

THE THAECIAN ISLES

FESTIVAL OF THE BIZARRE

BY MATTHEW WEBBER

With contributions by Scott Agnew.

A roleplaying supplement for the **TALISANTA ROLEPLAYING GAME** created by Steven Michael Sechi.

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WELCOME TO THE THAECIAN ISLES

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

It is the author's intent that this book is not just as sourcebook, nor is it a straightforward adventure module. It was designed to be the start (or part of) an ongoing campaign where the GM and the players can explore the Thaecian Isles together. So instead of the regular adventure or a dry sourcebook, the islands are presented as an open-ended realm where the characters can explore freely, encountering adventure and danger at every turn.

Designed for a mid-to high level party.

It begins with the player characters receiving a mission to find a Gnori's missing Secret. She will

pay the for the characters to reach Thaecia Isle just in time for the famous Festival of the Bizarre. While the hunt for the Secret is the impetus for the characters to travel to the islands, they are in no way constrained to follow the one plotline and are free to explore any part of the islands they desire. While terrible dangers lurks at every turn, there is also the opportunity for great rewards, including the chance to uncover rare magics and treasures not seen since the Great Disaster.

Like all gaming products, this book is only a guide. As a Gamemaster, you should read through the whole book, making changes as you see fit to accommodate your own personal style, your players and your game.

The Festival of the Bizzare, and the character's chance to find the Gnori's Secret only lasts seven days, but it would be much longer (in game terms) to explore all the islands and do everything in this book. GMs can choose to play the events in sequence, or add their own ideas or visit some of the islands (Sorcerer's Isle, Gargantua) that we didn't have room for here. It is YOUR game, your world ... have fun with it!

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE

Scattered throughout the book are descriptions of some of this entrants in this year's Festival of the Bizzare. They are there to be used as needed to provide some colour and diversion as the characters explore the Festival.

CHAPTER 1, EIRA'S SECRET

For the sake of this book, the adventure begins in the city of Zanth, but it could just as easily begin anywhere in the Western Lands or Seven Kingdoms. However, scattered throughout the book are many references to the city, some of which may be clues to what is going on, some not. Gamemasters (GM) who begin the adventure somewhere else should read through the book carefully and make notes of any mention of Zanth, changing them as needed to suit their own chosen starting location.

It is early in the month of Talisandre and the PCs are enjoying a nice sunny day out in the city. It doesn't matter where it happens (could be in the street, or in a tavern) when suddenly, and without warning, one of the characters (PC) receives a sharp, painful rap across the calves. As the PC turns around, they are confronted by an irate Gnorl waving her walking stick in their face. "I know you, (insert character name), I know all of you. You and your friends be coming with me now!" her tone leaves little room for debate.

The tiny Gnorl is swaddled head to toe in a heavy brown robe, tied down by numerous bags, satchels, pouches and sacks positioned all over her body. Almost all are full to bursting with what looks and smells to be soil, some with young shoots poking through, and there is even a small pot filled with a small, but impressive blueblossom bush perched on her shoulder. If the PCs don't want to go with her, she will let slip that she knows all their names, and possibly quite a bit more about each character. "I'll not gonna hurt you, ya wilting lilies. Come and share a'cuppa with old Eira now." If the PCs are being really stubborn, she will resort to bribery to get them to follow. She will offer them ten gold lumens, but deduct it from what she offers the PCs in spending money (below).

She leads the PCs through the streets to shady side alley where there is a small round door. The Gnorl pulls out an impressive ring of keys to open the door to reveal a dimly lit tunnel leading steadily downwards. After a short walk, they come to another round door. Eira pulls out

another key and shoos the PCs inside. "Have a seat now and I'll put the kettle on."

The Gnorl's nook is a cramped little room with a low domed ceiling. A low fire in an oven built into the far wall gives the only light until Eira snaps her fingers and the dozens of half-melted tallow candles strewn across the room flicker to life. The walls are covered in dusty shelves, each stuffed to bursting with old, but well-tended books. More are piled up on the floor, next to piles of empty flower-pots and sacks of moist earth. One corner is filled with swollen cloth bags covered in iridescent mushrooms, and dried herbs hang in bunches from the ceiling. A low worktable at one end of the room is covered in soil, plant clippings and garden tools. The PCs have a seat as best they can on what floorspace they can find as Eira dumps a handful of crushed leaves into the kettle hanging from a hook over the oven. The room fills with the warm smell of mintlemon as the Gnorl sits down and carefully examines the PCs.

"So, you're wonderin' why Eira would invite a pack o'trouble such as yourselves over for tea? Well, I'll put it simple so you understand; A thief stole something from me, and you will help me get it back."

If asked what was stolen, Eira will look offended and say, "It's a secret." To a Gnorl such questions are the height of impoliteness: if a Gnorl doesn't volunteer information then it is a secret and the other person shouldn't pry, at least not so obviously.

If asked if she knows who took it or why, Eira will say. "Took it to Thaecia! Right out from under me. You go down to the sky-dock and find a ship they call 'the Dreaming Tree'. She'll take you to Thaecia and you bring it back to me!"

If any of the PCs ask, "Why Us?" the Gnorl grins quickly before replying. "Why not you?"

Eira is offering to pay for the trip, provide some pocket money and compensate the PCs handsomely if they are successful. If the PCs ask about money, she says, "Don't get your stalks twisted. Ship passage is paid, and the captain has a pouch of gold for each. Once you're in the air, you all will be fifty lumens richer. You bring it back to me and ..." The

Gnorl pulls out a small pouch, spilling dozens of marble sized jewels onto her open palm. "Each one has its own little secret." she says with an almost child-like giggle.

Eira will not, under any circumstances, tell the PCs what was stolen. She still considers it a secret and there is no force in the six spheres that will part a Gnorl from a secret she isn't willing to reveal. If the PCs ask what the item was a second time, she will only hint "You'd be best to keep your eyes peeled at night." Any further requests will only irritate the little Gnorl, and she will start grumbling that she "should have picked that other group. The one with the big stupid fellow and that spellcrazy Dhuna." The GM can always remind the players that she is offering an all expenses paid trip to a tropical island ... what could possibly go wrong?

The PCs leave the Gnorl's nook by the same method, but somehow come out in a completely differed alley. They have one day to pick up any supplies they think they will need. The next morning, at the city's sky dock they begin the long climb up the high-tower to board the 'Dreaming Tree' merchant skyship.

THE DREAMING TREE

"The Dreaming Tree" is one of the few commercial windships maintained by the Aeriad. At its heart are the two main masts, dorsal and ventral, made of living starleaf trees: span-oaks being two heavy for windship construction. The planks of the hull are held together by living viridian roots, all anchored to a reinforcing frame.

The ship's captain is Captain Jaay-Tr'Kirc, a Blue Aeriad ranger and veteran of the Grand Army. He is wearing a long, green, sleeveless coat and his bracers of levitation are well worn and stamped with a military crest. He welcomes the PCs briskly, but doesn't stay to chat. If asked about the money, he'll look at the PCs contemptuously and say 'Once we're in the air, mercenary.' Then he moves off, shouting orders at the crew and leaving the PCs standing around on the deck with some of the other passengers. Captain Tr'Kirc was a career military man who expected to live out his life in the Grand Army. He left only at the behest of both of Vardune's governing council to captain the country's first merchant windship. While he enjoys being at the

helm of his own ship, he misses the discipline and routine of a military vessel, and has a tendency to take out some of his frustration on those he considers civilians. He particularly dislikes mercenaries and adventurers, seeing them as little more than scavengers and bandits. The other passengers aboard the Dreaming Tree are a motley bunch; Cymrillians, Zandir, Sarista, Castabulanese, Marukan, Sindarans, Djaffir and others. Some are headed to the Festival, others bound for destinations up and down the Southern Rim. Among the more unusual passengers are a Mogroth Amber trader; a pair of Mirin performers, their skin turning a pale baby blue in the southern heart, and an orange robed Callidian staggering under the weight of a large package wrapped in blue paper.

The Dreaming Tree takes off soon after the PCs are aboard, the crew swarming through the rigging, letting out the sails and hauling in the ropes that had tied the ship to the dock. As the ship rises, the city spreads out below like a map, then quickly dwindles as the windship sets a southern course. Soon after departure, the passengers are taken to their quarters by the Third Mate, a polite Cymrillian woman by the name of Gabrilann. The passenger deck is an open room strung with hammocks separated by curtains. During the day, the hammocks and curtains are stored away and the room serves as the passenger lounge and eating area. A row of footlockers bolted to the walls allow the passengers to store their valuables safely (keys distributed by Gabrilann). A row of large portholes on either side offers plenty of light and a stunning view of the passing clouds. The PCs are allowed on the main deck at anytime, but are forbidden on the aftcastle deck or to enter the room containing the levitational. Both are guarded at all times by an armed Warrior-Mages. Gabrilann will also give the PCs the promised purses as she shows the PCs their bunks.

The ship sets a steady course south-west, stopping only at Vahanna and Tabal before setting out over crystal blue waters. Depending on where the PCs begin, the journey can take a few days, to a week and is uneventful unless the Gamemaster wishes to throw in an encounter with pack of ravengers over the Cinnibar mountains.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: RAVENGERS

Ravengers have become a growing problem across Talislanta, and have become a particular threat to windships. In some regions, packs of ravengers have learned that if they can force the windship to crash, then the crew is usually killed without much of a fight.

As the Dreaming Tree sails over the cloud soaked, blood red slopes of the Cinnibar mountains, the look-out in the 'bilge bucket' (the basket at the end of the ventral mast) starts to ring a warning bell. As the windship begins a steep climb, Gabrilann comes to the PCs and asks for their help. "Ravengers have been spotted and are circling for attack. The Tree is a merchant ship and most of the crew are sailors, not Warrior-Mage. We ask for your help in fighting them off." If the PCs ask to get paid for helping, Gabrilann will look at them in disgust (she shares some of her captain's distain for freelancers, but is normally willing to give people the benefit of the doubt) and says "Stay here then. Count your coins and pray to whatever god will have you that they cushion your fall when we sail into the mountainside." And with that she storms away.

If the PCs refuse to help, the crew fights off the ravengers, but not without numerous losses and considerable damage to the Dreaming Tree. For the rest of the trip, the PCs are ignored or treated rudely by the crew and the other passengers. Rumours of their cowardice might even follow them to Thaecia.

If they agree, the PCs are stationed on the forecastle. From their position, the PCs can see dozens of small black dots rising from the mountains. The Tree is climbing, but is clear that the dots will reach the ship before the ship can hide in the clouds. Most of the ship's crew is stationed in the rigging or near the rear to protect the more vital parts of the ship. It is the PCs job to take on any ravengers that land on the main deck. When the pack arrives, they attack every part of the ship simultaneously.

Once the PCs have cleared away some ravengers from the deck (GM's choice as to the number of opponents they think the PCs can handle), they can rush the aftcastle deck where Captain Tr'Kirc is standing over the body of one

of his fallen crewmen and battling a pair of swooping ravengers, or they can climb the rigging to help Third Mate Gabrilann, who is dealing with a trio of ravengers trying to cut the yard-arm off the main mast.

Battle Notes: Flying ravengers get +2 to all their combat roles against opponents on the ground. If the PCs choose to go up into the rigging, they must make a successful Climbing or Pilot skill (Labourer will also work if the character has a sailing background. ie, common swabbie or cabin boy) at -8 to get into the rigging successfully. All combat rolls in the rigging are at -3 because of the difficulty (large weapons ramp the difficulty up to -6, and any two handed weapon, including bows, cannot be used at all).

RAVENGERS

6'-6" tall, 140-170lbs.

| | |
|--------|--------|
| INT 0 | PER 0 |
| WIL +4 | CHA -3 |
| STR 0 | DEX 0 |
| CON 0 | SPD 0 |

Ability Level: 1-10

Hit Points: 18

Attacks:

Bite DR 4

Claw DR 6

Special Abilities: heat or cold attacks only do half damage. Flight, swimming

Armour: PR 2

THE THACCIAN ISLES

Three days after the PCs cross the Cinnibar mountains the mainland coast has faded away, lost in the thick tropical air. Below, crystal blue water seems to stretch out beyond forever in every direction; league after league of empty, endless sea.

THE CLOUDS OF TALISLANTA

As the Dreaming Tree sails into the clouds, they don't immediately envelope the ship. Instead they first tear apart like a cotton ball, breaking on the Dreaming Tree's bow before closing in like a fog. In the bright beams of sunlight that make it through the cloud layer, there are the faintest hint of lines, like thread or spidersilk, highlighted in the sunlight like motes of dust. These fibres are called cloudstuff, and they are collected on magical spindles by the the wizards of Cabal Magnus. The harvested cloudstuff is then spun

into thread and traded with the Enchanters of Thaecia, who weave it into their famous gossamer cloth.

Some mages have begun to speculate that these fibres are responsible for the build up of eldritch energies that are responsible for Talislanta's terrible aberrant weather

The waters of the Azure ocean are so clear that even from the deck of the windship, the passengers can often see the white sandy ocean floor, broken by rich shoals of coral teeming with a kaleidoscope of colourful life, or the broad, craggy back of a basking zaratan. Sometimes there are other, darker shapes that cut through the waves like a scalpel, then disappear below the waves like a bad dream. Once during the voyage there is a warning cry and the Dreaming Tree climbs steeply into the cloudlayer, too quickly for the passengers to see what alarmed the crew, just a glimpse of something huge, black and malevolent worming across the sea floor.

The sight of other ships, both on the sea and in the air, are a welcome reminder that the Dreaming Tree has not sailed so far from civilization as it might seem. Sleek sailing vessels pass below heading southward along a similar course, or tracking east along the trade-routes to the Dark Coast, Faradun and beyond. Passing windships wave colourful flags in friendly greeting to signal that they too, are on their way to Thaecia.

VIEW FROM AFAR

It is still early in the morning as the Thaecian isles appear on the limitless horizon. The crew prepares the ship for docking and the passengers pack up their belongings as the Dreaming Tree begins its slow descent towards Caprica, the only settlement on Thaecia worthy of a name. In the clear, blue water, the PCs can see half a dozen ships anchored just outside Thaecia's tiny harbour, and three large windships, along with a handful of windskiff and windriggers bobbing lazily in the warm, tropical air.

As they draw closer to Caprica, the PCs can see azure waves rolling gently over a broad white beach of burnished sand. A low cliff of quartz veined rock rises up over the beach, broken by

wide mouthed caves, scenic waterfalls and shallow lagoons of crystal clear water. The cliff is topped by swaying trees and a sea of green grass and colourful flowers. Set up atop the grass are innumerable, brightly coloured pavilions billow gently in the warm, sea breezes. This is Caprica.

CHAPTER 2, CAPRICA

"Having visited Caprica, one can truly appreciate the meaning of the word, 'Paradise' and ultimately, just how quickly that word becomes dull and unexciting."

-Red Rymora, Gao Captain.

HISTORY

The residents of Caprica, and the rest of the Thaecia have never kept detailed historical records, nor have they much interest in anything but the here and now to investigate their past. For all they care, Thaecia may have existed since time immemorial or since yesterday. However, according to records found in Cabal Magnus, it is almost certain they came to the islands sometime after the Great Disaster. Scholars believe the Thaecians are neomorphs, related to the Muses of Astar with whom they share similar traits.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE OOD'S CYLINDER

One of the strangest tales from before the Forgotten Age is that of Ood the Odd, who created a race of tiny, nearly microscopic neomorphs he named, 'the Minisculia'. He placed them within a glass sphere that visually augmented what happened inside so he could study his creation. According to Ood's journal, over the next seven days he watched as the tiny race quickly developed a society and began building an expanding civilization within the globe. On the morning of the eighth day, Ood awoke to check on his creation, only to discover that they had disappeared. All that remained in the globe was a metal cylinder, about two feet high and a half a foot wide, covered with strange, minute writing that no one has ever been able to decipher. The cylinder was thought lost, but debates about its existence continue to this day. Theories have included that it was a complete history of the Minisculia: a detailed blueprint on how to build a device that will transport you to wherever the Minisculia went, some sort of beacon

or even a suicide note.

Glottis, the Calidian claims not only to have found the cylinder, but also to have translated it and is bringing it to Festival to reveal it to the world. According to him, the cylinder tells of how Ood and the Minisculia quarreled over the neomorph's imprisonment, eventually coming to battle each other. The Minisculia killed Ood, and built the cylinder as a monument to the man they had revered as a god. They then moved into Ood's body, animating it from the inside as if it were some sort of machine, and set out to explore a much larger world.

Thaisian legends tell how both they and the Thaecians were created by the Enchantress of the Shoals, who once gave birth to two daughters, one silver skinned, one violet and they in turn became the mother's of the Thaisian and Thaecians races. This small piece of legend satisfies the islanders who enjoy weaving imagery into their tales, crafts, and songs.

A VISITOR'S GUIDE TO CAPRICA

With a population that usually hovers around three hundred, Caprica is merely a large Thaecian settlement and is most notable for the fact that it is relatively stationary. The Thaecian have many preferred areas around the island, but not all of them are occupied at any given time and the fact that settlements often breaking up or moving a few dozen feet down the beach if a nearby tree throws an unflattering shadow.

The town sees a small, but constant trickle of traders and tourists through the year from Cabal Magnus, Gao, Cymril, Zandu and the isle of Eros, but for a couple off weeks around the Festival of the Bizarre, the settlement can swell to four times its normal size as visitors from across Talislanta come to gawk, and enter their oddities in the annual parade of the strange, fascinating and weird.

Thaecians move their pavilions at whim. Their tent-like homes are built to collapse into a tight bundle of sticks and folded gossamer, and possessions are kept in chests and folding

luggage, ready to be packed up and moved so as to be closer to a new love, a needed resource or simply because the occupant was looking for a different view in the morning. This random movement helps ensure that the soft grass the Thaecians like to pitch their tents on does not suffer or die from prolonged lack of exposure to water or the sun. However this does mean that the layout and 'streets' of each settlement change with astounding regularity. Only during the Festival of the Bizarre are the pavilions positioned with any thought, forming a rough circle with a large open field in the centre.

THE WINDSHIP DOCK

The only permanent structure on the island towers almost seventy feet over the gathered pavilions. Caprica's skydock is considered something of a necessary evil, permitting traders from Cymril and Phantas to dock, but thought by the Thaecians to ruin the aesthetic beauty of the surroundings. There have been attempts to make the tower more attractive, including extensive carvings, draping of coloured gossamer and the cultivation of flowering garlands and colourful vines woven around the frame, but most of the island residents simply like to pretend that it doesn't exist. It is run by grumpy old Phantasian by the name of Voortivar who maintains the tower, helps ships dock and passengers load and unload, and collects a few coins for the service. While he may act a bit senile, Voortivar is actually quite astute and likes to keep an eye on all the tourists coming to the island. A job made easier by his living quarters, a small platform near the top of the tower that commands a stunning view of the Caprica and much of the surrounding island.

The Dreaming Tree waits its turn to use the skydock, behind a sleek, privately owned Cymrillian windsrigger, and a garishly decorated Phantasian merchant vessel that chugs into away from the dock like a sickly land lizard. After a few hours of waiting, the Dreaming Tree has its chance to dock and the passengers spill out onto the platform, hauling crates and luggage down the long staircase to the island. The dock isn't large enough to handle more than one ship at a time and once all the passengers have departed, the Dreaming Tree drifts away to make room for next waiting ship.

There are dozens of people milling around, from almost every race and region of Talislanta. A sign points those with entries in the Festival towards the open field in the centre of the pavilions that draws away the Mirin and the Calidian, who set off into the maze of pastel walls blowing softly on the breeze. The other passengers gradually move away, dragging their belongings behind them and leaving the PCs on their own. It is just before noon, the day before the Festival opens and the PCs can begin by looking for a place to spend the week or they may want to look for new clothes. They may quickly notice that their normal, adventuring attire stands out like a sword among roses. To bring home the point, an attractive Thaecian woman in a flowing, almost see-through gown, walks by, sniffing pointedly at the odour of oil, sweat and metal.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE ZARQUON'S PORTABLE LABYRINTH

A circular maze has been painted on a square of vellum no bigger than four feet square. When a person stands at the end of the vellum and stares into the labyrinth, they can see it and begin to walk, following the painted lines as if it were life sized. To anyone watching, it appears as if the person is shuffling and turning in place.

Those who have walked the labyrinth say the experience is very calming and meditative. Walking the labyrinth resets a spellcaster's accumulated spell penalties for the day and gives any person a one time bonus of +10 to any one intellectual based skill. Zarquon is a wrinkled old man of indeterminate race with golden skin and white hair. He asks for a donation to walk the labyrinth, but it does not have to be money.

A PLACE TO STAY

It is now time for the PCs to consider where they will be sleeping. A quick exploration of Capricia will reveal that there are no inns or lodging for the tourists in town. Their options are to buy their own pavilion, or to rent a room from one of the two enterprising captains who have transformed their ships into floating inns for the

duration of the Festival. Both have representatives on the beach, ready to woo customers and ferry guests to the ships. One is manned by a short, garishly dressed Zandir, and the other by a surly Jhangaran.

Sleeping on the beach is also an option, but the Thaecians like to warn visitors that sea-scorpions sometimes hunt along the beaches at night. No one is sure if they are joking.

THRESTITIVUL'S FESTIVAL OF TENTS

As the PCs approach this pale blue pavilion set up near the skydock they see a Zandir couple approach, talk briefly with the proprietor, then walk away in a huff. If the PCs approach they see a young Thaecian sitting with his chin in his hands and a dejected look on his face. In the open tent behind him are a stack of rolled pavilions, hammocks and a crooked sign that says; 'Buy- 75gl. Rent for the Week- 50gl. Hammocks-30gl.'

"You probably don't want to buy one either". He says gloomily as the PCs walk up. If asked what is wrong, he will explain that the pavilions are twice the price they were last year. It seems there was some sort of a problem with this year's harvest, and the Thaecians were only able to gather about half of what they needed. As a result, the tent makers, sail makers and clothiers have had to hike up their prices. If the PCs haven't changed yet, Threstivul will notice the PCs weapons and armour and perk up a little. "I don't suppose you guys are interested in a work?"

If the PCs aren't interested, Threstivul will shrug and try to sell them a tent. They can come back at anytime and ask about the job if they are interested. All gossamer items are priced at least 30% above standard unless the PCs help Threstivul out.

If the PCs are interested, Threstivul will whisper conspiratorially. "I'm not sure of the details yet, but you meet me at Thaya's, that's the pink tent near the beach, after the lesser sun goes down. There might be a way to make us all some money."

"TEN THOUSAND VOICES, RAISED IN SONG"

This Zandir dhow, with its bright blue hull and painted gossamer sails has been a regular visitor to the Festival of the Bizarre for just over a dozen years. The flamboyant Captain Dreese Caravelgio has transformed his ship into a floating palace, complete with luxurious private cabins, a stylish restaurant with Mandalan chef and a famously diverse wine cellar. The ship caters to the very rich looking to travel to the tropical isles in style and comfort, but many of the passengers go ashore for the festival and Caravelgio rents out the empty cabins at a slightly less exorbitant rate. Captain Dreese, as he likes to be called, is on the beach soliciting well-to-do looking tourists to visit his floating inn. He is a short, pudgy Zandir dressed in a riot of green and orange, with a long, curling mustache, a ridiculously long sword on his hip and topped off by a emerald green wide-brimmed hat. Dreese is pompous, self-important and likes to believe that he and his ship are somehow crucial to the success of the Festival. He can often be found parading pompously around the island, sticking his nose into everything as if blessing the entire event. The Thaecians, who wouldn't care of the Festival brought in three thousand visitors, or three, tolerate Dreese because they find him amusing, and for his restaurant and wineceller.

If the PCs are still in their regular clothes, Dreese will snub them with a sniff, unless he is shown a large enough purse. If pestered, he will suggest the 'Darkwater', saying the ship's name with utter contempt.

Nightly room rental: 20 gl

Room for the week:: 100 gl

Typical meal (dinner): 10 gl (per person)

Typical meal (lunch): 5 gl (per person)

"THE DARKWATER"

This carrack out of Gao-Din took its inspiration from the 'Ten Thousand Voices' and opened a floating inn and tavern for those with a less refined taste. Her captain, a Gao-Dinian by the name of Saltblood, spent his entire life before the mast and as he grew older, he decided to combine his love of ships, with his love of a good, smelly tavern.

The Darkwater has been refitted to provide all the comforts, trappings and odours of a raucous

pirate inn. The tavern takes up the front half of the main deck and a specially built cabin on the forecastle. The bar is tended most nights by Saltblood himself, a Gao pirate of mostly Dhuna stock, but with a strong hint of Cymrillian responsible for his shock of green hair. He is getting on in years and walks with a pronounced limp, but he still enjoys a stiff drink, a saucy maid, a ribald tale and an honest duel. The Darkwater's menu is determined by an excitable Jhangaran cook with eight fingers by the name of Spoonmeat. If you are hungry, you'll eat what he serves ya, and complaints are likely to be answered by a cleaver unerringly tossed from the kitchen. While almost anything goes in the Darkwater, fights that threaten to turn lethal, or the occasional person foolish enough to be caught cheating at the cards or dice games, are dealt with by the Thrall warrior turned pirate called Bad Bones.

Below the tavern is the sleeping quarters. There are no private rooms, only a common-room with a few curtained off stalls (rented by the hour, see Miss Genni for rates). A silver lets you sleep on the floor (thoughtfully added to the bill in case of extreme inebriation) or a gold gets you a hammock, which might not be clean but at least gets you off the floor.

Spoonmeat is on the beach by a seaman's pike flying the Darkwater's flag, throwing stones and swearing at a group of giggling Thaecian children. The surly Jhangaran will ask for a night's lodging in advance and deliver this short speech. "Dinner's a silver. Tonight we're'a having beans 'n quall on toast. Boat leaves when silver moon rises. You late, you swim. No refunds!"

WHAT TO WEAR

As the day goes on, more and more people start appearing in costume. Traditionally, a costume was a necessity to gain entrance to the Festival, but it has become more of a custom, especially during the carnival-like atmosphere of the first day. The Festival's first prize, 'Most Fabulous Fashion' is awarded on the second day, after which, fewer people dress in costume, though most still dress up.

However, the Thaecians do strongly disapprove of people walking around armed and outfitted as if they were dressed to storm a Za camp. PCs

dressed in their usual adventuring attire will quickly find themselves sticking out like a sore thumb and under the constant scrutiny of an Enchanter charged with patrolling the Festival. And unless their arms or armour are particularly ornamental or exotic, the wearer will often be outright ignored by shopkeepers. The Thaecians consider such things the height of bad taste, not to mention completely unnecessary on their island paradise.

ONE MARVELOUS MASQUERADE

The outside of this sprawling tent is decorated with dozens of masks, some frightening, some comical, some incredibly realistic and some that seem to watch you as you approach. Just inside the pavilion are racks and shelves covered exotic pieces of clothing, make-up, paints, props, and stranger items such as prosthetic wings, bizarre headpieces and other complicated apparatuses whose purpose is not immediately apparent. While nothing available here is wild enough to win the Festival disguise competition (those who seriously enter the competition plan their costumes years in advance), it is a popular place for visitors to rent a costume for the Festival's opening carnival. At the back of the tent there are four tables where Domino's three person staff busily work transforming their clients into new and exotic beings.

The Masquerade is owned by a creature known only as Domino. Thought to be a Thaecian, Domino is never seen without an elaborate disguise that completely disguises her, or possibly his, features. As the PCs enter the tent, of the masks moves and a great cloud like a storm rises in front of the PCs. The rolling, flowing gown is the colour of a stormy sky, streaks of silver rage through the cloth like lightning, and as she moves, there is the sound of distance thunder. Riding at the top of this storm is a storm demon in miniature, its body boiling like a cyclone, complete with a curl of dark mist rising from the nostrils.

"Welcome to the Masquerade!" the figure booms and the PCs realize that the storm demon is actually a mask and, as Domino moves her head, it appears to be soaring above the typhoon of her robes. With a voice that sounds like falling rain, she asks the PCs what sort of costumes they are interested in and shows off

some of more popular choices. Once they decide, she passes them off to one of her Thaecian assistants, who help the PCs get into costume.

~All Costumes are rented with an extra 5gl deposit that the character gets back when the costume is returned. Domino will take coins.

- Phantasian Guardian and Muse are the most popular disguises. (3gl to rent for two days). The Guardian costume has the added advantage of being a serviceable suit of armour, though lost plates are usually replaced with wood or ceramic pieces (costume plate mail, PR 3-5).

- Other complete costumes (4gl for two days): Mandalan Mystic Warrior, Morg-Wan (two persons), classic green Cymrillian, or Djaffir. Winged-Ape and Gryph (+1gl for the wings)

- One of a kind costumes: (5gl for two days) Fuzzy, overstuffed gold-beetle. Black Savant (yellow robes and headdress), rubber Sauran Gladiator, and Snipe with paper-mache shell.

OTHER ITEMS FOR SALE

- Moulding Clay. When this alchemical mixture is applied to bare skin, it sticks fast but allows the flesh beneath to breath and sweat normally. The clay can then be molded, allowing the wearer to sculpt new features onto their own skin, such as the muzzle of a Kang or the wrinkled features of a Kasmiran. It normally lasts for about a day before hardening and crumbling into dust. 2gl per feature.

- Skin Dye: These paints come in any colour imaginable, and tend to last anywhere from a few hours, to a few days depending on the potency. 1 sp per colour. 5sp to make it last for 12-24hours, 1gl for five-seven days.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE COME DRESSED AS A SONG

Lallo is a young Bordorian girl wearing a wide square sheet. The sheet has been painted with flowing colours that blend and mix in wonderful ways and is a treat in itself to look upon. The true beauty of the costume however, is that the colours are an original musical composition, painted to represent how Bordorians perceive sound as colour.

Lallo wins the first prize of the Festival, 'The Most Fabulous Costume' after she

goes on stage accompanied by a lone Bordorian on flute. Several judges members open weep as Lallo dances to the flute's song, the flowing colours letting everyone watching experience a little bit of how the Bordorians see music, if only for a moment.

R'ANDO'S

R'ando is an Aamanian exile who fled his country because of its oppressive views on fashion. As he explains, "I just can't work with white!" He now divides his time between Thaecia and Zanth where he claims to serve as stylist for many of Zandu's rich and powerful. During the Festival, he sells a wide variety of upscale clothing from his tent, easily recognizable by its swirling colour pattern. While R'ando sells regular clothing, he likes to push his own designs on customers. This season he has become obsessed with feathers, decorating every piece of clothing in them, the more colourful and exotic the better.

R'ando is a tall man with cinnabar skin and a head of black hair usually styled into some strange arrangement. He is wearing a long, red gown covered in stripes of metallic yellow feathers, and the high collar is a fan made up of long, bright orange feathers.

R'ando works mainly with expensive fabrics such as silkcloth, spinifax, spangalor and gossamer (though he has purchased much less this year because of the inflated prices) and favours elaborate robes, sashes, gowns, tunics and pantaloons. With what he has in stock, he can make almost any outfit the customer desires and have it ready the next day with the usual price (jewelry, accessories and shoes are extra) around 40gl (50gl if gossamer). He will always push for adding feathers to any outfit, which drives the price up an additional 10gl

THAYA'S

This small pink tent is unadorned except for a few gossamer gowns on a small wooden rack, and dancing in the breeze. A beautiful young Thaecian woman dressed in a pink to match her tent, is sitting on a wicker stool, carefully sewing two patterns of gossamer together using the finest silken thread. If the PCs speak before she is finished, she will quietly hush them, running

the needle through twice more before putting down the piece. "If you rush, you bruise the fabric." she says with a gentle smile. If the PCs have agreed to help Threstivul, she will say "Are you Thres's friends? I think I know where we can get some more silk, but we can't go until after dark. Come back as the lesser sun is setting."

If they do, see CHAPTER 6: "The Silk Hunters".

If the PCs are helping her and Threstivul, she will give them a gossamer gown, or a shirt and pantaloons, for free. Otherwise they are 7gl if Thaya likes the PCs, 15gl if she doesn't.

A DAY IN CAPRICA

The Festival does not begin until the next day, so the PCs have a day to look around and explore. The pavilions close to the skydock cater mostly to the visitors; selling pavilions, hammocks, gossamer sails, sea-shells, rare island delicacies, exotic animals, orbs and various types of clothing.

A Bordorian band plays merry music as a group of Thiasians acrobats tumble and dance on the soft grass. On the beach there is a row of food stalls, giving off a mouth-watering array of smells, selling island delicacies such as coral candy, rock urchin chowder, smoked vasp eggs, claw oysters, sugarblossoms, snow petals and a sweet island tea called barba that is served over ice.

THE SHEBEEN

This structure, set up for a Festival a few years ago and now a semi-permanent part of Caprica, is simply a light lattice of wood, interwoven with vines and gossamer cloth, all mounted on slim bamboo poles. The place is popular with the Thaecians who come to eat and drink and relax on the tables and chairs set up in the shade.

Thaecian nectar is the mainstay of the islanders' diet. Distilled from rainbow lotus that is cultivated in the freshwater pools around the island, the thick, amber liquid is high in sugar and provides the Thaecians plenty of energy to pursue their idyllic pastimes. In addition, the islanders eat the petals of certain flowers and herbs, several varieties of fruits, seaweeds, shellfish and fish, all of which they commonly dip or marinate in the nectar.

At one end is a small open air kitchen tended by an old Thaecian woman named Mitzi who specializes in the plates of fruit and seafood favoured by the islanders. She will make up a small meal for anyone at the price of about 1gl per person

At the other end, there is a set of packing crates arranged into a makeshift bar, backed by more stacked crates, all covered in a bewildering array of bottles. The man behind the bar is Gusano, a Thiasian whose violet skin has become so splotchy and streaked with different colours that great swatches of his skin look like a painter's mixing palette. The skin on his left hand is covered in silvery scales. One eye is a solid gold and visibly glows even in the brightest sunlight. The left side of his skull is completely hairless, but covered in sharp spines, and every once and while, a puff of blue steam escapes from his ears. Gusano has, as he will happily admit, never met a potion he hasn't liked. He has traveled the length and breadth of Talislanta as a performer, gathering drinks, potions and bottles from every corner of the continent. During the Festival, he returns to sell off some of his collection, and occasionally enters the Festival when he believes he has found something truly unique.

Gusano has any alcoholic drink listed in the Guidebook plus numerous rare, even unique vintages. He guarantees that nothing in his stock is fatal, and any blindness will wear off after a few hours, but judging by the state of the proprietor, experimenting does carry a certain element of risk. Prices listed are for a single glass or cup. Multiply by ten for a bottle.

● **!Mezc** This Jhangaran drink made from fermented mung berries, is extremely rare since mungberry trees do not grow in Jhangara, and the marshhunters rarely work up the courage to venture into Mog. It is infamous for its potency, its mucus green colour, and the live worm, called a mezcik, a common marsh strider parasite, that is placed in the bottle. Somehow the worm is able to survive in the brew, and can be seen swimming contentedly besotted in the bottle. The Jhangarans consider the drink sacred and only drink it on special occasions (ie, nighttime). Eating the still-wriggling worm is a popular test of manhood for young Jhangarans. Though stuffing the struggling, biting worm down

your throat can be an ordeal, it is surviving the three day bender that eating the worm induces, that truly impresses the Jhangarans.
5sp

●Aa's Own

This wine, which is as clear and colourless as water, is specially made in Aaman for the Heirophant. The white grapes used to make the wine grow only in one small garden in a monastery located deep in the monastic hills. The garden is considered to have been touched by Aa and anything that grows there may, under penalty of extreme death, only be eaten by the monks and the Heirophant. Gusano describes the wine as dry and a little dull, but with a surprisingly cheeky aftertaste.
5 gl

●Grimdeath

A popular brand of Arimite grease remover, this drink is traditionally set alight before drinking, since its normal consistency lies somewhere between wet sand and dry mud. Heating it turns it into a thick gel that must be chugged quickly before the liquor cools and sets into a chunky, chalk-like substance. Extreme care must also be taken when the drink is on fire, since if spilled, the burning liquid will stick and burn like napalm; the main reason it is usually banned in most Arimite establishments.
5cp

●Serpent's Milk

This Nagra concoction is made from boiling the venom of the nagaina, one of the most dangerous snakes in the Chana jungles. The alcohol content of this drink is high enough that simply breathing it in is enough to get someone stone drunk. It is said that the Nagra shaman drink the brew to help them contact the spirit world. According to the Gusano apparently you reach the spirit world through repeated and prolonged bouts of vomiting.
1gl.

●Shreek. A rum from Mangar that is known for its potency and its fiery burn going down. Nevertheless, it is still quite popular all along the Southern Rim, even in the alehouses of Gao Din. No one but the brewers know what gives the rum its distinctive red colour, but most conclude that it is probably wiser not to ask.
2sp

●Tears of the Earth

This Vajran drink is made from the secretions of a subterranean mushroom called the black weeper. The drink was illegal under the Quan, and is treated with trepidation by the Kang, since the drink is generally believed to be fatal to the races of men. Gusano claims to have found a way to make it a little less fatal, and promises that the heart spasms and nightmarish visions will stop after a day or so.
3gl

●Sindra Surprise

One of Gusano's favourite hobbies is to mix alchemical potions together at random. After a quick taste, he then sells the blend as 'Sindra Surprise; with the warning that there may be some side effects.

5gl (not available in bottles)

For ever glass consumed, roll d20. Effects to stack, and the effects usually last from 1-10h.

- 1: Roll Twice
- 2: PC's skin changes color/ player choice
- 3: PC's skin changes color/ player sitting to right of the PC's choice.
- 4: PC's hair changes color / GM choice
- 5: Random attribute goes up by 1
- 6: Random attribute goes down by 1
- 7: character grows horns
- 8" character grows a tail
- 9: Character's hair turns into feathers
- 10: Character becomes completely hairless
- 11: Irresistible to the opposite sex (treat as CHA+6)
- 12: Irresistible to the same sex (treat as CHA +6)
- 13: Character floats three inches off the ground. Can walk and run normally.
- 14: Character smells like baking cookies
- 15: character smells like baking socks
- 16: Character takes on the appearance of a Danuvian (note that male characters take on the appearance of a Danuvian male).
- 17: Character takes on the appearance of a Muse
- 18: Character permanently shrinks 6 inches in height
- 19: Character permanently grows 6 inches in height
- 20: Roll again and this time result is permanent.

AN ECLECTIC EDUCATION

Thaecians have no organized schooling as they would find the routines and strictures of a formal

education to be painfully dull. Instead, each young Thaecian usually gets a basic education and a craft or two from their parents, and then as they mature are free to petition others to learn whatever they choose. As a result, Thaecian education is sporadic and ongoing, with many of them choosing to learn new skills and crafts throughout their lives. They view almost everything as an art form, including the sensual arts which are regarded as an essential skill to most on the island. In addition, almost every Thaecian has some degree of magical ability.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE CARDOON'S LYCEUM OF LOOKALIKE LEGUMES

Assistant to the Chair of Vestigial Biology at the Lyceum in Cymril, Cardoon is a studious looking Cymrillian of middle years wearing green robe with starched collar, a haughty air and a pair of mothwing spectacles that are constantly slipping down his pronounced nose.

His entry into the Festival is a display of oddly shaped vegetables. He has lignuts, hearttubers, chuckroots, sourkale, wattle-gourds and dried oozeplant and more all laid out, proudly displayed on a masterfully carved gall-root case. Each vegetable is carefully nestled inside its own specifically carved slot, nestled in red velvet and identified by a covered placard. With barely contained glee, he carefully explains the nature and properties of a vegetable, before asking the audience to guess who the legume resembles. Once they have made a guess, he pulls the cover off the placard, revealing the name of a Lyceum professor, past or present.

The Thaecians think the act is hysterical and come by to shout of bizarre and occasional crude guesses as to what each legume resembles (the long redknob onion with the appearance of Bursar Faddle Gimps is a crowd favourite), but Cardoon either doesn't hear, or chooses to ignore the teasing and continues to proudly present his vegetable faculty.

MONEY ON THAECIA

Rather than use currency, the Thaecians prefer to trade with one another for what they need. This helps keep the island self-sufficient, and ensures that every Thaecian learns a useful skill so they have something to trade, though even the most helpless or elderly Thaecian would never go hungry. The problem for the Thaecians comes during the Festival, when the flood of visitors overloads their economy with dozens of different currencies. Some Thaecians simply refuse to take currency. Others who make goods specifically for the tourists have adapted, but usually prefer straight copper, silver or gold lumens that they can melt down later. Prettier currencies, such as Cymrillian pentacles or L'Haan adamants are sometimes taken in trade, and used as decoration in their crafts.

Thaecians see themselves as artists, not merchants and as can be very arbitrary in setting a price for their work, and are even more picky about to whom they will sell. Rude behaviour, aggressive haggling or anything the artisan might find offensive, are all ways to make the Thaecian drive up their prices, or even refuse to sell at all. Conversely, they can be very generous to those they like, substantially lowering prices or even giving away items for free if they believe the person really needs the item, or if they feel the item particularly suits the person.

DJENNE THE MONEYCHANGER

Djenne came to the Festival a few years ago as part of a Dajffir caravan, but she saw a need and an opportunity to raise some money to start her own caravan. Each year, Djenne comes back to Thaecia with a wagonload of small trade goods that she sells to the tourists to use as currently with the Thaecian merchants and artisans.

She always sets up her aht-ra hide tent on the beach between the skydock and where the sailing-ships unload their passengers. For a small percentage, she sells small, easily carried items such as beads, salt, spices, small vials of perfumes and potions that the Thaecians prefer to take in trade instead of currency. (Traded currently loses 3% of value, but the PCs experience no problems with any Thaecian merchants.) She will also act as a go between if

needed, the visitor paying Djenne in cash, who then arranges a trade with the Thaecian merchant, though this service costs 5% because it usually deals with larger purchases.

Djenne is a friendly young Djaffir merchant with a red-tinted mask and likes to wear red-tinted robes and headdress when away from the desert. She is quite fair in her dealings and sees the festival as a perfect opportunity to building a network of potential clients for when she starts her own caravan.

THRAELIAN'S ORBS

Thraelian is an older Thaecian gentleman who works out of a plain white tent set up at the opposite end of Capria from the skydock. He wears a plain white robe, and ties his long, silver-blue hair back in a pony tail to keep it out of his eyes as he works. He walks with a pronounced limp and an ivory cane etched with blue scrimshaw.

A private and grumpy man, he dislikes the flood of visitors the Festival brings, but welcomes the opportunity to sell the enchanted orbs he makes throughout the year. Some of his more popular items include (with average price):

- Orb windchimes: made from failed spell-orbs, 2gl
- Orbs of Light: These fist-sized orbs glow like scintilla when rubbed, and will glow for almost six hours before they begin to fade. They can be recharged by leaving them in direct sunlight for a few hours. Available in different colours. 50gl.
- Spell-orbs: these fist sized orbs contain a single spell that is released upon breaking the orb. (modes available are limited to: Alter, Defend, Heal, Illusion, Move, Reveal and Ward) 10 gl per level of the spell.
- Songchimes: These orbs contains tunes that the orb plays when blown upon, either by the wind or a person. The effect is permanent. 5gl.
- Enchanted Orb: these larger orbs are used by wizard across Talislanta for a dozen different purposes ranging from crystal balls, to spell foci, and are worth a minimum of 1,000 gl.
- Portrait Orbs: these orbs contain a perfect, miniature illusion of a single person or object within the orb. The image is three dimensional, but Thraelian must be able to see the item or person to get the illusion right. (10gl).

●Security Orbs: Thraelian's most popular creation. These orbs, which must be individually crafted for each buyer, are solid and impenetrable to everyone but the owner, who can open the orb at will. These orbs have become very popular with wealthier visitors to Thaecia who might be uncomfortable with the flimsy security provided by the traditional gossamer pavilions. 500gl for a small orb (head sized), and up to 2,000gl for larger orbs.

As a younger man, Thraelian regularly travelled to Orb island to collect the fruits of the crystal dendron plant, which he used in the creation of his enchanted orbs. Unfortunately, an encounter with a water raknid left him with a debilitating limp and disinclination to return to the island. He has a standing offer of up to one hundred gold lumens for each dendron orb (depending on the quality), and even has a small boat that he will lend out to anyone brave enough to attempt the journey.

Thraelian is quite blunt about the dangers of Orb island, telling tales of his run-ins with water raknids, sea scorpions, aramatus and the other predators that invest the island. He also likes to show off the long scar and the bite shaped chunk of missing muscle from his leg as a final deterrent to warn away any unprepared adventure seekers. If, by this point the group is still interested, he is also quite explicit in explaining that he prefers the orbs from the Dendron swamp located at the centre of the island.

After talking with Thraelian, the PCs can now travel to Orb island (see CHAPTER 7: "Orb Island") at any time to hunt for orbs and other treasures. He lends the PCs his single-sail boat to get to Orb island, and if they are successful in getting him at least three orbs, they can borrow his boat anytime just for the asking.

THE ENCHANTRESS

At some point as the PCs are exploring Caprica, they are approached by a tall, beautiful Thaecian woman dressed in indigo robes. Her hair is dyed a dark, shining, plum and her eyes shine like polished silver. On her shoulder is a monkey-like creature with scaly, emerald green skin, a crest of yellow fins, a long, prehensile tale and wide, bright orange eyes that regard the PCs inquisitively.

She introduces herself simply as Nessa. Unless the PCs have already committed some nefarious deed, she doesn't suspect them of anything, and is merely curious. Along with a few other Enchanters, she is informally patrolling the Festival, keeping an eye on the visitors and looking for anything suspicious. Spotting the PCs, who are clearly not the normal type of visitor to the Festival, Nessa has grown curious and has decided to investigate. After introducing herself, and as long as the PCs are not outright hostile, she will invite them for a meal at the Shebeen.

After ordering a plate of giant mollusk and melon slices (she will pay for the food, drinks from Gusano's are extra), she will engage the PCs in small talk, answering any questions they might have about the island, as well as asking their names, where they are from and why they have come to the Thaecia.

Despite her youthful appearance, Nessa is a powerful Enchanter who knows a great deal about the islands and its people. If the PCs give her a reason to worry, they will find their every move watched over by an Enchanter, or a pair of bright orange eyes. If the PCs are honest with her, or if at the very least they don't scare the blazes out of her, Nessa can be a valuable asset in their search for Eira's secret. But like any good detective, she will want something in return.

If the PCs do tell her about Eira, she promises to talk discreetly to some of the Festival entrants on their behalf, and she wonders if they might be willing to do her a favour. If the PCs do not agree, Nessa will still investigate the PCs, eventually uncovering some details from Captain Tri'Kirc, but will keep any information she uncovers to herself.

If the PCs do not tell her about Eira, she will simply ask if they might be willing to help her in a small investigation of her own.

Either way, if the PCs agree to help in her investigation, she will raise her hand and call over a small, stooped Maruk man who has been sitting nervously nearby.

AMBERDIPPER TOYLE

Thaecia is a large island with a population that is relatively small, and usually transitory throughout much of the year. However during the Festival, the island's population can easily double in size, which led the Thaecians to hire a balding, middle-aged Maruk Dung Merchant by the name of Toyle, to handle the extra garbage and sewage generated by the visitors.

Toyle is a thin, hunched little man with creased, pallid skin, an unconvincing comb-over, a stringy beard and is usually dressed in sackcloth shorts and a shirt dyed a watery blue. Toyle means well, and the Thaecians appreciate what he does, but Toyle's esoteric interests and the ever-present smell make it hard for the islanders to stand his presence for very long. Being a Maruk, Toyle is used to being evaded, and the Thaecians are nicer about it than most, but the prospect of having others around during the Festival means he can get quite excited, and he enjoys striking up conversations with strangers. Those who are polite or kind to him are will likely be bothered throughout the Festival, but his duties and his tendency to gossip make him an excellent source news about what is going on in Caprica.

He lives alone in a small, dry cave on the beach downwind of Caprica. Besides a small cot, the cave is filled with assorted crafts and trinkets that Toyle has picked up on his rounds, including a number of old Festival entries, left behind by sore losers. However, the most striking thing about Toyle's home are the chests, bags and piles of loose coins scattered around the cave, many of them spilling over and giving his cave the appearance of a dragon's horde. The Thaecians, not caring much for currency, are quite happy to give them away and pay Toyle for his services with large bags stuffed full of mixed coins. Ironically, while Toyle would be a very wealthy man anywhere else on Talislanta, the coins are next to worthless on Thaecia, but the little Maruk can't bring himself to leave and give up the promise of even more coins. The Enchanters have placed strong wards around his cave and attempts to rob it will very quickly result in a trip to Nearwan (see Chaper 5, Thaecia Island). As mentioned, the Thaecians are very appreciative of what Toyle does for them and will not tolerate him being molested or infringed upon.

Accompanied by the smell of sewage, Toyle comes over, bowing nervously to Nessa who waves him to sit with a smile and a discreetly sniffed handkerchief. "Tell them what you told me." she says and Toyle nervously begins to speak, keeping his eyes on the ground, with quick glances at Nessa and the PCs.

"I, I was down on the beach last night, burning a couple of barrels of ... well, you know, when I noticed something or someone moving around the Cascading Veil. I went up to see, in case someone needed help you know?, but when I got closer, I started not feeling right, so I stayed low and snuck up. Someone was moving around up there. They went through the waterfall and it looked like they was carrying something. I didn't see it, but whoever it was, it scared the luck right out of me, you know?"

Nessa thanks Toyle and warns him not to go near the Veil. She also slides over a gold coin bigger than her palm over to the Maruk, who slips the coin into his shirt and departs with a lot of bowing and gratuities. When he is gone, she turns to the PCs and says, "The caves behind the Cascading Veil are where we are interred in our final slumber and we fear it may be graverobbers. We have no guard or martial force on the island, and so we must rely on your help. Promise to investigate for us, and I shall give you these," she holds up a handful of woven leather bracelets, one for each PCs, each containing a single, small pearl-like orb, woven into the knotwork. Then her voice sharpens into a distinct edge. "We do not take kindly to those who disrupt our sleep on Thaecia. If there are graverobbers in the cave, I want them brought to me. I do not care how."

The bracelets Nessa gives the PCs enchant the hand it is worn on, and anything carried by that hand. Any weapon carried by that hand is now considered magical and has +1 to hit (no other bonuses), or a shield carried by that hand has +1 to PR. When the PCs decide to investigate, go to CHAPTER 4: "Ghosts in the Graveyard"

THE THAECIAN WINDRIGGERS

The Thaecians own two archaic windriggers purchased from Cabal Magnus. Both are slow and sluggish, but there are few places that the

islanders feel they need to see in a hurry. Only a handful of Thaecians know how to even pilot them and those who do are often given the tedious tasks of checking Nearwan island and patrolling the coasts for slavers. When not tending to their more important duties, the ships ferry people back and forth to Eros island or take small groups on sight-seeing tours over Thaecia and the surrounding waters. Though there are others, two Thaecians handle the majority of the piloting.

●SKYHEART

A young Thaecian man who changed his name to reflect his love of flying and windships. He likes to copy the dress of the Cymrillian skysailors and one day hopes to get a job aboard one of the great merchant windships. In the meantime, he has crafted quite the dashing persona. His island tours aboard the lavishly, some might say garishly, decorated "Capriole Serenade" are quite popular with the young women of the island.

●LUCKY TALIS

This easygoing Phantasian halfblood flies the much battered 'Flury', a windrigger that has seen better days. Despite his many crashes, which earned him his nickname, Talis has quite the affection for his rigger and happily volunteers for any mission that lets him fly.

Lucky Talis will play a role in CHAPTER 8: "Sunset of the Mind"

HEALER'S ROW

Healer's Row is the informal name given to three tents located at the edge of the festival, next to the Tumbling Stream, a shallow waterway that falls over the cliff to become the Cascading Veil. It is here where the Thaecians and Festival visitors come when they are injured, ill and hungover.

CHI-ZATO THE MASSEUR

This tiny, blind old Mandalan masseur lives in a small weather-worn tent of yellow silkcloth. A battered begging bowl sits out front and when anyone drops a coin in, Zato will emerge and invite them in for a Mandalan massage. The procedure is intensely relaxing, accompanied by incense, warm oils and Zato humming softly. A massage will restore d6 hit points.

He can also perform acupuncture which in addition to relieving pain, can also cure many magical maladies and curses. 5-10gl depending on the severity of the infliction.

CUTTER THE BONESETTER

Gruff, battled-scarred and intimidating like most Thralls, Cutter is a veteran medic of the Seven Kingdoms Grand Army and saw a lot of action on the Wilderlands border before an accidental fall from a Mangonel lizard shattered her leg. She is still a gifted surgeon and bonesetter, even if she has the bedside manner of a drill sergeant. She dislikes the use of herbal painkillers except in extreme cases and absolutely refuses to use of magic or potions. The best most patients can hope for is a large shot of shriek and a leather strap to bite down on. Lately though, she has been letting Zato tend to her patients both during and after surgery and has become quite impressed with the blind Mandalan's ability to sooth and calm a patient even during the most evasive procedures. Cutter's tent is a bright red.

ZANAK, MISTRESS OF SEVERAL MOONS

A flighty young Thaecian girl who likes to dress in flowing lace, coloured scarves and an abundance of charms. She prefers to treat her clients with crystals, aromatherapy, chants and herbs. But her real skills as a healer comes from the curatives, balms and purges she makes, usually following the recipes from a musty old book she bought off a bookseller in Cabal Magnus. She is also learning to be quite a good midwife. While flighty and prone to using bizarre rituals and charms, she is bright and learning quickly. She is also smart enough to go to Zato or Cutter if she encounters something beyond her experience. Her tent is black and has been painted with silver sigils, stars and representations of every moon but Zar. Like any Thaecian, Zana's prices vary.

THE CARDS OF CARMULODUNUM

Carmulodunum is a Rhahastran who during the day, sets up a folding table just outside the Festival grounds. He sits silently waiting for anyone passing to drop a coin into his open Zodar case and seek their fortune. He will also

play Follow the Fool, Zanillo's Cross, Lost Wanderer, Countup and Old Maid for coins. His Gambling skill is 13.

In the evening, he can be found in the Darkwater running a nightly table. While he will play anything, his game of choice is a game called 'Assassins over Talisandre', which is usually shortened to 'Assassin's Moon.'

ASSASSINS OVER TALISANDRE

All cards in the deck are dealt out to three or four players (in three man play, two cards are discarded face down). Then the dealer starts by showing one card. If the next player has a card that is in sequence with the first card they must play it now. If they do not, they can play any card they wish.

For example, the dealer showed card 17 (The Mystic), the next player must play either card 16 (The Wizard) or card 18 (the Alchemist) if in their hand. If the next player has both cards, they may choose which they want to play.

The next player must also follow the dealer's card, with the addition that any of the preceding players played a card that was in sequence with the dealer's first card, they would then have to play the card at either end of the longer sequence.

For example, the opening played card 17. The next player was then forced to play card 16. If the third player has card 15 or 18, they must play it now.

Once all players have shown one card, that is considered a Hand and the winner collects the played cards. They then get to play the first card of the next Hand and so on until all cards are played. In gambling games, each card played is worth a coin. The winner of a Hand is the player who showed the highest numerical value card.

The exceptions is that card 7 (Talisandre) is considered the high card and always wins. Card 13 (the Assassin) is the low card and always loses, except when played in the same Hand as card 7, in which case it wins.

THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS

In preparation for the Festival of the Bizarre, the Thaecians arrange the pavilions of Caprica into a wide circle with an open field in the centre where most of the celebrations take place. While the official Festival does not begin until tomorrow, the field has already been decorated with tall poles wrapped in colourful gossamer flags and topped with shining scintilla, some painted to give off rays of coloured light. A Bordorian band is warming up on a makeshift stage that will see performers and bands playing continually, day and night for the next seven days.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE GRANNAPAPANO'S GASEOUS APE

A sign outside this pale green tent reads, "Hear your Fortune, 1sp!". Inside, standing by a low table is a Mogroth with his fur dyed a light purple and braided with thousands of small sea shells that tinkle when he moves. On the table is something covered by a scarlet and gold cloth. Grannapapano will introduce himself graciously and wait for someone to give him the silver piece. Once the money is in hand, he will whip away the red and gold cloth with a flourish, revealing a life-like, three foot high bronze statue of a winged-ape with its wings partially unfurled. One arm of the statue is outstretched and its hand is pointing directly at one of the PCs.

"Pull the finger of fate to hear what destiny has in store for you!"
Grannapapano bellows, dramatically.

Actually pulling the sivilian's finger results in a prolonged, vulgar sound emanating from the rear of the statue, followed by a puff of brown smoke and a moist, putrid smell. The Mogroth finds this all uproariously funny and doubles over in hysterics, every single time. However, he is not mean-spirited and will refund money to anyone who is truly offended.

Many of the Festival entrants are already setting up, pitching their pavilions and assembling their exhibits. There is no order or organization to the

Festival, anyone may enter anything they choose, though the Thaecian Enchanters do keep an eye out for anything truly, dangerous, offensive or mundane. Some of the displays going up are elaborate affairs with complete with stages and planned lighting, while others are much simpler; such as the Dhuna fussing with a large, closed, crimson blossom, or the Monad proudly showing off his collection of magic beans, laid out on a handkerchief draped over a crate.

Only a couple of the displays are open yet, but small crowd has gathered around a large pavilion made of tattered golden silkcloth lined with fraying silver filigree. A wooden sign over the door painted in high talisman reads, perhaps a bit redundantly, "The Bed of Slumber".

If the PCs wait with the crowd for a few moments, a tall Phantasian Dream Merchant in a long cap and robes of gold and scarlet dramatically exits the tent, throwing back the door-flap with a flourish and a bow.

"As promised," he cries, "the lucky two have already fallen asleep. In a few minutes, they shall awaken as refreshed and revitalized as if they had spent the night asleep in their mother's arms!" He then stands back to let the crowd see inside the tent.

Inside, there is a large, ornate bronze bed decorated in a nighttime motif, complete with stars, clouds and all seven moons rising over the headboard. The bed is made up with satiny sheets and pillows, and two Thaecians are currently curled up under the covers, sleeping blissfully no matter how much noise or conversation is going on around them. As promised, the two awaken a few moments later, stretch luxuriously, then spring from the bed as spry as a pair of drac pups. They both rave about the night's sleep they had, and seem genuinely surprised to find that only a few minutes have passed since they fell asleep.

The Phantasian thanks them for the demonstration, then asks "Who wants to be next? Special one time only offer of 1gl per customer! Wake up refreshed and ready to dance the night away!"

If the PCs decide to try the bed, they find it

works exactly as advertised. They awaken after a few minutes refreshed and feeling as if they have spent an entire night in deep, dreamless sleep. Talking to the Phantasian is difficult, since the bed is proving to be quite popular, but he might spare a few moments with the PCs if they want to bribe him, or wait until later when he is drinking in the Shebeen.

The Phantasian's name is Lentor Torpescen. He is a tall, thin young man with pale, golden skin and a head of shock white hair. Arrogant with the ambition of youth, he is eager to talk about his creation, and about "how the Magistar and his council on Cabal Magnus are nothing more than a bunch of doddering old fools, who would prefer to sniff their dream essence than deal any real problems. We could revive the glory of not only Cabal Magnus, but we could lead they way into a new Archean Age if they just started looking for ways to move forward."

"I cannot yet divulge the secrets of the Bed of course. But I hope to win the Festival and parlay the money into greater things. With the winnings, and what I'll make taking the Bed on tour of the mainland, I will raise enough funds to create a school for magical research in Cabal Magnus. With some luck and a little hard work, I think the school that would rival even the Lyceum! That will drag Cabal Magnus out of its dreaming stupor!"

"I had the idea for the Bed one night while working late, but I could only develop it so far. Naturally, I found little help amongst my own countrymen, and I had to travel to Zanth (or the city where the PCS met Eira), to complete the research I needed, but that only proves my point! With a proper school, we wouldn't have to leave the island to look for new idea, or loose our best minds to Cymril. They would come to us!" Lentor can go on like this for hours if the PCs let him.

CHAPTER 3, GHOSTS IN THE GRAVEYARD

This scenario can be run anytime after the PCs speak with speaking with Nessa and Toyle. It starts as the PCs make their way down the Crystal Stairway to the Sapphire Shallows, a shallow, glimmering pool of clear water surrounded by smoothed, quartz lined boulders. Normally filled with frolicking Thaecians, this idyllic lagoon is eerily empty and even the avir are silent.

As they approach the water, Toyle pops up from behind one of the water smoothed boulders and calls over the PCs with an unsubtle, stage-whispered, "Over here!"

Still speaking in his unquiet whisper, Toyle will explain, "I've been watching the place at night, you know?, to see if I can spot the graverobbers, but nobody was coming out. So I came back this morning and I found this..." he waves the PCs to follow, and sneaks closer to the Cascading Veil. In a wet, sandy patch of ground between two boulders, he points out what looks like a pile of broken glass, and a single, large, misshapen, footprint. "I think the glass is one of the coffins. The Thaecians lock their dead up in crystal corpse boxes, and that stuff is harder than Cymril glass. Dunno about the footprint. Don't look Imirian, but it could be Jhangaran or an Ahazu, you know, they sometimes run with the Mangars."

"The entrance to the Caverns of Final Slumber is behind the waterfall, you guys go on in and I'll stay here and guard the entrance from down on the beach. Keep your luck up and oh, you know, a warning; Don't touch nothing in the Cave. The Enchanters wouldn't like it." with a cheerful pat on the shoulder of the closest PC, the little Maruk will scramble away, leaving nothing but the smell.

Behind the waterfall is a stairway carved into the rock. The steps are carved wide and broad to make them easy to traverse in the constant mist. They lead up behind the waterfall to an opening halfway up. The entrance to the cave is

decorated with flowers, each blossom carved from different coloured quartz.

The only light comes from what filters through the waterfall, and as the PCs walk deeper into the cave, the light quickly dims. What little light remains comes from a single, fading scintilla that they find lying behind some rocks. Brackets carved into the wall to hold the shining orbs lie empty and the ground is littered with eggshell like shards, some still glowing faintly. Something has deliberately smashed all the light sources in the cave.

The tunnel soon opens into a large cavern. The dim light of the dying scintilla cannot penetrate the darkness, and there is only the faraway sound of dripping water to break the utter, stifling silence of the caves. Exploring the cavern reveals a beach of coarse sand surrounding a pool of deep, cold water that lies in the centre of the cave, created over the centuries by water slowly dripping down from the ceiling.

At the walls of the cavern there are the glass sarcophagi where the Thaecian dead are laid to rest. These bodies closest to the entrance were among the first entombed here, and even entombed they have long since decayed down to skeletons dressed in gossamer rags. Many have been buried with artworks and personal effects which they keep clutched to their chests with boney fingers. There is no obvious way to open the sarcophagi without shattering the enchanted glass. Each coffin rests on a carved stone and offerings of flowers, colourful stones and small trinkets are traditionally placed on top by visitors. Only now, the offerings have been brushed aside and in some cases, the sarcophagi themselves have been tipped off their stone beds.

Along the wall of the cavern are four branching tunnels, each leading down into darkness. Sarcophagi line the walls, the state of the corpses inside ranging from bare skeletons, to as fresh as is they had just laid down to sleep. Nearly all the coffins have been tampered with in some way, and some of ones with fresher looking corpses inside have deep clawed rents on their glass surface.

TUNNEL A

This long tunnel runs along the cliff face overlooking the beach. Openings let in the warm

sunlight and the sarcophagi here are less tampered with, giving the PCs an idea of what these caves are normally like. The sunlight makes the coffins glow and the offerings look like warm tokens of remembrances, even on the coffins that have clearly been here for many, many years. The tunnel comes to an end at an opening that overlooks the beach.

TUNNEL B

This tunnel leads deeper into the cliff. Nearly all the sarcophagi have been knocked off their pedestals, some dragged or smashed together. The tunnel runs for almost fifty metres, before it comes to a small, open cave. The PCs can smell it long before they reach it, the sickly sweet scent of rotting flesh. The room is littered with dismembered, masticated corpses rotting into a sickly mess. Some of the corpses are animals, but most were silver skinned Thaecians in shredded robes possibly taken from the sarcophagi. But sticking out of the gore is a chewed, green arm, and a smashed, elongated skull stares up with empty eyes. Any PC with the stomach to search the horrible mess (requires a CON roll at -7) will find a small, uncut ruby. While it appears to be a normal gem, magical analysis will reveal that the ruby is an ancient Archean spellstone and contains the ancient spell "Rodin's Spell of Sartorial Splendor".

TUNNEL C

This tunnel at the farthest, darkest corner of the cavern looks like a darkened slice of night leading straight into the void. The smells emanating from the hole are a mix of dead flesh, sewage and something hard and chemical, like burnt sulphur or boiling acid. As the first PC steps into the tunnel, there comes the faint sound of an unholy giggling echoing out of the darkness. The tunnel is as dark as sin and non-magical light barely penetrates more than a few feet. Magical light reveals a wide tunnel, with recesses carved along the walls, each containing a glass sarcophagi.

The Ghast is hiding in a small recess in the ceiling of the tunnel about forty feet in. He will wait until spotted (PER roll at -15 to spot) or the party has past beneath it. It casts Unlife on a skeleton it has stacked against the wall and as the corpse attacks from the front, it casts Black

Mists of Malnangar on the PC bringing up the rear, then drops from above. The Ghast fights to the death.

GHAST

Size: 7'6", 200lbs

INT +5 PER +8

WIL +8 CHA -5

STR +7 DEX -5

CON +10 SPD +2

Ability Level: 16

Attacks Damage: Claws DR 13, Bite DR 10

Special Abilities: Night vision, detect invisible presences. Harmed only by silver, or enchanted weapons

Armour: Ebon Armour PR 3

Hit Points: 42

Magic: Necromancy +16 (all spells taken from Talislanta Rulebook.

Ebon Armour: CM +11. Provides PR 3 for three minutes

Raj-Kal's Visceral Fingers: CM +10. Range, touch. Does DR 6 for as long as caster remains touching the victim, for up to 6 rounds.

Unlife: CM +3. Animates one corpse for 10 minutes.

Black Mists of Malnangar: CM +6. DR 10.

UNLIFE SKELETON

Size: 7', 110lbs

INT N/APER

WIL N/A CHA N/A

STR +2 DEX -1

CON +2 SPD -2

Ability Level: 3

Attacks/Damage: Punch DR2, Bite DR 2

Armour: none

HP: 20

Once the Ghast is dead, the tunnel continues on for another forty feet or so, coming to a small room, filled with more sarcophagi. This is where the Ghast has been spending its days, hiding from the sunlight. Two nests, made from human hair and skin are in the centre of the room, surrounded by chewed corpses and bones. Searching the room, the PCs find:

●Red Iron Axe +1

●Wand of Lightning: MR +8. Casts a lightning bolt DR8. Can be fired nine times before it needs to be magically recharged.

●Map of Orb Island

●Serpent Skin boots. +3 to Stealth skill

●Oceanian Sea-Dragon skull helm. +1PR

TUNNEL D

This tunnel runs west along behind the cliff face and more openings let in the sunlight. The cliffs here drop straight into the sea, and the PCs can see, and hear the pounding surf below. Warm sunlight fills this tunnel and the sarcophagi entombed here have been barely tampered with. Only at the farthest end to they come across a pile of smashed coffins, the bodies dragged away to be devoured. Amidst the shards, the PCs can see some of the treasures that the corpses where entombed with; small orbs that play a favourite tune, cameos of loved ones, and other beloved toys and trinkets. Nestled within the debris is a blue-iron sabre. The sword is incredibly light and could balance on the head of a pin, runes etched on the blade denote that it is probably magical and an second ancient script, roughly similar to High Talislan reads: "to Thrayal; Foe, Ally, Comrade, Friend. ~Korion" (a History or Tactics roll at -9 will reveal that Korion was famed Erythrian General who penned numerous works on tactics and strategy).

The problem with the sword is the skeletal hand that is still clenched to the handle. The sword is still useable, but the hand cannot be forced to relinquish its grip, no matter how hard it is smashed or forced.

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE

If the PCs take the sword it will become a problem if Nessa or any of the other Thaecian Enchanters see it. They were warned by Toyle not to touch any of the items buried with the corpses and they heard Nessa's stern warning about her dislike of graverobbers. If caught with the sword outside of the caves, they will be sent to Nearwan. Hiding it could be a problem as well, if the grisly hand weren't enough of a giveaway, every Thaecian knows the tales of Thrayal, who has become kind of a folk hero to the island folk. The Enchanters are less concerned with the items found with in the Ghast's nests as there is no way to prove that they didn't come from island visitors.

THRAYAL'S BLUE IRON SABRE

DR6+3. +1 to Hit and Parry (non-magical bonus, due to superb craftsmanship, with hand removed the bonus rises to +2). Also does +2 DR to Demons and creatures from the Underworld. Given in friendship, the sword can only be taken in friendship, which is why the hand will not let go. If taken from the islands against its will (ie, the hand is still attached), the sword will curse the welder; once picked up, they will become unable to let go. Over time, the sword will kill each of the welder's friends, family and eventually, anyone who shows the welder the least bit of kindness.

BACK IN THE MAIN CHAMBER

As the PCs return to the main chamber, they see that the entrance has been blocked by a pile of corpses.

The second Ghast is hiding under the water of the pool. It has cast Unlife on the corpses, which come alive and attack as soon as someone touches the barrier (min 4). As the PCs deal with the animated corpses, the Ghast attacks from behind, casting Ebon Harbingers from below the water (DR 12, five foot area), then lunging in to finish them off.

This is an optional encounter if the PCs sustained heavy damage fighting the first Ghast, though if they have picked up Thrayal's sword, they remain at a distinct advantage.

CHAPTER 4, FESTIVAL OF THE BIZARRE, PART 1

Though the official Festival doesn't begin until noon the next day, the party begins at second sundown the night before. At some unseen signal, a massive cheer erupts from the assembled throngs of Thaecians and island visitors as they spill out into the Festival grounds, all dress in their Festival masques and disguises. On stage, a makeshift band made up of every minstrel, troupe and troubadour on the island starts up a lively tune as the jugglers, contortionists, buskers and performers take to the streets as magical lights and fireworks light up the darkening sky. It is a party that will continue every night until the Festival closes in seven days time.

At night, the Festival grounds are home to a party that rival's Zandir's Night of Fools. Unlike the lawlessness of that celebration, the island's Enchanters keep a close eye on the proceedings, making sure that no one is seriously hurt, molested or gets too carried away. Their all-seeing orbs, often disguised as scintilla, can be found hanging from light poles or in tents open to the public. Most of the entrant's pavilions are closed at night, but some stay open for the revelry. They can even request to show their entry to the Committee at night, if necessary.

During the day, the attention is focused on the Festival Entries. By drawn lots, each official entrant is given a chance on the main stage to present their entry to the Festival Committee. The Committee is usually made up of senior Enchanters, honoured guests and previous prize winners, though random visitors have been chosen occasionally on whim. The committee judges both on their own preferences and by the reaction of the crowd. It is custom to show their approval or disapproval by magically exaggerating their expressions- literally dropping their chins to the floor, or laughing with smiles that go from ear to ear.

The entire proceedings are informal and unstructured with the Committee members often

making up awards on the spot (“Most Unexpectedly Lethal”, “Most Entertaining Audience”) and giving away small prizes at whim. At the end of the day’s presentations, there is a small formal award given away to the day’s best entry. The title of the award is usually made up on the spot to suit the winner (“Least Boring Entry I’ve seen Tonight”, “Most Elusive” etc) and the winner is given a price equal to around 100gl.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE EFFABA’S EMERALD SLIPPERS

The Lyceum in Cymril submits an entry every year. While they claim it is an attempt to promote the school, most would say that it was an attempt by the faculty to finagle a paid tropical vacation. Competition between department heads in the weeks leading up to the Festival can get pretty intense. This year’s entry was submitted by the Dean of Enchanted Accoutrements.

Effaba was a respected wizard of the early New Age and one of the founding members of the Lyceum Academy, who in later life became increasingly obsessed with footwear. She created dozens of different shoes, boots and slippers, each enchanted with a different power, but her crowning achievement was a pair of ornate, curly toed slippers studded with emeralds and stitched with solid gold thread. In addition to fitting any sized foot, the slippers have the ability to make any outfit, no matter how awkward, grungy or eclectic come together as the perfect ensemble.

Unfortunately, Effaba underestimated the power of the slippers and after lending the out to friends, family and colleagues, began to notice that those she lent the slippers too were becoming more and more reliant on them and unwilling to give them back. Without them, they complained, no clothes fit right, looked right or felt too small or too large. People began to demand the slippers, or bribe and even threaten to get them. Effaba, who was not immune to the slipper’s charms became more

possessive and paranoid. Finally, the whole mess erupted into what Lyceum Historians refer to today as the ‘Slipper Incident’. Effaba herself was a victim, nothing remaining of the wizard but her slipper and a curl of green smoke rising from the heel.

The slippers have been sealed in Amberglass and are guarded at all time a by a pair of colourblind Warrior Mages. The mages are there to tell Effaba’s story, but they are also armed and on constant lookout for anyone who might seem too interested in the shoes, because no matter who you are, the more you become convinced that the slippers would go just perfectly with those new pantaloons you just purchased...

The rest of the time, the entrants are free to show their items as they wish. Most rent pavilions or small platforms, acting as barkers to call in passersby to come and see the strange or bizarre object they have on display. Besides the presentation to the Committee, there are no formal rules as to how the items are presented and the owners are free to charge, or not to charge the public whatever they wish. It has become tradition however, for audience members during the formal presentation to the Committee, to throw copper pennies at those entrants they feel were charging too much.

Outside the main Festival grounds there are numerous other pavilions that the Enchanters deemed to mundane or inappropriate for the Festival proper. These items are not totally out of the running however, as Committee members or popular opinion can bring an item to the Festival stage. There have been some notable Festival winners who were discovered this way.

On the last day, almost everyone on the island turns out as the Festival’s four main prizes are given away. “Most Provocative”, “Most Absurd”, and “Most Unique” each win ten thousand gold lumens and the grand prize winner, “Most Bizarre” wins one hundred thousand.

THE CLOCKWORK WARRIOR

A wooden ring has built at the edge of the Festival grounds, where a Danuvian stands

beside a man made out of beaten blue iron. If any of the PCs look like warriors, she calls out to them "Hey tough guy, you think you can stand against what I got?"

If the PCs stop, she shows off her Blue Steel Man, her entry into the Festival. It looks like a seven foot statue covered in plates of battered and dented blue steel, made to resemble the armour of some long forgotten royal guardsman. Between the plates, the PCs can see rods, springs and clockwork gears tied with silver wire. The face is flat and featureless with only an inverted triangle where the eyes and nose would be. In one articulated hand, it is holding a padded wooden stick. The other hand is missing, but a plain wooden shield has been strapped to the forearm.

"Genuine Eytherian Battle Construct." The Danuvian boasts. "Found in the Wilderands and restored by the finest Yassan thumbs money can buy. For a gold you can climb in and try your luck. For five gold you can press your luck and for ten you can risk your neck. Win, you double your money, it's that easy. Whaddayasay? Dare to prove you got a pair?"

If a character agrees, she introduces herself as Bretta and points the PC towards a rack of padded wooden sticks and a row of stacked wooden shields. "Pick your weight and climb on in." she instructs.

Depending on how much the PCs choose to pay, Bretta can set the Construct to one of three settings. The first two are simple training programs, but the third is adaptive and the Construct learns from opponent as the fight continues. Only one opponent at a time and if the PC easily defeats the Construct on level 1 or 2 Bretta won't let them fight on those levels again. Once activated, the triangle on the Construct's face glows with a crimson light.

EYETHERIAN BATTLE CONSTRUCT LEVEL 1

Size: 7", 250lbs

Attributes:

| | |
|----------|----------|
| INT: N/A | PER: 0 |
| WIL: N/A | CHA: N/A |
| STR: +2 | DEX: +2 |
| CON: +2 | SPD: +2 |

HP: 25

Ability Level: 3

Padded Sword: CR 8. DR 10 stun damage (padded sword).

Armour: Blue Iron Plate 4

EYETHERIAN BATTLE CONSTRUCT LEVEL 2

Size: 7", 250lbs

Attributes:

| | |
|----------|----------|
| INT: N/A | PER: 0 |
| WIL: N/A | CHA: N/A |
| STR: +2 | DEX: +2 |
| CON: +2 | SPD: +2 |

HP: 25

Ability Level: 5

Padded Sword: CR 8. DR 10 stun damage (padded sword).

Armour: Blue Iron Palate 4

EYETHERIAN BATTLE CONSTRUCT LEVEL 3

Size: 7", 250lbs

Attributes:

| | |
|----------|----------|
| INT: N/A | PER: 0 |
| WIL: N/A | CHA: N/A |
| STR: +2 | DEX: +2 |
| CON: +2 | SPD: +2 |

HP: 25

Padded Sword: CR 8. DR 10 stun damage (padded sword).

Armour: Blue Iron Palate 4

Ability Level: Adaptive. For three rounds, the Construct starts with a CR of 7. On the fourth round, and ever round following, the Ability Level (and CR) of the Construct goes up by 1 to reflect its ability to learn the moves of its opponents. The Ability level will not go higher than 2 above the PCs CR or 14, whichever is lower.

The fight ends whenever one side is reduced to 0 HP. The damage is all stun and not permanent, but a loosing PC is going to be sore, black and blue for few days. The Construct shuts down when it calculates it has taken enough damage and will not start again until reactivated by Bretta.

Gozzo's stall, not uncoincidentally, is set up next door to the ring. He frequently takes bets on the fights.

THE WEAVER

This mysterious figure, known only as the Weaver, has a midnight black pavilion on the

edge of the grounds. He wears a hooded, black robe his features obscured by a purple veil and his hands covered by supple purple gloves. He sells dream essence, euphorica, manaweed and other mild opiates permitted by the Thaecians, but he also pays to extract dreams from willing donors. He has a closed room within his tent where donors lie down and sleep for a few hours under a strange contraction of glass bulbs, tubes and glass bell that is placed just over the sleeper's head. If he extracts a dream worth selling, he pays five gold (25% chance), only one gold if he does not. The client does not remember the dream upon waking and feels listless and unrested.

The Weaver has many dreams for sale, but only the most common are available to those unfamiliar with the substance.

If the Weaver is asked about the strange deaths that begin to happen at the Festival, he will only say "something is on the hunt." and stops selling nightmare or night terror essence to anyone until the treat is stopped, "least they draw the hunter." The only other help he will give the PCs is to warn them, "Beware of unnatural slumber. It can stir the mind in dangerous ways."

GOZZO THE BOOKIE

This robust, balding Arimite comes to Thaecia every year and acts as the Festival's unofficial odds maker. From his open air stall with its massive black slate backdrop where he writes his numbers in chalk, he makes odds and takes bets on everything from Bretta's clockwork Construct; the mage ring; to the Festival prizes and pretty much anything else he can place a wager around.

Gozzo will bet on almost anything, so long as he can set the odds. If the PCs get him to bet, the must first make an opposed Gambling Roll (his Gambling Skill is 13) to get the best odds.
Mishap: Sucker Bet, he pays out, but only at 1.5x
Failure: 2:1
Partial Success: 3:1
Success: 5:1
Critical: 10:1

THE MAGE RING

While technically part of the Festival, this area has been moved to the beach where there is

less chance of a misfired spell rocketing into the nearby gossamer tents. The flamboyant Royus and Sygfeld, a pair of flamboyant Cymrillians with a trained exomorph run the ring. As an added protected, they have set up a wide circle of wards and defenses in the sand, most of them stored inside Spell Orbs.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE GUSANO'S PASSION POTABLE. THE SPIRIT OF TRUE LOVE.

Gusano the bartender has his own entry into the Festival: a tiny vial filled with a smoky pink liquid. He claims that it is essence of Pure Love and any who sample it will forever know their truest love. One sip of the brew and you will know instantly when you lay eyes on the one perfect person for you, regardless of age, geography, class, gender or even species.

Be he warns that Pure love comes with a price: You will never be able to love another for the rest of your life, and there is no guarantee that the person you fall in love will love you in return. He will say these warnings with a heavy sadness in his eyes.

Mages interests in competing can come down and register at any time in all number of categories (price range from 5-50gl depending on level of mage). There are illusion contests, rare spell demonstrations, theoretical and academic debates and straight magic duels which are most popular with the spectators. To prevent lasting injury, the Thaecians have loaned out a healing orb prevents anyone from expiring (equal to 1 hp) while in the ring.

The winner of each duel is invited to face new challengers. Those PCs who put on a good show and attack a lot of spectators (five wins or ten matches win or lose, whichever comes first) will be rewarded with a rare spell scroll.

SPELL, BY ORDER

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Cartomancy | Call the Bluff (reveal) |
| Cryptomancy | Monty's Killing Joke (attack) |
| Crystalomancy | Resonating Shards (attack) |
| Geomancy | Feet of Clay (alter) |

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Invocation | The Silence of Jamba (alter) |
| Mysticism | The Sweetest Kiss |
| Natural Magic | Womb of Earth (heal) |
| Necromancy | Shadow Steed (move) |
| Shamanism | Vision Quest (reveal) |
| Witchcraft | Loudon's Possession (influence) |
| Wizardsy | The Proper Papers (transform) |

There is also a stall here, run by a young protégé of Royus and Sygfeld named Prestoban who sells all manner of minor magical trinkets, spells and silver lame clothing.

KHRONK AND ROMELLO

Only one of the Festival's entrants is not open to the public this year. A fine scarlet pavilion remains closed throughout the day. A bored looking Sarista sits out front, cleaning his fingernails with a thin dagger and making remarks any woman who walks past. When people ask him what is inside, he only grins and says, "I might be able to tell you, for the right price." If any pays him any money, he begins to juggle his knives, but doesn't say anything unless the person speaks first. "I said I *might* be able to tell you, but it turns out I can't right now. Nevertheless, I am rewarding your generous gift with this truly outstanding juggling routine. Amazing isn't it?" at which point he will abandon all three knives in mid air and suddenly wrap his arm around the shoulder's of the nearest PC. "Now let that be a lesson to you, always be aware of the find print and never, ever give a sucker an even break!" all the while cutting the PCs purse (his skill is 13) before the knives land point down in the soft earth at his feet.

The only other person around the tent is a Kharakan giant who can sometimes be seen carrying a wheelbarrow full of dirt of buckets of pure water from the nearby trees. Other times, he is sitting with the Sarista, losing at cards and trying out his own pickup line on the ladies. When the Sarista is not around, he is on guard and is much more direct at keeping people away. However, if approached by a beautiful woman (CHA 2 or above), or with food or alcohol he becomes much more welcoming, if sill suspicious. "Rom said not to talk to anyone. I always talk too much." The only questions he will answer is his name and where they are from "We were just in Zanth, there are lots of jobs to pull in Zanth." If asked what is in the tent, he looks confused for a second then says, "Plants

and stuff. Mostly I just carry dirt." Romello arrives at this point to chase away the PCs.

THE NEXT MORNING

The day dawns as the party fades into a mellower mood. Only a lone Bordorian sits on the main stage, lazily strumming on a lyre for a young Thaecian couple who are half dancing, half falling asleep in each other's arms. Mitsi and some of the other cooking stalls are warming their fires and getting an early start. Toyle is also about, sweeping up garbage, and dragging those who didn't make it home out of the major thoroughfares. Everything is peaceful until the screaming begins.

It is coming from a tent close to where the PCs are sleeping and if they go to investigate, they are the first ones to arrive. The screaming is coming from a small lime-green tent with the door partially open. If they go in, they find its quite small inside, most of the room taken up by a large cot. Lying on the floor and wrapped in a gossamer sheet is a young Thaecian woman cowering and screaming in fear. On the cot there is a young Cymrillian boy curled up so tight that his knees are almost resting on his ears. His skin has a deathly pallor and he is cold to the touch. There is a blood on the blanket, but no obvious signs of injury until someone jostles the bed or disturbs the body. His head falls back revealing the bloody truth. His hands are covered in gore, but there is nothing on the girl or anywhere else. He clawed so hard that he tore through his cheeks and tore out his own eyes. But as terrible as the injuries are, they alone could not have killed him.

Nessa arrives with other Enchanters soon after (GM NOTE: a good opportunity to introduce Loggos, see CHAPTER 5: Thaecia Island). and they quickly clear away the bystanders and take away the hysterical girl. Nessa asks the PCs to stay close, for questioning if she isn't sure about them, or for help if they she does. About an hour later she catches up with them and discusses the incident. "The boy's name was Marogus, a cabin boy from the windship 'Archon'. We have been telling people that he overdosed on Black Mushroom, but to be honest we don't know what killed him. Have you got any ideas?"

If she likes the PCs she will divulge, "He had no poisons or potions in his blood that we could

detect. At this point we are left with black magic and it seems to be of a kind we are not prepared for..."

If Nessa knows about the PCs mission for Eira's Secret, she will ask if they think they could be in anyway linked. If she doesn't know why the PCs have come to island, or does not trust them, she will point blank if they know anything. After a short interrogation, she will ask/warn the PCs to tell her immediately if they learn anything as to how or why the boy died.

THALLIA

The Thaecian woman's name is Thallia. The Enchanters have taken her back to her tent and magiced her into a restful sleep but if the PCs want to talk to her, she is awake later that day. She is upset but no longer hysterical and can recount her day with Marogus without breaking into tears. They had only met earlier that day; she had shown him around Caprica and he told her about life on a windship. They hadn't done anything out of the ordinary: watched the windships come in, walked around the city and tried to see some of the Entrants to the Festival, but with limited funds they had only been able to see the less expensive ones. Marogus had gotten them in to see 'The Bed of Slumber' because Lentor Torpescen had been a passenger aboard the 'Archon'. Afterwards, feeling refreshed they had gotten a quick meal, explored the beach and then returned for the start of the Festival. She had not seen Marogus take any strong drugs and he had not seemed nervous or frightened in any way.

Thallia is an adolescent on the cusp of becoming a woman and is becoming increasingly aware of her physical beauty and its effects on men. She harbors romantic dreams for every Gao Rogue, Zandir Pirate and Cymrillian skysailor who visits the island and will very likely develop a desperate crush on any PC she regards as handsome or dashing. While she deeply loves Thaecia, she has begun to dream about leaving to explore the places she has only heard about.

Her affections, while genuine, are fleeting and she will quickly become infatuated with someone or someone else. This is not unusual behavior for Thaecian youth.

LENTOR TORPESCEN

If the PCs talk to Lentor, he is dismissive at first, but agrees to help when he learns that it was Marogus who died. He knew the boy from his trip over on the Archon and is genuinely saddened to hear of his death. If the PCs already suspect the 'Bed of Slumber' had something to do with it, he will confirm that Marogus has slept in it a few times as did much of the Archon's crew and many others. Lentor assures the PCs that the bed is safe, claiming that he has slept in it more than anyone and has never suffered so much as a toe cramp. He allows the PCs (or Enchanters) to examine the bed and offers anyone involved in the investigation to try it out for free of charge. If they are reluctant, he will gladly demonstrate it himself first.

He has little else to offer. Lentor did not know Marogus well, but like most who travelled on the Archon, quite liked the friendly cabin boy. The only suspicious thing he can think of was that during the journey in from Zanth, one of the sailors was said to have disappeared. He knows nothing about it, but will direct the PCs to Captain Tyra.

In reality, Lentor is beginning to worry that the bed is somehow linked to the strange occurrences. But since he himself has never had a problem, and in his hopes of winning the Festival, he has dismissed his worries for now.

If the PCs mention Eira, he will claim not recognize the name. If asked about the origins of the bed, he will launch into his usual tirade about how he was force to leave the musty halls of Cabal Magnus for the forward thinking people of Zandir etc, etc. If they mention that Eira is a Gnorl, it will jog his memory, though he cannot pinpoint what it was exactly. "I do not know what a norl is, but I remember someone mentioning the term on our journey here... perhaps the Captain will remember?"

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE COGG'S PEDATRIKE

This strange contraption is made of two long red iron rods angled towards each other to form an open ended triangle. At the apex where the rods meet, there is a large wheel, almost six feet high and two smaller wheels are mounted on the free

end of the rods. A set of handlebars, three large levers and four pedals is connected to the top of the large wheel, by a complex set of gearwork that spins within the spokes of the large wheel.

The contraption is being constantly tinkered with by its inventor, a Yassan named Cogg. On the rare occasions when he hasn't dismantled the entire mechanism, he can be seen riding the pedatrike around the Festival. He will let anyone give it a try, but so far no one has been able to get the hang of it for more than a few yards.

CAPTAIN TYRA SUNBEARER

Captain Sunbearer has lemon yellow hair, wears Dracartan inspired reds and oranges and carries a pair of red iron axes in her belt. She is captain of the commercial windship, 'Archon' and is current in Caprica looking for new gossamer sales. If the PCs find her early, she will not yet have heard of Marogus's death and will become quite upset. She can assure the PCs that everyone on the Archon was quite fond of the boy.

If the PCs ask about the sailor's disappearance, Tyra will mention that disappeared from the highnest one night while on the journey here. They had concluded that he may have fallen asleep at his post and had either fallen out, or had been snatched by a ravenger or some other aerial predator. There were claw marks in the nest, but they had looked human, possibly the sailor trying to save himself from falling, but she admits that if he fell, she finds it odd that his body did not land on the deck.

Marogus was her nephew and she will offer the PCs 1,000gls if they can find out who was responsible. With that, she will head back to the Archon to inform the crew what has happened.

Anytime after that, she can be found on the Archon (they run a windrigger shuttle from an open field next to the skydock). She will answer any questions so long as she believes the PCs are still looking for her nephew's killer.

She knows nothing about Gnorls or Eira, but if pressed, she will say she has never had a Gnorl

passenger. But now that they mention it, she does remember a Kharakan guest mentioning something about a Gnorl on the trip over. She only remembers because giant's companion, a Dhuna had slapped the giant into silence.

VOTIVAAR

For a few lumens, the skydock keeper will say that he had watched the kids for a bit that day. He had followed them around the Festival for a bit, but hadn't noticed anything unusual, except for that group who were bundling something off towards the Dancing Glade at sunset.

CHAPTER 5, THAECIA ISLAND

The PCs are certainly not limited to Caprica city during their time on Thaecia. They can venture to new islands with chapters 7, 8 and 9, or explore more of Thaecia here and in chapter 6. How these sections are used is up to the GM; they can be used after the PCs are done in Caprica, or as a distraction during the game as a distraction or diversion.

TRADERS, ARTISANS AND MERCHANTS.

Because Thaecians move about so often, here are some sample NPCs that can be used anywhere as contacts or encounters.

●THAEO- ENCHANTRESS

Thaelo is a skilled Enchantress but she has earned even greater renown for her skills as an engraver. The Thaecian orbs she produces are more often for their delicate engravings than their magical effects. Her pavilion is a florid carmine colour.

●THOMEYO – DYE MAKER

Considered one of the most adept dye-makers on the island, Thomeyo mixes dyes of rare brilliance from the petals of rare flowers and powdered corals, which are in demand both on Thaecia and abroad. His pavilion is dyed a marbled mixture of plum and cobalt, stippled with gold.

●THAS – THAISIAN PERFORMER

One of the island's most capricious inhabitants, he left his troupe to stay on Thaecia and has vowed to remain here until he dies, or grows bored, whichever comes first. An accomplished troubadour and renowned lover, combined with his exotic appearance has made him a popular figure in the community. He stares in whichever tent is occupied by his current lover.

●THAECIA – CHILD

An adorable, but overly precocious and obnoxious child who lives with her exasperated older sister. While she initially comes across as the sweet and outgoing, she will eventually ask

for something, and becoming more and more demanding until she gets it.

●THERIS – GOSSAMER WEAVER

A gossamer weaver of astounding skill able to produce fabric of astounding durability and quality in demand across Talislanta. Windship captains are prepared to pay outlandish prices for Theris's work, especially since he dislikes other races and usually refuses to accept commissions from foreigners. He creates works at his own pace and sells to whomever he likes, regardless of price. Both the Flurry and Capriole Serenade boast two of his finer works. He dwells in a pavilion of lily-white gossamer as far away from Caprica as possible during the Festival.

●THIRION – ALCHEMIST

This older, affable and eccentric Thaecian produces his potions and mixtures from strictly local ingredients and is constantly experimenting with new and bizarre concoctions that he tests on volunteers. He has a friendly rivalry going with Gusano and they occasionally try to outdo each other in creating new potions. However his main trade is in mixing perfumes which are renowned for creating a range of effects including pleasant dreams, potent aphrodisiacs (very popular), contraceptives and stimulants. His tent is bright orange in colour.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE CARNILLIUS'S CROWNING CREST OF CONFUNDERMENT

Quite literally the crowning achievement of Carnillius Haberdash, a Zandir milliner who specializes in creating extravagant hats and scarves. A frequent visitor to the Festival, this year he has brought along a towering monument to his life's against the helm (that is actually a small bell) of a bested Aamanian knight. There is a working water fountain attached by a flying buttress and Carnillius claims that somewhere on the hat, he has represented each of the Ten Thousand Saints of Paradoxy. He has promised the hat to the person who can identify them all.

Through a series of pull-strings disguised as tassels the hat can: launch

fireworks, activated a pipe organ that plays the Zandir national anthem, open a parasol, shoot out eight different colours of confetti and three different kinds of alchemical smoke and the highlight of that hat; the entire centre tier of the hat that opens up to reveal a working carousel that spins to the famed tune of 'Night of Fools' by the renowned composer Sechius.

Carnillus is convinced that Aamanian agents have infiltrated the Festival attempting to sabotage the hat.

THE CRYSTAL PATH

Beginning and ending in Caprica, this single, unbroken path winds its way all around the island. Built by artisans, not engineers, the road is covered in small quartz crystals that glimmer in the sun. In some places it is barely wide enough to accommodate the handcarts the islanders use to move their belongings and in some cases, the crystal has been washed away altogether by rain or wind, though the path itself is still quite clearly marked. It is occasionally maintained by the Thaecians who will rake out and add new crystal, if only for a mile or so at a time.

Though it generally follows around the coast, it frequently meanders its way around the island, passing many of the places where the Thaecians like to set up their pavilions. The path can even backtrack, sometimes for miles to visit a peaceful meadow, a scenic lookout or simply a tree that the artisans who were building the path particularly liked that day.

THE ISLAND INTERIOR

The island gradually rises on either side towards the centre, forming two long ridges that run east-west with a broad valley in between. The outer flanks of the ridges are covered in open jungle, full of warm clearings and shaded groves that the Thaecians favour for their settlements. Cultivated orchards and fruit groves are tended by whoever is living nearby. The islanders also carry scatter seeds of edible plants in favorable locations to ensure that there is always something to eat nearby. Higher up on the ridges, the Thaecians often live in open meadows that look out over the island below.

Here they grow lotus in deep pools fed by the clear streams that run down the ridges to the sea.

The islanders rarely venture to the very tops of the ridges, which are home to ravengers, aeroplasm, winged vipers and a rare avir called a spiketailed azoryl, a smaller cousin of the beast that one filled the skies of Talislanta.

Cooled by strong winds guided by the ridged walls, the valley has a more temperate climate, with wide grassy fields, bamboo forests and thick corpses of trees around the many streams and small rivers. The Crystal Parth does loop briefly into the valley at both ends, but does not penetrate for more than a mile or so. Fewer Thaecians live here, but many come to gather grains, provender plant or to mine for the many minerals that are washed down the ridge walls into the streams. The settlements here are usually filled with those who come for the pure water that flows here, such as alchemists, dye makers and brewers of Thaecian nectar.

THE EASTERN SHORE

Warmed by the rising suns, the east coast of Thaecia is one of the most idyllic and peaceful regions in Talislanta. A stretch of white sand, called Caprica beach is broken only by warm lagoons and tide pools where the inhabitants swim and gather fish and shellfish. The beach leads up to the low row of bluffs called the Crystal Cliffs which are made of white chalk veined with colourful crystal and wetted by small waterfalls spilling over the edge. A broad stairway carved into the bluff called the Crystalline Stairs leads up from the beach to Caprica.

The largest waterfall is called the Cascading Veil, which is fed from a large brook. The waterfall tumbles down a set of glittering crystal ledges and into the Sapphire Shallows, the largest lagoon on the beach. Many islanders gather their drinking water from the falls or come to bathe in the warm, bubbling waters of the Sapphire Shallows. Behind the Cascading Veil is the Cavern of Final Slumber, where the Thaecians inter their dead in crystal coffins. The islanders see nothing morbid in this, and deliberately placed their mortuary in the most beautiful place they could find, so that the dead

could enjoy their Final Slumber close to water, beauty and laughter.

THE NORTH SHORE

The island's north coast is rocky and turbulent from the strong currents and tradewinds that sweep through the seas between the island and the mainland. The strong currents have carried away most of the beaches, but many reefs and shoals ensure that the fishing here is easy and plentiful.

THE BEAST AND THE BEAUTY

If the PCs follow the Crystal Path northward, it meanders its way into a Thaecian settlement tucked under a grove of parasol trees. As the PCs draw closer, they see that some sort of commotion is going on. The villagers are gathered at the far side of the pavilions, around something that the PCs cannot see from the path

If they investigate, they come across Loggos, a young Thaecian Enchanter standing beside a large Orb.

This is Loggos's first year as an official Enchanter for the Festival and he is determined to do a good job. He is secretly frustrated that the island has no set laws and has gone about writing down a few of his own. He is a stricter for protocol and rules and enjoys the authority of being an Enchanter.

He will be much more suspicious of the PCs than Nessa and may dog them if he suspects they are up to any wrongdoings. In his heart though, Loggos is a good man and will do anything in his power to protect the people of Thaecia. He is also a much more powerful wizard than he might initially appear, having created the Prisoner Orbs and a number of other non-lethal magics.

Loggos notices the PCs arrival and acknowledges them with a stern look, or a curt nod depending on if they have had dealings with him before. He then addresses the village: "Last night, I found this creature lurking just outside this very grove, possibly intent on doing harm to you and yours. Fear not, it has been placed under an enchantment of quiescence

and I will soon transport it to Orb Island where it can live out the rest of its days among the other beasts. Behold!" he finishes with a flourish. The Orb vanishes, revealing a tall, brutish creature with yellow skin covered in lanky green hair. It has wide, sloping shoulders and long, powerful arms. Its forehead is sloped with heavy ridges over its small eyes, while two long and yellowed tusks protrude from its lower lip. When the orb clears, it tries to stand, only to fall back onto its rump. With a pitiful groan, it sniffs halfheartedly at the assembled villagers then goes silent. Loggos again assures the villagers that the creature has been subdued and it is quite safe. He then calls the PCs over.

"I really gave to get back to the Festival. Can I trust you all to take this thing to Orb Island? All you have to do is drop it at the closest beach and I will reward you with a purse full of shiny gold? Can I trust you to handle that?"

If the PCs agree, he says. "There is a boat down by the shore you can use. I should warn you not to dally, as the beast's calming charm wears off at nightfall. Once you're done, come find me at the Festival." He points to an island visible on the eastern horizon.

If the PCs do not agree, he dismisses them with a disappointed wave of his hand and warns them to move along. "This village is not for tourists." If the GM still wants to continue with this storyline, Pharg escapes from Loggos's custody and meet up with the PCs father down the Crystal Path.

At one point, the PCs may notice that the beast is wounded with a long slash running down its back. The cut is not deep, but has not been tended and there are indications of an infection. If the PCs mention it to Loggos, he will frown and say "I certainly didn't do it. That is a sword wound. Have him tended by a healer if you wish." He departs soon after.

If the PCs are kind to the brute, by offering him food or tending to the wound, he begins to yammer in a strange and guttural language. A Linguist's role (-5 for characters from the Southern Rim, -10 for elsewhere) will reveal the language is dialect of Chana. They may even pick up that the beast's name is Pharg.

THRENYA

The settlement is made up of mostly Thaecian woman and children who are here to avoid the bustle of the Festival. There is not much to buy here beyond fruits, nectar and fish, but many of the pavilions here have exquisitely crafted poles and other wooden fixtures. The source of these pieces is a willowy woman named Threnya who dwells in a blue pavilion that smells of fine wood. She is curious of outsiders and will call the PCs over as they pass.

If any of the PCs have a musical bent, she will offer to carve for them a wooden flute. If they accept, she will ask to examine the PC's hands and throat. As she does so, she will ask about the brute. If the PCs mention the beast has been trying to speak, she will think for a moment and then offer to help. Digging around in a wooden trunk, she will pull out a twisted brass trumpet decorated with characters from many different languages: A Callidian Horn.

The wooden flute will be ready in two days and will grant +1 to the PC's Music skill when played. This is not an enchantment, simply a reflection of the quality of the instrument. The bonus only applies to the character the flute was made for.

CALLIDIAN HORN

When placed against the ear, these long twisted trumpets allow the listener to understand any language that has been inscribed onto the trumpet's surface. The trumpet does not let the speaker understand the listener (not unless they share the Horn), nor does it work on written material; or languages with non-verbal components (ie, Bordorian, Sign); or languages without a written script to inscribe. Provided there is room, skilled Cryptomancers can inscribe new languages onto the horn's surface. Threnya's Horn allows the listener to understand: Talislan, High Talislan, Archean, Nomadic, Sea Nomad, Thaecian and Chanan. She will trade it for two magical items or one musical or wooden magical item.

Threnya is curious about the beast and will accompany the PCs to offer to act as translator if they wish.

His name is indeed Pharg, and he tells his story in simple terms: "Lal. Green men take Lal away.

Escape from fishmen and swim here to find Lal. Lal here!" he says, pointing towards the east. If the PCs take Pharg to Orb island, he will follow without protest. At the beach he climbs into the boat and sits sulking in the prow. About half a mile from shore however, he will suddenly start to rock the boat with his powerful arms, tipping everyone into the water. He quickly swims back to shore (easily outracing any character but a Sunra), but the PCs will find him sitting on the beach pointing towards the east and moaning "Lal."

One thing that Loggos did not tell the PCs was that Pharg's calming enchantment will wear off if he is attacked. This was not deliberate on the Enchanter's part; he simply never imagined that anyone would attack someone who cannot strike back. If the PCs get rough with Pharg, he rushes into the jungle where he will arm himself with a thick branch to use as a club. He fights only to escape however, always head east towards Caprica.

If the PCs loose him at any point, or if they are successful to getting him to Orb island, he will simply swim back and head towards Caprica. There he will end up rampaging through the Festival looking for Lal, and be killed by an Enchanter.

PHARG

Size: 7'7", 286lbs

STR: +6 PER: -2

DEX: -3 CHA: 0

CON: 0 WIL: 0

SPD: -2 INT: -4

CR: +5 MR: -4

Skills:

Club +11 (DR 10)

Survival +6

Swim +10

PR: 1

HP: 30

Pharg is Batrean male, though the PCs will be hard pressed to guess this unless they have had specifically encountered a Batrean male in the past. They are rarely seen away from Batre and are kept under tight control by the Imrian slavers who rule the island.

He escaped the island looking for Lal, and suffered the sword wound during the escape. He

arrived on the island by clinging to the bottom of the ship all the way from Batre to Thaecia!

THE SEARCH FOR LAL

If the PCs decide to help (Threnya will plead with them if need be), they can follow him to Caprica, but must convince him to remain outside the city. If captured, Pharg will be shipped to Nearwan and the PCs will spend an uncomfortable night in Prisoner Orbs before Nessa can persuade Loggos to free them. Pharg's patience is limited however and the PCs only have until dawn the next morning before he decides to storm the city.

Finding Lal requires a successful Streetwise skill (or Diplomacy or Underworld depending on who they speak to) roll at -8. Any merchant or Festival Entrant will know who they are speaking of: Lal is actually Lalyanna, the newest consort to Hron-Hajiktar, a Hadjin aristocrat and patron of the Festival. She is drawing a lot of attention for her untouched beauty, having been purchased right from Batre before arriving on Thaecia.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE RUBGOLD'S UNSEEN MACHINE

A bewildering collection of gears, springs, wires, spokes, balls, bellows and bearings sits on an open platform, carefully tended by a little excited little Maruk, current buried to the elbows inside the contraption tightening a screw. When someone approaches, he calls out a cheery greeting and introduces himself as Rubgold, extracting himself with some difficulty. Offering a grease stained hand in greeting, he introduces his latest invention with all the pride of a new parent: the Unseen Machine. Demonstrations for only a silver.

When paid and after a few careful adjustments and a kiss to the talisman around his neck, Rubgold winds a spring and stands back. As the spring uncoils, the machine begins to tick like hot metal and a slow rattle begins as starts to shake back and forth, faster and faster until parts of it are moving too fast to see. Then, almost unperceptive at first,

the machine fades from sight.

Rubgold beams and waves his arms over the platform where the machine had been sitting. "It returns once the spring winds down." If asked where it went, his grin gets even wider. "I don't know!" he exclaims excitedly. "But I am thinking about adding a seat and handles. Are you interested?" Sure enough, after about two minutes, the machine returns, fading back into existence as gradually as it left.

The Hadjin is accompanied at all times by his Hajan servent Kaytor and two Danuvian bodyguards. Still dressed in her native grass skirt and shell necklace, it is the young Batrean's first time away from the island and she is a little naïve, but she is learning fast. Kaytor is already wrapped around her tiny finger and will do anything she asks. But getting close to her is still difficult. Hron-Hajiktar wants his possessions envied, not manhandled and the Danuvians have express orders to prevent anyone getting too close to the girl.

The only time Lal is left alone is when Hajiktar goes for his daily massage with Zato. Though they are suppose to be standing guard, the Danuvians and Kaytor often use the time to slip away and visit the festival. Usually only one of the three is left with Lal outside the masseur's tent. The Danuvians can be bribed (skill roll -10, female characters can make the roll at -5. +1 for every 50gl offered) to walk away for five minutes, while Kaytor will only leave if told to by Lal.

Lal will treat the PCs with a mild disdain unless they mention Pharg's name, at which point she will become excited (and dismiss a reluctant Kaytor if he is around).

"You know Pharg? Is he here? Can I see him?" She will quickly explain their story if asked: They were childhood playmates who grew up together on Batre until separated by the Imrian invasion. Until recently, Lal had thought Pharg dead, killed by the slavers along with many of the other Batrean males. But soon after she had been sold to Hajiktar she had spotted Pharg chained in a cage by the beach. Though she tried to discreetly get his attention, she hadn't been sure

he'd seen her but she'd been happy he was still alive. He must have somehow escaped and followed her here.

She will come happily with the PCs but they need to come up with a plan to get her away from Hajiktar. The Danuvians cannot be bribed that far and will fight to prevent her from leaving. Kaytor will reluctantly help as long as Lal is around to persuade him, but will quickly come to his senses if not in her presence and alert his master

Any sort of commotion will draw Loggos who will chase the PCs down with Prisoner Orbs and sort it out later.

DANUVIAN BODYGUARDS (2)

Size: 6' 4", 184lbs

STR +3 PER 0

DEX +2 CHA +1

CON +2 WIL 0

SPD +2 INT 0

CR +6 MR 0

Skills:

Halberd +18, DR 13

Longsword +12 DR 11

Parry Bracers +12

Brawling +13

Guard +14

Armour: Padded Cloth PR 1

HP: 30

If the PCs are caught, they are brought in front of Nessa, Loggos and Hajiktar. The Hadjijn, being a businessman will consider the matter settled if the PCs pay a fine of 2,000gl. If he is paid, he will offer to sell Lal to the PCs for an additional 7,000gl. While the Enchanters find slavery deplorable, they are happy the dispute can be resolved without conflict and will abide by the terms.

Both prices are negotiable, but require an opposed Merchant Skill. Hajiktar's Merchant skill is +12.

Mishap: the PCs agree to pay and must give over the money, whether they have it or not. They must pay out what they have and sign a contract in front of the Enchanters promising to pay off the rest.

Failure: the price goes up by 5%

Partial Success: the price remains the same

Success: the price is lowered by 10%

Critical Success: the price is lowered by 20%

Nessa and Loggos will ensure that the terms are met and the fines is paid as long as the PCs remain on Thaecia.

RESOLUTION

If the PCs can get Pharg and Lal together, the reunion is a tearful and joyous one. The nubile consort agrees to run off with the brute. If the two can be reunited without undue violence, Nessa will offer them a home on Thaecia.

If the two are reunited but things get messy, Nessa will subtly intervene and spirit away Lal and Pharg, providing them a sea canoe and sending them off in the direction of Eros island. But she will be much less forgiving of the PCs in future.

Loggos will be much more watchful of the PCs from here on in, though he will only interfere directly to protect any innocents. He doesn't care for slavery and won't be terribly upset if Hajiktar is divested of his "property".

THE WESTERN SHORE

Once a range of tall, granite cliffs, the land along the island's west coast has been eaten away by eons of tide, wind and currents. The stone cliffs are now great sweeping arcs, bridges and spires of that decorate the long, red sand beaches. With the heavy tradewinds, strong currents and under the influence of the seven moons, the tides here are among the highest and fastest on Talislanta and run on a timetable only a Castabulanese astromancer could understand. The long, scenic beaches can quickly turn into a flooding torrent without warning.

The hundreds of inlets along this shore has made it a haven for smugglers and pirates. Tales of lost treasure, forgotten hideouts and sunken ships abound. Unfortunately, so do sea scorpions who use the changing tides to come ashore to lay their eggs in the soft, red sand below the granite spans.

The Crystal path winds along the remains of the cliffs, looking out at the beaches and stone formations. Eventually, the PCs come to a Thaecian settlement perched at the cliff's edge. It is shaded from the tropical winds by a screen

of palm trees that have trimmed with chimes, scarves and pinwheels. As the PCs approach, they sense something is wrong. An INT or PER check at -5 will quickly confirm their suspicions: there is no-one moving around, the village looks abandoned.

As they get closer, they can see that the place has been ransacked. Everything of value has been taken and much of what's left has been broken.

Sitting quite openly in the open square at the centre of the settlement, is a large Imrian slaver sitting on a broken chest and slurping down a snot-green concoction from a bottle. He waves the PCs over when spotted. A PER check of -10 will reveal other Imrians hiding around the square, though how many is difficult to say.

The Imrian greets the PCs with a rough laugh. "Bout time you lollywags got here. My scales are drying out in this wind. I'm Capt'n Grukk and you boys are gonna do us a favour!"

If the PCs ask why, or make any threatening moves, he will point out to the water. "Take a looksee over yonder. You see my ship? I got me twenty four fine young Thaecian hides there ready to sell in the flesh markets of Tarun if you say no. Think of them as ... compensation." In the water below the cliff the PCs can see an Imrian coracle, its team of three chained kra lolling in the warm waters. On deck, they can see a group of Thaecian in chains being watched by Imrian guards. Once they've looked, Grukk continues. "We don't really want them, we want Grutak, but he's on Nearwan and that is where you come in. Get Grutak for us, and that pack of shacklebait is all yours."

If the PCs threaten Grukk, he will hold up his bottle. "Take one step closer and this here goes over the cliff. See, the kra are getting hungry and this here is the signal for feeding time. Its been a long trip here and we don't have a lot of kra chow left. We are have to use whatever is lying around on deck, if you catch my whiff." Grukk is not bluffing. If the PCs move on him he will casually toss the bottle over the cliff. There is the sound of the Thaeciens screaming and crying, following by a splash. After that, the sounds that echo up the cliff are best not dwelt upon.

"In two minutes, another one goes over the side. You gonna help us now?" he asks.

If the PCs try to fight it out, they are quickly surrounded by a dozen Imrians warriors and will find themselves being herded towards the cliff's edge. Depending on how much damage they do, Grukk may give them another chance to reconsider, or else he will order them killed or captured.

If the PCs agree to what he wants Grukk will explain the deal. "We want Grutak, not a village of worthless women and kids. But he's on Nearwan, and we can't even slap fin there without all sorts of bog slime coming down on us. That is where you come in. Get him off and you get the goods."

If asked if he will keep his side of the bargain, he simply laughs, spraying green slime all over. "You don't!"

How he plans to get them on Nearwan. "We got you a present." He says, holding up a small golden orb. "We took this off the village Enchanter. Took almost an hour with the hook sticks to get her to tell us that it will get you on the island without setting off the magics. Don't loose it, mind. Otherwise you're a permanent resident. Now hurry up and get gone. We'll be sent to Nearwan ourselves if we're caught close to this rock by nightfall. So we plan on leaving when the first sun goes down. You got till then. To make things easier on ya, I will tell you that we need Grutak, but don't need him exactly whole, if you catch my whiff. There is no need to be gentle about it."

If the PCs ask why he wants Grutak, Captain Grukk shrugs. "He used to be captain but went and got himself pinched before he could show us where the loot's been buried. Story time is over. Swim away, little tadpoles. Time is waiting."

The loot Grukk is referring to is a chest buried on Beautiful Beach on Orb island (see CHAPTER 8). If they PCs have already been there and have the map that was inside, they can trade it with Grukk for the Thaeciens. Once he has what he wants, he has no compunction against leaving Grutak on Nearwan to rot.

Pleasantly surprised by the quick resolution, Captain Grukku will also turn over all the other slaves in his hold in a rare show of generosity. There are ten, including a couple of Batreans, one badly wilting Green man, a Farad boy, the remains of a Thaisian troupe and a pair of Gao sailors.

One of the slaves is an aged Swailia with yellowing feathers and a dangerous sounding cough. His name is Ramalama and he is dying of Greenlung, a virulent tropical disease that is almost always fatal in avians. Ramalama is dying and he knows it, but he was a Swalia elder and carried a piece of the Great Song. Infectious and dying, he can no longer go home to Fahn island and will ask the PCs to take his song home. (See CHAPTER 11, Further Adventures).

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE THE AMAZING LARI NU DEL'S BLADDERS OF DETONATION

Lari is a Sindaran alchemist with a slightly shell-shocked expression who claims to have invented a safe and amusing explosive. He has filled hundreds of small bladders with a red liquid that when burst, shaken or broken, explode with a lot of noise, red smoke and flash but no real heat. Lari enjoys demonstrating his product, which he calls, 'Explosivo!', by slapping the bladders between his hands or stomping on them with his feet. For his big finale, he juggles six bladders for a minute before letting each one fall on his head.

Demonstrations are free, but each bladder costs 5gl.

NEARWAN

A flat, barren atoll in the middle of the ocean, Nearwan is only home to the criminals and outcasts of the Thaecian isles. Windswept and rocky, it is covered only in coarse grass and slanted rocky outcrops that serve as shelter for the island's inhabitants. Enchanted orbs, both Prisoner and Scrying Orbs have been placed around the island's perimeter to prevent the prisoners from leaving, or for anyone getting to the island uninvited. The small golden orb that

Grukku gave the PCs allows them access to pass the island's protective orbs unmolested.

Because crime is rare on Thaecia, it is regarded with abject horror and abhorrence by most of the population when it does occur. There are no formal laws on either Thaecia or Eros, but it is customary for the accused to be brought before a council of Enchanters or elders. Those caught redhanded are usually banished without trial and those who fail to prove their innocence to the Enchanters are sent by windrigger to the island of Nearwan. Traditional sentences for non-violent crimes are a year and a day, but there have been cases of prisoners spending much longer there because the Enchanters that sent them there died or simply forgot.

New prisoners are given a jug of water and a bag of seeds, but the Thaecians take no further hand in their fate. Pools of fresh water and an abundance of wild provender plant ensure that even the least agriculturally gifted will not starve.

Those that have committed repeat offenses or violent crimes are sometimes deemed irreparably incorrigible and are constrained within webs of perdurable force. So trapped and immune to physical force, magic and the elements, they are forced to live out the rest of their natural lives as living statues; their wild, insane eyes serving as a reminder to the other prisoners what might happen if they continue to disturb the island's peace.

There are only a handful of prisoners on Nearwan at the moment, and soon after the PCs arrive, they encounter a small, hairy Maruk dressed in filthy rags mumbling to himself as he collects driftwood for a fire. Spotting the PCs, he drops his load and bolts behind the nearest large rock.

If not approached, he will follow the PCs at a distance. He will hide if the PCs call out to him, but he will always return, coming a little closer each time so long as he is not attacked or molested. Eventually, he will attempt to talk to the PCs or respond to their calls and quickly becomes downright chatty. His name is Dander and he will follow the PCs around, showering them with a never-ending dialogue about the island. ("see this rock here? That's a good rock! Don't getting much better than that rock there. I

remember once I caught me a nice big crab out of the tidepool over yonder. You remember, the one with greenish brown slime, not the brownish green slime and I was looking for a place to crack it, then I sees this rock..." etc).

If they ask him about Grutak, he will clutch his sides and begin to laugh like it's the funniest thing he's ever heard. Once he calms down, he will explain. "Ain't no Imrians here. Don't know if there ever were. See, the beautiful people out there, they don't like the slavers much. Let's just say that a there is a lot of water between that island and this one. Water that's gots lots of big waves, and some mighty mean fish. Sometimes people fall in, if you catch my meaning." It doesn't take long for the PCs to comb the island and realize that he is telling the truth. There are no other souls to be found on the island, except for the screaming eyes of those trapped in the webs of perdurable force.

As soon as Dander sees the PCs getting ready to leave, he will begin to beg and plead with them to take him with them. "I have been heer for near on ten years! Look'it this beard, look at my clothes! I admit I stole a little back in the day, but I don't deserve to die on this rock."

They can take Dander with them if they like, but he disappears as soon as they get back to Thaecia. If they mention the incident to any Thaecian, they will quickly become horrified and tell them the harrowing tale of Dander the Deviate. (See CHAPTER 11, Further Adventures).

DANDER THE DEVIATE

A Maruk Talismaner with sordid tastes, he came to Eros island just over a decade ago and wrecked terror on the helpless inhabitants for almost a year. In the end it took three Enchanters, one of whom was killed and another irrecoverably cursed, before he was brought to Nearwan and trapped within a web of perdurable force. However, before he was trapped, he was able to drop his luck talisman on the ground where it lay unnoticed. Through it, he was able to construct a curse so that next person to find the amulet would swap places with him in the web. Sure enough, one luckless exile found the

talisman and Dander was freed, though still trapped on Nearwan.

He has spent the last decade looking for a way to escape and amusing himself with the occasional unfortunate exile. The PCs are too large a group for him to take on directly, but he will put on a good act to win their sympathy. If that doesn't work, he will attempt to steal the golden orb. If that doesn't work, he might attempt to rush the boat as the PCs leave or even become desperate enough to attack them directly.

If he is successful in getting off the island, he will set out indulging his appities and gaining revenge on the Thaecians who sent him to Nearwan in the first place. See CHAPTER 11, Further Adventures.

DEALING WITH THE PIRATES

The PCs must now decide how to deal with Grukk. If they return to speak to him, they find that the tide has gone out which took the pirates by surprise. The coracle is now stranded and the three kra have been beached. Grukk and most of the crew are on the beach trying to figure out if the tide will return soon, or if they will be forced to kill the kra before their helpless thrashing tears the boat to pieces. The Imrians are clearly distracted and the villagers are still chained in the hold under minimal guard.

If the PCs try to go and find help, by the time they locate an Enchanter and return the tide will have returned. The coracle and the villagers are long gone.

Sneaking onto the boat requires the PCs climbing down the cliff, and then making their way to the coracle undetected. Then they must come up with a way of smuggling the villagers off the boat undetected.

Taking the pirates on directly is an option. For any battle on the beach, don't forget the added danger of the beached and thrashing kra.

IMRIAN GUARDS

Size: 6'-6'6". 200-280lbs
STR +4 PER 0
DEX -4 CHA -3

CON +2 WIL 0
SPD -2 INT -1
CR +4 MR -3
Skills:
Capture Pole +8 DR 10
Oc +7 DR 6
Armour: Hide PR1
HP 29
Equipment:
23 gl in assorted coins.

CAPT'N GRUKK

Size: 6'4". 268lbs
STR +4 PER 0
DEX -4 CHA -2
CON +2 INT 0
SPD -2 WIL 0
CR +5 MR -3
Skills:
Capture Pole +12 DR 11
Oc +13 DR 7
Bone Sword +9 DR 13
Armour: Hide PR 1. Vest of iridescent dragon scales PR 4
HP 32
Equipment: 34 gl in assorted coins.

THE SOUTHERN SHORE

Thaecia's south shore is one long, unbroken beach of white sand. The cliffs of the eastern and western shores sag to become low bluffs covered in sand and tall grass. The jungles here are open and filled with many edible plants. Most of the Thaecian settlements are gathered here, basking in the warm breezes and bright suns that bathe this tropical paradise.

As the PCs walk along the Crystal Path that meanders along just above the beaches, they hear someone up ahead singing a jaunty tune in a foreign language. (If any of the PCs speak it, the tune is in Quanesese and is about a Quan Prince and the Seven Mandalan Maids). Coming the other way is a very large man dressed in yellow shirt and crimson pantaloons, wearing a wide reed hat and pulling a cart laden with kegs of nectar and wrapped bottles of aquavit. When he spots the PCs, he smiles warming and greets them with a hearty, "Good day my friends! A glorious day, is it not? The suns are warm, the breeze is fine and you, looking like you could use a drink." He has cooled Thaecian nectar,

icewine and aquavit available at half the normal price.

If asked his name, he introduces himself as: "Minister of the Last Star of Morning; Eparch of the Celestial Baths in Ispasia and Fierce Guardian of the Quaneeth Roses along the Twice Blessed Path. Beloved Third Cousin once removed of the True Emperor in Exile, Ruloo Taraka Suun." He says with an exaggerated formal bow. "But you may call me Thirsty Ru."

If prompted, he is only too happy to share his story: "I was taking an extended holiday tour along the Southern Rim aboard my prized possession, my beautiful barge, "the Blessed Petal of Buoyant Bliss". We were here in the islands when news reached us that the Kang were revolting, something I had been telling my people for years. The captain of my guard, may he spend eternity head down in a vat of raw land lizard filth, quickly mutinied. Then the red bastard, may a tarkus feast upon his liver, stole my servants, my money and my ship and left me here to rot. Look at me, "he says slapping his still ample belly." "I am wasting away!" While Ru is still quite large, he has lost the grotesque rolls of fat that used to hang off his bloated body. His skin is taut, tanned and healthy and his eyes are bright and alert.

"I quickly drank myself into oblivion, and after selling my clothes for a few drops more, a brewer named Thrusa took pity on me and gave me a job as a delivery boy. I turned him down of course, but living naked on the beach eating wild provender plant does quickly lose its appeal. So here I am! Perhaps not quite as glamorous as Fierce Guardian of the Twice Blessed Path, I admit. But truth be told, I was never quite sure where the Twice Blessed Path actually was."

Thirsty Ru has turned his delivery route into quite the enterprise, trading goods all around the island. He is always looking to expand and if the PCs present themselves well, he will ask them if they are interested in becoming partners.

If the PCs are interested, he will present them with a wagon full of Thaecian Nectar and wish them luck. He will be able to supply any further items if asked, but he will take 2% of any profits the PCs make.

THAECIA TRADER'S CHART

Each region has a limit to what is available and how much it is willing to buy of each item, expressed in gold lumens under "Limit per Item". Enterprising PCs can attempt to raise or lower the price by negotiating with their Barter or Merchant skill. Each region has its own skill level listed under Negotiation Level.

| BUYING | SELLING |
|---|--|
| Mishap: Price is raised by 5% | Mishap: Price is lowered by 5% |
| Failure: Price is raised by 2% | Failure: Price is lowered by 5% |
| Partial Success: Price is lowered by 2% | Partial Success: Price is raised by 2% |
| Success: Price is lowered by 5% | Success: Price is raised by 5% |
| Critical Success: Price is lowered by 10% | Critical Success: Price is raised by 10% |

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| CAPRICA/ EAST COAST | |
| Limit per Item: 1,000gl | Negotiation Level: 15 |
| Thaecian Nectar~ 400gl | Fruit~ 50gl |
| Crystals* 10gl | Rainbow Lotus 10gl |
| Spices 50gl | Provender Plant 35gl |
| Euphorica~ 30gl | Aquavit 50gl |
| Crafts~ 50gl | Scintilla~ 900gl |
| Jewelry~ 100gl | Gossamer* 10gl |
| Silk* 10gl | Timber 20gl |
| NORTH COAST | |
| Limit per Item: 600gl | Negotiation Level: 10 |
| Thaecian Nectar 200gl | Fruit* 30gl |
| Crystals 20gl | Rainbow Lotus 15gl |
| Spices* 40gl | Provender Plant~ 40gl |
| Euphorica 25gl | Aquavit 55gl |
| Crafts 40gl | Scintilla 800gl |
| Jewelry 90gl | Gossamer 15gl |
| Silk 20gl | Timber~ 15gl |
| WEST COAST | |
| Limit per Item: 400gl | Negotiation Level: 9 |
| Thaecian Nectar 200gl | Fruit 40gl |
| Crystals~ 30gl | Rainbow Lotus* 5gl |
| Spices~ 75gl | Provender Plant 35gl |
| Euphorica 15gl | Aquavit 45gl |
| Crafts* 20gl | Scintilla 700gl |
| Jewelry 95gl | Gossamer 15gl |
| Silk 15gl | Timber 25gl |
| SOUTH COAST | |
| Limit per Item: 800gl | Negotiation Level: 10 |
| Thaecian Nectar* 100gl | Fruit 40gl |
| Crystals 15gl | Rainbow Lotus~ 20gl |
| Spices 60gl | Provender Plant 35gl |
| Euphorica 20gl | Aquavit* 40gl |
| Crafts 40gl | Scintilla 750gl |
| Jewelry 90gl | Gossamer~ 30gl |
| Silk~ 30gl | Timber 25gl |
| INTERIOR | |
| Limit per Item: 500gl | Negotiation Level: 12 |
| Thaecian Nectar 150gl | Fruit~ 45gl |
| Crystals 20gl | Rainbow Lotus 10gl |
| Spices 45gl | Provender Plant* 30gl |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|
| Euphorica | 15gl | Aquavit | 50gl |
| Crafts | 30gl | Scintilla | 800gl |
| Jewelry* | 75gl | Gossamer | 25gl |
| Silk | 20gl | Timber~ | 30gl |
| EROS ISLAND | | | |
| Limit per Item: 150gl | | Negotiation Level: 6 | |
| Thaecian Nectar | 110gl | Fruit | 35gl |
| Crystals | 10gl | Rainbow Lotus | 15gl |
| Spices | 50gl | Provender Plant | 35gl |
| Euphorica* | 10gl | Aquavit~ | 60gl |
| Crafts | 30gl | Scintilla* | 650gl |
| Jewelry | 80gl | Gossamer | 25gl |
| Silk | 15gl | Timber | 20gl |

*Indicated Best Place to Buy

~Indicates Best Place to Sell

All prices are per standard unit of item.

CHAPTER 6, THE SILK HUNTERS

This scenario can be run anytime after the PCs speak to Thaya and Threstival in Caprica city.

The lesser sun is sinking into a blood-red sea as the PCs return to Thaya's tent. Threstival is out front, talking to Thaya who nervously waves the PCs over. Threstival greets them with a tight eagerness, as he almost dances in place with nervous excitement.

If asked if anything is wrong, Thaya promises that they are not about to do anything that might attract the attention of the Enchanters, but that it might be dangerous, which is why they need the PCs help. She promises to explain, but first asks the PCs to promise not to reveal anything of what she says or might show them to the other gossamer merchants in Thaeacia.

"The best silk for making gossamer comes from the egg-sacks of the aquatic vasp. Normally they lay their eggs in the reef just out beyond the lagoon where they are safe and easy for us to collect. Unfortunately, earlier this year a pod of young sea-dragons found the reef and ate most of the harvest. The scarcity of the silk is the reason that our prices are so high. Thres has found another reef to the north, but it lies in deeper water and the danger is much greater. We need you to watch for wasps and sea scorpions while we collect the egg-sacks."

"We have little to pay you with right now, but we can promise you ten percent of whatever we make between now and the end of the Festival. If we collect even a few egg-sacks, we will corner the market on gossamer this year."

If the PCs agree, Threstival takes them down to the beach where there is a raft tied to a small rowboat. Inside the rowboat are three long poles with scintilla tied at the hooked end. Thres rows the PCs north through the calm ocean swells until they can dimly see a small atoll outlined against the star filled sky. Thres asks one of the PCs to continue rowing towards the atoll, then climbs onto the raft, picks up one of the poles and dips the glowing scintilla into the water.

The light from the shining orb uncovers a world just below the dark waves. A reef teems with life as fish of every colour and description can be seen darting through coral canyons. Thres slowly moves the scintilla through the water, poking it into the crooks and crannies of the coral, accidentally startling a large, ugly dracfish which darts away with an irritated bark. Finally he finds what he is looking for, pointing out a silvery glow tucked in between two tusked-sponges. Hooking it with the pole, he hauls his catch out of the water and lets out a happy laugh. It looks like a large caterpillar's cocoon, about two feet long and shining like polished silver in the light of the scintilla. He carefully unhooks it in the boat, but warns the PCs not to touch it. "We have to kill the eggs inside by smoking it. If the eggs are mature, the larva might hatch and eat through the silk if it is jostled"

too much." He then asks two PCs to pick up a pole and hunt for egg-sacks, and any remaining PC (spellcasters and those with ranged weapons preferred) to keep an eye out for other hunters on the reef. "The light may attract sea-scorpions, or the vasp that laid these sacks could still be around."

EGG HUNTING

Each PC rolls PER (Dredging, Salvager or a Background with Fishing are applicable skills at the GM's discretion). The first round the Difficulty is -3 and every following search check is at an additional -1 (-4, -4, -6 etc). Threstivul has the Background:Rural Island skill at +9, or lazy GM's can have him find a sack every third round.

ROLL RESULTS

M: Forgiving GMs may have the PC simply lose their pole. A less forgiving GM will say that the PC has poked their pole into the wrong crevasse and have woken up a grumpy octomorph who is determined to make the transgressor pay for disturbing its sleep.

F: Found nothing.

PS: The PC thinks they have found something. Next round, roll without any penalties.

S: Found one! Forgo the next search round to haul it out of the water.

CS: Found two! Thress or another PC must also forgo the next search round to help pull the sacks from the water.

GUARD DUTY

One of the hunters has accidentally touched one of the imperceptible threads that aquatic vasp lay over the reefs to alert them to their prey and one is now stalking the raft. The PCs on guard duty must make a PER roll every round (Guard skill also applicable) starting at -13 penalty, but decreasing by 2 every round (-11, -9 etc). The vasp will be close enough to attack in five rounds and gains an automatic surprise attack if it gets to the raft and PCs undetected.

ROLL RESULTS

M: The vasp slips even closer and will now attack one round sooner.

F: Everything looks okay to me!

PS: Something is out there. The PC gains +5 to their roll next round, \

S: The vast remains in hiding and does not move any closer this round.

CS: Vasp! The party might have time to pack it in and move away before the vasp can attack, or they gain an automatic first attack, depending on the GM.

OCTOMORPH

The octomorph is just irritated and is not interested in a battle to the death. It will flee if it loses more than half its hp, has pulled a PC into the water, or automatically after three rounds when it senses the vasp approaching. The octomorph starts by trying to grab the PC's pole (opposed STR check), and if that doesn't work it will attempt to drag the PC into the water (a successful tenacle grab, followed by the opposed STR check to pull the PC into the water). Any PC pulled into the water will get a face full of ink (permanently dyes all clothing and the PC's skin has a purple/black tinge for the next d20 days), but the octomorph will flee without doing any real damage. The real danger is that for every round the PC spends struggling with the octomorph allows the vasp to draw closer unnoticed.

Size: 7ft long, 300lbs

INT: +3 PER: +2

WIL: +2 CHA: -5

STR: +3 DEX: +4

CON: 0 SPD +5 (in water), -3 (on land)

Level: 4

Attacks/Damage: Tenacles DR4 constriction damage per round. The octomorph can make up to 8 attacks per round. Ink, blinded for 4 rounds. Special Abilities: possible aquamancy skills. Can survive out of water for d20 rounds.

Armor: shell PR 3

Hit Points: 18

AQUATIC VASP

The vasp will start by trying to destroy the raft and dump everyone into the water where it has the advantage. It will attack the raft with its pincers, only pausing if attacked by a PC directly (no spells or missile weapons). The raft has 41hp.

If any of the PCs wind up in the water, the vasp will immediately try and capture them with its mandibles (opposed STR check) then web them into submission, and finally sting them.

INT: -12 PER: +3

WIL: +7 CHA: N/A

STR: +8 DEX: +4
CON: +6 SPD: +3
Level: 12

Attacks: Pincers DR 20. Sting DR 12+venom (DR 3 for 10 rounds). Webbing (STR roll -5).

Special Abilities: aquatic, night vision, webbing

Armour: metallic scales PR 6

Hit Points: 50

Any character in the water must make their first action a Swim check at -5 (see Aquatic Combat At the end of this book). On a Critical Success, the character has found a secure foothold on the reef that allows them to keep their head out of water and fight without further swim checks. Any character stung by the vasp suffers damage until the end of the fight when Threstivul knows which sponges can be applied to the wound to stop the poison.

REWARD

Each egg-sack the party finds will make approximately one bolt of gossamer which Threstivul and Thaya will turn into pavilions and clothing they can sell at the Festival. Neither artisan has much starting money and the PCs can only collect their reward at the end of the Festival after Threstivul and Thaya have sold off the bulk of their merchandise. This allows the PCs to collect as many egg sacks as they desire. Provided he is not killed, Threstivul will accompany the PCs anytime they wish. On subsequent trips, the GM can have the PCs face vaps, raknids, volts, sea scorpions and other terrors of the water. There are also opportunities to collect more vasp egg-sacks on Orb Island, Peridia and Farique.

On the last day of the Festival, the PCs will be paid 10gl for every egg-sack they have collected over the course of the week.

CHAPTER 7, ORB ISLAND

Like some land out of a nightmare, Orb island is a tiny spot of tropical jungle barely ten miles across, yet it is infested with every kind of terrible creature that the swamps and seas of Talislanta has to offer. Swapping tales as their wounds heal, the surviving hunters have long speculated as to why the island overflows with tooth and claw. Some say it was once some sort of twisted menagerie, others contend that the first settlers to arrive in the isles drove many of dangerous creatures off their islands where they eventually gathered on Orb island. Either way, the island now has one of the deadliest concentrations of bloodthirsty predators on Talislanta and would be diligently avoided by all if it wasn't for the water raknid hive and the proliferation of naturally growing crystal dendron plants, both of which produce the superior globes prized by Thaecian Enchanters for the creation of their Enchanted Orbs. Some hunters have returned rich beyond measure, but many more have never returned, leaving their bodies and their treasures scattered across the island.

The PCs can try their hand at hunting orbs anytime after talking to Thraelian (see chapter 2). He will implicitly warn them of the overwhelming dangers of Orb island, but he will not mother them. If they choose to ignore his warnings, he will not remind them again.

At first glance the island looks peaceful, but even sailing their has its dangers as boats often attract the attention of the sea scorpions that patrol the shores. Much of the coast is covered in bombo trees which grow right out into the shallows. The are only five narrow beaches, each ominously covered in wrecked boats and dried bones. The interior of the island alternated between thick jungle and tangled swamps, but for all its dangers, it has been well mapped. However, these maps are highly coveted by their owners and few will part with them without a steep price. Many of the regions have been named, some more ironically than others.

Each region has a short description accompanied by an Encounter Chart, listing all of the creatures common to the area and a note

stating how many times the chart needs to be rolled before the region is crossed.

They also have modifiers listing the difficulty to search for rare plants and treasure in each location. Those charts are located at the end of the chapter and list the plants and items that can be found if the PCs stop to look. Treasure hunting carries even more risks and GMs should roll on the encounter chart every time the PCs stop to look around.

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE: Feel free to adjust, modify and cheat when sending the PCs through this meat-grinder to better suit your personal style, campaign and characters.

THE BOMBO GROOVES

Plant Hunting: PER -7, SKILL-12

Treasure Hunting: PER -5, SKILL -9

Much of the island is overgrown with bombo trees, but there are two main forests, Bombo Ota to the north and Ota Bomba on the southern shore. The ground here is a nuddy tabngle of thick roots, often flooded and plagued by swarms of flits and other insects.

ENCOUNTER CHART: Roll 4 times to move through either groove.

| | |
|-------|--------------|
| 1-3 | alatus |
| 4-6 | aramatus |
| 7-8 | bog devil |
| 9-10 | psuedomorph |
| 11-13 | swamp lurker |
| 14-16 | urthrax |
| 17-18 | winged viper |
| 19-20 | none |

MUDDY MEADOWS

Plant Hunting: PER-6, SKILL-10

Treasure Hunting: PER N/A, SKILL N/A

This foul smelling morass is covered in thick, seeping mud and a few dead, sun bleached tree trunks. The mud is very deep and often traps travelers, making the easy prey for the marsh-striders that abound here. Characters can only search for plants here, as anything dropped into the mud quickly disappears forever into the muck.

Moving through the mud requires five DEX or STR rolls (difficulty -2). A failure means thy the character is stuck and must make another STR

roll at -4 to pull themselves free. Any mishap means that the character has fallen into a sinkhole and is currently sinking at six inches per round. Pulling oneself free is difficult as it requires a STR roll at -8. Cries for help will always attract marsh striders.

ENCOUNTER CHART: Roll three times or whenever a character becomes stuck.

| | |
|-------|------------------|
| 1-10 | march strider |
| 11-12 | scavenger slime\ |
| 13-15 | urthrax |
| 15 | psuedomorph |
| 17-18 | swamp mantis |
| 19 | aramatus |
| 20 | none |

MISTY MIRE

Plant Hunting: PER -8, SKILL-15

Treasure Hunting: PER -8, SKILL -16

A heavy mist hangs over this region, obscuring an irregular terrain covered in ankle catching gullies, thorny bushes and low hanging branches. Some tales tell of a ruined city, possibly even one of the legendary floating cities of the Fourth Millennium, hidden with the mists. But no hunter who has ever gone to investigate the legend or to find the source of the mists has ever returned.

ENCOUNTER CHART: roll twice

| | |
|-------|-----------------|
| 1-9 | vorl |
| 10-14 | scavenger slime |
| 15-18 | urthrax |
| 19-20 | none |

DENDRON SWAMP

Plant Hunting: PER -4, SKILL-8

Treasure Hunting: PER -5, SKILL -8

Located almost at the heart of the island, this region is a murky marsh filled with deep sinkholes, dense reed beds and stinking muddy pools. Crystal dendron plants grow in abundance here, their fruit orbs are favoured by Thaecians for making their Enchanted Orbs. Because of its popularity with orb hunters, as well as its central location makes it a natural congregation point for almost all of the predators on the island.

ENCOUNTER CHART: Roll four times

| | |
|-----|---------|
| 1-2 | alatus |
| 3 | urthrax |

- 4 bog devils
- 5 swamp mantis
- 6 ikshada
- 7 psuedomorph
- 8 scavenger slime
- 9 marsh strider
- 10 krissbeak
- 11 aramatus
- 12 violet creeper
- 13 osedax
- 14 echinomorphs
- 15 needle-leaf
- 16 raknids
- 17 skalanx
- 18 swamp lurker
- 19 winged viper
- 20 none

THE BONELESS JUNGLE

Plant Hunting: PER -4, SKILL-6

Treasure Hunting: PER -6, SKILL -10

The land is drier here, with only a few shallow pools of stagnant water. It is covered in a dense jungle of tall trees, fernwoods and shafts of purple bamboo that rise over fifty feet into the air. Many rare and delicious fruits grow in abundance here, dangling swollen and uneaten from the branches. Ikshada and osedax worms infest this region, nesting in the fruits and lurking in the pools waiting for a chance to burrow into any passing unprotected flesh.

ENCOUNTER CHART: roll twice

- 1-4 ikshada
- 6-10 osedax
- 11-12 alatus
- 13-14 krissbeak
- 15-16 needle-leaf
- 17-18 violet creeper
- 19-20 none

THE DEVIL'S BOG

Plant Hunting: PER -6, SKILL-10

Treasure Hunting: PER -5, SKILL -11

Tall trees capped with heavy canopies block most of the sun's light (-2 to all PER and vision related rolls), filling this region with gloom and darkness. The ground is made up of spongy peat covered in a layer of stagnant water choked with decaying vegetation.

ENCOUNTER CHART: Roll three times

- 1-6 bog devil

- 7-9 urthrax
- 10-11 alatus
- 12-13 aramatus
- 14 psuedomorph
- 15-16 swamp slime
- 17 swamp lurker
- 18-19 swamp mantis
- 20 none

ENCHANTED GROVE

Plant Hunting: PER -4, SKILL-6

Treasure Hunting: PER -4, SKILL -7

A region of dry ground covered in soft grasses and warm sunlight spilling through shady fruit trees onto groves of wildflowers and rare herbs, many hunters make the fatal mistake of resting here. The region is actually the domain of Adhok, a grotesque and powerful abomination who's very presence is enough to keep most of the other island predators away.

ENCOUNTER CHART: roll twice

- 1-10 Adhok
- 11-12 alatus
- 13-14 flits
- 15-16 krissbeak
- 17 winged viper
- 18 needle-leaf
- 19-20 violet creeper

LAST CHANCE BLUFF

Plant Hunting: PER -6, SKILL-11

Treasure Hunting: PER -5, SKILL -9

This rocky bluff rises out of the jungles and ends at a jutting cliff side that drops fifty feet straight down onto the rough surf crashing onto the jagged rocks below. The cliff is so named because of the many orb hunters who have met their end here, fleeing from some beast of another.

ENCOUNTER CHART: roll three times

- 1-5 roll on the Dendron Swamp chart
- 6-8 alatus
- 9-12 ravenger
- 13-15 krissbeaks
- 16-17 winged viper
- 18-20 none

VENTURE RIVER

Plant Hunting: PER -4, SKILL-8

Treasure Hunting: PER -8, SKILL -14

This murky, sluggish waterway links the island's lagoon to the sea. Some enterprising orb hunters have tried to use the river to access the interior of the island. Most fun afool of the hidden, shifting sandbars that leave them exposed to raknids and the other predators that lurk just below the surface. Five pilot rolls at -10 are required to navigate the river and a Failure means that the boat becomes grounded. A Mishap means that the boat is sinking.

ENCOUNTER CHART: roll four times, or automatically if the bloat becomes grounded.

| | |
|-------|----------------|
| 1-2 | sea scorpion |
| 3-6 | skalanx |
| 7-8 | giant mollusk |
| 9-11 | nar-eel |
| 12-14 | raknid warrior |
| 15 | aquatic vasp |
| 16-17 | fanged eel |
| 18-19 | enchinomorph |
| 20 | none |

THE QUEEN'S LAGOON

Plant Hunting: PER -4, SKILL-8

Treasure Hunting: PER -5, SKILL -8

This pool of stagnant water at the heart of the island is choked with water plants, including k'tallah and lotuses of every color. At the heart of the pool there is what appears to be a small island topped by a single, great crystal dendron plant. This fabled tree supposedly produces the rare scarlet orbs that are worth three times the price of regular orbs to Enchanters.

Unfortunately, the island is actually the top of a giant water-raknid hive and the waters teem with the fearsome inscents. If the PCs make it to the island, d10 raknid warriors appear, plus an additional raknid warrior every three rounds until the PCs flee the lagoon area. The warriors who have appeared will pursue and fight until killed.

ENCOUNTER CHART: roll three times to get to the top of the Hive.

| | |
|-------|----------------|
| 1-2 | raknid worker |
| 3-4 | raknid drone |
| 5-15 | raknid warrior |
| 16-17 | enchindomorph |
| 18-19 | swamp lurker |
| 20 | none |

SORROW BEACH, BETRAYAL BEACH, ROT BEACH, MASSACRE BEACH AND BEAUTIFUL BEACH

Plant Hunting: PER -8, SKILL-12

Treasure Hunting: PER -8, SKILL -8

These five small beaches ring the island. At first glance, they seem inviting; the sand is soft and the waters are warm and shallow. The island predators certainly seem to, and they have learned that these spots are common places to find an easy meal. The more intelligent ones will even let hunters venture into the island, then they lurk inside their vessels waiting for the exhausted survivors to return.

Half buried in the sands of Beautiful beach, there is a giant mollusk shell that has been uncovered by the tides. The lips of the shell have been sealed with a dried green past and requires a STR roll of -10 to open (a prybar reduces the penalty to -5). Inside, the mollusk is filled with Imrian brass rings and other coins (totaling 890gl). There is also a crude map wrapped in dried seaweed. This map covers much of the Southern Rim from Jhangkin Bay to the Forbidden Straights and numerous forgotten islands, ocean currents and hidden coves are marked in a crude, watery script. This chest was buried here by the Imrian Captain Grutak and is now being searched for by his crew (see Chapter 5). The map is worth 1,000gl to any Gao Pirate, 500 to any other sailor.

ENCOUNTER CHART: Roll Once per visit

| | |
|-------|--------------|
| 1-2 | echinomorph |
| 3-6 | sea scorpion |
| 7-8 | skalanx |
| 9-12 | ravengers |
| 13-16 | psudeomorphs |
| 17-20 | none |

TREASURE HUNTING

Orb island abounds in treasure both natural and manufactured. Rare hers and plants grow almost everywhere and treasures of all types lie where fleeing hunters dropped them, or died carrying them. A PC can choose to stop and look for treasure at any time, but they must declare whether they are looking for plants (this

includes Crystal Dendrons), or they are looking for lost Treasure (this includes scintilla). Whenever a PC stops to look, roll once on the Encounter Chart for that region.

PLANTS AND HERBS

This chart uses either a PER roll or the Naturalism, Herb Lore or Botomancy skill to find and identify a useful plant. Each region has its own modifiers to indicate the likelihood of discovering a valuable plant.

Mishap: Oozeberries

Failure: Nothing of value found

Partial Success: Roll once on the chart at -2

Success: Roll once on the plant chart

Critical Success: Roll once on the Plant chart +1

PLANT CHART

| | | |
|-------|------------------------|-------|
| 0-1 | barberries, red | 5sp |
| 2 | cooking herbs | 1gl |
| 3 | barberries, purple | 2gl |
| 4 | sugarbulbs | 3gl |
| 5 | rainbow lotus | 5gl |
| 6 | barb tea | 8gl |
| 7 | spice leaves | 10gl |
| 8 | green lotus | 20gl |
| 9 | whispbane | 25gl |
| 10 | blue lotus | 25gl |
| 11 | balmroot | 30gl |
| 12-14 | crystal Dendron, small | 50gl |
| 15 | euphorica | 75gl |
| 16 | tantalus | 100gl |
| 17 | k'tallah | 100gl |
| 18-20 | crystal Dendron, large | 100gl |
| 21 | black lotus | 200gl |

TREASURE

This chart requires a PER roll, or the Artificer, Dredging, Salvager or Scout skills. Each region has its own modifiers to indicate the likelihood of discovering something of value.

Mishap: Roll once on the Encounter Chart

Failure: Nothing is found

Partial Success: Roll once on the Treasure Chart -2

Success: Roll once on the Treasure Chart

Critical Success: Roll once on the Treasure Chart +1

TREASURE CHART

| | |
|-----|-------------------------|
| 0-2 | d20gl in mixed coins |
| 3-4 | d20x10gl in mixed coins |
| 5-6 | vasp egg sack |

| | |
|-------|---|
| 7 | d20x50 in mixed coins and gems |
| 8-9 | Piece of Equipment (select from Equipment List in Main Rule Book) |
| 10 | Weapon, basic (ie, sword, axe etc) |
| 11-12 | scintilla |
| 13-14 | armour, basic (up to a PR of 4) |
| 15 | Alchemical Creation (Potion, Elixir, Narcotic, Poison or Powder) |
| 16 | Weapon or Armour, Uncommon (ie, gwanga etc. Armour can be red iron and/or have a PR of up to 6) |
| 17 | Magic Item, minor (see chart) |
| 18 | Weapon, rare (blue iron, silver or enchanted +1) |
| 19 | Armour, rare (blue iron or enchanted +1) |
| 20 | Magic Item, rare (see chart) |
| 21+ | Unique Item (see chart) |

CHART: MAGIC ITEMS, MINOR

| | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Aamanian Holy Symbol |
| 2 | Yitek Charm |
| 3 | Jaka Luck Talisman |
| 4 | Bane's Eye Amulet |
| 5 | Marukan Luck Talisman |
| 6 | Djaffir Fetish Mask |
| 7 | Cragspider Claws (worn as gloves, +5 to Climb Skill) |
| 8 | Zandir Paradoxist Emblem |
| 9 | Kra Horn pendant (breathe underwater for one hour) |
| 10 | Whisp Hair charm (+1 to SPD) |
| 11 | Amulet of Protection (+1 vs a single Mode) |
| 12 | Ring of Defense (+1 PR) |
| 13 | Ring of Summoning (any Order, level 4) |
| 14 | Ring of Truth (While wearing the ring; deliberate lies sound painful to hear. Also, the wearer can only tell the truth). |
| 15 | Ring of Fire Bolt (DR 7, three times per day) |
| 16 | Gale Wand (casts Whirlwind) |
| 17 | Wand of Decay (casts Ebon Harbringers) |
| 18 | Zodar Deck |
| 19 | Stranglevine rope (will obey simple commands) |
| 20 | Cave Bat Horn (+1 PER, listen checks only) |

CHART: MAGIC ITEMS, RARE

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Tamar |
| 2 | Bracer of Levitation |
| 3 | Rajan Death Mask |
| 4 | Azoryl Hide Cloak (Levitation for 30min per day) |

- 5 Cymrillian Shrinking Chest (standard chest that shrinks down to six inches across. Item inside remain unharmed)
- 6 Korak's Wand of Analysis (casts Arcane Analysis)
- 7 Spangalor robe +2
- 8 Lamune's Magic Slippers (allows wearer to walk on water)
- 9 Dastana Bracers (+2 to parry)
- 10 Thrall Skin Bandolier (+2 to STR)
- 11 d10 Drakken Coins (worth 100gl each)
- 12 Garde of Striking (adds +1 to hit)
- 13 Forgotten Spell Scroll (contains one archaic spell, GM choice)
- 14 Tome (rare or spellbook)
- 15 Spellstone (contains one spell)
- 16 Dragonbone Shield (-1Combat Rolls, +2 Protection, +5 vs heat/fire attacks)
- 17 Quarant Blade (syphon's 1/2 of all inflicted damage to heal PC)
- 18 Gnomekin Ambercusps (allows wearer to see in the dark)
- 19 Black Savant Head Dress (+1 to INT)
- 20 Thrall Greatsword

CHART: UNIQUE ITEMS

- 1 Kharakan Beast Maul
- 2 Iterative Arrows
- 3 Sword of Cowardice
- 4 Hilt of Eldritch Light
- 5 Snuff of Ceaseless Passion
- 6 Potion of Apparent Invisibility
- 7 Tiara of Fairer Beauty
- 8 Quicksand Sandals
- 9 Etzel's Mittens
- 10 The Golden Arm
- 11 Mortieac the Bottled Imp
- 12 Ring of Surety
- 13 Eye of Righteousness
- 14 Book of Waking
- 15 Hearteater
- 16 Kimono of the Black Iron Suns
- 17 Quararian Needles
- 18 Blue Iron Pendant
- 19 Hollow Mask
- 20 The Dragonpike

UNIQUE ITEMS

BLUE IRON PENDANT

This amulet is a twisted abstract representation of a shrieker made from blue iron hanging on a chain that is made of woven strands of red and blue iron thread. When worn, it endows the

wearer with a natural armour protection of +2. The first time the power of this amulet is called upon (ie, the PC is attacked), it begins to heat up, quickly becoming so hot that it burns its way into the PC's flesh. The pain becomes so intense in d10-CON (min 1) rounds that they cannot perform any actions for 2 rounds and they suffer 5hp damage (heals normally) as the amulet embeds itself into the wear's flesh. At the start of the first round of pain, the PC has one chance to remove the amulet with a STR roll at -7. Once embedded, the amulet cannot be removed by any method except the wearer's death, but the protection bonus is now permanent and stacks with all normal armour. The PC's flesh will take on a bluish tone that will grow stronger over time, but with otherwise look and feel normal.

THE BOOK OF WAKING

This tattered manuscript has a red leather cover with a faded obscuration of all seven moons rising over unidentifiable mountains. It is said to contain the secrets of lost art of Narcomancy, but no one has ever been able to decipher the fuzzy, unclear script that fills the pages. (GM note, the book can only be read properly in th Dreamscape). Worth 1,200gl to a collector.

THE DRAGONPIKE

A long pole painted gold and crimson, topped by an ornate blade made to resemble a snarling dragon. During combat, the dragon will begin to belch flame uncontrollably DR 20+4(fire). A relic of some long forgotten age, the weapon is much too long and top heavy to wield properly and as such is -4 to all combat rolls.

ETZEL'S MITTENS

Small, knitted mittens, one red, one green. They will magically grow to fit any size hand and add +2 casting bonus to any spell cast with the intention of doing mischief or harm. They mittens are also tied together by a long string of yarn. Their mitten's enchantment is lost if the string is cut.

THE EYE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The head of this heavy +2 black-iron mace has been cast to resemble Aa's All-Seeing Eye. The mace automatically casts the spell of Conversion everytime it strikes an unbeliever. However, if the person wielding the mace is not

an Hetrodoxist, then the spell is cast on them instead.

THE HILT OF ELDRITCH LIGHT

This item looks like a simple longsword hilt that is missing a blade, and only a magical inscription around the guard reveals that it may be more than it seems. When magical energy is directed into the hilt (counts as a spell cast for that day), a sword blade of pure magical energy appears. The blade lasts for seven hours or until willed to stop. The character must be able to cast spells in order to activate the sword. DR+2

THE GOLDEN ARM

Made out of a mysterious golden metal, this arm looks as if it has fallen off a perfectly carved statue. The limb is sexless, but flawless with every line, wrinkle, vein and muscle perfectly represented, right down to the fingerprints. If held up to the shoulder of any amputee, the arm will attach itself and instantly begin to act as if it were a normal arm (side doesn't matter, the arm will morph itself to either side). The character can even feel sensations through it as if where their own flesh. The arm has a STR of +6 for any matter involving just that arm (including damage).

Those who have worn the arm praise its abilities, but are reluctant to recommend the prosthetic. They say that in some strange way, the arm is alive and seems to be working towards some unfathomable agenda of its own.

HEARTEATER

The blade of this wicked looking sword ends in three barbed prongs made to resemble an outreached claw. It is said that this blade was a favourite of Nasishna himself, who would drive the prongs into the chests of his enemies and pull it out so quickly that it would drag out the still beating heart. The sword is a +2 longsword, and any damage inflicted by the sword take twice as long to heal, while magical healing is only half as effective.

THE HOLLOW MASK

This artifact is a white, Thaisian performer's mask that has had the bottom half forcibly snapped off. What is left covers only the eyes, the nose and some of the left cheek. While wearing eh mask, all performace skills are at +5.

However, the longer the character wears the mask the more convinced they become that they cannot perform without it. After every performance, make a WIL roll at -3. If they Fail, all their regular Performances (made without wearing the mask) permanently drops by 1. If any Performance skill drops to 0, then the character becomes so dependant upon the mask that they will no longer take it off, even when off stage.

ITERATIVE ARROWS

These enchanted arrows (+1) are found in batches of six. No matter where the first arrow fired hits, all the other arrows from they same set will strike in the exact same location. The arrows will always follow the most direct path, regardless of what, or who may be in the way. The sets can only be used on one target at a time, and if the first arrow fired misses and hits something else then the rest of the set will follow suite. The only way to reset the set is to fire all the remaining arrows. Breaking the first arrow fired will also reset the batch. Otherwise, no matter how much time or distance has past, the arrows will still fly towards their pre-chosen target.

MORTIEAC THE BOTTLED IMP

Morty, as he likes to be called, spends his days stuffed into a cramped amberglass bottle like some bloated, diabolical baby, Rude, crude and extremely vulgar, the red skinned sardonicus enjoys trying to shock those around, and keeping a running, sarcastic commentary on everyone's actions.

KHARAKAN BEAST MAUL

This great hammer, decorated with crude drawings of a Kharakan land dragon hunt, does +2 damage to all animals and natural creatures. It does no extra damage to demons, but is still considered enchanted and will do regular maul damage.

KIMONO OF THE BLACK IRON SUNS

This black silk kimono is decorated with white and yellow sunbursts. It has been enchanted to provide the protection equivalent of dragonscale (PR 4). The kimono was made as a gift for a Quan noble and is somewhat generous in its proportions.

POTION OF APPARENT INVISIBILITY

Once a person drinks this clear and colourless potion, they notice their flesh has become completely invisible (their clothes and equipment do not). To everyone else however, the person is still completely visible. No matter how hard others try to convince the PC, they will remain completely and utterly convinced they are invisible for d20(-WIL) hours (if result is 0 or less then potion has no effect). However, the PC IS invisible to all enchanted and magical creatures.

RING OF SURETY

This ring fills the wearer with an almost absurd confidence and feeling that they can accomplish anything, no matter how impossible or ludicrous it might seem to others. It also provides a +1 to all action table rolls out of sheer bravado. The character has a WIL score equivalent of +5 to resist any attempt to prove what they are doing may be attempting is foolish or misguided.

QUARANIAN NEEDLES

A black leather case with four, short, slim needles carefully packed inside. Once the tip of essence extractors, these needles are coveted by assassins. The needles can be inserted painfully into the flesh of their victims, leaving no mark, no discomfort or sign of blood behind. The needle then slowly drains away the victim's essence, causing them to sicken and die over a matter of weeks, even months (victim permanently loses 1hp per week). Usually placed under the hair or in some out of the way crevasse, the needles are extremely hard to spot (-18 Healer skill, -11 if they know what they are looking for). Even if removed before the victim dies, the needle's effect up until that point are permanent.

QUICKENED SANDALS

These sandals give the wearer one free action at the start of each round. The character rolls for initiative as normal, but are granted one free action before anyone else can act. When the regular turn in the initiative comes up, they act as normal with no multiple action penalties.

SNUFF OF CEASELESS PASSION

A small, mother-of-pearl snuff box inlaid with tiny cavorting Thaecians done in silver. The

snuff is glittering a glittering powder and a single sniff can create a state of heightened, prolonged arousal. Too much and the person becomes consumed by a raging, manic lust that cannot be slacked until the effects wear off (d20Hour-CON) or until they collapse from exhaustion and dehydration (d10Hours+CON).

SWORD OF COWARDICE

This ornate, red iron longsword is +3 and casts Ebon's Alternating Elements on every strike. Unfortunately, anyone who picks up the sword is overwhelmed with feelings of pantswatering terror at the very idea of combat, pain or danger. A WIL roll at -4 or curl up in a ball, whimpering like a whipped darkling.

TIARA OF THE FAIRER BEAUTY

This white, ivory crown gives any female character a +2 to CHA while wearing it. Any male character that puts it on is permanently changed into a woman, then starts to receive the bonus.

NEW CREATURES

ADHOK

The abomination called Adhok was once a Phandrian wizard named Hodak who came to the Thaecian islands claiming to have found the fabled Sorcerer's Isle. He set out one morning on a small windskiff, but soon after he left a terrible witch-wind typhoon struck the islands. No one knows what happened, but two weeks later Hodak washed up on the shore of Eros island. He had once been friendly and well liked, but after he recovered he became sullen, quick to anger and wearing an oversized robe. Not long after, people started to disappear. Hodak's reign of terror lasted for months before an Enchanter linked the deaths to the wizard. By now, whatever fiendish magics had infected him had completely taken over and his body had become twisted into the gruesome shape it is today. His capture killed six more, but it said the Enchantress herself intervened and had him banished to Orb island instead of having him executed.

Size: 11', 930lbs

| | |
|--------|--------|
| INT +6 | PER+3 |
| WIL +6 | CHA -6 |
| STR +8 | DEX 0 |
| CON +6 | SPD -2 |

Ability Level: 15

HP: 55
Attacks/Damage: Stomp DR 16, Claw DR 12,
Bite DR 8, Tail DR 10, Tusk Gore DR 10. 3
attacks per round.
Special Abilities: Amphibious, nightvision
Armour: scaled hide PR 5
Magic:

KRISSBEAK

These large avir have curving, razor sharp beaks that they use to slice at their prey. They have dark marron plumage, fading to red scales on the belly. They beaks are often quite brightly coloured and are thought o play a part in their courtship rituals. The beaks can fetch up to 50gl and are sometimes made into daggers.

Size: 1'flong, wingspan 7'-10', 6-10lbs

INT -6 PER +4
WIL +1 CHA 0
STR -4 DEX +4
CON +2 SPD +5

Ability Level: 5-10

Attacks/Damage: Beak DR 5, Claws DR 4

Special Abilities: flight

Armour: scaled belly PR 2

HP: 12

OSEDAX

Also called boneworms, these inch long, hair thin worms are nearly transparent until they feed. They lurk in stagnant water waiting for an animal or person to walk by. When they come into contact with flesh, they begin to burrow, digging deep into the skin. The process raises red welt on the skin that are itchy, but not painful. The real danger comes when the worms reach the bone and begin to feed. The process starts as a dull ache in the effected and a rapid loss of strength. The pain intensifies gradually as the worms begin to stiffen with ingested calcium, become inch long needles moving deep in the flesh. Without treatment, the victim's bones become fragile, then porous before finally disappearing forever. Invertabrates, like aramatus and alatus are immune to the worms, but often carry their larvae, which can be transmitted through their bite.

SWAMP MANTIS

A species of giant water bug that is native to the swamps and marshes of the Thaecian isles. They have a distinctive metallic-red carapace that is favoured by the Thaecian artisans and their meat is considered a delicacy.

Size: 6'-6'6", 100-150lbs
INT -8 PER 0
WIL -3 CHA N/A
STR +3 DEX +2
CON +2 SPD +3

Ability Level: 3-9

Attacks/Damage: mantis claws DR 10

Special Abilities: walk on water (like a water bug)

Armour: Carapace PR 4

HP: 26

NEW FLORA

KURU TREE

A type of dwarf tree sometimes called the Smiling Palm, the kuru tree produces small, orange fruits, also called kuru, year round. The fruit is said to be exquisitely delicious with a soft, nourishing meat full of vitamins.

Unfortunately, it also contains a potent neuron poison that eats away at the intellect, leaving its victims a smiling, mindless husk. (For each fruit eaten, make a CON roll at -2. On a failure, the victim permanently suffers -1 to their INT).

OOZEBERRIES

These large, red berries are found in abundance all over Orb island and the rest of the Thaecian Isles. They grow on vines that weave through the islands' vegetation, laden with swollen berries that always appear slightly overripe. The berries are covered in a thick ooze that is extremely sticky and requires a STR roll at -2 to pull free. The ooze is waterproof and is used by the islanders as a powerful adhesive. Or, if the ooze is neutralized by soaking the fruits in a strong alcohol the berries can be eaten, through it is said that they have a very sour taste.

CHAPTER 8, SUNSET OF THE MIND

This ring shaped copse of trees on Thaecia island stands atop the caverns that overlook the beach. According to local legend, the trees are actually the ensorcelled forms of a circle of arrogant dancers who had irritated the Enchantress of the Shoals (see chapter 9) and she transformed them into tress for their temerity. It is said that the trees dance when no one is looking. For their part, the Thaecians enjoy the trees as a place of shade and often hang their freshly cleaned gossamer laundry on the boughs, then play their instruments for the dancers while it dries.

Beside the glade, a small pavilion has been set up on the edge of the cliff looking towards the western horizon. Outside the tent, a middle-aged Zandir is fussing about with a folded easel, canvass and paints. When he sees the PCs, he waves them over and without asking any questions, hands them each a canvass, easel and assorted tools. Once they are all overloaded and his arms are empty, he claps his hands and says, "Excellent! Now come follow me!"

If the PCs refuse at any point, he will look momentarily bewildered and say, 'Oh come now, it is not far. There is a shiny pentacle in it for each of you.' He pays no attention to negotiations.

As he walks along he mumbles, half to himself and half to the PCs. "I traveled for three days aboard that smelly ship because they promised me a suns-set! The most beautiful on Talislanta, they said, can you believe it? I have painted the suns setting low over the Red Desert. I have painted the suns sinking down towards the oceans from above in a tower at the edge of Alcedon itself! How dare that these tired vistas and sea-washed colours are the best that have ever been. Sheer blasphemy I tell you, blasphemy! ... ah, here we are.'

He has lead the PCs down to the beach, and after a moment he picks a spot and begins to set up his gear. He is too distracted to remember the promised payment and the PCs must ask for

it. He will apologize and pay an extra pentacle for their troubles.

Regardless of if the PCs help him or not, he will offer them more work. "If you chaps are interested in making some more money, come by my tent tomorrow at midday. I am planning on making a small excursion and I require porters. Now, if you will excuse me, I have just had the most resplendent idea for how to improve the texture of my sands." And with that, he will rush off, too distracted to answer any further questions.

If they take the painter up on his offer, the following day, they will arrive to find him standing by his tent with a large collection of crates. Without preamble, he waves for the PCs to pick up the crates and leads them back down to the beach. There, they are met by a young Phantasian who meets them halfway, waving and shouting enthusiastic hellos.

LUCKY TALIS

Talis is a young, gawky mixed Phantasian/Thaisian with a mouth full of teeth stolen from a bucked toothed equus, put together with limbs lifted off a passing knobkneed ath-ra. He is wearing bits and pieces of Guardian armour, topped off with a padded leather cap and goggles. He greets the PCs warmly and introduces himself as 'everyone calls me Talis'.

"Well, its not Talis really. My real name is Klitarus, Klitarus Bladesemmer, at your service.' He says with a bow that looks more like a fold. "People started calling me Lucky Talis after my third crash, its short for Talisandre. And this," he says beaming with pride. "is the Flurry!" waving theatrically towards the windskiff anchored a short ways down the beach.

THE FLURRY

A sad, small looking windrigger anchored to the sand by a rusty chain and what appears to be a broken granite gargoyle. It is bobbing gently in the wind, floating a few feet above the ground, but drooping noticeably to the left. The front end of the skiff has been clearly repaired, rather extensively with different kinds of wood than the rest of the hull. Large patches, some made from canvass, cover holes along the sides and the sail is a riotous quilt of gossamer swatches of every shape, size and description.

The rigger dips alarmingly as they all pile in, but Talis seems unconcerned as he busies himself around the craft. Soon the skiff is skimming around over the ocean and Talis loops a rope around the tiller and sits down. The artist ignores them, busying himself with his crates. Talis however, is happy to talk. "His name is Zordaz." He says pointing at the artist. "He's a bit windblown, but he pays well, when you remind him. He explains that they are all headed to the island of Dalia, rumoured to have the most beautiful sunsets on all of Talislanta. "But don't worry," he says reassuringly, "we'll be leaving as soon as it gets dark."

If the PCs ask him why, he becomes distracted and points out a small, rocky island on the lefthand side. "That's Nearwan, where the Thaecians lock up the criminals. I heard they captured an infamous Imrian captain a few weeks back. Those fishbellies aren't allowed to any of the islands after nightfall. Those Enchanters really don't mess around!"

If the PCs really continue to pester Talis about Dalia, he will finally explain. "Well, it's not so much as dangerous, more of a hazard. It's a nice place to visit, but you don't want to linger, if you catch my drift. There are these little flying parasites called neurovores flying around. They like to eat people's smarts. But they are tiny and won't go after anyone who is up and walking around. They like to get you while you're sleeping, or not paying attention. I've been a couple of times now, and I've barely even seen any. But just to be safe, if you have to go into the jungle, you may want to wear a helmet."

The rest of the trip passes pleasantly, with Zordaz sketching quietly, and Talis answering any questions about the Thaecian islands that the PCs ask (general rulebook knowledge). Zordaz will distractedly answer any questions about payment with "what do you think is fair?", but he will negotiate a little of the PCs ask for an outrageous sum. Haggle skill +9, but he will not go any higher than 201 per PC.

After a few hours Talis points out a lush green island far below and begins his descent. Halfway down, the Flurry suddenly sudders and bucks violently. Talis jumps to his feet and mumbles, "Not again!" Opening up a hatch, he rummages around for a few seconds as the bucking grows

more violent. Giving up with a shrug, he grabs the tiller and warns everyone to hang on.

The Flurry crashes in the water just off the south shore of Dalia island. Have each PC make a CON roll with a -8 penalty. On a Mishap they take 10 damage, on a Failure they take 6 damage and on a Partial Success, they take 3 damage.

It doesn't take much effort to haul the light craft onto the deck, where it lies lifelessly on the sand. Zordaz seems the most upset since one of his crates has broken open. He salvages what he can out of the skill and starts setting up his easel on the sand. Talis takes out a small golden box etched with eldritch runes from the hatch on the hull and opens it. With a loud "ah, darn it!", he pulls out a small blackened orb from the box. "It is out of juice." The orb needs to be recharged with sunlight and a few spells that Talis knows. The problem is that the suns will be setting soon and there is not enough sunlight to recharge the orb. The party will be spending the night.

Luckily, Talis is quite experienced with crashes and immediately gets to work on the Flurry. Once they learn they can leave in the morning, Zordaz turns his attention back to the coming sunset. They have plenty of supplies to survive the night, but the party will need firewood and something to patch the large holes in the rigger's hull. The PCs will have to venture into the jungle.

DALIA ISLAND

A poet of the Archean age once wrote that Dalia was a piece of paradise that had broken loose and found its way to this mortal world. Whatever else he may have written is lost under the childish scribbles that filled the remainder of his journal.

Wide beaches of soft, white sand surround an open tropical jungle filled with shady glens, colourful plants and trees bearing rare and delicious fruits, berries and edible blossoms. On the north side of the island there is a large lagoon filled with warm, shallow water. The northwest side of the island rises to a series of bluffs that overlook the Azure ocean. At the northernmost tip, a witchgate lies in ruins, deliberately destroyed by someone, or something.

No landmarks or features on the island name because anyone who spends enough time here soon cannot remember what they called them. Except for the buzz of insects, the island is eerily quite. No avir or animals calls this island home. This is because of the island's dominant inhabitant, the tiny winged parasites called neurovores.

NEUROVORES

Tiny, bat winged parasites with bulbous eyes, clawed feet, round body covered in fuzzy grey fur, scaly tale and tentacle like feelers. When nothing else is around, they feed on sparkberries, but their favourite food is the electrical impulses of a large brain. Because of their tiny size, they pose no physical threat to someone awake, but they will attack anything sleeping or unaware. However, on the rare occasion that they have been known to swarm, they can reduce the most learned scholar to a babbling idiot in seconds.

Size: 1"-2" long. 1-2oz\

STR: -12 PER +3
DEX +7 CHA N/A
CON -4 WIL -4
SPD +6 I\|NT -11

Ability Level: 1-2

Attacks/Damage: Feeding tube drains one point of INT per hour (per neurovore)

Special Abilities: flight, drain INT

Armour: none

HP: 2

THE CASTAWAY

The PCs have little trouble moving through the island jungle, the trees are widely spaced and there is little undergrowth to impede their progress. Talis has instructed them to look for a fern tree called campleaf, a tree with thick, reddish-purple leaves the size of a full grown man (Wilderness Survival -7, or Naturalism or Herb Lore at -10). The leaves are thick, strong and watertight and a popular building material along the Sothern Rim.

As the PCs trudge along, they start to notice what, at first, appears to be small balls of grey fluff or dustballs hovering in the air. There are only one or two at first, but as they go deeper into the jungles, they notice more and more of them. When one alights on a nearby branch, they can see the tiny, bat-winged creature with large eyes staring at them hungrily.

Have the PCs make a PER roll (-5) to hear a distant voice. If they investigate, they voice gets louder, speaking in a strange language (it is Quan, but anyone who speaks it will understand that the person is babbling incoherently). Just off the trail, by a small pond is a person sitting on a log with his back to the PCs. He is dressed only in scraps and clumps of his short, black hair have been torn out. He is clearly gibbering to himself, occasionally shouting, crying or laughing at random. If the PCs speak or try to make contact, he goes silent but cocks his head as if listening or curious. He waits for the PCs to come close enough, then lunges at them like a maddened drac.

ANTHROPHAGE

On occasion, shipwrecked survivors, unlucky treasure hunters or unlucky tourist come to Dalia and fall victim to the neurovores. Often they are so drained of their intellect that they cannot even contemplate the thought of escape. Driven to drooling idiocy and constantly victimized by the swarms of insatiable parasites, most die slowly of starvation, thirst, gangrene or exposure; too feeble minded even to seek out a sip of water or seek shelter from the sun. But some, robbed of their intellect, revert to the level of mindless, primal beasts. With very little else to eat on the island, they become cannibals, feasting on other neurovore victims, unwary visitors and each other. Because of their poor diet, they develop a gaunt, wasted appearance and often fall victim to gruesome and contagious tropical diseases because of their total lack of concern towards hygiene.

Size: Dependant upon race

Attributes:

INT: -9 PER: 0
WIL: N/A CHA: -8
STR: -- DEX: --
CON: -- SPD: --

-- as per race

Ability Level: 1-9

Attacks: Bite DR1+STR. Claw DR2+STR, plus any naturally occurring racial weapons. They are no longer smart enough to carry weapons

Special Abilities: Mindless, immune to all illusions and spells of influence and control. Will ignore pain, fear, damage and will always fight to the death. Plus any racial abilities.

Armour: natural armour as per race.

Occasionally one may be wearing scraps of

armour it had on when it fell victim to the neurovores.

Hit Points: 18 or as per archetype

Currently the island has about a dozen anthropophages, all that is left of an unlucky Thaisian fruit gathering expedition as well as the remains of Thirsty Ru's former entourage, who got turned around in a gale on their way back to Quan and sailed into Dalia's lagoon to wait out the storm. Some of them have contracted a disease called Black Malla, a slow, degenerative condition that causes the skin to turn black and fall off in slimy chunks.

MANDALAN ANTHROPHAGE

The cannibal lunges at the PC in the lead and attacks relentlessly until dead. He will attack twice each round, first trying to grab his victim then going in for a bite. He will not make any effort to defend himself.

INT: -9 PER: 0
WIL: N/A CHA: -6
STR: 0 DEX: +2
CON: 0 SPD: +1

Ability Level: 5

Attacks Damage: Bite DR1, Claw DR2

HP: 18

Once the Mandalan is dead, the PCs find that the pool is filled with fresh water and lined with camptleaf trees. The suns are beginning to set and they should be heading back quickly.

THE BEACH AT SUNSET

The PCs make it back to the beach just as the suns begin their final dance of the day. Dalia is said to have the most breathtaking suns-sets in the known world, and as the sky turns from blue, to scarlet, orange and purple it might be hard for the PCs to disagree. Zordaz is hunched over his paints, but a closer observation will reveal that he is not working. The characters find him bemusedly staring at his canvass as he twirls globs of colourful paint around with his fingers. Any touch, and a small grey mote tumbles out of his hair, spreads its wings and flies away. Just above Zordaz's right ear is a small red welt, but there is no other sign of injury. Zordaz simply smiles and says "Please Mummy, I don't want to wear my woolen jumper to school today." A Naturalism roll at -8, or a Medical roll at -5 will let

the PC know that he isn't permanently damaged and will recover, in a few weeks.

From the boat, Talis suddenly shouts a warning. Swarming out of the jungle are half a dozen people (enough to give the PCs a hard time), all screaming wildly. As they get closer, the PCs can see that some of them appear to be rotting, their skin blackened and decaying right off their bodies. Zordaz frowns. "Is it those ten thousandth damned Devoted Until Aa scouts again? Tell those kids we are not buying another box of thistle wafers this year!"

BLACK MALLA

This horrific disease is mercifully rare everywhere but on the island of Dalia, where it is spread from the neurovore carries to their victims. It begins as a simple rash and can be easily cured at this stage. But it can rapidly, and without warning, turn septic as it attacks the skin layer, first causing it to turn black, stiffen then slowly liquefy, falling off their victim in gooey, chunky strands. If bitten by a neurovore or an anthropophage displaying no symptoms, roll 1d20. On a one the critter is a carrier and the wound is infected (automatically infected if bitten by an anthropophage with obvious symptoms). The rash begins in a few hours and lasts from between d6 days. At this point, it can be easily treated by a Heal Spell or the Medicine Skill. However, once the infection sets in, it can be almost impossible to treat.

It works slowly and some victims can take months to die unless a radical cure can be found.

The mob is made up of mostly Mandalans and Thaisians (use same stats as above). Three have Black Malla and gain +2 to their STR. The anthropophages attack the party (Zordaz being particularly vulnerable as he keeps trying to approach them to buy a box of vanilla All Seeing Eye-biscuits), but they will also swarm the Flurry looking for food. In the confusion, one of the anthropophages will grab the blackened orb that powers the rigger's levitational and runs back into the jungle.

Once the attackers have been dealt with, the trail of the escaped cannibal is easy enough to follow. The falling night is clear and bright under blazing stars and the shining moons, making it easy to see. Talis is distraught over losing the levitational's orb, but refuses to abandon his windrigger and will stay on the beach to guard it. However, he cannot guard Zordaz and the rigger at the same time, especially since dealing with the painter has become something of a problem. The artist has been reduced to the mental level of a spoiled toddler and acts the part; whining that his feet hurt if forced to walk, that the weather is too cold, or too hot, too hungry, too thirsty; throwing tantrums and spooning bizarre non-sequiturs as he trails after the party.

If the party wants to wait until daylight to search of the orb, remind them of the neurovovs, which begin to flock around the boat now that darkness has fallen. If they still insist, have them spend a sleepless night constantly on the lookout for neurovovs and random attacks by the anthrophages.

The anthrophage trail is easy to follow, requiring a Tracking roll of -4 to trace through the jungle. For five miles in, it runs straight as an arrow through the jungle, then comes to an abrupt stop at the edge of a wide lagoon. Towards the open sea, there is something large sticking out of the water. From there, it is hard to tell which direction he want, no matter what the tracking roll is, it is an even fifty-fifty chance that he went east towards the bluffs, or east into the jungle.

THE LAGOON

Even at its widest, Dalia is barely five miles across. Bent into a U shape with an overbite, the island surrounds a lagoon filled with bright, clear water teeming with rare corals and brightly coloured tropical fish. The lagoon is protected from the ocean currents by the large reefs of razorcoral just outside of its mouth, which also helps keep out most of the larger predators, and the neurovovs often take care of the rest. The only large animal in the lagoon are wallowing leviacanth; slow swimming, bloated reptilians (distantly related to land lizards) that are protected from the neurovovs by an extraordinarily thick skull plate.

At the far end of the lagoon, just before the mouth of the bay there is something large in the

water. Closer examination reveals it to be the rotting hull of a sunken pleasure barge, all that remains of the Thirsty Ru's beloved 'Blessed Petals of Joyous Bliss'. The boat sits in about twenty feet out, in ten feet of water at requires an easy Swimming Roll at -4(minus all Armour PR, minus 2 for every article of clothing beyond the basics, minus 3 for every weapon carried). Unless the PC is a Sunra, swimming requires wearing pretty much nothing but the basics. If a player objects, have them try treading water in just jeans in a tshirt for five minutes).

The passengers and crew took most of the supplies when they left, but the boat was sinking and they couldn't take everything. There is still a treasure in gold, pearls and art inside the hull. The problem is that the water is a dark mirror under the night sky, and the sunken hold is also home to two anthrophage Sunra. With the leviacanth and fish to feed on, they have faired much better than their landlocked brethren and are still strong, sleek and deadly as a demon in the water. They attack as soon as a PC reaches the boat, getting a free action to strike as they strike from below.

ANTHROPHAGE SUNRA

Size: 6', 140lbs

INT: -9 PER: +2

WIL: N/A CHA: -6

STR: +3 DEX: +1

CON: 0 SPD: +4 (in water) 0 on land

Ability Level: 6

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 4, Claw DR 5

Special Abilities: Mindless

TREASURE

Inside the sunken hull are two chests, one contains a bag of 64 Quan Emperors and three quaga pearls. The other chest contains a small, violet quaga pearl (worth 250lbs), and a small woodblock print of a beautiful Mandalan woman. Thirsty Ru will pay 5gl per Emperor, otherwise they are worth only 2gl apiece to all other merchants on the isles, and the Thaecians will take them for only 1gl each. However, on the mainland they can be worth up to 100 lumans each if the PCs find the right collector. For Thirsty Ru however, the real treasure is the portrait. It is a picture of his favorite concubine, Dreaming Lotus, and he will reward the PCs with the 500gl and all the nectar they can drink in return.

THE BLUFFS

To the west, the land rises in a gentle slope. The soil becomes sandy and the trees thin out, leading to open meadows filled with high grass, bushes and rare flowers. In the west, the bluffs overlook the Azure ocean and to the east, the PCs can see the entire island spread out below them, silhouetted in the moons' light. (If they are looking for the rigger, they will notice that there is no fire burning on the beach.) There is no sign of the anthrophage, but to the north, there is a strange glow in the night.

If the PCs investigate, they walk for a while through the sleeping meadows until suddenly, the lead character falls into a covered pit (if Zordaz is with the PCs, he can be the one to fall into the trap.) If the party is looking for traps, it is a Traps roll at -11 to spot.

PIT TRAP

An anthrophage Vajra has created a pit to trap his prey. Covered with only a light layer of sand, twigs and grasses, it drops into a steep sided pit lined with loose, making it almost impossible to climb out of once trapped. The pit is almost twenty feet deep and the hungry Vajra is waiting at the bottom, ready to devour its helpless prey.

When a PC falls in, roll d20 minus the PC's DEX. This is how many feet the character has fallen into the pit before they stopped. To climb back out without a rope requires a Climbing roll at -15. A rope and the help of someone pulling reduces the penalty to -9 minus the pulling character's STR.

Mishap: fall back 5 feet
Failure: fall back 3 feet
Partial Success: hold ground
Success: climb up 3 feet
Critical: climb up 5 feet

If at any point, the trapped character falls below 15 feet, the anthrophage will emerge and try to drag them down the rest of the way. If the PC escapes from the pit, the Vajra will disappear via a network of tunnels it has dug under the meadows and ambush the PCs again further up the trail.

ANTHROPHAGE VAJRA

Size: 5', 190lbs
INT: -9 PER: +4 hearing

WIL: N/A CHA: -6
STR: +5 DEX 0
CON: +4 SPD: -2
Ability Level: 6
Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 6, Claws DR7
Armour: PR 3, natural armour
HP: 28
Special Abilities: Mindless

THE WITCHGATE RUINS

The northernmost tip of the island rises to an open clearing lit by lantern flowers, which accounts for the strange glow seen by the PCs. Three huge stones, a type not found anywhere else on the island, lie here half sunken into the sandy soil. Wizards and shaman will feel strange eldritch energies ebbing and flowing around the stones. The glyphs that were carved onto the stones have been deliberately scratched out and defaced. These are the ruins of an ancient witchgate, though who built it and why, or where it might lead if rebuilt, remains a mystery.

THE LOST CAMP

The east side of the island is covered in thick jungles overflowing with lush tress, vines ferns and grasses. It is soon obvious that the anthrophage came this way, leaving a clear trail through the thick underbrush, leading north. After a short journey, the PC hear strange barking noises ahead. Sneaking up, the PCs can see an open clearing, filled with ruins of what was once a campsite. Smashed chests and barrels litter the ground. A long dead firepit, filled with filth, decaying bodies and waste sits in the centre. Scattered around, scraps of cloth from old tents hang from the trees or snagged on branches. The only thing left untouched is a small boat, dragged hear from the lagoon by some deranged survivor. The anthrophage the PCs have been chasing is here, hopping around eagerly as two large, darkened figures are hammering at the orb with heavy rocks. As the PCs watch, they shatter it with a mighty blow.

They are barking furiously, but stop suddenly as they start to sniff the air (if Zordaz is with them, he will try to walk into the camp asking if they have seen his lost drac pup). Slowly, they turn towards where the PCs are hiding. Both anthrophage were one Kang, before the ravages of Black Malla turned their skin a sickly black and the flesh fell away revealing the bloody

tissue beneath. Both the Kang and the Mandalan attack immediately.

ANTHROPHAGE KANG

Size: 6'7", 150lbs

INT: -9 CHA: -6

WIL: N/A PER: -4

STR: +4 DEX: +2

CON: +2 SPD: 0

Ability Level: 6, 10 for the larger one in armour

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 5, Claw DR 6

Special Abilities: Mindless, Black Malla

Armour: the larger one is wearing the remains of his old armour PR 3

Hit Points: 28/34

CAMP LOOT

Everything remotely edible has been devoured by the anthrophages, and nearly everything else has been smashed. The PCs can find dented, golden candelabra (50), a bolt of silver gossamer (51gl), and 59gl in assorted coins.

BACK TO THE BEACH

This section applies whenever the PCs decide to head back to the beach, whether or not they have learned the fate of the orb or not.

If they are not already aware that something is wrong, they may notice that something is wrong (PER -3) as they approach the windrigger; the campfire is out, making it hard to see that the far side of the windrigger has been smashed to pieces. It is quickly obvious that there is something large moving around inside the hull, making deep, guttural noises.

There is no sign of Talis, at first, though the PCs can see a shape in the sand if they circle the hull. As the PCs approach the prone pilot, a cloud of neurovores rises from his skull and fly off, sated in their hunger. Talis was knocked unconscious by the anthrophage currently invading his ship and became an easy meal for the parasites. If the PCs manage to revive him, he is nothing more than an empty shell now, permanently beyond any help or healing.

Inside the rigger is a Monad anthrophage who smashed his way inside looking for something to eat. The rigger is ruined now, and the only way off the island is the small boat left back at the Lost Camp. The Monad comes out once he

hears people outside and attacks the first PC he sees. Any PC knocked unconscious during the fight will be swarmed by the waiting neurovores, who steal 1 INT per round until the PC reaches -7, at which point they become a mindless vegetable, permanently.

MONAD ANTHROPHAGE

Size: 6'7", 150lbs

INT: -9 PER: 0

WIL: N/A CHA: -6

STR: +8 DEX: -4

CON: +9 SPD: -4

Ability Level: 5

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 8, Punch DR 10

Special Abilities: mindless

P: 40

If the GM chooses, they can have the unfortunate Talis rise as an anthrophage, who will attack the PCs after three rounds.

ANTHROPHAGE TALIS

Size: 7' 170lbs

INT: -9 PER: +3

WIL: N/A CHA: -6

STR: +1 DEX: +1

CON: 0 SPD: +1

Ability Level: 4

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR2, Punch 3(gauntlets)

Armour: partial ceremonial plate PR 3

Special Abilities: Mindless

Hit Points: 22

GOING HOME

The only way off the island is by the small boat left at the Lost Camp. It is a slow ride home which can take up to two days (1day minus d20-Sailor or Navigation skill, hours). A GM can use this time to get the PCs to Cella or Eros island. More enterprising GMs can send the PCs towards Gargantua, Farique or Swailia (see Chapter 12 for further adventure ideas).

Those wishing to move things along can have the PCs picked up by a passing Zandur dhow on its way to Thaecia.

CHAPTER 9, CELLA AND PERIDIA ISLANDS.

There are a number of ways to get the PCs to Cella. They can be picked up escaping from Dalia by a Zandir ship heading to Eros; They can take a sight-seeing trip with Skyheart; Nessa might order them to Eros to pick up a Thaisian troupe; They may be forced to flee Thaecia if the Enchanters have discovered they have stolen Thrayal's Sword, or found out they helped Dander escape from Nearwan; Or perhaps a beautiful stranger takes an interest in one of the PCs and asks her to slip away with him to an island of warm breezes, romantic glades and soft beaches of black sand.

CELLA

This tiny island, barely ten square miles across is ringed by wide beaches of black sand that stretch out for miles beneath a warm shallow sea. The interior of the island is covered with tall jarool palms, gumsugar melon trees, forests of purple bamboo with clear pools surrounded by shady glades of soft grasses. Rare and colour avir and feathered dractyls fly through the treetops, chased by playful l'latha and watched by curious tardisites. No predators dares set a claw on the island and even the insects do not bite, for the island is under Her protection.

THE MANSE OF THE ENCHANTRESS

Just off the beach on the eastern shore is a manse made of purple stone. A palace in miniature, the walls have no corners or obvious joins, each wall flowing into each other like a perfectly carved statue. The door and window frames are made from polished gold and set with idyllic scenes made from stained glass. The manse has no wall or gate, only a garden planted with everblooms, lantern flowers and thrallback roses, each petals as unique and intricately coloured as its namesake. A pathway made from the same purple stone, leads up from the beach to an open double door. The Thaisians say that if the doors were ever closed, the stained glass upon the doors would depict a

scene of such breathtaking beauty that it would crush the heart of any mortal who looked upon it.

Inside the cool shade of the grand foyer there are dozens of statues of naked, frolicking, Muses, nymphs and Thaisians. Painting of floating cities and otherworldly, six dimensional landscapes line the walls, On the floor, a mosaic of abstract knots and spirals is made of tiles cut from precious jewels. Everything is coated in dust and the droppings of the avirs that nest in the corners of the gilded frames. Room after room in the manse is empty or filled with covered furniture under a geological layer of dust. Finally, in the middle of the manse there is a garden. Tall, branchless palms surround a raked stone garden with a small waterfall emptying into a pool filled with lotus and sleepy moonfish. The whole garden is shaded by what the PCs think is a sheet of gossamer suspended between the trees, until it starts to descend.

As it comes down, it reveals itself to be a gossamer pavilion of pale violet, similar to the homes of the Thaecians, but much larger and ringed by golden filigree designs similar to the mosaic floors of the manse. As it settles over the pool, the curtained door open, and a voice that sounds like smoked honey asks, "Who comes into my home uninvited?"

Inside the pavilion is a highbacked throne and a tall mirrorframe made from yellow amberglass. For an instant, the PCs can see a part of the mirror: the frame almost empty except for a few shards. Then vision of grace stands up from the throne and walks towards them, and suddenly the PCs would no longer notice if their hair was on fire. Clad in a dress of sheer white gossamer that clings and flows to hint at the curves and flawless violet skin beneath. Her face, ringed with shining plum coloured hair is almost to beautiful to look upon. No one who has seen her has ever been able to properly describe what they have seen. Even the most skilled poet of the third age, Stanzar was said to break down into tears when asked to compose an ode to her beauty. When she smiles to the PCs, it is like all the light of the universe is focused on them alone.

The Enchantress of the Shoals leads them through the manse, now suddenly clean of dust

and grime, every surface shining as if freshly scrubbed. In an solarium overlooking the ocean she motions for them to sit and an oceanyd appears from nowhere with a plate of melon slices, sugarbulbs and glasses of iced wine. She asks the PCs what brings them to her home, and with that the PCs will begin to talk about their adventures. The tales will grow more outlandish as the PCs try to outdo each other for her attention. Finally, as the PCs begin to realize that they have been speaking for hours, she smiles and says, "It has been so long since I have had company. You may all remain here as long as you wish." Then, turning the PC with the highest CHA (male or female) she will say, "And you will be my consort."

She stands and holds out her perfect hand. The chosen PC must make a WIL roll at -18 to resist. If they refuse her, she will simply turn and try with the PC with the next highest CHA. If both refuse, or the other characters object, she will tell them, "You all may stay here as long as you wish. Your every whim and desire will be catered too, your every desire sated. The manse is yours, but do not return to the garden. I bid thee all, an end to want." She then takes the hand of the chosen PC and starts to lead him/her out of the room.

If the other PCs continue to object, or try and come into the garden, the Enchantress will grow angry and her voice takes on a dangerous edge. "Would you rob him (the chosen PC) of paradise? A lifetime here in my arms where he would live each day in ecstasy. Where he will not grow old, enfeebled or feel the decaying touch of age or disease until a gentle, natural death took him? You!" she points at the PC with the next highest CHA. "Perhaps you would like to take his place? Can you turn down a lifetime of rapturous joy, free of want or pain?"

If the PCs continue to object she will become visibly angry and the manse grows dark, like thick clouds have drifted over the suns. "You care for this wretch so much, you may have him back. I give him to you, with all his darkest desires exposed to the world!" She grabs the forehead of the chosen PC and there is a magical pulse that rocks the room like a shockwave. When she releases him, he collapses on the floor, dazed and groaning, but alive. "I do not suffer fools, and I am never

denied. You wish to save this loathsome soul," she says kicking the PC at her feet, "then you will go to the island of Peridia and bring me back a mirrorshard. Otherwise this one will spend the rest of his days shunned and alone."

With that, she vanishes and the manse instantly becomes dusty and empty. If the PCs try to remain on the island, they will find themselves constantly drenched by thunderstorms, mocked by tardisites, harassed by l'latha, plagued by insects and the near constant targets of the island's avir's morning constitutional.

The immediate effect on the PC is that they have permanently lost 1 CHA. He will another point of CHA each day until he reaches -7, at which point not even his own mother would be able to stand his presence.

If the PCs do not argue with the Enchantress, she delivers exactly what she promised. The PCs may remain on the island, searved by oceanyds and entertained by Thaisian performers for as long as they desire. The chosen PC vanishes into the Enchantress's pavilion and is never seen or heard from again. After a few months, the Enchantress may ask the PCs to fetch her a mirrorshard, in exchange for granting one favour to each character. Doing a favour with the Enchantress will clear any record of wrongdoing they may have with the Thaeicians as they would not dare to interfere with someone on a mission for the Enchantress.

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE:

The Enchantress of the Shoals is a near immortal sorceress of untold power. Any tricks the PCs try to pull over on her, magical or otherwise are brushed aside like a small fly. She cannot be harmed in any way by the PCs, but sufficiently irritated and she will cast the Diminishing CHA curse on the entire party.

If the PCs ask around about Peridia, any island will direct them to Crupio, and elderly Thaisian adventure on Eros isle who has explored most of the southern Rim. He will tell the PCs about the dangers of Caverncliff, how to approach it and about the dangers that lurk inside. "Ah, but what beauty." He says with a reminiscent smile on his face. "There are things of such beauty there."

“What you gotta do is buy some scintilla, bladders and a stout rope, then lash everyone together real tight with as many bladders as you can. Use the scintilla for light because they’ll float and won’t go out like torches. Then you get a small raft for all your gear and armour, but make sure you keep your sword in your hand or a spell on your lips, cuz you’re gonna need them! Once you get to the main cavern, make for the far side as fast as you can and look for the crooked crystal. I’d say, ‘May the Enchantress smile on you’, but, hehehe, we all know that ain’t gonna happen.”

Crupio will offer to row the PCs out to Peridia, but will not go in. He promises to return in three days. If the PCs are not waiting, he will assume they have been killed and go back to Eros and compose an ode about the folly of angering the Enchantress.

PERIDIA ISLAND, HERE BE DRAGONS

Peridia island rises like a fortress from the waters of the Azure ocean. Volcanic forces in the ancient past thrust a column of earth up through the crust, up through fathoms of cold black water and into the suns, where hot magma and ash poured forth into the sky for years beyond counting. When the rumblings had stilled and the liquid rock no longer flowed, the island of Peridia had settled into its current, column-like shape, surrounded by sheer cliffs, tempered by the tropic waters of its birth.

The windrigger pilots of Thaecia will not fly over the island, and even the captian of the mightiest Windship-of-War may consult her charts, then refuse. The skies above Peridia are marked with the most dangerous warning sigil they have, though it does not say why. The only way in, is by boat.

Sheer cliffs break the water into a heavy chop and strong currents make any approach extremely difficult. The lower cliffs, worn smooth by water and wind are a difficult climb and are shunned even by nesting sea-avir. Higher up, they become a jagged mess of jutting overhangs made of razor sharp rocks. A small cave just below the waterline on the northern side of island is only break in the cliff wall. Though flooded most of the day, for a half hour at the

lowest ebb of low tide it half empties, providing access to one of the strangest wonders of Talislanta, the Caverncliff.

CAVERNCLIFF

During low tide, the water level of the tunnel falls to just over five feet, with roughly three feet of clearance. Wadng through the tunnel is further hindered by a strong current rushing out towards the ocean and any round where a PC is standing still (including in Combat), they must make a STR or DEX roll at -3, or risk being swept off their feet and being carried out into the open sea. There is no natural light and the rushing waters and echoing cavern make things hard to see and hear; all visual and auditory PER rolls are at -4.

It requires three successful Swim (Difficulty -10), or STR rolls (Difficulty -15) [+1 to Difficulty for every bladder carried] rolls to make it halfway down the tunnel. The problem is that the tide reverses halfway in.

The tide reverses after d10 rounds and water begins to rush back into the cave. It provides a +3 to all Swim rolls, but the tunnel is flooding quickly and the consequences of a mishap can be disastrous. Each round, the PC must make a successful Swim roll at -9 (or STR/DEX at -14) to recover or loose 7HP(-CON) in drowning damage per round. Out of control characters will be spit into the main cavern after d6 rounds.

Halfway down the tunnel, there (is what appears to be) a large rock just below the surface that provides to a safe place to rest and catch your breath for a moment. The rock is actually the head of a large lurker that has made the tunnel its home. During low tide, it rests in a shallow hollow, watching and waiting to snag any passing prey. Mistaking its head for a rock is a very unwise decision as the lurker gains one free Bite attack on the unlucky appetizer.

LURKER

Size: 7;4", 422 lbs

Attributes

| | |
|--------|---------|
| INT-7 | PER +3 |
| WIL +4 | CHA N/A |
| STR +6 | DEX +3 |
| CON +3 | SPD +3 |

Ability Level: 12

Attacks/Damage: Tentacles DR10 (three attacks per round), Grasp STR roll at -6 to resist or suffer DR 2 crushing damage per round. Bite DR 4.

Special Abilities: Amphibious

Armour: Scale hide PR2

Hit Points: 60. tentacles n8 each (6 total. Lurker will flee after loosing 4 tentacles)

Past the lurker, the current ebbs and the going is easier; Swim rolls are at Difficulty of 6, STR is at -10, and it only requires two successful rolls to pass. However, as they get closer to the caverncliff, the PCs can feel the water shifting around them in strange ways. The currents change randomly and small whirlpools appear, then fade in the blink of an eye.

A change in the air tells the PCs that they are coming to the end of the tunnel, though all they can see is blackness. The drop off into the pool is sudden and while not far (about five feet at the end of low tide), if the lead PC is not paying attention, they must make a DEX roll at -4 to avoid falling below the surface (where they will automatically be attacked by a Sea Demon out of sight of the other PCs). The water appears bottomless and from the mouth of the tunnel, it is impossible to see the other side of the pool with normal scintilla light. As the PCs start to swim out into the blackness, the Sea Demons who call Caverncliff their home begin to circle. They attack suddenly, becoming whirlpools and try to suck the PCs down below the surface (opposed STR rolls). Any PC pulled under must fight. For those who remain on the surface, two successful rounds of Swim (at -7 as the Demons try to pull them back) will get the PCs to the crystal beach at the far shore. (A failure means the Demon attacks, Mishap means the PC has been dragged under).

SEA DEMONS (4)

Size: 7'2, 314lbs

Attributes:

| | |
|---------|---------|
| INT +2 | PER +2 |
| WIL +6 | CHA -6 |
| STR +7 | DEX +1 |
| CON +10 | SOPD +4 |

Ability Level: 4

Attacks/Damage: Claws DR 12, Bite DR 8. Two attacks per round

Special Abilities: Almost invisible to detect in water (-8 plus other penalties in the dark). Adopt

liquid form, create whirlpools and undercurrents. Can only be hurt by mage, silver or enchanted weapons. Fire and heat based attacks do double damage.

Armour: Elemental water PR 3

Hit Points: 22

Magic: Aquamancy

Spell: Stolen Breath

Aquamantic Globes (rule book, pg 57). Globes will absorb 16ph of damage before bursting.

Call of the Fathoms: Summon, fish, small wave demon.

Treasure: When the demon dies, its body liquefies, and the black diamond at its heart will sink into the jet black water. Each requires a swimming roll at -9 to retrieve. Worth 400gl each.

The beach at the far side is made of crushed crystal. A lone, six foot, white crystal stands on the beach, though it has acquired a slight lilt over the years. There is a hollow carved in the back of the crystal. If a torch or other light source in the hollow, the light is refracted by the crystal and it sends out beams to other crystals placed around the cavern, causing each one to glow, and suddenly Caverncliff suddenly flares to life.

Crystals of every type, colour and description hang from the walls, ceiling and below the water. The entire cave glitters and gleams like a thousand suns, the crystals breaking the beams of light into rainbows that hang in the misty air. Caverncliff is the inside of a giant geode, driven up from the deepest depth of the earth by cataclysmic volcanic forces that formed the island.

Two major volcanic events shaped Peridia, the first was the rise of the Cavenciff geode, which formed the island's main crater when it collided with the island's underbelly. The second was a mighty volcanic explosion which formed with Caverncliff blocked the main magma flow. The pressure built up over the decades until it exploded, and blew out the side, forming the island's second crater.

Just off the crystal beach, there is an entrance to a natural stairway that leads upwards. This stairway is a natural formation, but there is evidence that it was once maintained. The faintest remnant of carved reliefs in the walls

suggest that once, long ago this tunnel was well used. The climb is brief and the PCs walk out into the hot sun through a small crack at the bottom of a massive cliff wall.

There is little to hint at where the PCs should start looking for the mirrorshard. The land seems empty and the crater walls rise up from all sides. The walls that surround most of the island are over fifty feet high and require a Climbing roll at -11 to scale. Looking inland, the PCs can see the crater basin spread out below them, covered in sun bleached, rocky terrain. From the tunnel into Caverncliff, the crater stretches northeast for miles before it twists to the east, the crater walls obscuring what lies behind. The land is a barren waste of low hills, empty riverbeds and broken lava fields. There are only two areas that look interesting; a set of ruins only a few miles from the tunnels, and beyond that a small wood, one of the only spots of greenery on the isle. Only a few tufts of sharp brown grass, some hardy bushes and a few lonely, stunted trees struggle through the hardscrabble soil, but the island is alive with birds and avir. Everywhere they look, great flocks of seabirds and ocean going avir are soaring through the air, guarding nests or squabbling over territory, mates and food.

THE RUINS OF NATATORIA

During the third and fourth millenniums, Natatoria was a favoured spa of the Archeon elite. They built a great bath-house that housed a hundred pools and contained nyphariums, pleasurdromes and nacoleums that rivaled Locus itself. Their baths were favoured by the Archeans because the hot waters that bubbled to the surface here shared some of the fabled properties of the waters of Farique. Not as strong, but without the dangers of that island's predator ridden jungles. During the Great Disaster, however, the spa was abandoned, then forgotten.

Nothing remains of the great Natatoria bathhouse but a few crumbling pillars, broken statues and scattered building stones, stained by nesting avir and overgrown with grass and lichen. Anything of value was looted long ago and most of the pools are now clogged with rubble or were sealed during the calamities of the Great Disaster. But a few remain, still full of

warm and soothing waters. The PCs can easily find one such pool, filled with hot water that has a faint sulphur smell. The pool heals 5hp for every hour spent resting in the water.

TANGLEWOOD GROVE

The faint glimpse of green seen from Caverncliff leads to a copse of twisted looking trees. Bleached white bones litter the ground between the roots, while nestled in the dead leaves are many apple-sized pods and what appears to be a suit of armour. A Naturalism, Botomancy or Survival skill roll (at -5) will identify these trees as dangerous tanglewood. The PCs may also notice that none of the island birds or avir are going anywhere near the trees.

TANGLEWOOD TREE

Many of the trees on Peridia are a tropical form of tanglewood that is, if anything, more bloodthirsty and vicious than its temperate cousin. They often grow in clusters and litter the surrounding ground with unexploded seedpods that can burst open when stepped on. Anytime a PC makes a significant step around a tanglewood tree (including combat maneuvers such as Dodges) without first making a PER roll, (or suffers a Mishap), roll D20. On a 1, 10 or 20, the PC has stepped on a pod, which now has a 50% chance of exploding. This grove has five tanglewood trees.

Size: 10-20ft tall

STR: +4, SPD-1 (all other attributes are N/A)

Ability Level: 3-4

Special Abilities: Entangle (Make and opposed STR roll to escape). 3 attacks per round.

Damage: Seed Pod DR 12 (to five foot radius).

Crush DR 5 (must Entangle first)

Hit Points: 50, 10 per branch

Below the tanglewood trees are the remains of the tress previous victims. If the PCs risk looking around they must first deal with the trees, but they can find: a chipped, dented and faded set of Phantasian ceremonial armour. Most of the padding has rotted away, but it can be restored and fitted for 50-100gl. A Danuvian halberd blade (no shaft) that has been enchanted to make it lighter than normal (STR -1 to wield). An ivory scrollcase (worth 60gl). The scrolls inside have crumbled to dust, but still retain some for their power and are worth 100gl to an alchemist. Plus three small silver vials (all are one use only). Requires an Alchemical skill to identify.

One contains a Healing Potion (restores 20hp). The other two contain dream essence. One is a standard pleasure dream, but the other is a night-terror that can be used to lure the nightstalker hunting in Caprica.

THE LAST DRAGON OF PERIDIA

As the PCs head east, they cross a field of dried lava when suddenly the constant din of avir goes silent. The silence is so sudden that for a moment, it feels as if the island is holding its breath. Then there is a horrible shriek, followed by a thunderous crack of air like a ship's sail catching the wind. Rising up from the far eastern crater-wall, the PCs spot something that has not been seen by human eyes in over a decade. One of the last crested dragons of Talislanta takes to the air on great spanglor wings, make two great circles over the island, then heads out towards the open sea.

It takes a few hours of walking for the PCs to reach the bend in the crater. This sunken region is the second, smaller crater town out of the island by the great volcanic eruption. The island's violent past is even more evident here; there are far fewer plants and the land is covered with fields of dried lava that either steams with inner heat, or has dried and cracked into thousands of razor sharp shards. Scattered boulders, some the size of a small castle have been smashed into the earth, and the land sinks in the middle like a fallen cake. At its lowest point, thick yellow smoke rises from the surface of a mirror still late, and the smell of brimstone hangs in the air.

Investigating the region, the PCs eventually find a small cave that leads into the crater-wall along the southern rim. The tunnel is little more than a large crack that leads into the stone wall and is much too small for the dragon to have come out of, but it is the only way in, and further investigation reveals something glinting somewhere up ahead. Thirty yards in the crack opens up into a tunnel that is just over ten feet wide. The tunnel is not natural, but judging from the huge claw marks in the walls, it was not made by human hands. The floor is made up of sand and pebbles and there is a large silver dressing mirror stands in the middle of the corridor, positioned in such a way that it catches

the light from the crack and sends it up the tunnel. Past the mirror, it ends abruptly at a rubble strewn wall.

The tunnel is forty feet long and besides the mirror, completely empty. Strange, slithering tracks run along the ground (A Naturalism or Survival roll, or previous experience and the PCs may note that the tracks resemble land kra, but the tunnel lacks the devastation and filth normally found in kra holes. There is a strange, reptilian smell in the corridor, like burning copper and scorched meat. There is more light ahead and as the PCs approach, they begin to make out the distinct glitter of gold.

As they get closer, the PCs catch sight of the dragon's horde; a massive pile of gold, silver and jewels. In their eagerness to get to the treasure, the PCs might miss (PER at -4) the low, cooing purr that rumbles through the corridor like fading thunder. Just as the tunnel opens into the vast treasure cavern, their way is suddenly blocked by the massive, draconian head of a curious wyrm. The infant dragon doesn't know what to make of these curious creatures that have invaded its home, so it alternates between curious approaches, hissing indignantly and cautious sniffing, trying to assess whether the PCs are edible. It will not attack unless the PCs attack it first or corner it and it has no other way out. It can be chased into away with loud noises and threatening gestures (it is not afraid of, or harmed by, fire). If chased off, it will flee down the far tunnel that leads to the outer coastal wall and begin to cry for its mother.

CRESTED DRAGON WYRM

Size: 14', 2500lbs

| | |
|---------|---------|
| INT: -4 | PER: 0 |
| WIL: +2 | CHA: -3 |
| STR: +5 | DEX: +2 |
| CON: +5 | SPD: +1 |

Ability Level: 4

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 10, Tail DR 8

Special Abilities: Breath fire once per day, DR 16

Armour: Protective carapace PR 10

Hit Points: 30

The PCs can only access the treasure if they kill or drive off the wyrm. This natural cavern is huge and dark, but ornate braziers (most half

melted) line the walls. In the center of the room is the mountain of treasure, containing millions of lumens worth of gold, silver and precious metals, all piled into a gigantic nest. At the top of the pile, there are three giant, leathery egg-sacks and two more that have been ripped open and partially eaten. These are the dragon eggs and they squirm at the noise of the PCs climbing over the coins. The nest has more treasure than the PCs could ever dream. There is enough coin and gems here to buy the entire Crimson Horde six, along with magical items of every description -- except for the Enchantress's mirrorshard.

DRAGON LEATHER

The leather of the dragon egg sacks is incredibly tough and will not be missed by the dragon or the wyrmm. If the PCs wish, they can gather enough of it to make two sets of dragon-leather armour that has the same protection as chainmail. (PR 5, WT 3, STR-3, Cost 1,000. Cost-to-Make: 400gl per suit)

In the shadows around the edges of the cavern there are large piles of debris; the remains of shipwrecks, building and creatures that Angrabodhar has looted to build her horde. She cares little for anything beyond gold, metal, jewels and magical items, and so everything else, such as potions, cloth or wooden items were ignored and pushed aside. Some can still be found here, though she has also pushed much of the wyrmm's waste here, so a throughout search make have particularly caustic circumstances. One item is a small jug once filled with fine wine, now turned to a potent vinegar. This vinegar can be poured into the waters of Caverncliff and will drive away the sea demons until the tide changes (roughly two hours), which should be more than enough time for the PCs to make it back out without being molested. (Any items removed from the debris will not be noticed by Angrabodhar).

Not long after the PCs arrive in the cavern, there is a huge rush of wind that comes from the far corridor leading out towards the cliff wall. Angrabodhar has returned.

ANGRABODHAR

While dragons usually abandon their young, Angrabodhar the crested dragon, has become aware of her species' plight and has chosen to remain and care for her newly birthed young until they are ready to fly with her to the Unknown lands beyond Talislanta. She has protected them as best she is capable, but soon after the first two wyrmm's hatched, an opteryx snatched one of the young from the cave mouth while she was off hunting. She has spent her days since looking for the monster, but so far without success.

Like all dragons, she is inscrutable and quick tempered. She is also aware of every gem and coin in horde will notice with a glance if even so much as a copper penny is missing. If the PCs have killed the wyrmm, she will immediately attack until she, or the PCs are killed.

If the PCs have not harmed the wyrmm, she will immediately demand what they are doing in her cave and order the return of all treasure they have stolen. If the PCs comply and tell her what they are looking for, or even mention the Sorceress, Angrabodhar will interrupt and say, "I know what are seeking. You are not the first, but perhaps you are the luckiest. In times past I would have killed you only for your trespass. But I have grown tired of that little witch using me as the executioner of her spurned suitors. Perhaps you may do me a service, in exchange for your lives and the shard."

"To the north, there is a forest of rocky spires, too tightly packed for me to enter. Hidden within is the lair of an opteryx that threatens my young. Kill the beast and bring me back its three eyes as proof and I will give you the mirrorshard." Angrabodhar is in no mood to negotiate, and this is a limited offer. She will not kill them outright unless they attack her, but she will stop them from leaving the island until they comply with her demands.

CRESTED DRAGONS

The most intelligent of Talislanta's dragons has been driven to near extinction by the constant hunting of opteryx, Araq and other, more capitalistic hunters looking to fill the demand for dragon parts in the markets of Tarum,

Irdan and the Kang Empire. There are rumours of crested dragons in the mountains of eastern Raj, or hiding deep in the Kharakhan wastes, but these rumours remain unconfirmed since no one is in a hurry to go to these regions and investigate. In fact, most of the surviving dragons departed Talislanta for other lands. Perhaps a few chose to remain, through for their own inscrutable reasons.

Size: 30-40ft. 4-6tons

Attributes:

INT: +3 PER: +2

WIL: +5 CON: +5

DEX: -2 STR: +10

SPD: +1 CHA: 0

Ability Level: 20+

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 20, Claw DR 18, Tail DR 13 (two attacks per round).

Special Abilities: Flight. Breath fire four times per day DR4/level. Converse in up to five languages.

Magic: Choice of two Orders (usually Natural Magic, Pyromancy or Wizardry) and 4 modes at ability level. Immune to regular fire. Magical fire only does ½ damage.

Armour: PR 8. Natural skin.

HP: 70

ANGRABODHAR

Size: 38ft.5tons

Attributes:

INT: +3 PER: +3

WIL: +5 CON: +5

DEX: -1 STR: +10

SPD: 0 CHA: -2

Ability Level: 19

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 20, Claw DR 18, Tail DR 13 (two attacks per round).

Special Abilities: Flight. Breath fire four times per day DR76. Converse in up to five languages. Immune to regular fire. Magical fire only does ½ damage.

Armour: PR 8. Natural skin.

HP: 70

Magic: Pyromancy, Wizardry. She knows all Pyromancy and Wizardry spell from the book as well as two Archeon Spells:

Sassan's Pyromania: CM -1. Causes any item to burst into flame and consume it for 10 rounds.

Will not harm flesh, but will destroy anything non-living such as clothing and hide armour.

Sassan's Fiery Motes: CM +1. Conjures up 30 fiery motes that do DR 2 each.

Infernal Rain: CR +13. Inflicts 5hp for five rounds.

THE SPIRE FOREST

Along the northern crater wall there is a strange landscape of rocky spires that thrust up like columns from the earth. The columns range from only a few feet, to over fifteen and are at -7 to climb. They are tightly packed and form a dense labyrinth which is home to an opteryx which is also in the process of building a nest for its own eggs. It knows when the PCs enter the spires and will try to sneak up on them behind (a Guard roll at -10 to avoid being surprised) before they find its nest. It fights on its belly until things are not going well (less than half its HP) then it will turn and flee, attempting to get out of the spires and into the air.

At the center of the spires is a small nest made out of the bones and rotting corpse of the wyrmm. Inside are three eggs the size of a man's head, each the colour of dried blood and covered with a sticky, smelly slime. If the PCs can bring the eggs to Angrabodhar, she will devour them with obvious relish and rewards the PCs with a treasure of their choice from her horde. She will also volunteer to take the PCs over the crater walls (carrying the PCs in a wrecked boat, not on her back) to a small atoll where they will be seen by Crupion and taken back to Cella.

OPTERYX

Size: 30'wingspan. 15' long, 947lbs

INT: -5 CHA: N/A

WIL: +6 PER: -7

STR: +9 DEX: -2

CON: +7 SPD: +2 in air. -2 on ground

Ability Level: 10

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR10. Tail Claw DR 17. Three attacks per round.

Special Abilities: Immune to illusion. Can carry more than half its weight in flight. Three heads
Armour: Heads PR 6. Hide PR 2

HP: 69

Once the opteryx is dead, Angrabodhar will meet them out in the open and reward them with a small hand mirror with only a single shard of glass set into the frame. She then flies off with the warning, "Warn your kind never to return to

this island or I shall wreck vengeance upon these isles the likes of which you cannot imagine.”

Looking into the shard, the PCs do not see their reflection, but a shadowy figure that seems illusively familiar, like a glimpse of a lost love through a crowd.

To escape the island, the PCs must still traverse Caverncliff cave and the sea-demons that lurk there, unless they have the jug of vinegar from Angrobhar’s cave or some other idea. Crupion is waiting in his boat, “More looking for a quiet place to compose my songs than any real hope of seeing your sorry faces again.”, he says with eny genuine surprise as he rows them back to Cella island while peppering them with questions on what they saw there. The Sorceress does not greet them personally and the mirrorshard is taken by an Oceanyd. But the manse is clean and open to the PCs, filled with flowers, foods and nubile nymphs for as long as the PCs choose to say. Of the Sorceress, she never comes down from her floating pavilion.

CHAPTER 10, THE DARK PILLAR

One afternoon in Caprica, Nessa approaches the PCs asks for a moment of their time. She takes them down to the beach where there is a waiting party of three Parthenians. Two are carrying massive tridents, the third is unarmed, but carries a small chest and inclines its head slightly in greeting. “Are these the units we requested?” it asks Nessa in a strangely hollow voice.

“A moment, please.” she says then turns to the PCs. “Three-One here,” she says pointing to the unarmed Parthenian, “has requested the ... aid of some adventurers. From what I can gather, they need extra guards for some sort of trade mission. I don’t know why, or what they are trading, or why they need you, but they promise to pay well ...”

At this point, Three-One interrupts “One gold ingot for each participant, payable immediately.” It opens the chest to reveal six solid gold bars. Nessa nods and continues. “Apparently, you will only be gone overnight, but where you are going I have no idea.”

Most questions directed at Three-One will be met with a cold, mechanical stare. It will only answer three questions: Something along the lines of ‘why us’ will be answered, “Organics required.” If asked what the mission is, or how dangerous it might be: “Danger assessed minimal, given units adhere to program.” How long they will be gone: “Travel time, eight hours. Transaction, variable. Estimated return to present co-ordinates, one hour past sunrise.”

This is a yes or no proposition. If the PCs turn him down, Three-One will ignore the PCs from that point on and Nessa will sigh and go look for someone else. If they accept, the PCs are given one hour to gather their gear and return to the beach (Nessa also suggests they bring along their own food, Parthenian understanding of organic consumption is pretty basic.) Three-One will only give the ingots to the PCs before they board, so Nessa will volunteer to take them until PCs return. The Parthenians then take the PCs to a waiting bronze boat that skims along the

water with no visible means of propulsion. A few minutes later, the island is only a faint shadow in the distance when the PCs first see the trireme.

The Parthenian ship dwarfs any sailing vessel or windship the PCs have ever seen. Over two hundred feet long and plated with shining, untarnished bronze, it rises four stories out of the water and is topped by a single, gigantic saffron yellow sail that could blanket an entire Festival grounds. As the boat approaches the PCs can make out the great brass bearded face affixed to the front of the ship. The PCs get the uncomfortable impression that the ship's huge, hooded eyes are watching them as the little boat glides up alongside. Three-One, the PCs and one of the Parthenian guards climb aboard up a ridged ladder. The moment the Parthenian guard steps onto the ladder, the last guard and the boat zip away and disappear around the side.

On board, the spotless deck is made out of a jade-green wood that shines like metal in the sun's light. The deck is completely empty, there are no signs of any other Parthenians or anyone else, and what is even more peculiar, the deck is completely clear of the ropes, chests and assorted tools that litter the deck of every other ship the PCs have ever seen. At some hidden signal, the deck lurches slightly and the ship's sail fills with a previously unfelt breeze. They are underway.

Three-One takes the PCs to a windowless cabin built into the forecabin. Accommodations are very basic, with only six wooden bunks with no blankets or pillows, a brass brazier for heat, and a pitcher of water next to a plate of some unidentifiable dried fruit. Three-One leaves them with these instructions: "You are permitted aboard the main deck, but it is recommended you begin your rest cycle. You will be retrieved you once we have reached our destination."

The trip is indeed eight hours of tedium.. The ship sails along silently, and any PC with a navigation skill will realize that they are heading straight out into open sea. Once the lesser sun sets, there is nothing to see but open water, stars and the moons. All seven are out tonight, and by the bright light spilling onto the empty deck, the PCs might notice that almost all are round and full. The PCs see no-one for the

duration, not a single Parthenian or anyone else comes up on to the deck and the ship is eerily silent. Except for the creak of the booms and the snap of the sails, the night is dead calm. If the PCs explore the main deck, they find nothing of interest. The only doors appear to be an entrance into the aftcastle, and two sets of massive cargo doors all sealed with thick brass doors with no handles or visible means of opening. The doors cannot be picked, and are almost impervious to damage. Any serious attempt by the PCs to break open the doors will first be met by a stern warning by Three-One. Any further attempts will result in them being 'expelled' from the vessel, a hundred miles from land.

As the night creeps towards midnight a Parthenian, possibly one of the earlier guards, possibly not, comes to the PCs followed by a small woman of a race none of the PCs have seen before. Dressed in a sackcloth robe, she has snow white skin and pupil-less red eyes. She quickly passes the PCs a tray with more water and dried fruit, curtsies and departs. If spoken to, she will only stare incomprehensibly and will be pulled back by the Parthenian. The only thing he says, "Make ready, we are nearly there." yet there is still nothing to see but the stars reflecting off waves.

Then as the ship sails on, the PCs make out a strange blankness against the southern sky. The shadowy absence of stars becomes a great black structure; a massive column of smooth marble that reaches up from the ocean floor, through countless fathoms of empty sea, to a hundred feet into the air. Below the looming column, the Parthenian ship slows, coming to a perfect stop against the featureless black surface. For the first time, the PCs can see the narrow stairway carved into the marble, spiraling upwards until it disappears into the night. Three-One and the two Parthenian guards emerge from the aftcastle, the guards carrying a large iron cube almost five feet square. The sides of the cube shine are polished to a mirror finish, but some deep flaw distorts the character's reflections in disturbing ways.

Three-One climbs over the ship's rail onto stairway and motions for the PCs to follow. Upwards they climb, followed by the Parthenian guards, still carrying their burden. The climb

seems to take much longer than it should, and the PCs lose track of time as they climb, around and upwards, until the Parthenian ship below looks like nothing more than a toy. Finally, they reach the top; a featureless empty circle, almost thirty metres wide. The only flaw in the mirror black surface are grooves cut into the marble, perhaps rain gutters, perhaps not. The two guards carefully set down the cube in the exact centre of the circle, then disappear back down the stairway. Three-One then silently leads each PC to a spot around the edge of the circle, so that they are spaced equal distance from one another. "It is required that you do not move from present location until transaction is complete. Directive mortally imperative."

Once the PCs are in place, Three-One will point to their feet, and the PCs can see that they are each standing in a smaller circle, all part of a much larger, spiraling, circular labyrinth carved into the pillar top. Alien glyphs line the grooves, twisting in on themselves like a swarm of cannibalistic worms and utterly indecipherable to any sane mind. All seven moons are full now. They seem closer and brighter, almost as if they were being drawn towards the pillar, and the PCs notice that they are aligned, one each behind each character. Overhead, directly above hangs Zar, the Dark Moon yawning full and empty like a hungry maw about to swallow the pillar and everything on it.

"Lacerate your palm and spread the blood across the circle at your feet. Not much is required. Remain in your designated positions until transaction is completed and you will not come to damage. I return when the Greater Sun rises." Then without waiting for questions, Three-One disappears down the stairs.

A cold wind blows forlornly across the pillar. Nothing happens until each PC cuts their palm and spreads their blood across the glyphs. The wind picks up, snapping in an instant from a cool breeze to a hard, gusting howl that is thick and heavy with the smell of a coming storm. Black clouds swell across the sky, bloating out the stars and turning the moons in a dark, glowing nimbus. With a thunder crack, rain starts to sputter and fall. As it hits the pillar the raindrops instantly evaporate as if boiled, and as the storm builds the mist starts to rise into the night like the pillar is afire with grey flame,. Then with a

shudder, the cube in the centre of the circle begins to move.

The sides of the cube shift slightly, a barely perceptible change that the PCs feel in at the base of their spine rather than see. Then as the feelings of unease grow, the polished iron surface of the cube begins to ripple like water. As they spread, the ripples spill over onto the other sides of the cube and where the waves meet, they form vile, shifting patterns that disturb the eyes and fill the head with painful thoughts. The ripples spread across the cube, but gather on the top-side, sinking into the surface like water down a drain and forming a small, colourless hole. Thrusting from the void, a long, skeletal limb the colour of quicksilver pushes its way through the top of the cube. The limb is followed by a gaunt humanoid body with wasp-like wings and thin limbs that bend at strange angles. Every inch of its skin a gleaming silver as if its body was made from living quicksilver. The creature's head is long and predatory, the gaping mouth filled with silver fangs dripping with metallic gore. And it has only a single eye; a black polished orb set in silver.

The anxiety fills the PCs almost immediately. It starts as dry, palpable taste in their mouths and an involuntary quiver in their knees as the beast climbs down onto the platform and slowly turns its head to look at each PC. Then it begins to crawl towards one of them....

PANIC DEMON

The creature is a Panic Demon from the continent of Temesia. The Parthenians, who are immune to its fear inducing effects have captured it and are trading to extradimensional traders. Organic blood and sentient souls are required to open the portal and the Parthenians have found that slaves panic too easily and step outside of their circles, thus freeing the demon from the constraints of the labyrinth. As long as the PCs remain in their circles, they cannot be physically harmed by the demon, but it can still use its Fear powers and will start by using them on the PC with the lowest WIL stat.

There is some debate whether panic demons are true demonic entities, or are perhaps some sort of escaped hybrid, or an abomination formed by the elemental landscape of Temesia. Though they do possess a twisted intelligence,

they do not speak or practice magic. When killed, they do not revert back into a pure elemental state. However, if one were killed, you would find a black diamond where its heart should be.

PANIC DEMON

Size: 8', 600lbs

Attributes:

INT 0 PER +2

WIL +7 CHA -6

STR +7 DEX +3

CON +8 SPD +3 on land. +5 in the air

Ability Level: 7

Attacks/Damage: Claws DR 10, Bite DR 14

Armour: metallic skin PR 4

Hit Points: 40

Special Abilities:

Fear Aura: the panic demons constantly radiate an aura of fear and unease that can cause people to hesitate, -2 to Initiative. At the start of combat, a WIL roll at -5 is required, or suffer -1 to all Combat rolls.

Fear Shriek: the scream of the Panic Demon can evoke deep seated fears and phobias from deep within the subconscious. For each scream, all within a 10' radius of the demon must make an Opposed WIL roll. On a Failure, the character has become a trembling, incontinent coward, and will not attack under any circumstances, and can only defend at -5. On a Mishap, the character has become incapacitated with horrible visions of their worst nightmares. The only way to shake off the effects is to get more than 20' away from the demon and make a WIL roll at -5.

Flight (this panic demon's wings have been clipped), Immune to non-magical harm.

Panic Demons are particularly vulnerable to Mysticism spells (double damage, and any WIL checks are made at +0. Just for the record, Thralls are immune to the Fear Shriek, but not the Fear Aura.

The Panic Demon will bombard its chosen victim with screams (once per round for 5 rounds), on a Mishap, the character becomes delusional with fear and runs from the circle, or collapses outside its protection. Attacking the demon with a melee weapon breaks the protection of the circle and the demon can attack normally. Ranged weapons will work (if magic), but spells will not penetrate outside the circle.

After five rounds, the storm changes. A low pitched throbbing begins and even the demon pauses. Suddenly, standing on the platform is a humanoid creature seven and a half feet tall, with oily black skin, sharp horns and four unholy glowing eyes. His only clothing is a kilt made of flayed skin with horrible stretched faces and features still visible. He is carrying a long red-black snake and a folded flap of skin. If one of the PCs happens to look overhead, there is something huge lurking in the clouds. There is something up there, more massive and terrible than even the Parthenian trireme, with strange coloured lighting racing across its gargantuan flanks.

BROOD SLAYER

The slaver has come for the demon and will ignore the PCs unless attacked, or if they have killed the demon. If left alone, it will battle the demon, throwing its vorak to distract it while it tries to trap it with two strictors. The battle lasts for about two minutes before the demon is snared beneath the two twisting, constricting snakes.

If the PCs agitate the slaver, he will throw the vorak at them to distract them while he attacks the demon with the constrictors and a scimitar.

Size: 7'2", 275 lbs

STR +4 PER +5

DEX +1 CHA -4

CON +3 WIL +2

SPD +2 INT -2

CR +5 MR 0

HP 30

Damage

Strictor* +14 DR 4 (constriction, per round).

Vorak** +10 Claw DR 2, Bite DR 4 (per round)

Scimitar +1 +9 DR 11

Unarmed +9 DR 7 (spurs)

Armour: PR 2, chitinous hide.

Special Abilities: Synesthetic vision (range 300'. -3 PER outside range).

*On a successful attack, the snake has wrapped itself around its target and begins to squeeze. STR roll at -8 to break free.

**Thrown. On a successful attack, the vorak has latched onto its target and begins to gnaw and claw. If attacked, it releases and flies back to its trainer.

If the Brood slaver captures the demon or is killed, the low throbbing begins again and

suddenly, the Brood, the demon (if captured) and the strange beast in the sky are gone. The storm slowly clears and the PCs can see the first grey light of the Greater sun in the eastern sky. If the Brood took the demon, there is a small onyx chest. It is not locked and inside are three small pale-blue crystals. If you have those sort of players, remind them that stealing the crystal would be a very bad idea unless they have some way of crossing two hundred miles of open ocean.

If the Brood or the demon are killed, there is nothing left on the pillar. When he returns, Three-One does not seem agitated, but the PCs are not given food or water on the way back. Back on Thaecia, Three-One will demand that Nessa returns all but one of the ingots for "Transaction Failure." Nessa will agree to the terms, and will keep half the ingot herself as a 'finder's fee'.

CHAPTER 11, THE FESTIVAL OF THE BIZARRE, PART II

THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW

The second morning of the Festival, another person is found dead, the same horrified expression on his face. This time it is Thidney, a Thaecian fruitier. The next morning, it is Bayob, a Bordorian musician. Each morning, the Enchanters find someone else dead with no fatal wounds, only a look of supreme horror frozen onto their rictus faces. Each day, it becomes harder and harder for the Enchanters to keep the news of the deaths a secret and a fearful tension descends on the Festival. The visitors begin to spend more time aboard their ships and a few of the vessels even depart. By the last day, nearly half of the island visitor's have gone and the streets of Caprica look empty in comparison.

DAY TWO

Thidney: A Thaecian fruitier. A woman in the neighbouring stall will tell the PCs that Thidney was complaining that he was behind in his deliveries and was looking for a way to work longer hours to catch up.

DAY THREE

Bayob: a lone Bordorian minstrel found curled up behind a stack of crates near the main stage, clutching his obomophone so hard he has cracked it. The Bordorian head of the troupe currently on stage will say that they had taken over for Bayob only a few hours before. Before that, he had been playing on stage for over twelve hours straight.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE DEMERARA'S SUGAR CITIES

Demerara is a nearsighted, ancient Cymrillian woman verging on senility who has been coming to the Festival for over twenty years, each time entering the Festival with her own unique variation on a theme; a beautifully

recreated, almost map perfect rendition of some Talislantian city, made entirely out of sugar, breads and candy.

Some of her past entries have included: Aamahd done entirely in vanilla, the coral city of Isalis, two versions of Cymril, one in classic green, the other colourful and two years ago, a complete model of ancient Xambria. Demerara herself has admitted that, beyond the festival she has never left Cymril, so how she has come to have such extensive knowledge about the far flung cities, is a mystery, even to her. If asked, she will answer, "I only bake what is in my head, dear."

This year her entry is Dracarta, done in red and orange sugar-bread and dusted with red dyed, powdered sugar. Anyone who has seen Dracarta at twilight will remark that the resemblance is uncanny.

The Thaeicians have come to look forward to Demarara's visit, and have adopted her as a sort of Festival mascot. Each year, they go out of their way to see that the old woman is provided with some gifts and all the comforts and luxuries of the island, completely free of charge. They also created the category "Most Edible Metropolis" specifically in her honour. The prize is only a shining purple sash and enough coins to pay for her return the next year, but its presentation is a highlight for the Thaeicians, because she always allows her creation to be eaten at its end. Demarara always seems surprised and happy to win as if she had won the Most Bizarre trophy itself.

DAY FOUR

Sadlinus: A Zandir sailor aboard the 'Darkwater'. He returned to the ship well into the third watch and tried to rouse sleeping patrons into a game of deskstones. They beat him unconscious, but an hour later he began screaming in his sleep. Then suddenly he just stopped, cut off in mid scream.

DAY FIVE

Thery: This elderly Thaeician ran a small menagerie that showcased many of the island's strange flora and fauna. His body had been partially eaten by the pair of crested catdracs he kept as pets, but his expression on what left of his face seems to be the same as the other victims.

DAY SIX

Jlitter: a Thaisian performer with a troupe that calls itself Sapphirical Delights. They had all slept in the Bed of Slumber the day before in preparation for their preparation for their performance of the Dance of the Ecdysistian Stars, which is only performed under the light of the purple moon. After dancing all night, they returned to their pavilion in the early hours of the morning. Jlitter had begun to scream about an hour after they had fallen asleep, but the others could not wake her and she died thrashing in her arms.

DAY SEVEN

This scene happens on the morning of the last day of the Festival, or earlier if the PCs deduce that the "Bed of Slumber" is responsible for the deaths and they go to confront Lentor. His tent is quite and still closed. There is no answer when they call and if they enter they find that the Bed has been mutilated. There is a small hatchet on the floor and it looks like someone used it liberally on the mattress and headboard, the pavilion still swirling with gently falling feathers. Lentor is flung out over the broken bed, his body twisted in a bizarre rigour as if he had been locked in battle. A PER roll (-3) will allow the PCs to spot a small black vial half buried under a pile of feathers. The vial is empty, but it has the same spice and burnt sugar smell as the Weaver's tent. He can identify it as a bottle of Night-Terror#XIII, one of his most potent and frightening dream-essences. He will also confirm that he sold it to Lentor the night before.

If the PCs don't fetch Nessa right away, she will arrive shortly, seeking the source of the psychic disturbance that woke many of the island's Enchanters. She will quickly guess as to what has happened and will order the PCs to carry the bed down to the beach and pick up a bundle of torches along the way, but not to start until she arrives. She departs then meets them at the

beach carrying a scrying orb that she drops onto the mattress. After a short incantation, the mists inside the orb clear and suddenly there is a vision of a horrible three-eyed monster covered in fur that has no color, only shades of darkness. Something is clutched in its long, saber-like claws and it is feasting on a hazy image that like smoke. For a moment as it disappears into the fanged maw of the monster, the smoke swirls into the shape of Lentor, locked in a scream.

Nessa is weeping openly as she passes her hand over the orb and the mists return. Closing her eyes, she says a short prayer for Lentor's soul, and all the others taken by the monster. "That is a nightstalker." She explains. "A hunter from the Nightmare dimension. It must have used the Bed as a portal into this plane, feasting on the astral bodies of those who have slept here. The bed must be destroyed, but I fear that will not stop it. It has already touched the minds of everyone who has slept on it, and it will use their dreams to find a way back into this dimension. Eventually, it will feast on the soul of every single person who has lain here. You must help me destroy the beast."

If the PCs do not have a plan, she outlines one of her own. One of the PCs must sleep on the bed, having first taken a vial of night-terror essence to lure the nightstalker. Nessa will then use the scrying orb to watch the PC's dream. Once the nightstalker appears, she will attempt to draw it fully into the material world where the rest of the PCs can confront and kill it. The greatest danger will be faced by the PC chosen to lure the nightstalker. She will have to face the Nightstalker alone before Nessa can draw the monster out into the material plane.

ASTRAL COMBAT

Combat in the astral plane is resolved in the same manner as regular combat, with two important distinctions. First, the character uses their MR, instead of their CR in all combat actions. Secondly, spells can be cast at a much faster rate, allowing mages to cast multiple spells per round, with the usual multiple action penalties.

Only magical weapons and armour can be taken into the dreamworld. Each item requires a WIL roll at -8(+1 for every additional item) and -2 for any item that has a strong emotional connection

to the PC such as an heirloom or religious object. Alchemical, technological and thaumaturgy items will not manifest.

The character chosen must fight the Nightstalker alone for three rounds before Nessa can draw it far enough out of the astral plane. However, even after its physical body has been drawn into the real world, its astral body continues to fight. Characters put to sleep by the nightstalker's breath manifest on the astral plane after one round. If the characters are powerful enough that a single nightstalker is too easy, have the astral combat attract other beings from the nightmare dimension, such as fiends, nightmares, bat-mantas or more nightstalkers.

NIGHTSTALKER

Size: 10', weightless

INT: +5 PER +5

WIL: +5 CHA: N/A

STR: +5 DEX: +5

CON: +5 SPD: +5

Ability Level: 18

Attacks/Damage: Claw 13

Special Abilities: Apper simultaneously in both the astral and physical planes. Unaffected by illusions. Breath causes sleep (CON vs Ability Level).

Armour: PR 2

Hit Points: 55

SECRET OF THE NIGHTSTAR ROSE

On the sixth night of the Festival, just as the suns are beginning to set, the festival crowd begins to gather by the main stage where a young Dhuna is fussing with a tall red screen. The Festival Committee takes their seats and call for the performance to begin, accompanied by shouts from the audience. With one eye on the setting suns, the Dhuna nervously stammers an apology and says that he must wait until the last ray of light is gone. He waits, watching the suns and ignoring the growing agitation of the committee and jeers from the crowd. Then just as the light of the surrounding scintillas become visible, he mumbles a quick apology, introduces himself as Valerian and musters enough courage to shout, in a voice cracking with nervousness, "The Nightstar Rose!". He then quickly shuffles offstage, carrying the red screen with him.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE A VERY REMARKABLE TOAD

Murgog, a young Mogroth boy has found a small blue skinned toad that has eight eyes, arraigned around its head like a spider. When Murgog lightly presses on the toad, it croaks, casting a random spell from one of its eyes. For a lumen, visitors can try their luck.

1) Stunning Bolt

Shoots out an octarine bolt of eldritch power that strikes the nearest person and knocks them to the ground. The bolt does no damage, but does knock them senseless for a few minutes.

2) Happy Feet

This spell has a radius of about ten feet, and everyone inside must make a WIL roll (-4) or start dancing uncontrollably for one minute.

3) Happy Meal

This spell conjures up a slab of fried erd meat in a bun, a basket of deep fried provender plant cut into strips, a glass of sweat, fizzy liquid and a small toy.

4) Heal

Heals any one malady, or 8HP to whomever pressed the toad

5) Apparition of Desire

Summons up an apparition of the person's greatest desire. The vision is clearly visible to everyone.

6) Flameform

The toad bursts into flame for 30seconds. Make A SPD roll at -3 or suffer 1hp damage.

7) Levitation

The person starts to float upwards without control. They level off at about 50ft, but the spell wears off without warning after an hour or two. After a couple of clients almost drifted out to sea, Murgog went out and cut a bundle of willow switches to be used as emergency tethers.

8) Magnetism

The person becomes heavily magnetized for 1 minute. Any iron item will stick to their skin and smaller items may even be pulled towards them.

A keen eyed PC (PER roll at -2) will notice the Kharakhan giant and a wild-eyed Sarista standing at each end of the stage.

On stage there is a large ceramic pot. In the pot is a large black rose, its blossom closed in sleep. A sad song begins to play, coming from the reed pipe played mournfully by the Dhuna standing off to the side, a strange look of rapture across his features.

The rose begins to unfurl, the petals pulling back to become a naked dryad with flawless black skin, silver hair that moves like a moonbeam and eyes that shine like stars. Slowly, she begins to move, dancing to the tune of the Dhuna's flute with such grace that every eye is locked upon her and all other sounds fall away leaving only the pure sounds of the flute. She dances happiness, she dances heartbreak and she dances joy. When the song ends, she bows and curls back into a sleeping blossom. The crowd erupts into riotous applause and the Committee all rush the stage. Valerian quickly puts up the red screen around the pot before the Committee surrounds him, offering their congratulations, their magicked faces twisted into caricature expressions of happiness, laughter and lust.

The PCs may notice that the blossom is no longer on stage, and the Kharakan and the Sarista are gone. Their pavilion is empty and no one return to it that night.

Late that night, a giant waterlilly the size of a small castle sails into the waters just off the beach and three figures appear on the sand, scaring an amorous couple to race who into Caprica yelling in a panic. The three figures say nothing at first beyond asking for the return of their daughter.

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE: If the PCs deduce that the dryad is Eira's secret before the performance, Valerian, Khronk and Romello flee Caprica, hoping to sail away on one of the Zandir trading ships that visit the other parts of the island. Along the way, Khronk and Romello become angry because Valerian promised that he would win the Festival's prize money. They beat up the Dhuna and steal the dryad. Valerian then runs back to Caprica, confesses everything to either the PCs or Ness, and begs for their

help to get the Nightstar back. That evening the Green Mandarin arrives.

The lily and the visitors soon attract a large crowd. The PCs find Nessa and the other Enchanters talking to a tall, powerful being draped in a cloak of living greenery and wearing a crown of tall, red leaves. He is flanked by two guards, one is covered in wicked looking black thorns and the other is tall and thickly knotted like a living gall oak tree.

Nessa is yelling in a panicked tone at the green man, and as the PCs watch, more of the plant beings appear on the beach; Oak and thorn, violet creeper, serpentvice and wings snapdragons, all armed and standing in the manner of soldiers. The green-man ignores Nessa's cry and suddenly addresses the beach in a voice that magically carries all the way across the isle. "I am the Green Mandarin, ruler of the Dendrad. A daughter has been stolen from us and we demand her return by sunrise or we shall cleanse this island of meat and bone."

Nessa finds the PCs and orders them in a voice edged with panic, "Find Valerian!"

Their pavilion is empty, but inside the PCs find the ceramic pot that the dryad had slept in and numerous plant cuttings and soil samples scattered around. The PCs may notice that the plant cuttings are moving slightly, inching towards the beach as if in genuflection.

Finding the Dhuna is actually quite easy, the PCs find him running into the nearly empty Caprica. When he learns of the Green Mandarin's arrival, he nearly goes into shock. "A Dendrad! No wonder I couldn't identify the species. Quickly, we must go and get her!"

Valerian leads the PCs out of Caprica and into the jungle. "The Dendrad must dance all night." He explains on the way. "so we take her to a secluded clearing where she can dance under the moons. About an hour ago, she stopped dancing and started crying, reaching out towards the beach, and so where many of the plants! I left her with Khronk and Romello and came into town to investigate."

He takes the PCs to a clearing not far from the city, lit by scintilla and nestled in a grove of

palms. It is empty and Valerian stops dead, looking around in confusion.

"You want your girl?" comes a voice from the darkness beyond the clearing. "We promise to give her back, if you deliver what you promised us. You do remember your promises, don't you?"

"Yeah, promises!" comes a much deeper voice. "Shut up, Khronk."

"Sorry."

"You want your houseplant back, its going to cost you the fifty thou... no make that the whole one hundred thousand. Lets say for expenses and labour, eh? Fork it over now, or she's mulch."

"But Rom, you said we'd sell her back to the g-norl."

"Shut up, Khronk!"

"Sorry."

If the PCs try and talk to Romello he says, "Shut up! I don't talk to hired goons when I am negotiation!"

"Hee,hee. Goons."

"Shut up!"

"Sorry."

Romello doesn't care about the Green Mandarin or any threats to the island. Eventually, he will grow tired with the whole conversation and casts Iselda's Immobilizing Muscles on Valerian and the PCs and makes a run for it. The spell wears off in 1d6 rounds and then the PCs will have to give chase. If the PCs tease or insult Khronk, Romello says in a weary tone, "Oh, you shouldn't have done that." Khronk then fires his crossbow at the offending PC, then charges into the clearing.

ROMELLO, SARISTA GYPSY

Appearance: 5'4", 145lbs

STR 0 PER +1

DEX +2 CHA +2

CON 0 WIL +1

SPD +2 INT +1

CR +3 MR +2

HP 20

Skills

Dagger +13, DR 4

Short Sword, +14, DR 6

Pickpocket +14

Deception +12

Stealth +10

Armour: Spangalor Shirt PR 3
Magic
Natural magic +10
Nature's Fur: CM 0,, (Rulebook pg 69) DR 8
Barkskin: CM -4, (rulebook pg 70), absorbs 24hp

KHRONK, KHARAKAN GIANT

Appearance: 10'1", 1,357lbs

STR +8 PER +3

DEX -4 CHA -2

CON +9 WIL +6

SPD -2 INT -3

CR +3 MR -3

HP 50

Skills

Battle Maul +12, DR 24

Giant Axe +10, DR 23

Giant Bow +8, DR 14

Brawling +6

Armour: Giant size hide Armour 4, Tough Skin
PR 1

Romello will run if he is reduced to less than five hit points, and surrender if Khronk is killed. Khronk will not surrender, but will run if told to by Romello. Valerian sneaks away during the fight, searching the surrounding jungle for the nightstar rose. As the fight ends, he comes back into the clearing, leading the frightened Dendrad. Together, they return to the beach and the Green Mandarin.

PAGEANT OF THE BIZARRE THE ICE EATERS

The Dracartans and the Mirin have long used Blue Havoc, a substance created from the raw elemental essence of pure ice, in their thaumaturgic experimentations, but it took a pair of Mirin twins by the name of Boral and L'Onna to turn it into an art form.

By using wands tipped with blue havoc, which smolders like blue flame in the warm air. The Mirin performers fill their mouths with water, then spray it over the wands. Exposed to the blue havoc, and under the careful direction of the performers, the water freezes instantly, transforming into stunning strbursts, long delicate arches and even complex loops and spirals, before it smashes to the ground. Other elements of the performance include coloured water,

freezing flowers and fruits, placing the smouldering wands into their mouths or on top of their heads (merely uncomfortable to the cold-immune Mirin), and their grand finale which so impressed the King of Carantheum that he immediately became their patron and paid for their trip to Thaecia ... covering the courtyard of the King's desert palace in a light layer of snow.

VALERIAN'S TALE

On the way back, Valerian tells the PCs his story. He and Eira were friendly rivals, both interested in horticulture and botomancy. "We would compete to see who could collect the most exotic species, specimens and clippings. One day, Eira asked me to help with a strange seed she had bought off one of her many secret sources. But nothing she could do to make it germinate, so was forced to ask for my help. We worked on it for months, but nothing worked until we discovered that it needed a liquid distillation of moonbeams, mixed with nitrogen and just the right amount of pollen shaken from a wailing mandragore ... anyway, we finally got it to germinate and it became this beautiful creature you see here. But Eira wanted to keep the nightstar locked up in that secret underground garden of her's, where she would never see the real suns or the moons or the stars. I tried reasoning with her, even offered more than I could afford to buy the nightstar. But Eira just forbid me from returning. So I stole her. We came here because I'd hoped the prize money would help us travel the continent, maybe to the Aberrant Forest, or perhaps the Variegated Forests of Quan, where we might find where she came from, more of her kind."

They make it back to the beach and the nightstar rushes towards the Green Mandarin. They speak for a moment in the secret language of plants, then the Green Mandarin calls the PCs forward. 'For rescuing our daughter, we offer our thanks. We know that meat and bone treasures stone and iron, but all we have to offer are the gifts of sun and soil. Choose:' some of the Mandarin's warriors step forward, each holding out their weapons, shields or cloaks." The PCs may each choose one of the items presented. All the items are living plants and need to be taken care of as such, with daily waterings and exposer to sunlight.

THORN SWORD

A blade and handle are carved from a single, long black thorn. DR 7, WT 2, STR -1. Does double damage to beings from the underworld. Is otherwise magical, but it cannot harm demons.

GALL SHIELD

A living shield that helps protect against blows. -3 to hit. WT 10, Max DR 25, STR +1

CLOAK OF FOLIAGE

adds +5 to stealth when in an area with plants.

TONGUE TULIP BLOSSOM

A petal in amber worn as a broach. Allows wearer to speak with plant once per day.

The Green Mandarin then calls Valerian. "The greed of the meat brings the unscrupulous and the ruthless to our home where they raid and plunder. Sometimes our daughters are taken to dance for the courts of your petty kings. But away from the soils of home, they wither and die. Yet under your care, our daughter has not only blossomed, but flourished. I have nothing to match your care and concern. All we can offer you is an invitation, a chance to explore the magic of my kingdom."

The Mandarin extends his hand towards the Dhuna, "Will you come with us?" Valerian looks stunned, but takes the monarch's hand. With a gleeful laugh, the nightstar hugs him, and accompanied by the legion of dendrad warriors, they return to the lily and said away just as the suns' first light breaks the rule of night.

ONE LAST PRIZE

It is a sober end to this year's Festival. The string of deaths and the near invasion by the Dendrons have caused many of the visitors to leave early and it is a much smaller crowd that gathers around the main stage on the afternoon of the last day. The Festival Committee has made its choices and it is time to present the three main prizes of the Festival, "Most Unique", "Most Provocative", and finally, "Most Bizarre." The day has grown cloudy and cool, and scattered clouds send cloudbursts to dampen everyone's spirits.

The winners of 'Most Unique' and "Most Provocative" are up to the Gamemaster. She can choose one of the entries in the Pageant of the Bizarre, make up their own entries, or even offer a entries to the PCs and allow them to vote.

The applause for each winner is polite, but genuine and both receive their prizes quickly and without much ceremony. Finally the time has come for the Committee Members to present the grand prize winner, "Most Bizarre". Nessa and the other Enchanters gather in the centre stage, about to announce their choice when a Monad steps on stage and asks politely asks, in Sign when it is his turn to present his entry. The committee is unsure what he means at first, so he goes on to say. "Everyone came here and showed you their entry. Would it be okay if I had my turn now?"

Some of the committee members laugh and one asks. 'I remember you. Didn't you have a handful of beans?'" the Monad nods and opens his humongous hand to reveal a half dozen small, yellow lignut beans. 'Magic' he signs.

By now a Thaisian has jumped up on stage to translate for the crowd and the begin to laugh. The Monad, thinking the laughter is for him, breaks out into a wide simple grin. Nessa hushes them and turns to the giant. "We're sorry, but the Festival is over." She says in her kindest tone. "We have already picked the winner." The Monad closes his hand and turns to leave. 'Give him a chance!' someone yells, and the cry is picked up by the crowd. The Committee confer for a moment, then Nessa stops the giant and calls him back onto the stage. 'Are you sure you want to do this?' she asks, "They are only doing this to poke fun at you." The Monad smiles and nods his head. With a pat on his shoulder, Nessa and the others step aside and let the giant take centre stage.

Opening his massive fist, he ponders for a moment, carefully selecting a single bean as the crowd titters in anticipation. Having chosen a bean, the Monad leans far back as he will go and hurls it straight into the sky. Nothing happens at first, the Monad standing patiently and the crowd sitting in stunned silence. Suddenly the tension breaks and they all begin

to laugh and shout sarcastic cheers at the Monad. Nessa sighs and steps forward to comfort the giant when the crowd's jeers turn to gasps of astonishment. She looks up to see that the cloudy blue sky is gone and in its place is the starry bowl of night. One by one, the stars begin to dance.

IN CONCLUSION

If Valerian and the Rose leave with the Green Mandarin, they never accomplish what they originally came to Thaecia to do, which was bring back Eira's secret. The little Gnorl has already proven herself capable of sending mercenaries out of those who cross her. When the PCs do not return the flower, she may get angry and send mercenaries after them.

This book can also be used as a jumping off point for a campaign along the Southern Rim, moving up to Jhangara and east along the Dark Coast, to Faradun, the Chana Jungles all the way to the far isles.

CHAPTER 12, GAME MATERIALS

AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

At the end of each chapter, the CM should reward between 5-10xp to each player, depending on how well the players accomplish the goals, any roleplaying bonuses and how well the gamemaster feels that the chapter played out.

A few other experience bonuses that can be applied:

If the players deduce that the Bed of Slumber is responsible for the deaths before the seventh day +5xp.

If the player's figure out that the Nightstar Rose is Eira's secret before the seventh day, +10xp +1xp for every 100gl make trading for Thirsty Ru, collecting vasp silk and/or orbs

+2xp for delivering the panic demon alive

+2xp for getting rid of Gruk and the Imrians without any hostages being killed.

+2xp for reuniting Pharg and Lal

+1 for leaving Tharyal's sword in the cave.

NEW RULES

AQUATIC COMBAT

There are numerous times during their stay on the islands when the characters may find themselves in water during combat, so here are some rules to help deal with that scenario:

- Fighting, moving or performing any gross physical skill in water that is not above the character's neck level has a standard automatic penalty of -5 to all actions for any non-aquatic race. The GM may elect to raise or lower this penalty depending on the character's background and/or race.

- Any action performed in water above the character's neck level requires a Swimming Roll every round to keep the character oriented. The first action the PC SHOULD must make each round is a Swimming roll (-3 in optimal conditions. -5 in Combat).

Swimming Skill Results

Failure: The character has a -10 penalty to any further actions this round and a -10 modifier to

the next round's Swimming roll. A second failure counts as an automatic Mishap

Partial Success: The character has the normal -5 multiple action penalties this round, but a -10 modifier to the next round's Swimming Roll

Success: the normal -5 to further actions this round.

Critical Success: No penalties to further actions this round.

The character can choose to skip making the Swimming roll if they choose, but each skipped round adds -5 to the inevitable roll. The PC can continue to avoid making Swimming rolls for as many rounds as their CON. If they wait any longer, they must make a CON roll at the current penalty to avoid an involuntary breath in and becoming incapable of making any further actions until they succeed in a Full Success Swimming roll at the current penalty, plus an additional -5.

At any point, two Swimming failures in a row or a Mishap and the character is now drowning and takes DR4 damage per round until rescued.

Swimming Penalties: All armour acts as a penalty for all rolls made in an aquatic environment. For Blue Iron, the penalty equal to the PR (ie a chainmail suit with a PR would give a -5 penalty). Red Iron, leather and hide armour has a x2 penalty and Black Iron has a x3 penalty.

NEW ARCHTYPES

PARTHENIAN MALFUNCTION

"Designation ... Unknown. Function Unspecified."

Lost. Separated. Alone. How you came to be on that shore, you do not know. The wound in your head has been repaired, but the memories of the time before are gone. All you know is that if they find you, you will be dismantled, and you have discovered that you are not yet ready to face the One.

Appearance: 6-8"-7'. 282-300lbs. Bodies made of bronze, hair made of braided wire. Devoid of gender.

| | |
|---------|---------|
| STR: +2 | CHA: 0 |
| DEX 0 | PER -1 |
| CON: +2 | WIL: +1 |
| SPD: -2 | INT: +1 |
| CR: +1 | MR: +1 |

HP: 23

Skills:

Technomancy +2

Trident +3

Choice of Weapon +4

Artillerist +3

Pilot +6

Salvager +5

Merchant +5

Appraiser (slaves, treasure) +4

Special Abilities: Immune to poisons, disease and magical influence. Does not sleep, age or eat (though will require occasional lubrication and repair). Night vision. Brass skin provides natural PR 3

Equipment: choice of clothing and armour.

Lacquered iron bracers, trident and choice of weapon.

THAECIAN RHAPSODIST

"What lies beyond these gilded isles? "

Even as a young child you knew that you would follow the path and become an Enchanter. You studied everything they could teach you, but then they told you that it was not enough. True learning only comes from experience, they said, and experiences only come to those who seek them out. So with a borrowed sword and a few belongings in a satchel, you have booked passage on a ship bound for the mainland, ready and eager to experience everything that life has to offer.

Appearance: 6'-6"6", 100-160lbs. Silvery complexion and slender build.

STR 0 CHA +3

CON 0 WIL -2

DEX +1 PER +3

SPD 0 INT +2

CR 0 MR +4

HP: 18

Skills

Wizardry (3 modes of choice) +3

Dagger +2

Artificer +4

Brewer/Vintner (nectar) +2

Seduce +3

Performing Skill <choice> +3

Thecian native, High Talislan, Archeon, fluent

Equipment: gossamer robe, purse and shoulder

pouch. Travelling robe. Silver bound spellbook .

Dagger and staff. 200gl in potions, trade goods

and assorted coins.

THAISIAN SWASHBUCKLER

"Avunct yer maties! Batten my hatches, swab the deckhands and buckle the swatches! Heehee, this is fun!"

You were never all that keen on learning how to juggle, or memorizing songs, or learning how to play the zombazeen. When you should have been practicing, your thoughts would always turn to the tales you had heard of adventure on the high seas. Once you were old enough you ran away from Eros and joined the first Zandir privateer or Gao Pirate crew that would have you. While life aboard ship isn't quite what you had imagined, you still eagerly await the life of adventure you had only once sung about.

Appearance: 5'-6". 80-170lbs. Violet skin, black hair and a lithe, athletic build.

| | |
|--------|--------|
| STR +1 | PER 0 |
| CON 0 | WIL -2 |
| DEX +4 | CHA +2 |
| INT 0 | SPD +2 |
| CR +2 | MR +2 |

HP 20

Skills

Weapon <choice of two> +2

Magic Order <choice, with two modes> +1

Evade +1

Pilot +1

Dance +3

Performance Skill <choice> +3

Thieving Skill <choice of two> +3

Swim +2

Low Talisman, High Talisman, Thaecian, fluent.

Equipment: flamboyant garments. Weapon, musical instrument and performance props of choice. 30gl in assorted coins.

SPELLBOOK

AQUAMANANCY

Call of the Fathoms (Summon)

Level of Creature: 5

Casting Time: 1 minute

Duration: 3 minutes

Casting Modifiers: -14 (-5 spell level, -2 extra duration, -7 shortened casting time)

This spell summons a Sea Demon with an Ability Level of 5.

Stolen Breath (Attack)

Duration: 5 rounds

Range: 50ft

DR: 2 DR per round

Casting Modifiers: -10 (-5 duration, -5 damage)

This spell covers the victim's face with a mask of water that does not allow the to breath and inflicts 2 points of drowning damage per round

CARTOMANCY

Call the Bluff (Reveal)

Sense: PER +4

Range: 50ft

Duration: 1 minute

Casting Modifier: -5 (-4 for spell level, -1 range)

This spell, usually cast around a card table, allows the caster to tell when their opponent is lying or bluffing (requires a PER check vs the opponent's WIL).

CRYPTOMANCY

Monty's Killing Joke (Attack)

Duration: Instant

Range: touch

Casting Time: 2 rounds

Casting Modifiers: -15 (-10 for spell level, -5 for trigger effect)

This spell encrypts a joke so funny that someone reading it will break into laughter so powerful that it actually causes 10hp worth of damage. Some mages post this on doors or chests that should not be opened.

CRYSTALMANY

Resonating Shards (Attack)

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

Casting Time: 5 rounds

Casting Modifiers: -13 (-8 for spell level, -5 for trigger effect).

DR: 8

This spell finds the right frequency to make a crystal vibrate at a high speed, making it highly unstable. The crystal can then be thrown, or laid as a trap for someone to trip on. When jostled, the volatile crystal then explodes, sending shards in all directions.

GEOMANCY

Feet of Clay (Move)

Strength: +2

Range: 50ft

SPD -2

Casting Modifier: -12 (-6 STR, -2 SPD)

Duration: 5 rounds

This spell causes the earth to grab bold of a victim as if they were walking through thick mud of deep snow. It lowers their SPD rating by -2

and if they wish to run, they must make an opposed STR roll.

INVOCATION

The Silence of Jamba (Alter)

Range: Touch

Broad Alteration: Silence

Duration: 3 min

Casting Modifiers: -12 (-10 spell level, -2 duration)

A person inflicted with this spell cannot speak or make a sound for three minutes. Spells that require vocalization cannot be cast.

MYSTICISM

The Sweetest Kiss (Influence)

Duration: 5 rounds

Range: touch

Resistance: WIL at -4

Casting Modifiers: -12 (-8spell level, -4 duration)

This spell tweaks the pleasure center of the target's mind, causing an involuntary jolt to the nervous system that lasts for the duration of the spell. The target cannot do anything for those five rounds but enjoy the ride.

NATURAL MAGIC

Womb of the Earth (Heal)

Range: Touch

Effect: Heals 20hp or 1 major malady

Casting Modifier: -18 (spell level)

This spell must be cast when the wounded character is laid out on bare ground. A hole opens and the wounded character sinks in, the hole closing up around them. They are gone for a few minutes and then will rise back to the surface, a little dirty, but fully healed. Those that are sucked into the earth experience no panic or alarm, only a feeling of warmth and well being.

NECROMANCY

Shadow Steed (Summon)

Level of Summoned Creature: 6

Duration: 11 minutes

Casting Time: 6 minutes

Casting Modifiers: -15 (-11 Duration, -6spell level, +2 Mode Bonus)

This spell summons a shadowmane (SPD +7) that will allow the summoner to ride it for the duration of the spell.

PYROMANCY

Inferno Rain (Attack)

Duration: Instant

Range: 20ft radius

Duration: 5 rounds

DR: 5 per round

Casting Modifiers: -8 (-2range, -1 range, -5 spell level)

This spell calls down a literal rain of fire over a 20ft radius, damaging everything within and setting combustible materials on fire.

SHAMANISM

Vision Quest (Reveal)

Casting Modifier: -18 (-20 spell level. +2 mode bonus)

Effect: this spell is not to be undertaken lightly. It requires the caster to fast and spend days meditating alone. At the end of two days, the PC must make the spell roll, and if successful the caster meets their spirit totem and may ask it one question that the totem must answer honestly, but not necessarily clearly. Totems are notorious for answering in riddles.

WITCHCRAFT

Loudon's Possession (Influence)

Range: 5ft

Duration: 10 rounds

Casting Modifiers: -16 (-10 duration, -8 spell level, +2 mode bonus)

Effect: this spell allows the caster to enter the mind of their target and see through their senses. It does not allow the caster to control the target or read their thoughts in any way, but unless the possessing character fails their Casting roll, the victim is totally unaware that they have a visitor.

WIZARDRY

Arms of the Mogroth (Alter)

Range: touch

Duration: 2 minutes

Casting Modifiers: -10 (-9 spell level, -1 duration)

This spell raises the Caster's STR to +6, while simultaneously lowering their SPD to -4.

The Proper Papers (Transform)

Level: 3 for simple documents, 5 for complex documents

Range: touch

Duration: 10 minutes

Casting Modifiers: -13 for simple documents. -15 for complex ones

This spell allows the caster to turn a simple piece of paper into the required documents (provided they know what the documents look like), be it a passport, a bill of sale or a letter of passage, etc.

The Sultan's Blade (Alter)

Range: touch

Duration: 2 minutes

Casting Modifiers: -7 (-1 duration, -6spell level)

This spell adds +2 to the caster's Sword skill.

The sword itself is unchanged.

Safeguard (Summon)

Range: Self

Duration: 1 minute

Casting Modifiers: -15 (-5 spell level, -10 for casting time).

This spell summons an unseen spirit that will attempt to deflect oncoming attacks from melee weapons. Counts as a free parry to all attacks until spell expires.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

THE SEARCH FOR DANDER

Stranded on Nearwan for over a decade, the infamous Talismancer known as Dander has escaped due to the actions of the PCs.

Suddenly, the islands are gripped with panic, flooded with rumours and tales of past horrors. Those who must travel only do so during the day, only in large groups, and never at all at night.

Charged with tracking down the infamous fugitive, will the characters survive his twisted games? Or will they come to believe his story of being framed and pursued by persons unknown? And why do all the clues lead to the island of Farique and the rumors of its waters granting immortality?

GARGANTA

One afternoon, distant rumbles fill the tropical sky and not long after, the sky turns a dark crimson as smoke and ash fill the western sky. The next day, the ground begins to shudder and heavy waves smash the beaches. As the week wears on, the storms, the earthquakes and the waves get worse until a small village on the west coast is washed away. The PCs discover that the origin of the trouble is coming from island of Garganta, home of the living mountains called

Monoliths. Sent to investigate, they learn that one of the monoliths has become dangerously unstable and even the other monoliths have begun to be afraid of his outbursts. Will the PCs be brave enough to delve inside an insane mountain to discover the source of its madness? And what will they do when they discover a colony of subterraneans mining deep inside the elemental's giant crystalline brain?

AND BEYOND...

The day after the festival wraps up, the biggest windship the PCs have ever seen docks at Caprica. This is the "Endless Endeavor", commissioned by a charter of aristocrats, merchant guilds and the army of the Seven Kingdom. Thaezia is its last stop before it begins an unprecedented exploration beyond the southern horizon. It has stopped for supplies, but also to pick up any mercenaries, scholars and explorers looking for new lands, wonders and mysteries to explore.