floor and lining it with silver nuggets from the mine.

The night sky is a Permanent Illusion (Chapter 3, core rules). Have the characters do three Magic (Difficulty 12) rolls. If anybody succeeds at one roll, explain the Mind Control on the slavers. If anybody succeeds at two, also explain the sky illusion. Only if someone succeeds at all three should the Gamesmaster explain that the northern wall is under an illusion to make it appear closer than it really is. Resting on a stone throne behind the illusion is Ilundial the elf lord, surrounded by goblins. If he is not spotted, he will wait and watch the characters fight.

Slavers (x2): Shortsword (Combat +1), whip, leather armour (Defence +1), a key for half of these chains (different for each slaver), and 20 Shards. See the description of whips in scene 2 and of Mind Control below. For more information on slavers, please refer to Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book.

If the illusion is kept up and the characters win, the slaves will insist on distributing the silver nuggets amongst themselves. If asked, the slaves report that none of them have been in the tunnel to the north, but they've seen the elf and his other faeries come and go that way. They've been instructed not to touch the stone object itself; 'not yet.' If vindictive Lauria (see introduction) is present, she notes she has never been in this room.

As soon as the characters step north of the stone structure, or move to touch it, Ilundial drops the illusion on the north wall. Read the players the following:

An illusion on the northern wall melts away and you see that the chamber extends even farther in that direction. The slaves freeze in shock and fear as a stone throne surrounded by goblins comes into view. Seated on it is a tall man with wolfish features and pointed ears. He smiles and greets you grandly.

'Welcome, mortals,' says the elf. 'I am Lord Ilundial. I have been waiting to meet you since you began interfering with the weak-minded ones who released me. Those slovenly minions are needed no longer: you are clearly more magnificent, and with your help we will see the undoing of bonds set before your maps were their modern shape.

'Larun, our forest, once reached beyond its present borders, swathing this earth in green. It was in those days that I, and my Lady, and our favourites, were bound in tombs. The tombs were only to be opened by willing human hands. The ravages of time and humanity have pushed the forest back, and now human hands have brought me free; free to prepare the earth for the day my Lady joins me.

'I had thought to wait longer, to make her first steps be into true beauty, but enough is enough. You will open the seal for me, and pledge yourselves as the finest servants to Lady Aelferryn. You will do this with a free mind. You will do it now.'

Even if the characters agree (with no promise of reward) to open the stone seal, the slaves will form a human wall around it to stop them. In the end, Ilundial and his goblins (and the slavers, if appropriate) attack in frustration.

Goblins (x6): They each carry a dagger (Combat +0) and leather armour (Defence +1). See special rules in scene 3 and statistics in Chapter 3, Sokara Source Book.

Ilundial - Elf: Staff (Combat +1), ebony wand (Magic +2), and a jug of faerie mead (EV 0.5). Ilundial has Magic of 12 and 15 Stamina, but his remaining statistics are the same as for elves in Chapter 10, core rules. He has access to the Enchantment, Herbcraft, and Illusion lores of magic, including a new spell called Mind Control.

Mind Control

Magic Lore: Enchantment

Difficulty: 20 (+1 per individual already under control)

Duration: 24 hours

Target: 1 monster or enemy

This use of Enchantment grants nigh-complete control of a target's actions. Mind Control forces the target to follow the caster's verbal instructions for a 24-hour span. If the actions would be natural for the target to do anyway, then there is no resisting a successful spell. If the actions are extreme or out of character (e.g., attacking a friend), then the target may do a test at Difficulty 12 to terminate the spell, using either Intelligence, Sanctity, or Magic. That is, a foolish command may be resisted with Intelligence; an evil command may be resisted with Sanctity; and any other command may be resisted with Magic. A test is done once for every out-of-character action, or once per combat round, as appropriate. The target is always aware of Mind Control attempts. Others may detect that an individual is being controlled with a Magic (Difficulty 12) test.

Note: The target must be able to understand the language of the caster for it to work. The Gamesmaster may judge that sufficiently unusual or powerful targets are immune.

When fighting, Ilundial spends 1 AP each turn choosing a spell at random from these six options: Command, Emotion Control, Mind Control, Pacify, False Image, Invisibility (Chapter 3, core rules). When he dies, any remaining slavers are freed of Mind Control.

If vindictive Lauria (see introduction) is present, the Gamesmaster should keep her toward the back in combat. At a good point during the fight, such as when Ilundial is about to fall, go to scene 13.

Normal Lauria would be gone already. After the fight, the slaves insist on distributing the silver nuggets amongst themselves, and prevent anyone from opening the seal until the merchant's guild can be contacted (see conclusion). If the characters explore the far north area, they find a second stone tomb which has been opened in an undecorated cave. Inside is just a stone floor a foot or so down, so nothing could fit inside except by magic.

13 - THE LORD'S LADY

This section counts as a secondary quest when calculating the experience reward for this adventure (see conclusion). It only happens if the players made Lauria vindictive (see introduction). Read them the following:

You hear a shout above the din of battle. Risking a sideways glance, you feel a chill to see Lauria standing at the far side of the sealed tomb doors. The look in her eyes is unkind. 'I promised you payback!' she screams, and throws open the doors.

She then runs full speed for the exit and proceeds out as described in scene 10.

New enemies unfold from within the tomb: the elf lady Aelferryn and another contingent of goblins. They appear confused for an instant, but then Aelferryn shrieks in rage at the threat to the faeries and attacks immediately. The slaves find strength from fear and all flee, even if still chained.

Goblins (x6): They each carry a dagger (Combat +0) and leather armour (Defence +1). See special rules in scene 3 and statistics in Chapter 3, Sokara Source Book.

Aelferryn - Elf: Staff (Combat +1). Aelferryn has Magic of 12 and 15 Stamina, but her remaining statistics are the same as for elves in Chapter 10, core rules. She has access to the Enchantment, Herbcraft, and Illusion lores of magic, including Mind Control (scene 12).

When fighting, Aelferryn spends 1 AP each turn choosing a spell at random from these six options: Command, Emotion Control, Mind Control, Pacify, False Image, Invisibility (Chapter 3, core rules).

After the fight, the characters are free to collect the silver nuggets: they are EV 4 and sell for 700 Shards.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that Dunwick is dead (and his body is fertiliser), so ownership of the mine falls to any surviving slavers. If the second seal is unopened, the slavers (or slaves themselves) contact the merchant's guild to use Dunwick's remaining assets to hire scholars and/or mercenaries. They thank the characters for tipping the scales, but dealing with the valuable mine is now a private concern, and the characters are not invited to help. The slavers/slaves are happy to get a parchment from the guild acknowledging the party's involvement in Dunwick's claim (e.g., as 'outside contractors') so they can get paid. If the mines are empty, the characters can report this fact and get written documentation anyway.

Then they must walk back to Marlock City. It is 75 miles from Caran Baru to Trefoille. The Weary Pilgrim Tavern is exactly halfway, and has the same rates as the Gold Dust Tavern in Yellowport (Chapter 9, core rules). It is 20 miles from Trefoille to Marlock City. Consult Chapter 9, core rules for rates of overland travel. Normally, there could be random encounters near the Forest of Larun as detailed in Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book, or on the roads as detailed in The Ghouls (quest 4), but the Gamesmaster should let the return be uneventful.

When the characters bring their guild documentation to the House of Priests, read the following:

Shortly after arrival, you again see the inside of Chief Administrator Altun's offices. He glances at your parchment, but is more interested in the tale of events at Dunwick's mine. 'I had not heard of these tombs,' he says at the end, 'but the Forest of Larun is known for its secrets. It seems the world was well-off over the years these malevolent faeries were sealed away.'

He arranges for you to be paid your 600 Shards, and thanks you. That is, he thanks you on behalf of the souls who suffered and died in this most recent crisis. Hopefully, nothing else dreadful will surface anytime soon.

If the characters inquire about the jug of faerie mead found on Ilundial, Altun advises them not to drink it, but to keep it safe: should they meet faeries in more wholesome circumstances, it may prove useful for negotiation. Faerie mead will become relevant in Source Book 2: Golnir - Cities of Gold and Glory.

Next give out experience points. It is suggested that the Gamesmaster start with a fixed experience reward of 15 for this quest. Add 5 experience if the characters did the secondary quest: that is, they suffered vindictive Lauria and Lady Aelferryn, completing scene 13. Once calculated, the total fixed experience is divided among the characters, with rounding to come to an equal amount for each. Extra points should then be rewarded for individual skill and role-playing, which might average 2 experience points per character, or 3 if they completed the secondary quest and therefore did more gameplay.

Quest 6 - A Test of Loyalty

INTRODUCTION

This quest is another like A Long Sea Voyage (quest 3) that is linear and focused on story. It is particularly tricky because the players must choose a side in Sokara's civil war; a decision with lasting effects. The choice develops over scene 3, scene 4, and scene 6. The remaining scenes (7 through 10) are set up to be 'reversible,' meaning that the players will face the same challenges no matter what, but the Gamesmaster can swap names and allegiances based on the final decision. This choice then determines events after the conclusion of this quest: if the players support Nergan Corin, they may continue with To Serve a King (quest 7); if the players support Marloes Marlock, they may continue with To Serve a General (quest 8).

The quest begins whenever the Gamesmaster wishes. Characters should be allowed time to heal, and possibly ship cargo if they have a ship and Piloting skill. Determine the in-game date and roll on the weekly weather table if appropriate (Chapter 9 - For the Gamesmaster in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). The House of Priests in Marlock City has no more work for the characters; instead, they will be contacted anywhere in Sokara as detailed below:

This morning, you find yourself contemplative. Your life has brought you a number of remarkable adventures. To date, you have been on land, in the underground, and on the high seas; you have faced animals, people, faerie folk, and the undead. The consequence has been that your purse repeatedly bulges with Shards. Yes, by adventure you make money; but what of making history?

Today a messenger finds you. He is not from the House of Priests in Marlock City; instead, he is a soldier in service to Grieve Marlock, Protector-General of all Sokara. He delivers a summons to present yourselves to Marloes Marlock, Provost Marshal of Yellowport. That is all.

The characters probably should not refuse a summons from such a powerful figure. When they arrive at their destination, note the weather and mention it along with the following:

You have technically seen the Marshal Citadel and Courthouse before; at a distance, atop a small hillock, and beyond a fortified wall, the dense Citadel Grove, and two large barracks. Now you walk through its front doors. In the marble-floored reception area you wait a spell, then are met by Captain Royzer, an aide to the provost marshal who is by all accounts the more competent of the two. After being thoroughly convinced of your identity, he escorts you through halls of lavish decoration and up to the second floor where you enter a war office.

Marloes Marlock does not have a public face: since he was installed in power, he made no habit of marching at the head of parades, nor of delivering grand speeches. In truth, the paranoid man has not been seen outside the citadel in months. Yet here, in an office with no audience but his guards and advisors, he sits on an extravagant throne and enjoys all the trappings of wealth. Captain Royzer goes to his side, whispers a few words, and is dismissed vaguely. As the captain leaves the room, the provost marshal waves you over.

'I get a lot of use out of the Bronze Hills,' he declares without preamble. 'The silver mines are a place of choice to put criminals and those who resist our new order. Reports are that the area would have been destabilised had you not come along to clear out a problem. For able adventurers like yourselves,

I can think of other productive tasks. Conveniently, ones that also let you show your loyalty to my brother, the Protector-General.'

He snaps a finger. An aide hesitates for a moment, then brings him a whole stack of parchment from a nearby table. Marloes Marlock snarls and pulls a map of Sokara out of the heap. Jabbing a finger at it, he continues. 'A group of rebels, loyal to the old king, are hiding out in the Coldbleak Mountains. Their leader, Nergan Corin, is dangerous to us, as he is heir to the old throne and a rallying point for the rebels.

'We fear that he is cultivating royalist cells in Sokara, preparing traitors to rise up and seize local control. Skilled individuals such as you may be able to get into his confidence and disrupt the process. I task you to penetrate his stronghold and find evidence of where rebels intend to strike next. Then, travel to the location and terminate the insurrection. Do this and you will be richly rewarded: I can promise you 1000 Shards if you succeed and bring back word that justice has been done. And, perhaps, once your loyalty is known, there may be other uses for you.'

If the players accept, Marloes Marlock will advise starting their ascent from near Blessed Springs to have a safe base camp. He emphasises using diplomacy once at the mountain hideout, as a light touch will be essential to keep the rebels in the dark. Then, once they know more about imminent rebel activity, how they deal with it will demonstrate their worth to the Protector-General. The provost marshal dismisses them brusquely, and they are left to their own devices in Yellowport to prepare.

1 - TO THE COLDBLEAK MOUNTAINS

Hopefully the players will think to prepare for a mountain climb, as well as overland travel as there is no safe place to dock a ship east of Yellowport. When they are ready, read them the following:

So the journey is underway. Of all the 'patrons' you have had so far, Provost Marshal Marloes Marlock is the most unsettling. This promises to be an interesting excursion.

It is 40 miles from Yellowport to Venefax, then 25 miles from Venefax to Blessed Springs, both by road. Describe locations per Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book. For every day spent in southeast Sokara, the Gamesmaster should roll 2 dice and consult one of the following random encounter tables. The first is when on a road:

2-3 Scorpion men

4-6 Travellers

7-10 No encounter

11 Military patrol

12 Wild animals

The second is if the characters find some reason to go off-road:

2-3 Scorpion men

4-9 No encounter

10-12 Wild animals

Scorpion Men

The characters meet 1d3 scorpion men out from Scorpion Bight on a hunting excursion. They must fight or flee. These enemies have shields (Defence +1) and non-magical melee weapons of the Gamesmaster's choice up to a maximum of Combat +2. For more information on scorpion men, please refer to Chapter 10 - Monsters and Enemies in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book.

All other encounters are similar to those described in The Ghouls (quest 4), except for one distinction with military patrols: there are no regular guard posts on the roads, and any soldiers met will have horses (Chapter 10, core rules), likely in transit to or from the Forts of the Eastern Marches. Remember that a wayfarer can skip an encounter with Secret Ways.

2 - WOLF PACK

When the characters approach the Coldbleak Mountains, read the following:

The Coldbleak Mountains look as inhospitable and forbidding as their name implies, their frozen flanks climbing high into the icy clouds. A heavy snow falls even at the lower reaches and it is dangerously cold. It is uncertain how you are supposed to find anyone in these conditions.

The weather will be category A throughout exploration of the mountains (Chapter 9, core rules) and will not improve even if the characters let time pass. They may seek to search in some pattern, but there are literally no signs or tracks to be found in the storm. Assuming the characters have adequate gear to survive the cold (e.g., cloaks), they must simply begin climbing and making Scouting tests as per the description of the mountains in Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book. Do not roll for random encounters. After two climbing tests (and regrouping if it so happens that some characters fall), read the following:

You stumble upon an open plateau where the snow in the air dances weightlessly about you but the snow underfoot seems compacted. You barely spot a cave nearby.

Any character that makes a successful Intelligence (Difficulty 9) roll will deduce the cave is occupied, but not by rebels; rather, by a pack of snow wolves. If the characters do not flee, the wolves come out from the cave and attack. Remember that ranged combat is impossible due to the weather (Chapter 9, core rules).

Snow Wolves (x1d6): For information on snow wolves, please refer to Chapter 3, Sokara Source Book.

See the snow wolf den map. Their lair contains a smattering of animal and human bones, a hunting spear (Combat +1), flint and steel, and 40 Shards.

3 - WHO IS THE RIGHTFUL RULER?

After passing the snow wolf cave, have the characters do one more Scouting test for climbing in the Coldbleak Mountains (Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book). After succeeding (or failing and regrouping), read the players the following:

You clamber up until you come to a mountain track. It passes through a deep rocky cleft where you get relief from the strong winds. From somewhere ahead, a man steps out in front of you. He is clearly a soldier, but his clothes are rough and ready, as if he had been living in the wild for some time. The soldier looks you over critically.

This is a royalist soldier, and there are several others positioned among the jagged rocks along this cleft, all about 20 feet overhead. If the characters behave aggressively, they will stand and fire arrows until the characters retreat (and with the wind weakened there is no penalty to ranged combat). If the characters do nothing contrary, this one soldier parleys with them. Read the following:

‘Who is the rightful ruler of Sokara - General Grieve Marlock, or the son of the old king, Nergan Corin?’ asks the soldier.

Answering ‘Grieve Marlock’ prompts an archery attack. The characters would be advised to leave and try again later. They could camp in the snow wolf cave (scene 2), or, because they know the route now, they need only make one test for climbing to leave the mountain then one more to return. The next day, they could disguise themselves to seem like a new group: this takes one Thievery (Difficulty 9) test per person and at least half the characters must succeed.

If they answer ‘Nergan Corin,’ read the following:

‘That is fortunate - for you,’ says the soldier. Several archers stand up from their hiding places behind rocks overhead. Another soldier, a captain, approaches from the far end of this track and introduces himself as Captain Vorkung. He is clearly one of the old aristocracy, the nobles loyal to the king and the old regime, before General Marlock and the army seized power, and executed the old corrupt king. Vorkung tells you to leave the mountains.

Captain Vorkung’s statistics are described in Chapter 4, Sokara Source Book. He advises leaving the mountains because it is dangerous for the average citizen even to know that rebels are here. Characters may try to convince him they support the cause, have come to swear allegiance to the rightful king, would fight for Nergan Corin, et cetera, with a Charisma (Difficulty 9) roll. On failure, they are deemed possible spies and the archers fire warning shots into the earth to drive them off. They can try another Charisma (Difficulty 15) roll, getting attacked outright if they fail, or just leave and try again the next day as above. On success, Captain Vorkung decides they might be useful, and offers to lead them blindfolded the rest of the way to camp. If the characters agree, go to scene 4.

Royalist Archers (Warrior 4) (x7): For information on typical royalist soldiers, please refer to Chapter 4, Sokara Source Book.

4 - THE KING’S CAMP

If a druid character has Animal Friendship, the Gamesmaster will have to edit the following to accommodate animal companions before reading:

You are blindfolded and led through a confusing route; some secret pass in the rock. Then the wind picks up as you come out in the open again, and the blindfolds are removed. You stand in a mountain stockade surrounded by royalist soldiers. Captain Vorkung leads you into an enclosed building. Inside King Nergan gives you an audience in a makeshift throne room. The son of the old king of Sokara is a young man buried in thick furs, surrounded by aides just as the provost marshal was. Two long tables

nearby are covered in maps and documents, and toward the back are shelves of strange objects tended by some middle-aged woman. Vorkung tells his liege that he will be out with the patrol, and you are left to present your business to Nergan Corin.

The stockade map is in To Serve a General (quest 8). Nergan Corin's statistics are described in Chapter 4, Sokara Source Book. The woman is Tilonen, Nergan's court magician; her character sheet is also in quest 8. For purposes of this scene, there is an unlimited number of royalist soldiers.

The characters may approach this multiple ways. Characters loyal to Marlock may, under direct view, steal documents (EV 0.5) with a Thievery (Difficulty 17) roll. A different character may draw attention and provide cover with a Charisma (Difficulty 9) roll: for every point by which he or she beats the difficulty, the Thievery roll's difficulty goes down by one. Failure in the Thievery roll means someone must make a Charisma (Difficulty 12) roll to explain the odd behaviour or the whole group is executed.

Characters may simply offer to serve Nergan. He will ask what good they have done for the kingdom. A Charisma (Difficulty 11) roll convinces him to speak with them in private. He is immediately convinced if they mention what they did in Slaves of the Faeries (quest 5), as seen below.

If the characters seem to be accomplishing nothing, move the scene along by reading the following:

The middle-aged woman gives a polite cough, then whispers in the young king's ears. His eyes light up. 'That was you, then!' he proclaims. 'You were those who rescued the downtrodden in the Bronze Hills! Many who resist the so-called "Protector-General" are sent to those mines. Let us speak in private.'

Unless the characters excuse themselves early, proceed with the following:

He leads you aside into a private chamber. There are more parchments marked with recent notations alongside various supplies. 'I have need of ones such as you,' he says. 'Sokara groans under the yoke of the Marlocks. Those loyal to the crown are in danger everywhere, but with powerful aid they may tilt the balance against the regime. What say you?'

Now, characters may steal documents (EV 0.5) with a Thievery (Difficulty 12) roll, and the same Charisma rules apply as above. Players who have read the original game book may try to kill Nergan; unlike in To Serve a General (quest 8), there are so many guards nearby now that the attempt will be overheard. If the players seek to work with Nergan, read them the following:

'Royalist support within the military is rare, but essential. We stand in position to take Fort Brilon of the Forts of the Eastern Marches and commence building a base of force from a direction the Marlocks will never expect. It so happens that half of the soldiers in Fort Brilon are loyal to the crown. I task you to make contact with the sympathisers there and aid them in seizing control. Do this and you will be richly rewarded: I can promise you 1000 Shards if you succeed and bring back word that right has prevailed. And, perhaps, once your loyalty is proven, there may be other uses for you.'

If the players accept, Nergan Corin will tell them to contact Sergeant Taun Jacobs with the password 'ambuscade.' They must avoid Captain Forin Hale, who is loyal to Marlock. Any documents the characters steal describe all of this. He also supplies them with their pick of 6 potions; they may select any combination from the list in Chapter 4 - Equipment in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book other than potions of restoration. Thieving players may, with another roll, steal their pick of 6 potions.

Whether the players promise support or not, the king wishes them well and has them led out of the stockade and back down to the foothills of the Coldbleak Mountains.

5 - TO FORT BRILON

Read the players the following:

The plot thickens. Upon reflection, you see it is a matter of trust: both Marloes Marlock and Nergan Corin hold you as harmless, at least so far as you know. When you arrive in Fort Brilon, you will decide which way this small piece of civil war turns.

They may take time to prepare in Blessed Springs or elsewhere if desired; but note that Marloes Marlock wants the characters to handle the threat, and will insist on this even if they bring stolen documents all the way back to Yellowport. It is 40 miles from Blessed Springs to Fort Brilon by road. The road is patrolled by troopers of the Sokaran army so there will be no hostile random encounters.

6 - THE COUP: INTRIGUE

When the players arrive at Fort Brilon, first describe the Forts of the Eastern Marches per Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book. Then read them the following:

You now stand as far as can be from the seat of Marlock's power in the southwest. You enter the Sokara-side gates of Fort Brilon and are greeted by a royal crest on the inner wall: that of King Brilon Corin, a man many generations removed from the now-deposed Corin VII and his son, Nergan. Here, around two dozen soldiers perform various duties under the leadership of Sergeant Seeva Shain, Sergeant Taun Jacobs, and Captain Forin Hale. You learn that Commander Miles Torgan of the Marlock City war council, who oversees the entire operation, is back in Marlock City at this time.

See the Fort Brilon map. The players may first contact whomever they wish, so see below for personality notes on the officers. Sergeant Jacobs expects to hear the password 'ambuscade,' upon which he will immediately take the characters into one of the small offices. Read the players the following:

The sergeant is thrilled to receive word from his liege. He explains he has united soldiers still loyal to the crown right under the nose of Captain Hale. Jacobs has been preparing to seize control in a coup, but the problem in pitting soldiers against soldiers is knowing who is whom.

Captain Hale will do likewise if the characters bring him documents proving insurrection; otherwise, he can be convinced to meet in private through conversation, as he already knows of the problem anyway:

The captain grimly receives your word. He explains he has been aware of treasonous activity within the ranks; your report merely confirms what he suspected of Sergeant Jacobs for some time. Hale has been preparing for a coup, but the problem in routing the traitors is knowing who is whom.

Whether the characters choose Jacobs or Hale, the mechanics of the coup are the same. The remainder of this quest is written assuming they continue to support Marlock and choose Hale; if otherwise, the Gamesmaster must swap all names and allegiances as mentioned in the introduction. Below, this would be Jacobs for Hale, Marlock for Nergan Corin, 'the coup is a success' for 'the coup is prevented' and so on:

Now, it appears all is falling into place. Hale has identified more than a dozen enlisted men as loyal to Nergan Corin. A short while ago, a group on death duty scouting in Nerech returned with news: the manbeasts are preparing to attack. The attack should be small, and Hale has a plan. He will alert everyone he can trust that the true target during the attack is the opposition soldiers. Supporters of Nergan will be preoccupied fighting off the manbeasts and so they can be captured one by one. Only the sergeant himself will likely need to be killed; the others may yet be convinced to change their ways. The captain, after all, cares for those under his command. Once the coup is prevented, the victors can finish repelling any manbeast stragglers.

When it seems the players understand, explain the plan. First, all will wait for the alarm horn. Some soldiers will respond by going to the walls or towers with bows ready, and others by going to the courtyard with swords ready. The characters are to position themselves near the bottom of the stairwell in the main building, perhaps in the west equipment storage or the north office room, below the barracks on the second floor. They will use nets to capture and subdue opposition soldiers coming down. Allied soldiers will man other locations from the courtyard to the archer towers and proceed likewise.

In all this, Sergeant Shain is a wildcard. Her priority is defending Sokara and she could be convinced to join either side; if the characters do nothing, she will not help during the coup, but will serve with whichever officer comes out on top in the end. If the characters make a compelling argument, they may enlist her with a Charisma (Difficulty 12) roll.

Sergeant Seeva Shain, Sergeant Taun Jacobs, and Captain Forin Hale (Warrior 4): Charisma 3, Combat 5, Intelligence 5, Magic 2, Muscle 5, Sanctity 2, Scouting 4, Thievery 3, Stamina 21.

Equipment: Bow (Combat +2), quiver, 10 arrows, sword (Combat +2) and chain mail (Defence +3).

Powers: Weapon Skill I (Bow), Weapon Skill I (Sword), Swift Strike I.

Additional Notes: Sergeant Shain is pragmatic and disinterested. She will fight to do her duty to Sokara, defined as protecting the citizens, not as serving a ruler. Sergeant Jacobs has barely-controlled eagerness, but is intelligent. He planned this coup for some time, and will be very grateful to the characters for providing the push to make it happen. Captain Hale is righteous and duty-bound. He views the entire royalist insurrection as other people view weeds, and understands the cost when a nation fights itself.

7 - THE COUP: WARNING AND AMBUSH

The captain (or sergeant) instructs the characters in identifying opposition soldiers to capture, because he cannot guarantee he will be around to assist in the fight. He tells them to stock up on nets (EV 2) from the first-floor weapons and equipment storage. He also gives them food and lodges them in the barracks until the next day. Remember to note any changes in the weather (Chapter 9, core rules) as this matters in outside areas. The characters have a few hours to themselves if they come up with their own plans, e.g., to betray the very officer they've contacted. Then read (and/or edit) the following:

Under the captain's instruction, you've studied the faces around you as well as you can. The only thing left to do is wait. One need not wait long; shortly after sunrise, a lookout blows the alarm horn. The cry goes up: 'The manbeasts! To your stations!'

The soldiers hurry to organise. The characters start in the barracks, conveniently near the stairwell, and so may set themselves in position on the first floor in a single combat round. Roll 1d3+1: this is the

number of combat rounds until a group of soldiers runs by the door of their hiding place. The soldiers are a mix of opposition soldiers trying to repel the assault and ally soldiers hurrying to position in the courtyard (that is, they are not fighting each other yet). The Gamesmaster must determine the mix randomly for each group. Roll 1 dice and consult the following table:

- 1 One opposition soldier, one ally
- 2 Two opposition soldiers
- 3 Two opposition soldiers, one ally
- 4 Three opposition soldiers
- 5 Three opposition soldiers, one ally
- 6 Two opposition soldiers, two allies

Have all characters do an Intelligence (Difficulty 10) test to identify who is whom. If half or more succeed, all the players may choose the correct targets; otherwise, the Gamesmaster should decide at random. Of course, the players could decide to just net everybody in order to be safe.

Throwing nets operates as described in *The Cannibals* (quest 1), but some extra rules may be useful. Adding more nets adds +2 Difficulty for a victim struggling to break free, and the victim must handle each one in sequence (there is an effectively unlimited number of nets in storage). Also, a character may make a Muscle (Difficulty 12) roll to drag a netted soldier 10 feet into the hiding place so incoming enemies do not see. Noise will not be an issue, as they are covered by sounds of battle at the gates.

If the players agree to nonlethal combat, then they must only use blunt strikes. Blunt weapons such as maces are alright, but sharp weapons such as swords have their Combat bonus cut in half (round down). Arrows and quarrels may not be used. Soldiers reduced to 0 Stamina in nonlethal combat will collapse with exhaustion. Ally soldiers will all fight nonlethally if forced, but prefer to reach their station in the courtyard first. Opposition soldiers will all respond lethally.

Ally soldiers may be netted accidentally. The first time this happens, the Gamesmaster can have Sergeant Shain correct them if she is allied with the players (scene 6): she comes in from the courtyard, shouts orders, and then runs upstairs. If she isn't an ally, or has already gone by, the netted allies (who all know about the plot) can protest, prompting another Intelligence (Difficulty 10) test. A character with the Enchantment lore of magic could also use Speak Truth to check.

The Gamesmaster must judge the evolving logistics over the course of the battle. In another 1d3+1 combat rounds, a second group comes by whether the players are ready or not. Then in another 1d3+1 combat rounds, a third group will. Then, wait a final 1d3+1 combat rounds and go to scene 8.

Soldiers (Warrior 2): Most of their equipment and statistics are the same as for typical Marlock City soldiers in Chapter 1, *Sokara Source Book*. However, they are Rank 2, have 12 Stamina, an additional Weapon Skill I (Bow), a bow (Combat +2), a quiver, and 10 arrows.

8 - THE COUP: BLOODSHED

Read the players the following (edited as required):

The din of nearby battle has been audible this whole while, as the clueless followers of Nergan Corin attempt to repel the manbeasts at the gate. Loud bangs imply the foes are battering at it even now. The noise has increased as those loyal to Marlock spring their own traps overhead and in the courtyard. The last few moments, though, have brought screams from somewhere in the yard. Through an open window, you hear Captain Hale bellowing your names. 'They've seized the archer towers! They no longer fire on the manbeasts; they fire on us! Engage them with force!'

No more soldiers come down the stairs. In the barracks on the second floor, the players find a chaotic mix of netted and struggling soldiers of varying allegiances. Some allied soldiers lie dead from arrows near the exterior door. (If they go to the courtyard, they find similar, but also spy Captain Hale and Sergeant Jacobs dueling.)

Sergeant Shain is also here. If she is not allied with the players (scene 6), she will be confused and furious: she wishes to combat the manbeasts, but has nowhere to go where she may do any good. She can be convinced to ally if someone spends a combat round making a Charisma (Difficulty 12) roll. If she is allied, she will join the characters in a rush up the stairs to the towers.

All soldiers now fight to the death. Three of the opposition soldiers in the towers fire on the party once while they ascend. Anyone staying below and using ranged attacks back up toward the towers must suffer a -2 penalty in addition to any penalty for range. Magic is not affected, and in fact a successful magic attack will make the archers take cover and let the characters climb the stairs.

When the soldiers are defeated, go to scene 9. If the characters look down while in the towers, describe the basics from the first paragraph of that scene.

Soldiers (Warrior 2) (x5): Most of their equipment and statistics are the same as for typical Marlock City soldiers in Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book. However, they are Rank 2, have 12 Stamina, an additional Weapon Skill I (Bow), a bow (Combat +2), a quiver, and 10 arrows.

9 - THE COUP: DEFENSES BREACHED

Read the players the following:

The archer towers are secure, but the battle rages on beneath you. You look to the courtyard to see Captain Hale and Sergeant Jacobs in a duel amid netted or dying soldiers. Neither seems to give an inch. Then you look to the other side of the gate house. Outside you see the manbeast force, most of it dead, but with a few creatures still living to pound at the outer gate. They look like people but their limbs are strangely twisted, their hands ending in long black talons. They are covered in matted grey fur, and wear little except an ornate iron helm, each sculpted to look like some ferocious animal. They barrel toward the door again and again, using themselves as battering rams.

Suddenly they strike in unison - and with a shudder felt throughout the building, the outer gate caves in. The manbeasts are at the inner gate in a flash. Tragically, it would seem the inner gate was not properly sealed when the recent scouting expedition returned to the fort. Scrabbling talons find purchase and the manbeasts pull the gate open with ease. Soon they will be upon the officers below.

Sergeant Shain will fire arrows down on the manbeasts. Captain Hale and Sergeant Jacobs will of course fight the manbeasts, but take any opportunity to kill each other; the coup will not end in any heartwarming revelation that ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend.’ When all enemies are dead, go to scene 10.

Manbeasts (x3): For information on manbeasts, please refer to Chapter 10, core rules.

10 - THE COUP: REWARDS

If Captain Hale was defeated, he will be brought back to health with a potion of restoration. If Sergeant Jacobs somehow survived, such as by the characters using nonlethal combat, then Hale will execute him immediately before proceeding as described below (or the reverse for allies of Jacobs). Read the players the following (edited as required):

Captain Forin Hale takes control of the situation. Soldiers are organised to seal the gate properly and tend to the injured. Captured loyalists to the king are pressed back into grudging service. Sergeant Seeva Shain is livid that the inner gate failed by an error, but she keeps it within herself for the most part as she works with Hale. In short order, Fort Brilon is at peace, the coup is done, and able souls are already at work to repair the damaged outer gate.

When the characters are ready, i.e., any dying ones are healed, the captain thanks them for their loyal service to the Protector-General. He presents them with two old pieces of equipment, a magical axe (Combat +4) and magical ring mail (Defence +4), that he jokingly gives up because they ‘don’t fit with the uniform.’ These items are akin to normal ones (Chapter 4, core rules) but with an extra +2 bonus. He also offers each character one manbeast’s helmet (EV 1). They are no good as actual armour due to their awkward shape, but may be kept as heirlooms or sold for 75 Shards each. Manbeast’s helmets will become more relevant in Source Book 4: The Great Steppes - Plains of Howling Darkness. Lastly, he hands over the dead sergeant’s officer’s pass to deliver to Provost Marshal Marloes Marlock.

CONCLUSION

The players must return to their chosen patron, Nergan Corin in the Coldbleak Mountains or Marloes Marlock in Yellowport. Normally, retracing the route in the mountains requires one Scouting roll for climbing as detailed in Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book; and there could be random encounters on the road to Yellowport as detailed in scene 1; but the Gamesmaster should let the return be uneventful. Read the following to players loyal to Nergan Corin:

The weather in the mountains shows mercy and clears for your return. You are recognised by the soldiers on guard and again enter the mountain stockade. The king receives the officer’s pass and those assembled listen intently to your tale. The royalist guards seem thrilled, but Nergan seems quiet. ‘A good service has been done,’ the young king eventually proclaims. ‘I see that my trust was not misplaced. Come; receive your disbursement. Spend it wisely, and return here when you are ready to further serve your king. I will say no more until then.’ You are brought the promised 1000 Shards and an escort is arranged back down to the foothills.

Read the following to players loyal to Marloes Marlock:

At the Marshal Citadel and Courthouse once again, Captain Royzer meets you and brings you to another war office on the second floor. Marloes Marlock receives the officer’s pass and those

assembled listen intently to your tale. An aide begins furiously scribbling upon a parchment, but Marlock seems quiet. 'You will be paid as you are worth,' he eventually states. 'It is difficult to move against Nergan Corin, for his followers are skilled in identifying spies. So 1000 Shards it is; and if you return again, you may find more opportunities for pay. Do so when you are prepared to further serve your country.' You are brought the promised money and led out of the building.

Next give out experience points. It is suggested that the Gamesmaster start with a fixed experience reward of 15 for this quest, divided among the characters and rounded to come to an equal amount for each. Extra points should then be rewarded for individual skill and role-playing, which might average 2 experience points per character.

Quest 7 - To Serve a King

INTRODUCTION

This quest is 'optional' in that the characters either do this quest or To Serve a General (quest 8), but not both. Whichever they do becomes the conclusion of the campaign. This is intended to be a brief and intense experience, and the players should be warned to prepare.

The characters take quest 7 if they supported Nergan Corin in A Test of Loyalty (quest 6). It begins when the characters choose to return to the Coldbleak Mountains for further work from Corin. Note the in-game date and roll on the weekly weather table if appropriate (Chapter 9 - For the Gamesmaster in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). When in the mountains, the characters would normally need one Scouting roll for climbing as detailed in Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book, but the Gamesmaster should waive this for efficiency. Read the players the following:

You ascend into the mountains and find the now-familiar mountain track. Captain Vorkung sees you in to the mountain stockade of the royalists where King Nergan Corin awaits. The atmosphere is tense in the makeshift throne room, and the young king greets you with formality before ushering you into a private chamber.

'Thanks to you, we have military support within the Forts of the Eastern Marches,' he tells you. 'But cities are where the people live, and their heart must be with us as well. By the lesson of Yellowport we have learned that popular revolt leads to disaster: Provost Marshal Marloes Marlock, the brother of General Grieve Marlock, is a ruthless and paranoid man, and his response to the last revolt in Yellowport was bloody indeed.

'However, his brutality may be his undoing, for the people come to detest the regime and will be grateful to anyone who can spare them it. If you can get into the citadel at Yellowport and assassinate Marloes, we may begin to liberate the city. I myself will be eternally grateful - I can give you remuneration, namely another 1000 Shards, but I also offer what money cannot buy: connections. I will explain more upon completion of this mission. What say you?'

If the characters ever told Corin that they were offered work by Marlock himself, then Corin will advise them to take advantage of this: they should be able to enter the Marshal Citadel and Courthouse without challenge and trick the provost marshal into letting down his guard.

If they ask what proof Corin would accept for task completion, he responds that his court magician will verify Marlock's death through magical means. Her divinations cannot spy Marloes himself, as the citadel is too far distant, but she can piece together the proof in other ways.

If they accept the quest, read the paragraph below. If instead the characters demand more help or pay before accepting, the Gamesmaster can modify this text.

The young king nods and takes you out to the throne room again. He glances toward the back of the room, whence a middle-aged woman is approaching with something in her hands. Corin introduces her as Tilonen, his court magician, and she presents you with a sword. 'This is an Assassin's Sword,' she explains. 'It is doubly-enchanted: it will aid in combat, but it also has a magical shroud to prevent onlookers from realising you have it drawn. May it help you in your quest.'

The Assassin's Sword (Combat +4, strike order +2) is akin to a normal sword (Chapter 4 - Equipment in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book) but with an extra +2 bonus to both Combat and strike order. As Tilonen says, no one notices if the wielder has it drawn, and so he or she usually won't need to waste AP drawing it once a fight begins (Chapter 5 - Combat in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). This weapon may be sold for 700 Shards.

When the characters leave for Yellowport, go to scene 1.

1 - TO YELLOWPORT

Note the weather and mention it along with the following:

It occurs to you that once you return to Yellowport, the place will never be the same: you have agreed to bring upheaval to the city you knew from your youth. You can hope that service to the king will bring you a better life than subservience to the military regime. You can also hope that you will live long enough to see that life.

The trek from the Coldbleak Mountains to Yellowport (via Venefax) is detailed in scene 1 of A Test of Loyalty (quest 6). This includes rolls for random encounters. When the characters arrive at the Marshal Citadel and Courthouse, go to scene 2.

2 - INFILTRATION

Entry is simple, but the players may choose to overcomplicate it. If they enter during the day and ask to see Marloes Marlock, read them the following:

Just as when you first came here, Captain Royzer sees you up to the second floor where the provost marshal works on papers. The captain is dismissed, leaving you in a war office with Marloes Marlock, six of his guards, and another door nearby that leads to a side chamber.

See the marshal citadel map. The room in question is marked for scene 3. Go to scene 3 and read on.

However, the players may instead sneak in, or scale the walls, or try other approaches such as direct assault. Direct assault is repelled by an effectively unlimited number of guards from the citadel and the barracks, plus the army wizard Loron from scene 5.

Sneaking brings its own problems. Anyone bypassing the barracks by entering Citadel Grove will face a bramble wall, an unpleasant curse should they attempt to burn the brambles, and a deep trench just inside the innermost edge (Chapter 9, core rules). Anyone who enters the citadel and then tries to sneak around must make rolls like those in scene 4 to dodge regular patrols. Anyone arriving at night will find the main doors sealed with high-quality locks (Chapter 9, core rules), and inside all the halls are lit and patrolled like daytime. Anyone who climbs the walls and tries to open the barred windows must make rolls as described in scene 4.

3 - ASSASSINATION OF MARLOES MARLOCK

If the characters hold conversation with Marloes Marlock, note his most recent memory is that they agreed to work for him. With a Charisma (Difficulty 11) roll, they can convince him they have important news, best heard by him alone. He will take the characters to the side chamber without his guards. If they fail the Charisma roll, they could roll again if they mention specifics (real or made up) from their 'work.'

Marloes Marlock's statistics are described in Chapter 9, core rules. None of his aides are present. If the characters can kill Marlock in the side chamber within one combat round (give him the lowest position in the strike order), the guards will not hear. Then read the following:

Long live the rightful king.

They may loot the room and/or search for the secret door as described in scene 4. If they leave through the main door, roll 1d3: this is the number of combat rounds until the guards investigate (either these six or some other group) and the escape begins. If they leave through the secret door, it is 1d6 rounds. Then go to scene 4.

If they do not kill him within one round, he will call for the guards and they will approach on the second round. After a fight this large, other people in the citadel are sure to have heard (such as clerks walking by the room), so go to scene 4.

Yellowport Soldiers (Warrior 1) (x6): For information on typical Yellowport soldiers, please refer to Chapter 9, core rules.

4 - ESCAPE FROM THE MARSHAL CITADEL

Read the players the following:

The cry goes up throughout the citadel, 'Murder! Assassins!' and the hunt is on - for you.

Escape is possible out the front door or out a window. All windows are barred, meaning that opening them is akin to forcing open a portcullis (Chapter 9, core rules). Then, the climb is either 10 feet from the second floor or 20 feet from the third floor on a vertical slope with plenty of handholds, modified as needed by equipment and weather (Chapter 9, core rules). Whichever way they proceed, go to scene 5 when they get out to the citadel grounds.

Until then, the Gamesmaster will have to react to whatever the players do. The following are several rules that may be useful.

Encounters with guards are prevalent (see random encounter table below). Characters listening for guards must make a Scouting (Difficulty 5) roll. Recall from Chapter 9, core rules that you raise the difficulty when in a room with a closed door.

Characters may hide with a Thievery (Difficulty 9) roll, modified as per Chapter 9, core rules based on how many guards are trying to find them. In rooms without windows (or at night), they can take some time (one combat round) to douse oil lights and get the bonus for low-light or no-light conditions.

Characters may sneak by a patrol with a Thievery (Difficulty 7) roll, also modified based on how many guards are present.

It is suggested that the Gamesmaster roll for a random encounter when the characters enter new rooms or corridors, but roll less often if they are already in (or fleeing from) an encounter. Roll 2 dice, apply modifiers as indicated below, and consult the following table:

2-8 (or below) No encounter

9-11 Three soldiers approach

12 (or above) Six soldiers approach

Yellowport Soldiers (Warrior 1) (x3 or x6): For information on typical Yellowport soldiers, please refer to Chapter 9, core rules.

Every room is filled with riches, and the character may feel like looting, but there are only so many objects small enough for them to haul away (i.e., expensive drapes are too big). Searching for loot takes a combat round and a Scouting (Difficulty 7) test to find anything of value in desks, behind curtains, and so on. Add 1 to the next roll for random encounters if the characters spend time looting, successful or not.

Searching for traps takes a combat round and a Scouting (Difficulty 12) test. Characters may disarm traps as usual. If they trigger any trap, add another 1 to the next roll for random encounters.

Actual treasure and traps are determined at random. If characters want to search, roll 2 dice and consult the following table:

2-3 Trap

4-6 Trap plus minor loot

7-9 Minor loot

10-11 Major loot

12 Trap plus major loot

Trap

Select from these six options: a normal-quality arrow trap, a normal-quality fire trap, a normal-quality needle trap with scorpion venom, or a well-made version of any of those three (Chapter 9, core rules).

Minor Loot

Select from these six options: 100 Shards in trinkets like statuettes and small portraits (EV 1), 2 random potions, lock picks (Thievery +1), lantern, chain mail (Defence +3), magical dagger (Combat +1). This dagger is akin to normal ones (Chapter 4, core rules) but with an extra +1 bonus.

Major Loot

Select from these six options: 200 Shards in trinkets like statuettes and small portraits (EV 1), silver flute (Charisma +2), magical splint mail (Defence +5), magical shield (Defence +2), magical bow (Combat +3), magical battle axe (Combat +4). The magical weapons and armour are akin to normal ones (Chapter 4, core rules) but with an extra +1 bonus.

The following are notes for areas the characters may visit on their way out.

A: Main reception area. During the day, clerks and civilians here are panicking and raising alarm, so the Gamesmaster may add 1 to rolls for random encounters.

B: Main hall and stairs. During the day, there are clerks and civilians as in A.

C: Courthouse. The side chambers are preparatory rooms and libraries. Subtract 1 from rolls for random encounters while in a side chamber. Each secret door can be uncovered with a Scouting (Difficulty 12) roll. The characters can use these doors to throw off searching guards: the first time they use a secret door, subtract 1 from the next roll for random encounters.

D: Dining hall. The secret door is as in C.

E: Kitchen. The secret door is as in C. The side chambers are for pantries, linens, and laundry, which help with avoiding random encounters as in C. Additionally, the characters may use spare clothes to disguise themselves as kitchen scullions. They may then walk past a group of guards with one Thievery (Difficulty 9) test each.

F: These four rooms across the north end (aside from the space for the stairwell) are living quarters for aides Captain Royzer, Lieutenant Jenas, Lieutenant Tarrack, and Lieutenant Crom (Chapter 9, core rules). Secret doors are as in C. Note that the characters do not meet any of the aides during their escape, as the plot requires them to survive and maintain order in Yellowport. If a character with the Divination lore of magic tries to find Captain Royzer anyway, he will be at some safe distance.

G: All these remaining rooms on the second floor are war offices, including the one marked for scene 3. Side chambers and secret doors are as in C.

H: Clockwise from northwest: Marloes Marlock's bedroom, the stairwell, Marlock's bath, library, dining room, and study. The central space is a reception hall. The characters may use spare clothes to disguise themselves as officials using the same rolls as in E.

5 - AMBUSHED

The layout of the grounds is shown in Chapter 9, core rules. Unless the characters were followed out the front door, there are no soldiers out here. If they try to leave through the Citadel Grove, they will find it

nigh-impassable (Chapter 9, core rules). When they walk (or run) down the path between the barracks, read the following:

You approach the two large barracks. At this distance, you cannot hear the noise you left behind at the citadel. It seems the soldiers cannot either, and you do not see any activity in the area. However, as you pass between the buildings, you spy a flash of grey magical energy in the open door to the west. You hear a shout, 'It's them! It's them!' Some sort of army wizard gestures at you from the doorway and a group of soldiers pours out around her.

See the barracks ambush map. The enemies approach from the door marked with the scene number. If the characters fight, soldiers will be heard shouting from windows in the eastern barracks after a few rounds. When they win, yet more soldiers will be heard in the western barracks: these soldiers had been off-shift and sleeping. The characters have no time to loot corpses (except possibly to pick up dropped weapons and the cobalt wand) as reinforcements will arrive soon from both sides.

If needed, the interior of the barracks is as described in Chapter 9, core rules. If the characters are foolish enough to enter either building, or just stand around and wait for more combat, then they find soldiers effectively reinforce without end. When they escape to the streets of Yellowport, go to the conclusion.

Yellowport Soldiers (Warrior 1) (x8, plus unlimited reinforcements): For information on typical Yellowport soldiers, please refer to Chapter 9, core rules.

Loron (Mage 5): Charisma 4, Combat 3, Intelligence 5, Magic 6, Muscle 2, Sanctity 2, Scouting 5, Thievery 5, Stamina 24.

Equipment: Staff (Combat +1), cobalt wand (Magic +3).

Powers: Counterspell I, Mage Sight I, Sorcery I (Battle Magic), Sorcery II (Divination).

Additional Notes: Loron is dedicated but subtle. She followed the characters via Divination and prepared this ambush. In combat, she prefers to start with the Battle Magic spells: Combat Sense and Magical Shield (Chapter 3 - Spells & Sorcery in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book) before engaging. She will then fight to the death for her fallen marshal.

CONCLUSION

Once beyond the barracks, the characters face no more soldiers. There could be random patrols in Yellowport, but this is left to the Gamesmaster's judgment. It only really matters if the characters (unwisely) sell stolen goods in town: with Loron dead, reports of stolen goods are the best way the government has of tracking the characters. (For reference, Captain Royzer will take over as provost marshal in the coming days.)

The immediate task is to return to Nergan Corin in the Coldbleak Mountains. For this, too, there could be random encounters, but the trek should be left uneventful. When the players approach the mountain stockade, read them the following:

By now, you know your way into the Coldbleak Mountains. The climb is nothing compared to what you just accomplished. The soldier at the mountain track recognises you and leads you to the king. Nergan is pleased to see you. 'Have you succeeded in ridding us of Marloes?' he asks eagerly.

The players may explain themselves as they wish, then the Gamesmaster should continue:

Those assembled can scarce believe it. The king turns to his court magician, Tilonen. She reports that her divinations are consistent with his death. The military regime seems to be in upheaval: officers and troops are being called back to Yellowport from surrounding areas, including sympathetic forces from the Forts of the Eastern Marches.

Nergan Corin is overjoyed with the news. ‘Excellent! At this rate I will be able to take my rightful place in the throne room of Old Sokar. Such work deserves reward.’ He beckons and a guard brings forth 1000 Shards. ‘Of course, your service is worth more than silver. I dub thee King’s Champions. You may bear the title as an honorific among the loyal of Sokara.’

Then, after a brief pause, he leans forward. ‘Should you wish to live up to the mantle, though, you may accept the offer I made when you saw me last: the promise of “connections.” I speak of serving your liege in lands beyond the borders of Sokara. By your hand, we have gathered strength both military and social; now we must become political. I wish to send you west, into Golnir, where the Ravayne clan holds sway. If you agree, you shall become ambassadors as well as adventurers: you shall serve Baroness Ravayne in the name of Sokara, strengthening ties between us, and assuring that Golnir acknowledges my claim to my throne.

‘It will doubtless be a challenge; the demands will be many, and I can only support you so far. But if you feel ready and able, come speak to me again; adventure and reward surely await.’

Next give out experience points. It is suggested that the Gamesmaster start with a fixed experience reward of 20 for this quest, divided among the characters and rounded to come to an equal amount for each. Extra points should then be rewarded for individual skill and role-playing, which might average 3 experience points per character.

In a party of four, all characters who began this campaign at Rank 2 should achieve Rank 4 by now.

This is the conclusion of the campaign (quest 8 is only for people in service to Marloes Marlock). Therefore, the characters do not have to decide yet whether to accept Nergan Corin’s offer. Meanwhile, the characters may call themselves ‘King’s Champions’ in any interim quests the Gamesmaster runs. This title grants preferred treatment among royalist groups. If they do accept the new mission, the players and the Gamesmaster should refer to the campaign in Source Book 2: Golnir - Cities of Gold and Glory.

Quest 8 - To Serve a General

INTRODUCTION

This quest is ‘optional’ in that the characters either do this quest or To Serve a King (quest 7), but not both. Whichever they do becomes the conclusion of the campaign. This is intended to be a brief and intense experience, and the players should be warned to prepare.

The characters take quest 8 if they supported Marloes Marlock in A Test of Loyalty (quest 6). It begins when the characters choose to return to the Marshal Citadel and Courthouse in Yellowport for further work from Marlock. Note the in-game date and roll on the weekly weather table if appropriate (Chapter 9 - For the Gamesmaster in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). Read the players the following:

You have seen much of the inside of the Marshal Citadel and Courthouse; far more than you had expected during the years of your youth, working manual labour in Yellowport. Today you are brought by Captain Royzer to yet another war office on the second floor where Provost Marshal Marloes Marlock is receiving reports from members of the army. All these individuals are dismissed when you appear; all but one woman, who looks to be a wizard. The provost marshal sits thin-lipped as the Captain sees the others out.

‘That young upstart of a king has made his last mistake.’ he declares as soon as they are gone. ‘The work you did in infiltrating and disrupting the royalist sympathisers would be good any day, but rarely have agents managed it under the gaze of Nergan Corin himself. This shows a weakness in his armour: you, personally, can get close to him.

‘Rebellious groups throughout Sokara depend on him to unify their cause: penetrate his stronghold and slay Nergan Corin, and all will begin to fall apart. To prove his death to the masses, I must have the Royal Ring of the House of Corin; therefore, I offer you 1000 Shards in reward if you bring me the ring from his hand. I also offer what money cannot buy: connections. That is something I will explain if you return alive.’

Marlock will advise the characters to take advantage of their ‘diplomatic’ work from last time. They should be able to enter the mountain stockade without challenge and trick the king into letting down his guard.

If they accept the quest, read the paragraph below. If instead the characters demand more help or pay before accepting, the Gamesmaster can modify this text.

The provost marshal nods, then snaps his fingers. The woman who had been waiting nearby produces a sheathed sword from her robes. Marlock introduces her as Loron, a military wizard trusted by his aides, and she hands the weapon to you. ‘This is an Assassin’s Sword,’ she explains. ‘It is doubly-enchanted: it will aid in combat, but it also has a magical shroud to prevent onlookers from realising you have it drawn. May it help you in your mission.’

The Assassin’s Sword (Combat +4, strike order +2) is akin to a normal sword (Chapter 4 - Equipment in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book) but with an extra +2 bonus to both Combat and strike order. As Loron says, no one notices if the wielder has it drawn, and so he or she usually won’t need to waste AP drawing it once a fight begins (Chapter 5 - Combat in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book). This weapon may be sold for 700 Shards.

When the characters leave for the Coldbleak Mountains, go to scene 1.

1 - TO THE COLDBLEAK MOUNTAINS

Note the weather and mention it along with the following:

It occurs to you that once you complete this journey, you will have wiped away the last vestiges of the monarchy that ruled during your youth. The late King Corin VII was corrupt and you saw the people of Yellowport struggle under his edicts. You can hope that the regime of the Marlocks will bring you a better life than this replacement king would. You can also hope that you will live long enough to see that life.

The trek from Yellowport to the Coldbleak Mountains (via Venefax) is detailed in scene 1 of A Test of Loyalty (quest 6). This includes rolls for random encounters.

Then, at the mountains, a storm has picked up and the weather will be category A for the duration of this quest (Chapter 9, core rules). The characters must climb in these conditions and make one Scouting test as per the description in Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book. The Gamesmaster should make one roll for random encounters, again as described in Chapter 1.

When the characters survive the climb and complete any encounter, go to scene 2.

2 - INFILTRATION

The procession into the mountain stockade is simple, but the players may choose to overcomplicate it. If they plan to arrive as normal and ask to be shown in to see Nergan Corin, read them the following:

You eventually find the mountain track where the winds die down and royalist soldiers wait in hiding. They recognise you and Captain Vorkung has you blindfolded to go through their secret pass into the mountain stockade. The blindfolds are then removed as you walk through the stockade, and the storm resumes with remarkable strength: in these conditions, you can hardly see ten feet before you. The captain shows you out of the snows and into their makeshift throne room before excusing himself, leaving you with Nergan Corin and three of his guards.

See the mountain stockade map. Go to scene 3 and read on.

However, the players may try other approaches such as direct assault back at the mountain track or blindfold removal partway through the secret pass escort. Direct assault is repelled by an effectively unlimited number of archers, many of whom are 20 feet overhead.

If the characters remove their blindfolds, they must fight three soldiers somewhere within the secret pass (in this case, Captain Vorkung is assumed to have gone back to his patrol and the characters will not face him). See the secret pass map. The north end of the pass connects to the south end of the stockade map. Anyone who tries to sneak in must make rolls like those in scene 4.

3 - ASSASSINATION OF NERGAN CORIN

If the characters hold conversation with Nergan Corin, keep in mind whatever happened during their first visit. Under most circumstances, a character can make a Charisma (Difficulty 11) roll to convince him they have important news, best heard by him alone. He will take the characters to the office in the southeast corner without his guards. If they fail the Charisma roll, they could roll again if they mention specifics (real or made up) from their 'work for him.'

Nergan Corin's statistics are described in Chapter 4, Sokara Source Book. In addition, he wears the Royal Ring of the House of Corin (EV 0.25) on his hand. If the characters can kill Corin in the office within one combat round (give him the lowest position in the strike order), the guards will not hear. Then read the following:

Long live General Marlock.

When the characters leave this room without Corin, the guards will become suspicious. Roll 1d3: this is the number of combat rounds before the guards investigate and the real escape begins. When this occurs, go to scene 4. Of course, the players might want to fight these guards on purpose, in which case see below.

If the characters try to kill Corin in the office but fail to commit regicide within one round, Corin will call for the guards and they will approach on the second round. Once the king and all his guards are dead, roll 1d6: this is the number of rounds until somebody else investigates the goings-on in the building, prompting the escape in scene 4.

A character who uses Mage Sight on the royal ring will find that it holds a connection to ancestral spirits of the Corin family. This connection cannot be broken by a counterspell or priest power.

Royalist Soldiers (Warrior 4) (x3): For information on typical royalist soldiers, please refer to Chapter 4, Sokara Source Book.

Before they leave, the characters can try to loot the building. Though there are plenty of maps and documents, none seem as useful as those back in A Test of Loyalty (quest 6), so finding valuables takes time (and the characters may not have much of that). Each of the four rooms may be looted once. Searching takes a combat round and a Scouting (Difficulty 7) test. There are no traps.

For each room, select from these six options: 300 Shards in wine and valuable furs (EV 1), 4 random potions, 2 magical daggers (Combat +1), silver holy symbol (Sanctity +2), silver flute (Charisma +2), cross-staff (Scouting +2). These daggers are akin to normal ones (Chapter 4, core rules) but with an extra +1 bonus.

4 - ESCAPE FROM THE COLDBLEAK MOUNTAINS

If the characters are outside the building with the makeshift throne room when the assassination is detected, read the following:

From somewhere behind you, a voice cuts through the snow with the strength born of panic, 'Murder! Assassins!' and the hunt is on - for you.

If they are still inside the building when somebody comes to investigate, read the following:

From the exterior door of the throne room, you suddenly hear the cry, 'Murder! Assassins!' followed by a slam before you can respond. The hunt is on - for you.

If the characters refuse to leave the throne room, they will be swamped with an effectively unlimited number of royalists, 1d3 at a time. Note that they will not face either Captain Vorkung or the court magician Tilonen at any point during this scene, as the plot requires Tilonen to survive until scene 5, and Vorkung to survive in general. If a character with the Divination lore of magic tries to find either of them anyway, they will be at distant locations.

Escape requires leaving the stockade (by the south path), navigating the secret pass (which connects to the stockade map north-to-south), and leaving the Coldbleak Mountains. As soon as they accomplish this, but before they reach Blessed Springs, go to scene 5.

Until then, the Gamesmaster will have to react to whatever the players do. The following are several rules that apply along the way.

In the heavy snow in exterior areas of the stockade, movement speed is cut in half, ranged combat is impossible (Chapter 9, core rules), and visibility is reduced. There nonetheless are soldiers going between the buildings and the secret pass. For every round of the trek, the Gamesmaster should roll 1 dice: on a 1, 1d3 royalist soldiers draw near. Characters may fight, flee, or try to escape detection. They can sneak by with successful Thievery (Difficulty 8) rolls; or, if they plan ahead and take clothes from dead royalists, they can disguise themselves as soldiers with the same rolls.

The northwest stockade building is the barracks, where there are simply too many soldiers.

The main stockade doors are wedged open by snow, but the characters may choose to avoid the area in case of guards. Climbing the mountain walls is suicide in this weather, but characters can climb the stockade walls with Scouting (Difficulty 14) tests, modified as needed by equipment (Chapter 9, core rules). There is no penalty for falling except lost time. If they all succeed, they can circle around the doors and proceed to the secret pass without challenge.

Royalist Soldiers (Warrior 4) (x1d3, plus unlimited reinforcements): For information on typical royalist soldiers, please refer to Chapter 4, Sokara Source Book.

When the characters enter the secret pass, the winds die down but the danger increases. They most likely have never been in this area without a blindfold (barring animal companions of a druid character with Animal Friendship), but they can guess that they are headed generally south.

Characters may now climb the mountain walls. This requires a Scouting (Difficulty 8) roll, modified as usual, with 1 dice damage per fall. Success means bypassing walls on this map, getting a height advantage on approaching soldiers, and/or escaping out of the pass completely if trapped in one of the dead ends to the south.

Random encounters are prevalent. It is suggested that the Gamesmaster roll for an encounter at intersections and dead ends, but roll less often if the characters are already in (or fleeing from) an encounter. Roll 2 dice and consult the following table:

2-8 No encounter

9 Royalist soldiers

10-12 Ancestral spectre

Royalist Soldiers

Another 1d3 royalists catch up with the characters. Characters listening for pursuers must make a Scouting (Difficulty 5) roll. They may hide with a Thievery (Difficulty 9) roll, modified as per Chapter 9, core rules to Difficulty 10 if there are a full 3 guards trying to find them. They may sneak by a patrol with the same rolls. Disguises will not help here.

Ancestral Spectre

The stolen ring crackles with power and a terrifying humanlike figure appears before the characters. The first time this occurs, it screams 'Usurpers of the throne! You will pay for your crimes against the family of Corin!' Each spectre represents a different family member of Nergan Corin.

Ancestral Spectre: It has the same statistics as a ghost: please refer to Chapter 10 - Monsters and Enemies in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book.

Special Rules

Undead: The spectre is undead and thus is susceptible to any special rules affecting them.

Corporeality: This being is bound to a physical object it used in life, which has two effects: first, it can be harmed by non-magical means, unlike other ghosts; second, it leaves behind an heirloom upon defeat. Select from these three options: magical splint mail (Defence +5), magical shield (Defence +2), magical battle axe (Combat +4). These weapons and armour are akin to normal ones (Chapter 4, core rules) but with an extra +1 bonus. The spectre can be seen to use the object in the fight, but for simplicity do not recalculate its Combat or Defence rating.

When the characters get to the south end of the secret pass, the Gamesmaster may make up more twists and turns below the bottom of the map to extend the chase if desired. The Gamesmaster should force one encounter with an ancestral spectre if there have not been any.

When beyond the pass, the weather resumes, though it is not as blinding as it had been within the stockade. Characters must begin climbing and make one Scouting test as per the description in Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book. The Gamesmaster should make one roll for random encounters, again as described in Chapter 1. The ring will give them no more trouble.

5 - FOLLOWED

When the players reach the bottom of the mountains, read them the following:

At long last, the mountain storm begins to fade away behind you, and you set foot upon flat earth on the way to Blessed Springs. Trees rise up on either side of you. From here, you cannot see any pursuit from the royalists.

The characters should head back to Yellowport. Wise players might heal first in Blessed Springs, as there could be random encounters on the road. However, when they travel for this scene, there will be exactly one encounter: an ambush. The only way to change this is if a character with the Divination lore of magic spies on Tilonen, thus realising that she is on the road behind them.

Barring that unlikely event, wait until the characters have begun travel and are resting on the road for the first time. Read the players the following:

You begin to settle down for the night. Soon, you will be back at Yellowport, and will be quit of that ring. However, as you take stock of your surroundings, you spy people on horseback approaching from the north. A flash of grey magical energy appears before the leader and you hear a shout, 'Traitorous vipers! We have you now!' The leader is a middle-aged woman, some sort of magician; you realise you saw her before serving as an aide to the young king when you first infiltrated his court. Three royalist soldiers ride alongside her, bows at the ready to cut you down.

The ambush is in completely open space around their camp, with the enemies starting 100 feet to the north. Recall that individuals riding into combat must make a Scouting (Difficulty 9) test as described in Chapter 9, core rules, and mounted combat on a horse in general is described in Chapter 10, core rules. If a rider is killed, the horse will stop fighting and may flee, unless otherwise prevented such as by a character with the Beastology lore of magic. When the characters win, go to the conclusion.

Royalist Soldiers (Warrior 4) (x3): They each carry a lantern, bedroll, and 75 Shards in addition to their normal equipment. The soldiers will have their horses walk toward the characters for the first combat round, while they fire one volley of arrows and then ready swords. Then they will charge to melee on the second round. For more information on typical royalist soldiers, please refer to Chapter 4, Sokara Source Book.

Horses (x4): For information on horses, please refer to Chapter 10, core rules.

Tilonen (Mage 5): Charisma 4, Combat 3, Intelligence 5, Magic 6, Muscle 2, Sanctity 2, Scouting 5, Thievery 5, Stamina 24.

Equipment: Staff (Combat +1), cobalt wand (Magic +3), lantern, bedroll, and 375 Shards.

Powers: Counterspell I, Mage Sight I, Sorcery I (Battle Magic), Sorcery II (Divination).

Additional Notes: Tilonen is dedicated but subtle. She followed the characters via Divination and prepared this ambush. In combat, she prefers to start with the Battle Magic spells: Combat Sense and Magical Shield (Chapter 3 - Spells & Sorcery in the Fabled Lands Core Rule Book) before engaging. She will then fight to the death for her fallen king.

CONCLUSION

Once Tilonen is dead, no one is left to track the characters and they will face no more attacks. (For reference, Captain Vorkung will run royalist activities from the Coldbleak Mountains in the future.) When the players return to the marshal citadel with the Royal Ring of the House of Corin, read them the following:

Once, the Marshal Citadel and Courthouse had seemed imposing. Today, the walk to its front doors is almost a relief. You are ushered through quickly and led to the provost marshal. A number of his advisors stand nearby. Over glasses of fine wine, Marloes asks you to tell of your adventures in the Coldbleak Mountains.

The players may explain themselves as they wish, then the Gamesmaster should continue:

When you give him the Royal Ring of the House of Corin, he knows that Nergan is dead. His aides talk amongst themselves excitedly. Marloes Marlock is pleased indeed and seems relaxed for the first time that you have seen. ‘This is better news than I could have expected,’ he says. ‘You have done me a great service by getting rid of that pompous fool, Nergan. With their plots disrupted and morale broken, we should someday be able to wipe out this rebellion.’

He beckons and a guard brings you 1000 Shards. ‘Here is your pay, of course. And yet, your service is worth more than silver. I grant you the title Protectors of Sokara. This title will give you instant respect and command obedience in Sokara.’

Then, after a brief pause, he leans forward. ‘Should you wish to live up to the title, though, you may accept the offer I made days ago when I mentioned “connections.” I speak of serving your country and General in lands beyond our borders. It is essential that our rule be viewed as legitimate, both by our own people and by other nations. I wish to send you west, into Golnir, where the Ravayne clan holds sway. If you agree, you shall become ambassadors as well as adventurers: you shall serve Baroness Ravayne in the name of Sokara, strengthening ties between us, and assuring that Golnir acknowledges my brother’s claim to rulership.

‘It will doubtless be a challenge; the demands will be many, and you will no longer be in my pay. But if you feel ready and able, come speak to me again; adventure and reward surely await.’

Next give out experience points. It is suggested that the Gamesmaster start with a fixed experience reward of 20 for this quest, divided among the characters and rounded to come to an equal amount for each. Extra points should then be rewarded for individual skill and role-playing, which might average 3 experience points per character.

In a party of four, all characters who began this campaign at Rank 2 should achieve Rank 4 by now.

This is the conclusion of the campaign. Therefore, the characters do not have to decide yet whether to accept Marloes Marlock’s offer. Meanwhile, the characters may call themselves ‘Protectors of Sokara’ in any interim quests the Gamesmaster runs. This title grants preferred treatment among the Sokaran military and allows the characters to enter the General’s Palace in Marlock City, where Protector-General Grieve Marlock and the war council meet (Chapter 1, Sokara Source Book). If they do accept the new mission, the players and the Gamesmaster should refer to the campaign in Source Book 2: Golnir - Cities of Gold and Glory.