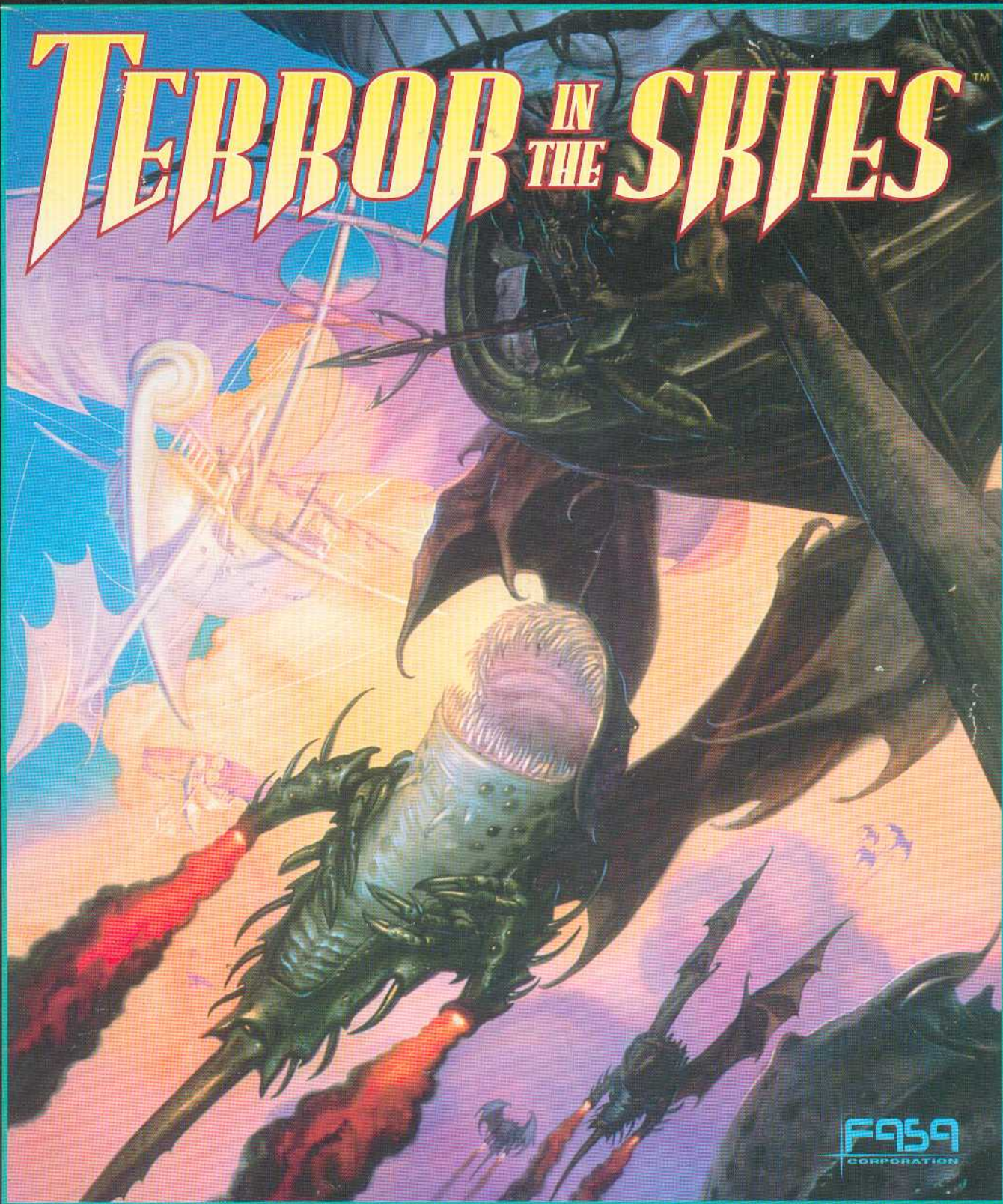


EARTHDAWN™

TERROR IN THE SKIES™



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AN EARTHDAWN ADVENTURE BY SHANE LACY HENSLEY



TERROR IN THE SKIES

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DARKNESS FALLS: A Prologue



"Had Tyrannisis but come—" The windling mage Skeethen turned on his fellow wizard, anger blazing in his eyes. "He has not come, Mearach, as any half-wit can see. He will never come! Those things out there have doubtless torn out his heart and devoured it, and all his so-called powers could not stop them!"

"Nor can we." Giska's voice cut across Skeethen's furious words. Unwillingly, Skeethen looked toward the elderly mage, his mentor since childhood. In the past few days since the sealing of the windlings' kaer

dug deep into the peak of Talon Mountain, Giska had become more bent, more stooped and withered. The eyes that had once brimmed with confidence in his power now held the calmness of despair.

"The Horrors have broken our only defense against them, Skeethen. How should we stop the Scourge, when even the mighty Therans cannot stand against it?"

Skeethen took a step toward Giska. "We are the seven most powerful mages in the kaer! We cannot simply hide in this room and do nothing. The Tome—"

"Skeethen." Giska spoke only his name, but it was enough. The old mage held Skeethen's gaze for a moment, then glanced toward the huge, oak stump that served as the windlings' table.

Silently, Skeethen waved his hand across the stump's polished surface. He and his colleagues gazed at the glossy wood. Before their eyes an image slowly formed: windlings by the thousands streaming out of the kaer's ceramic towers like wind-blown cinders from a thousand bonfires, fleeing the giant, black mantises that swarmed over the Talon and through the windling heartland. The Horrors stalked their tiny, fragile prey without mercy, impaling six or seven fleeing windlings on each of the huge barbed spines at the end of their eight hard shiny black arms.

Skeethen watched as a pair of mantises crushed a wall of one of the ceramic towers and tore at the family inside. One of the mantises spitted all three children on a single spine, then lifted them to its mandibles and devoured them. The second mantis speared their mother through the shoulder and lifted her toward its jaws as she writhed in mortal agony. It seemed to Skeethen that the mantis watched the woman's weakening struggles with a horrible curiosity before throwing her against the base of the shattered wall hard enough to dash her skull to pieces.

A man's dying scream split the air, close by the mages' tower. Startled, Skeethen let the spell disintegrate. As shouts of pain and rallying cries echoed through the chamber, the windling stalked to the tower's iron-barred window and looked downward toward the funnel-shaped entrance of the Mages' Cavern. A few, mutilated corpses of the Winged Guard, the finest fighters in the kaer, lay dead about the funnel's rim, their blood draining down into the reservoir far below. Toward the right, in the direction of the shouting, Skeethen saw the Guard's tattered remnants making a last stand in their barracks against the oncoming Horrors. Below him, near the front entrance of the mages' tower, Skeethen saw a few more bloody, battered defenders flying around a knot of mantises, firing tiny arrows at the insects' bulbous eyes in a desperate attempt to beat them off.

"Tyrannisis could have kept them from us," muttered Mearach, his voice flat and toneless. "He helped build this kaer. He helped us design it. Tyrannisis could have saved us. . ."

A terrible cracking sound echoed from below. Faint shouts and screams came to the mages' ears, followed by a soft tapping at the round doorway in the floor of the tower's topmost chamber. The tapping grew more frantic, then abruptly gave way to muffled screams. After several seconds, the screaming choked off into silence.

"He's led them straight to us," whispered Skeethen. "Like a wounded rabbit running to its warren. . ."

The door exploded inward, showering the room with splinters of stone. Skeethen and the others, knocked flat by the blast, stared upward in terror as one of the great, black monsters leapt into the chamber. From the corner of his eye, Skeethen saw the flutter of a silvery wing as Giska struggled to his feet and reached for the Tome of Banishment. Skeethen shouted a warning, but too late. Before the aging windling could utter a sound, one of the Horror's spines pierced his heart. Giska's blood spurted over the open book, spattering the parchment with scarlet.

Skeethen watched, frozen in shock and terror, as the mantis spitted the remaining five mages like wriggling fish. As the monstrous, black head with its clacking mandibles turned toward him, a fresh burst of panic broke Skeethen's paralysis. He threw himself across the room and grabbed the Tome of Banishment, then launched himself upward in desperate flight. He had hardly risen a windling-length off the floor when the mantis' spikes tore through his left wing. Skeethen screamed, but kept himself and the heavy book aloft through sheer force of will. Knowing that he could not hope to weave a spell fast enough to slay the creature, Skeethen made the only choice he could.

He flew toward the Sanctuary.

The small, round doorway in the roof loomed before him, the darkness within it waiting to swallow him. Skeethen had helped Giska construct the Sanctuary and knew its grim purpose, but had never guessed that he would be the one to entomb himself alive. *You are already dead*, Skeethen told himself, even as wild hopes and desperate plans flashed through his mind. He could slip past the mantis and fly out of the ruined kaer to freedom! But if the dreadful thing caught him or his torn wing failed him, the Tome would fall into the hands of the Horrors. That betrayal Skeethen dared not risk.

Skeethen beat his wings harder and soared close to the hole, ignoring the agony in his shredded left wing. The mantis raked its terrible arms across his leg, nearly severing it. Breathless and half-blinded by pain, Skeethen summoned up the dregs of his rapidly fading strength and threw his bleeding, battered body toward the Sanctuary. He fell short of the doorway, and began to drift back downward toward the mantis. Skeethen cursed his weakness, cursed his terror, cursed the crazy thoughts of escape

that had made him hesitate too long. Skeethen the coward had doomed the world.

His wingbeats grew slower, and he began to fall faster. As the mantis reached for Skeethen with a hungry hiss, Giska's bloody corpse moved. The ancient mage pointed a withered, blood-spattered finger at Skeethen, and suddenly the young windling felt himself *pushed* upward into the Sanctuary. He screamed the triggering words of the sealing spell, and watched as stone knit itself together over the entrance.

Curling his battered body around the Tome as if for comfort, Skeethen listened to the screams of the dying and the scraping of mantis barbs across the stone. Lying in the dark as his blood and the life-giving air seeped away, Skeethen smiled. Unlike Giska's, his death would count for something. Nothing would ever enter the Sanctuary. And nothing would ever leave.

From the hovering drakkar, Karl gazed down at the tiny, twinkling lights of Travar. "Time of legends," he grunted softly. "Time of hiding, I say." He slammed a fist into the ship's railing. "The damned Therans said those things would disappear! The Scourge is over!"

His partner, Yorlk, gave a bark of bitter laughter. "Sailors Who Died for a Fat Merchant's Money—that's our legend." He shook his grizzled ork head. "Shoulda never signed onta th' Flying Patrol."

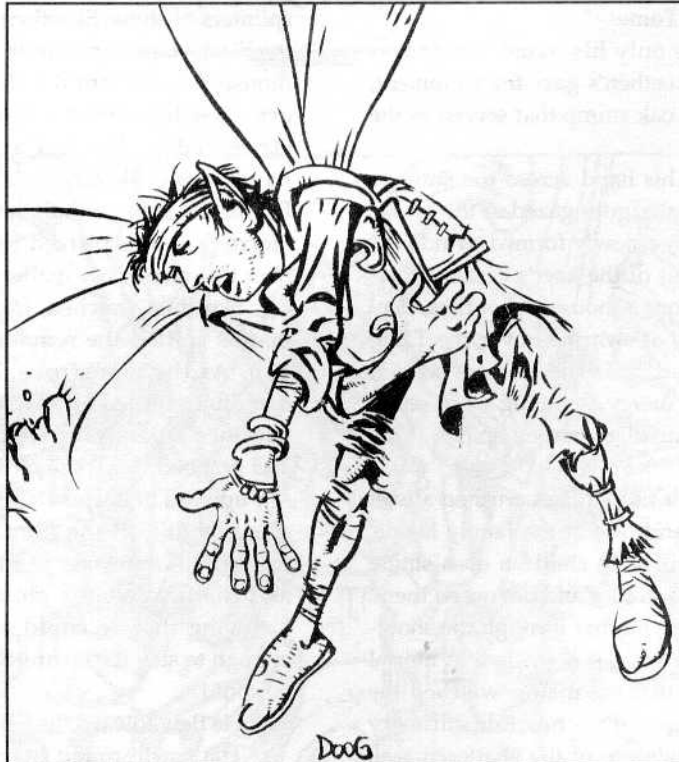
Karl glared down at the city far below. Over the past few months, the air patrols over the trade city of Travar had run into disaster upon disaster. Three weeks ago, a band of third-rate pirates had rammed a patrol drakkar and slain all on board. Only sheer carelessness on the part of the crew had allowed the pirates to gain so much as a toehold on the doomed ship, but Travar's merchants didn't care to hear that kind of truth. No, they'd all rather shake fists at Travar's air warden and demand reparations for lost goods that they knew the Flying Patrol couldn't afford. Then another airship had gone down, in far worse

than a pirate attack. In spite of himself, Karl shuddered at the memory.

Karl's four-ship patrol had spotted a flaming arrow, shot into the sky from a beleaguered ship owned by the Merris merchant house. As the Flying Patrol drew near the foundering merchantman, they saw three winged creatures from the darkest nether regions swarming over it, setting fire to the craft's sails and attacking its crew. As

Karl and Yorlk maneuvered their drakkar within boarding distance, one of the fiends threw the first mate over the side, his chest torn open and his body smeared with blood.

Karl remembered bellying at the things, waving his sword and trying to draw the creatures away from the helpless cargo ship. One of the dreadful creatures swooped down from the merchantman's burning rigging, shooting flame from its arms as it descended toward him. Karl braced himself for impact, but his crewmates Smorgan and Trusa swung their own drakkar in front of Karl's ship. The creature landed hard on the deck near the helm. Faster than



the eye could follow, it shot to its feet and grabbed Trusa. Karl could only watch, paralyzed with terror, as the monster sank its teeth deep into the pale flesh just below Trusa's tender throat. Smorgan swung his scimitar at the creature, but its leathery wings beat back the blow as it tore Trusa to shreds. Even as Karl and Yorlk tried to reach the crippled ship, the drakkar broke apart and plunged to the cold cobblestones far below.

Of course, the greedy merchants blamed the Flying Patrol for the disaster and cursed them for incompetence. Karl wondered what the ill-tempered Trusa would have done to them had she survived.

Yorlk shook Karl's shoulder, banishing the awful memory. He pointed toward the south. Karl turned his gaze reluctantly southward, and saw a single arrow tracing a silent, fiery arc across the night sky.

Yorlk grinned at him. "Time to get to work, Karl. Time to face death."

INTRODUCTION



Terror in the Skies is a roleplaying adventure set in the world of **Earthdawn**.

Thousands of years ago there existed an age of magic and high adventure, the age of **Earthdawn**. The power of magic flowed freely through the world, and people could draw on magic to perform both wondrous feats and everyday tasks. But the dawn of magic also brought Horrors to Earth, creatures from the depths of astral space that devour all life in their path. For four centuries, the people of Earth hid from the Horrors that devastated their land in what came to be called the Scourge. Now, the people of the province of Barsaive have re-emerged from their sealed kaers and citadels to reclaim their world from the remaining Horrors and the oppressive Theran Empire. From

all across Barsaive, bold heroes arise to explore the world, search for magical treasure, and slay the Horrors that still exist. Magicians spin the magical energies of the universe into powerful spells, and adepts use the magic to enhance their natural talents. Through magic, courage, skill, and daring, Barsaive's heroes strive to heal the world of the scars left by the Scourge and to build their own legends into the history of their land.

Terror in the Skies takes place in a corner of Travar, a bustling trade city in southwest Barsaive. The adventurers are hired to make the skies safe for the huge airships that move trade goods to and from the city. In the course of this adventure, the characters will travel to an ancient windling kaer, explore its haunted depths, and return to the beleaguered city of Travar with an ancient text called the Tome of Banishment. Along the way, they will fight many a pitched battle in the skies with monsters that shoot fire and a vast airship that carries a powerful Horror and his dark minions.

GAMEMASTERING NOTES

Terror in the Skies is a linear adventure, meaning that each event follows a particular sequence. The gamemaster should, however, feel free to adapt the adventure to suit his particular group of players. Though the encounters progress logically, the gamemaster need not follow the adventure precisely as written in order to run a successful game. To run the adventure, the gamemaster needs a thorough familiarity with the contents of this book, and both players and gamemaster should be familiar with the **Earthdawn** rulebook (ED).

Terror in the Skies is best suited for players using First, Second, or Third Circle characters. This adventure is tough and challenging, and the gamemaster should keep in mind that things might get a little rough for the characters. To help the player characters out of trouble, **Terror in the Skies** includes a complete cast of gamemaster characters, loyal companions who try to help their friends when needed. These gamemaster characters serve as a safety net for the adventurers, and also draw them deeper into the story as they come to know the people they live and fight beside.

Though gamemaster characters can play significant roles in this adventure, the gamemaster should not allow them to overshadow the player characters. When the adventurers attempt to overcome a particular obstacle, or try to think of a way out of some dangerous situation, do not use the gamemaster characters to tell the players how to resolve the problem. After all, if players make the right choices all the time, both they and the gamemaster have a lot less fun. Whenever possible, let your group of players make their own beds and lie in them.

With regard to the rakken (the creatures that the adventurers fight early on in this adventure), make sure that the characters do not defeat all of them. Ideally, these creatures should intimidate and humiliate the player characters so that when they finally find the Tome of Banishment, they will want to race back to Travar and use it to send these horrible creatures back to the nether regions from which they sprang. The adventurers should feel urgency about their mission; emphasize that every delay may mean another life sacrificed to the Horrors. This sense of impending disaster should help keep the adventure running at a breakneck pace.

MAKING TESTS

During the course of **Terror in the Skies**, whenever characters attempt to take actions such as casting a spell, swinging a sword at an opponent, tracking a Horror, or flirting with a barmaid, the gamemaster or the player rolls dice against a Difficulty Number to determine the action's outcome. These dice rolls are called tests. To make a test, the player or gamemaster rolls the appropriate Action dice based on the step number of the ability being used (see the **Step/Action Dice Table**, p. 36, ED). If the dice roll result is equal to or greater than the Difficulty Number, the test is successful and the character accomplishes his action. If the result is less than the Difficulty Number, the test is unsuccessful and the character fails to accomplish his action. In tests that deal with magic, the dice roll result often determines the duration of a magical effect.

Frequently, a test result determines not only success or failure, but the level of success. A test may have one of five success levels: Poor, Average, Good, Excellent, and Extraordinary. A Poor success level indicates failure bad enough to have unpleasant side effects. An Average success, equal to or barely exceeding the Difficulty Number, means that the character just barely accomplished his action. A somewhat better die roll yields a Good success, and a result close to double the Difficulty Number means an Excellent success. To achieve Extraordinary success requires an even better roll. Any success level greater than Average may give the character some gain for his actions or else valuable, extra information. The amount of gain for each success level is determined by the gamemaster unless otherwise noted.

In many cases when the player characters must make a test, the required ability is given, followed by the Difficulty Number of the task in parentheses. For example, a Perception (13) Test means that a player character must use his Perception ability against a Difficulty Number of 13.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Aside from the **Earthdawn** rulebook, this book contains everything required to run **Terror in the Skies**. The gamemaster should read this adventure carefully to familiarize himself with the background before beginning the game. Gamemasters may also find the **Barsaive Campaign Set**, the **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack**, and the **Earthdawn Companion** useful. The pace of **Terror in the Skies** often goes very fast, much like a roller coaster ride. To stay on top of the adventure's rapidly changing events, the gamemaster must know what happens so that he can hurl the unwitting characters into the next challenging situation before the players have time to think. The gamemaster should be familiar with the basic outline of the plot and know precisely which plot developments trigger later events. As always, the gamemaster should be prepared to deal with the unexpected.

The **Plot Synopsis** in this section summarizes the story background and the most probable course of the adventure. The following chapters, called encounters, describe the situations and events the characters must deal with during the course of the adventure. Each encounter contains five sections: **Overview**, **Setting the Stage**, **Themes and Images**, **Behind the Scenes**, and **Troubleshooting**.

The **Overview** gives the gamemaster a summary of the action that occurs during the encounter, and also tells him the encounter's objective. The next section, **Setting the Stage**, contains a narrative description that the gamemaster reads aloud to the players. The narrative describes the player characters' location and what is happening to them as if the characters were actually there. Any special instructions for the gamemaster are printed in **boldface** type.

Themes and Images helps the gamemaster set the mood and pacing for a particular encounter. It includes hints about imagery to use in the scene, emotions to convey, sounds, sensations, and so on. The information provided varies in form and content from scene to scene, ranging from general themes to specific sensory impressions.

Behind the Scenes explains what is really going on in each encounter. This section provides the gamemaster with all of the information he needs to run the encounter, such as specialized descriptions of locations and events and statistics for any gamemaster characters they may meet or creatures they may fight. If the players or gamemaster need a map to play an encounter, it appears here. As with **Setting the Stage**, any special instructions for the gamemaster are printed in **boldface** type.

The final section of each encounter, **Troubleshooting**, offers suggestions to help the gamemaster get the adventure back on track should things go awry. For example, the

characters may miss an important clue or lose a fight that they need to win. Most gamemasters will not want the player characters to get discouraged or killed off too easily. This section offers the gamemaster options for keeping the game going over trouble spots. The gamemaster can, of course, ignore these hints and invent his own solutions or simply let the chips fall where they may.

Following the encounters, the section entitled **Loose Ends** sums up the consequences of the adventure and suggests ways in which the gamemaster might use the adventure's gamemaster characters and settings in future adventures. This section also includes **Awarding Legend Points**, guidelines for awarding the adventure's **Legend Points** to the player characters. The gamemaster awards **Legend Points** after each gaming session (see **Game Session Legend Points**, below) as well as at the end of the adventure. **Cast of Characters** provides game statistics and descriptions for significant gamemaster characters, including creatures and/or Horrors. **Rumors and Research** provides gamemasters with all the information the characters can obtain from outside sources: rumors, tales and legends, library research, and so on. If he wishes, the gamemaster can adapt much of the information in this section to future adventures. **Ship Combat Rules** provide guidelines for running the ship-to-ship battles that occur in this adventure. **Player Handouts** contains a letter with a map that the player characters will use during the adventure.

GAME SESSION LEGEND POINTS

In addition to awarding Legend Points to player characters at the end of the adventure, the gamemaster awards Legend Points at the end of each game session, whether or not the entire adventure fits into that session (see **Gamemastering Earthdawn**, p. 241, ED). Because **Terror in the Skies** is such a fast-paced adventure, the encounters are grouped into only two game sessions (see **Awarding Legend Points**, p. 69 of this book). Each session also has a clear session goal (see **Completing Session Goals**, p. 242, ED). **Awarding Legend Points** lists the encounters and the appropriate **Legend Awards** in each session for defeating creatures, finding magical treasures, creative roleplaying and heroics, and so on.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

It is impossible to create a published adventure that provides the appropriate opposition level for every diverse group of player characters. Some groups are inherently more powerful than others.





The gamemaster must adjust the game statistics and capabilities of the opposition to provide an appropriate level of difficulty for his or her group. If the adventure does not suit the player characters' strengths and weaknesses, the gamemaster may use it as an outline, the bones to develop an adventure of his own. Or, if it works well except for a glitch here and there, the gamemaster can change any part of the plot or events to make the adventure a better one.

Maps provided for the adventure include two large ship maps for use during the battles depicted in the **Broadsides!** and **Pyres over Travar** encounters, pp. 55–67. The **Player Handout** section includes a letter drawn to look as if written on parchment; the letter contains a map for the players. The gamemaster should photocopy all three of these items and have them ready to use when needed. Give the letter to the players as is, or recopy it using calligraphy. Most home computers



can produce Old English or similar fonts, and many stores sell parchment paper made specifically for computer printers. Though creating your own parchment letter may seem like a great deal of trouble, such props can add flavor to the game and help the players suspend their disbelief.

In addition to props, gamemasters might want to use background music to help convey mood. For example, during the encounter in which the group explores the windling kaer, try dimming the lights a little and playing some tense music. Playing fast-paced music where appropriate may remind the group that every delay costs someone his life back in the beleaguered city of Travar. Use **Themes and Images** to find out what kind of music might be appropriate for a given encounter.

Keep in mind that you, as the gamemaster, have a unique responsibility to make the adventure exciting, keep the players involved, and hold the story on track. In describing the world of **Earthdawn**, try to answer all the players' questions about what the characters see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. Feel free to go beyond the descriptions provided in this book when evoking places and moods. To keep the players connected to the action, ask "What do you do?" each time you describe a new scene to them. By having to describe what they want their characters to do, the players help to tell the story and add to their own enjoyment. If the players wander from the storyline, nudge them back in the right direction. If the players make choices that interrupt the story or make them miss a vital clue, drop hints to encourage them to do what the adventure expects. Remember, however, to keep it subtle. A gamemaster guides the players; he does not tell them what to do.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

In the last few years before the Scourge, when the races of Barsaive shut themselves away in sealed citadels or in kaers beneath the earth, the human nethermancer Tyrannisis looked for a safe haven with a community of windlings living in the Thunder Mountains. Tyrannisis counted the windling clan's wizards among his friends; together, they had spent the past several years studying the Horrors, in particular methods of banishing the loathsome creatures back to their home plane. Because the windling mages thought that airborne Horrors were most likely to attack their kaer dug within the peak of Talon Mountain, the wizards' collective knowledge included considerable information about several such species of Horrors, as well as earthbound ones.

Tyrannisis arranged to meet his windling friends at their kaer in TH 1030, but a hazardous route fraught with marauding Horror-spawn slowed his progress. After surviving countless perils, Tyrannisis and his few remaining retainers arrived at the base of Talon Mountain. They began the last, perilous trek up the Talon toward the kaer in the peak, battling huge, black mantises that appeared out of nowhere among the rocks. Once through the kaer's doors, Tyrannisis and his men could rest their weary bones and have their wounds tended amid comfort and congenial company. Tyrannisis also made what haste he could for another reason; he feared for his windling friends. They had agreed to hold the kaer doors open until his arrival, and the unexpected swarm of Horrors on the mountains posed a threat to them that Tyrannisis had not foreseen.

Driving off one last mantis with a final sword thrust, Tyrannisis climbed the final ledge and gazed across in shock at Talon Peak. The doors of the windling kaer stood closed, and as he read the strange symbols written across them, dread filled Tyrannisis' heart.

The windlings had sealed the kaer.

Tyrannisis and his three surviving hirelings stood stranded atop the Talon, pondering their few options with growing panic. The trek back down the cliffs grew more perilous by the second, and it was a six-day journey through lands overrun with Horrors and their dreadful creations to Tyrannisis' retreat in the Delaris Mountains. And even if by some miracle he survived to reach his tower, he knew full well that its magic might not prove strong enough to protect him from the Scourge. Yet he must try; he had no alternative.

Gripping their weapons with grim purpose, Tyrannisis and his remaining hirelings fought a running battle back down the mountain. Somehow they reached the mountain's foot alive. For two more days they fought their way across the wild, ravaged lands. They found no shelter, no rest, and no respite from the growing black clouds of Horrors that fell upon the once-sweet earth like malignant rain. The giant insects were no longer their only enemy; shrieking, winged creatures with slavering, fanged mouths and wicked talons flew around them, lashing out at their prey and drawing blood with every touch. One by one, Tyrannisis' men fell dead. The nethermancer staggered onward until he fell, weak from blood loss. Then he crawled onward, refusing to listen to the sinister flapping of wings. Through bloodshot eyes, Tyrannisis caught one last glimpse of his tower retreat before the Horror named Rasper-Nor used its sharp talons to rip the orbs from their sockets.

Before Tyrannisis' life could ebb, Rasper-Nor possessed his soul and animated Tyrannisis' nearly dead body with its evil power. In possessing the nethermancer, Rasper-Nor discovered that Tyrannisis and the windling mages had found ways to banish certain types of Horrors, including those like Rasper-Nor itself, and in the process had also learned how to summon such beings. The windlings had recorded this knowledge in a book called the Tome of Banishment, that lay within the windling kaer that Tyrannisis had helped construct.

Determined to get at the Tome of Banishment, the Horror left Tyrannisis' identity intact, and constantly whispered into his brain that his so-called friends among the windlings had deliberately sealed the door of their kaer against him. Rasper-Nor left Tyrannisis' body eyeless and hideously scarred, using the nethermancer's blindness and pain to fan his hatred.

For months, Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor tried to breach the windling kaer. Knowing that Tyrannisis had helped construct the sanctuary's defenses, Rasper-Nor counted on the nethermancer to dispel or defeat whatever wards kept the Horrors out. The possessed nethermancer eventually succeeded, and Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor sent swarms of giant insects to overrun the windling haven.

The jubilant Horror led a group of its minions deep into the windlings' violated kaer in search of the Tome of Banishment. To Rasper-Nor's outrage, one of the mages had sealed himself and the book within a specially prepared structure. Neither Rasper-Nor nor Tyrannisis could penetrate the stone sanctuary, or solve the riddle carved into its surface.

Throughout the four-century Scourge, Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor continued to experiment with extra-planar spells that could summon more Horrors. After the Scourge ended, the Horror-possessed nethermancer turned his corrupted talents toward bringing back the Scourge. He failed in this effort, but successfully summoned enough individual Horrors into the world to threaten many villages. Upon observing a flotilla of airships from the city of Travar in flight over the Thunder Mountains, Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor concocted a plan to retrieve the long-coveted Tome of Banishment. He would summon dreadful creatures to attack Barsaivian airships until a group of heroes appeared to stop the carnage. Once the heroes proved themselves able to survive the terrors that still lurked within the ruins of the windling kaer, Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor planned to trick them into entering the ancient haven and unlocking the magical wards that had kept the Tome of Banishment sealed safely away for almost five hundred years. Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor would then use

the Tome to reopen the gateway between Barsaive and the realm of the Horrors.

To test the mettle of prospective adventurers, Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor created Horror constructs resistant to non-magical weapons and spells in hopes of ensuring that only a truly powerful team of adventurers could survive an encounter with them. Also, using flying Horror-minions as hero-bait would ensure that any successful adventurers would know how to fly or sail an airship—a skill necessary in order to reach the windling kaer within Talon Peak.

At this point the player characters enter the adventure, shortly after their arrival in the city of Travar. While enjoying a meal at a local tavern, they learn that in the past few weeks airships traveling near Travar have been attacked by mysterious, bloodthirsty flying creatures, and that the city's air warden wants to hire additional hands to guard the airships and their valuable cargo. The characters join the Flying Patrol, the airship force that protects the sky lanes in and around Travar. After the characters experience a few encounters with the flying creatures, known as rakken, Air Warden Drimsby learns of the existence of the Tome of Banishment, a book that holds the key to banishing the rakken. According to Drimsby's source, the Tome lies buried in the ruins of a windling citadel in the Thunder Mountains.

Drimsby, the characters, and a hearty crew of air sailors set off for the windling kaer within Talon Peak. As they descend into the depths of the terrible place, the adventurers battle horrible creatures and Horror constructs, as well as harsh weather, steep cliffs, and deep crevasses. Upon reaching the room where the Tome of Banishment lies within the sealed Sanctuary, the players must decipher the tricky riddle left behind by the Sanctuary's builders before they can take the treasure inside.

With the Tome in hand, the heroes climb triumphantly out of the windling kaer just in time to allow Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor to attack their airship and steal the book from them. The survivors of the attack fight a running battle with the Horror's airship all the way back to Travar, where they attempt to take the Tome of Banishment from Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor and use it to banish the evil being to his native plane.

Those men and women who live to accomplish this epic task will truly be the stuff of legends.



PRELUDE TO TERROR



OVERVIEW

This encounter begins shortly after the heroes have wandered into The Picky Palate, often called the best tavern in Travar, for a hot meal. When Travar's Air Warden, Gardius Drimsby, stops by the Palate to call out members of the City Watch, the heroes discover that the sky lanes around the city are being terrorized by flying demons bent on destroying Travar's airships and commerce.

SETTING THE STAGE

You walk into The Picky Palate, all but drooling at the prospect of a gourmet meal after several days on the road. Your fellow diners look prosperous, much more so than the denizens of the roadside pubs you frequent: fine leathers, brightly colored silks, and even the occasional glint of candlelight off jewelry dazzle your eyes. The rich aroma wafting from the kitchens makes your stomachs rumble. To judge from the tempting scents, The Picky Palate more than deserves its reputation.

You seat yourselves at a table so highly polished that it gleams, reveling in the simple act of leaning back in a leather-cushioned chair. So much more comfortable than a hard, wooden stool. . . Within minutes, a young human woman carrying a small sheet of parchment steps up to your table. She wears a simple black dress with a white apron, both cut of good cloth. "Good evening and welcome to The Picky Palate. I am Kathleen, your server." She sets the parchment down in the middle of the table. On it are drawings of several choice dishes: poultry with steaming vegetables, beef topped with boiled potatoes and leeks, t'skrang fish soup, stew with winter vegetables, nut-flour bread smothered in honey, and many others. The simple sketches make your mouth water. So many luscious dishes to choose from, and so little time. . .

After the characters have ordered, read the following aloud:

More quickly than you expected, Kathleen emerges from the kitchens, a large tray bearing your meals balanced on her slender shoulder. Halfway to your table, she stops and turns toward the door. The entire dining room falls silent as a dwarf clad in a steel breastplate, scarlet under-

shirt, and brown breeches enters the tavern. On his head he wears a rounded helmet, topped by a thin crest that runs down its middle. One hand rests on the hilt of a dwarf sword thrust through his leather belt.

When every eye in the room is upon him, the dwarf speaks. "I am sorry to interrupt everyone's meal, but I need all members of the City Watch and any other able-bodied persons to come with me."

With a scraping of chairs and a rustling of cloth, half

the diners rise and move toward the door. As the dwarf turns to leave, Kathleen calls to him. "Warden Drimsby, has there been another attack?"

Drimsby turns back to her and answers softly. "I'm sorry, my girl. The *Dawn* went down."

Kathleen's hands grip the edges of the tray. "Berthon?" she asks through trembling lips.

Drimsby says nothing, but slowly shakes his head. Kathleen drops the tray and dashes through the kitchen door with a strangled cry. A grim-faced Drimsby watches her disappear, then walks out. Several men and women rise to follow, some scooping a last mouthful of food into their mouths before leaving their tables. You look around the silent, near-deserted tavern: the only patrons remaining are the few too aged to be of use. Quietly, the waitresses in the front room begin to clear the empty tables.



THEMES AND IMAGES

The characters enter a bustling establishment full of contented eaters and animated conversation. After Drimsby brings news of the *Crimson Dawn*, a large air-freighter with two score crewmen, the level of conversation drops to a few low, dispirited mutterings. Over the soft table talk, a perceptive character can hear Kathleen sobbing faintly in one of the back rooms.



BEHIND THE SCENES

The menu includes almost any meat dish the characters can think of, all of which come with such vegetables as potatoes or leeks. The average cost of a meal is 50 silver pieces, equivalent to a sumptuous feast: choice cuts of steak or extra helpings can raise this price by 10–20 silver pieces. The fee must be paid before the meal arrives on the table. Though The Picky Palate established this policy to forestall walk-outs, the gamemaster can use it to get the characters involved in the adventure. With any luck, the heroes will follow Drimsby, ask him what the trouble is, and offer to help. Alternatively, one of them may try to comfort Kathleen, who then explains the trouble to the character. If neither of these options work, stress that the expensive meal the characters just paid for lies scattered across the floor. If the characters flag down another waitress and ask for a new meal, the waitress tells them the following:

"I'll replace your food immediately. No charge. You must excuse Kathleen; her betrothed served aboard the *Crimson Dawn*. We've lost three airships in a month now—no one seems to know how to stop these dreadful creatures from attacking."

If the characters ask their new waitress about the creatures, she tells them that demons have plagued the skies for a month, and that Air Warden Drimsby is eager to hire any adventurers willing to take on the creatures.

The Picky Palate's food can actually help a wounded character heal. Over the next eight hours as the character digests the food, he or she recovers 1 point of damage per hour (assuming the adventurers get to eat their expensive feast).

COMFORTING KATHLEEN

If a character finds and comforts Kathleen, she tells that character the same information that the other waitress knows. If a character is particularly kind to her, Kathleen may become romantically interested in him, but it will take her at least six months of game time to get over the loss of her fiancé. Berthon, an elf, worked for Juliak Merris, an obsidian merchant and owner of the *Crimson Dawn*.

FOLLOWING DRIMSBY

From the tavern, Drimsby heads southeast toward the flaming wreckage of the *Crimson Dawn*. The characters may catch up to Drimsby and speak with him on the way, but Drimsby never stops walking.

Unless the questioning character manages to offend Drimsby or somehow make him suspicious, Drimsby freely tells the characters what he knows. Talking out loud helps the old dwarf think things through, and he also wants to hire any able body he can get his hands on to help his city.

If the characters show any interest in Travar's plight, Drimsby eagerly offers them the following facts gleaned from the survivors.

Three demonic creatures, called rakken by the locals, have attacked airships near the city. The rakken have scarlet skin, huge leathery wings, and hollow arms from which they shoot fire. The creatures use their wings and their flame jets to maneuver, often changing direction faster than any weapons fire can follow. Their long, tapered bodies end in an opening that shoots fire, just as their arms do. Their large, round heads initially appear to have no mouth, until a rakken opens its jaws. When it does so, the rakken's head parts across virtually its entire width, revealing hundreds of jagged teeth. Several survivors saw their friends bitten in two by this vicious maw.

The creatures attack by flying near airships and setting their masts, sails, and rigging on fire. As the crewmen try in vain to extinguish the flames, the creatures swoop down and pick them off. No one has yet claimed to have injured a rakken, let alone killed it.

Most survivors are members of the Flying Patrol, a group of air sailors kept on call to escort airships as they enter and leave Travar. The patrolmen ride in small, fast drakkars; they have tried arrow barrages, ramming, and even a spell or two against the creatures with little success. Of the three drakkars escorting the doomed *Crimson Dawn*, only two returned to Travar intact. The third remains missing.

The characters and Drimsby arrive at the burning wreckage of the *Crimson Dawn* just as Drimsby finishes speaking. Go to the following encounter, **Crimson Dawn**.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Ideally, this encounter should end with the characters offering to help Drimsby in some way, though they need not necessarily offer to fight the rakken at this point. Encourage the players to get involved putting out fires, clearing wreckage, offering first aid, and so on. If the characters are not interested in helping Drimsby at this point, the following encounters provide plenty of additional hooks.

If characters caught up in death-or-glory visions offer to fight the rakken in this encounter, the gamemaster should recast the following encounter, **Crimson Dawn**, so that the fire from the burning airship burns out of control and ignites several buildings. One way or another, the characters should battle the flames side by side with the good citizens of Travar. Doing so will connect them emotionally to the people who need their help.

CRIMSON DAWN



O

 VERVIEW

In this encounter, the heroes help fight the fires caused by the crash of the *Crimson Dawn*. As they work side by side with the citizens of Travar, the characters learn more of the city and the threat that plagues its people.

SETTING THE STAGE

The mammoth airship ripped open a trench the length of fifty men when it slammed to earth. Several buildings lie smashed to rubble in its path. Cracked and scorched cobblestones lie scattered around the streets, and flaming planks threaten to set fire to nearby houses and shops. The rising wind whips the flames higher, sending hot sparks swirling into the cool, night sky. Several of the City Watch are furiously digging a second trench, trying to stop the fire from spreading into the town. One of them, a sergeant, shouts at the townspeople to help. Some move toward the diggers, but most simply stare in shock at the shattered *Crimson Dawn*. Drimsby curses and grabs a shovel, bidding you follow him closer to the flames.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Though the ship's size is difficult to judge from its burning remains, the *Crimson Dawn* was 40 feet wide and more than 80 feet long. Sky raider or air sailor characters who make a successful Perception (10) Test can discern two things from the wreckage: the fire that consumed the *Dawn* started almost simultaneously in several locations, and the shredded sails were most likely the first target of the ship's attackers.

Fifteen to twenty of the City Watch are trying to keep the gathering crowd away from the flaming hulk. Another fifteen, plus four townspeople, are digging a firebreak to keep the conflagration from spreading. A silent mob stands watching, most too stunned to offer any help. Drimsby immediately snatches up a shovel and starts digging; at this point, the characters must choose whether or not to get involved. Some may try to prod the onlookers into digging, while others may choose to lend a hand fighting the fire.

FIGHTING THE FIRE

The firebreak must be dug within 8 rounds, before the strong winds send the fire deep into the city. To halt the fire's advance, the ditch must be at least five feet wide and one foot deep along the length of the crashed ship. Such a mammoth task would take one man 200 rounds; the fifteen watchmen and four townspeople already digging, plus Drimsby, will finish the task in 10 rounds. Obviously, the fire will spread to nearby buildings and rage completely out of control unless more people join in the digging. Twenty-five diggers can finish the firebreak in 8 rounds, in the nick of time. Of course, every passing round tires those already digging, who will therefore dig more slowly. To reflect this slowdown without making the necessary calculations impossibly complicated, assume that every round

spent without the minimum five additional diggers requires two more individuals to ensure that the ditch is dug in time. For example, if no one helps to dig until the fourth round of activity, finishing the firebreak in time requires six individuals in addition to the original minimum of five—a total of eleven additional diggers. Be careful not to get bogged down in numbers at this point; the firefighting should add drama and bond the adventurers to the townsfolk, but should not slow the action.

All diggers take Step 8 damage from the blowing smoke and the sheer fatigue of digging. Depending on what they have available, they may dig with such difficult tools as bare hands, a sword, the edge of an axe, and so on. The earth of Travar's streets is covered in loose cobblestones, which will bloody hands and dull sword and axe blades. No matter what tools the diggers use, however, they recover damage normally.

If the characters help the City Watch dig the firebreak in time, the fire continues to consume the ship, but does not spread into the city. If the City Watch fails in its task, a few of the buildings closest to the ship will catch fire. Luckily for Travar, the townspeople will quench these fires within 5 rounds, quickly enough to prevent them from spreading further. During that time, the watchmen continue to work on the firebreak.

SOLE SURVIVOR

During the frantic digging and scraping, have one of the characters spot a blackened hand moving inside the inferno of the crashed airship. Though any character may see the hand, consider choosing a player whose character tends to stay out of the limelight, or a character who refuses to help Drimsby. In the former case, a shy player character has a chance to do something heroic, gaining both attention and Legend Points. In the latter, the reluctant character may feel more personally connected to the events that are occurring and choose to get involved after all.

The sole survivor is an elven crewman named Radlin. Any character attempting to rescue him must have some protection against fire, or take Step 12 damage from breaking through the flaming timbers to drag Radlin out. Though the elf is initially in too much pain to speak, once healed he will share valuable information with his rescuer (see **Rumors and Research**, p. 83). The rescuer also gets more immediate benefits. Impressed with the hero's sacrifice, the owner of The Picky Palate offers him or her a free meal, and the questors of Garlen hovering nearby heal the character for free once they have taken care of the most critically wounded. At the gamemaster's discretion, any business in town may choose to give the hero a 10 percent discount on any goods available in that establishment.



QUESTORS OF GARLEN

Several questors of the Passion Garlen, young women dressed in white shirts and pants, have gathered near the wreck to tend those wounded as the ship crashed to the cobbled streets. If a character saves Radlin from the wreckage, a windling girl named Tryla gives the elf immediate aid. Eventually, volunteers led by the questors transport all the wounded to the Sanctum of Garlen, a refuge several blocks away.

TALKING WITH DRIMSBY

After the fire has been contained, Air Warden Drimsby mentions to the characters that he wants new recruits for the Flying Patrol. This branch of the City Watch guards airships and shipping lanes near Travar. If any or all of the characters agree, the Air Warden signs them up at a pay rate of 15 silver pieces per 8-hour shift, adding 5 silver pieces in hazard pay to the standard pay rate of 10 silver pieces. He cannot pay much more, because the city merchants in charge of the budget will give him no more funds. Alternatively, Drimsby may offer a bounty of 75 gold pieces out of his own pocket to any character who finds and destroys the rakken. A character or group must either join the patrol or claim the bounty, but may not do both.

No matter which arrangement the characters choose, Drimsby takes care of such simple tasks as arranging for healing at the Sanctum or finding rooms (though he does

not pay for lodging). Once the heroes have proven themselves and gained Drimsby's trust, he may choose to assist them further. He does not offer to buy them weapons, armor, or any other equipment, however. The characters must acquire these things themselves as part of their contract.

Once the group has either joined the Flying Patrol or agreed to take the bounty, Drimsby asks them to meet him at the Flying Patrol's docking house at noon the next day. Go to **Knights of the Sky**, following.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the characters choose not to help fight the fire, have a sergeant of the City Watch grab them and commandeer their assistance. Alternatively, have a gamemaster character start digging, and make sure the player characters notice all the attention and respect he or she attracts. True heroes should want to help on their own, but occasionally need a little prodding.

If the characters take the bounty instead of joining the Flying Patrol, Drimsby sends them out to look for the missing drakkar anyway (see **Knights of the Sky**, following). The gamemaster will, however, need to recast the following encounter slightly to reflect the characters' status as bounty hunters.



KNIGHTS OF THE SKY



OVERVIEW

In this encounter, the characters learn to fly airships, search for the missing patrol drakkar, and discover more about the marauding rakken.

SETTING THE STAGE

After resting most of the morning, you arrive at the Flying Patrol dock. Several drakkars, some bearing the scars of battle, stand moored along wooden wharfs, looking for all the world like a fleet of riverboats on a waterway gone suddenly dry. A dwarf with tired eyes and a weary t'skrang rub wax over one of the drakkars, glancing indifferently at you as you enter the small docking house.

You find Drimsby's office easily enough; the grim-faced dwarf stands in the doorway, waiting for you. "Thank you for your promptness," he says, walking into his office and beckoning you to follow. Drimsby gestures toward a few wooden chairs and bids you take a seat. He offers you water, pouring each of you a cupful from a plain, wooden flagon. He pours a cup for himself, then leans against the edge of his desk and looks you in the eye. "Let me tell you about your first day's work with the Flying Patrol."

BEHIND THE SCENES

Everyone refers to the airship dock and all buildings on it collectively as "the dock." The docking house includes a waiting area, an office where Drimsby's second-in-command stays whenever Drimsby is out, and Drimsby's own office where he keeps pay records, tips on battling sky raiders, and other work-related information. The dock also includes a shack full of spare parts and shipwright's tools.

The airmen with whom the heroes will interact most are a human named Karl and an ork named Yorlk. Neither of these men know anything more about the rakken than Drimsby does. In briefing the adventurers on the workings of the Flying Patrol, Drimsby tells them the following:

"Outgoing ships send us a runner about an hour before leaving. When the runner arrives at the docking house, we dispatch our own runners to the patrolmen and send two or

three drakkars up to escort the trading vessel. The patrol ships fly escort for an hour or two before returning to Travar. The Flying Patrol has put quite a crimp in the dealings of our local sky raiders. Time was, they had spies living in the city; when the spies saw a ship lift, they'd warn their fellows, who'd strike the ship as soon as it left Travar. I could almost wish for sky pirates to fight now—anything but those rakken beasts.

"I need to know where you'll be from dinner to breakfast each day. If a ship tells us she's going up, I'll send a runner and have you airborne in less than a quarter-hour.

You escort her out safely, then come back and go about your business until another ship lifts. Even during the heaviest trading season, we usually only get three flights a day; with these flying demons marauding, it's dropped back to one, sometimes two.

"Ships don't leave Travar at night—the darkness makes it too easy for the pirates to trail them and attack after the drakkars leave. Sometimes, though, a ship comes in after dark. Most merchants try to schedule day landings, but slow winds or overlong trading stops can delay them. That's what happened last night with the *Crimson Dawn*. I sent up three drakkars, but the *Crimson Dawn* was already



on fire when they got there. One of the patrol ships is still missing; I want you to find it. Take up a ship now to get the feel of it, and then look for the missing crewmen. If they're alive, take them to the questors of Garlen in the Sanctum. If not, bring their bodies back to the city for a decent burial."

The newly inducted airmen may ask Drimsby whatever questions they wish. If they want to know the dates, times, and targets of the rakken attacks, go to **Rumors and Research**, p. 83.

THE BEST-LAID PLANS...

Though the characters will have an eventful first day on the job, they will also live through several long stretch-



es of downtime in which they may choose their own course of action. The characters will probably want to wander around Travar, searching for any special items that might give them an edge in the inevitable encounter with the rakken. If the players choose this sensible course of action, they may visit any of the locations listed under **Exploring Travar**, following. With regard to finding or making specific equipment, the gamemaster should anticipate the following possibilities.

The players may well want to create parachutes or some kind of life jackets treated with elemental air. Though such a precaution is a good idea, the gamemaster should veto it because the *characters* most likely cannot imagine such items. After all, humans sailed the seas for thousands of years before anyone invented a life jacket, and air sailing in **Earthdawn** is very similar.

If a player presents a sufficiently good excuse for devising a new piece of equipment, the gamemaster can let him create it as long as it has a few flaws that will add drama to the upcoming air battle. For example, a mage who wants to create a "chair of floating" out of wood treated with elemental air can do so, provided that the chair has a tendency to buck and sway in the wind and possibly disrupt the wizard's spellcasting as it spins, soars, and dives. Remember that once the heroes clash with the rakken, the fact that they might easily plunge to their deaths or wind up hanging upside down from a burning rope should keep the battle tense and force the adventurers to work together. The thief dangling at the end of a smoldering line will almost certainly call on his buddy the troll sky raider to pull him up, potentially forcing the troll to choose between saving his friend or getting a good hack at a creature.

EXPLORING TRAVAR

Though the city of Travar is far too large to describe in detail, the characters can find the following locations within an easy walk of the docks.

The Picky Palate

The tavern where the adventure began serves meals from noon to midnight and belongs to the human Maxor Yarl. A consummate gourmet, Yarl prides himself on serving the finest cuisine in southern Barsaive.

Uglan's Arms

Uglan, an aging t'skrang swordsman, turned to selling the huge quantities of weapons and armor he had collected from his defeated foes. This enterprise proved so profitable that he eventually opened up shop in Travar. The characters may find in his shop any weapon normally available.

The Broken Cutlass

A bartender named Mug serves spirits from this traditional tavern, frequented by ex-sky raiders and more than a few who still engage in piracy.

Sanctum of Garlen

Fifteen women and three men live within this retreat, healing all in need. In addition to healing, the questors also sell all of the healing aids described in **Goods and Services**, p. 258, ED.

The Slumbering Traveler

This inn is famous for its good beds, hot baths, and safety. The owner, an obsidian named Greeg Harksot, keeps two well-armed guards on duty at all times. These guards patrol the grounds to keep out thieves and safeguard the patrons. The characters may hear any number of legends and rumors in the Traveler.

MAD MARTIN STRIKES!

A local magician who long ago went insane, Mad Martin walks the streets of this corner of Travar babbling incoherently to unseen friends and screaming at invisible tormentors. Everyone in the district knows Mad Martin and avoids him like the plague. Maxor Yarl of The Picky Palate leaves table scraps behind the tavern for him from time to time, but only the waitress Kathleen knows of this kindness.

At some point during the day, have Mad Martin run up to one of the characters, sling mud at him or her, and cackle something about stealing oranges from the apple grove. If the character attacks Martin, point out that the old man is annoying, but harmless. If a character seriously injures Martin, that character has ruined his or her reputation in this part of Travar from that point onward. Few people speak to him, and merchants charge him 10 percent above standard prices for all goods and services. If the character ignores the lunatic, Martin eventually stops harassing the group and goes merrily on his way.

Should a character ask someone about Martin, tell them the following. Note that the passage below is written as if spoken by a commoner on the street; the gamemaster may wish to change the accent or wording to fit whomever the character asks.

"Oh, Mad Martin soiled ya, did he? Well, now, there's a strange one. Some say he were a wizard what dabbled where he shouldn'ta. Some even say he's Horror-marked. If that's true, seems funny that the creature never makes him do harm. Just torments the poor crazed soul, that's all."

This incident, though minor, lets the heroes know what a Horror mark is. This piece of information

becomes important in **Finding the Sanctuary**, later on in the adventure. If the characters already know about Horror marks, the gamemaster may skip the meeting with Mad Martin. Though in most Barsaivian cities a Horror-marked individual would be stoned to death or driven out, the people of the dock district know that Martin is harmless and therefore attribute his madness to some less corrupt influence than a Horror.

UNFRIENDLY SKIES

Eventually, the characters must take to the skies and hunt for the missing crewmen. Upon boarding their ship, the *Tree Skimmer*, they meet their fellow airmen, Karl and Yorlk. For Karl's and Yorlk's statistics, see **Cast of Characters**, p. 76. Drimsby has asked these two experienced flyers to work with the characters. The drakkar can seat up to 12 men comfortably; the weight constraints of the magic that keeps it aloft give the craft a maximum carrying capacity of 16 men, or roughly 3,000 pounds.

Flying An Airship

To help the gamemaster guide the characters through the process of crewing on an airship, use the following descriptions of airships and the Air Sailing talent. Keep in mind, however, that flying the ships is less important than the characters' actions in combat. For this reason, the descriptions below do not include a detailed set of game mechanics for operating airships.

Air Sailing Talent/Skill: To fly an airship, a character must use the Air Sailing talent (or skill). As stated in the description of the Air Sailing talent (p. 96, ED) a character must get a result of at least 4 on his Air Sailing Test in order to successfully row, operate the sails, and so on. Characters without ranks in the Air Sailing talent can use that talent by defaulting to Willpower. Alternatively, a character may use Air Sailing as a skill (p. 125, ED).

When engaged in ship combat (see **Broadsides**, p. 55), resolve the vessel's maneuverability using the ship combat rules on pp. 88–93 of this book.

Drakkars: Flying Patrol drakkars are much smaller than those used by crystal raiders, measuring roughly 30 feet long by 10 feet wide. The sides rise slightly higher than those of a typical water vessel. A single, twelve-foot sail hangs from the mainmast. Small, swift, and maneuverable, the drakkar can turn much faster than a galley, though the rakken and eendwings (see **Broadsides**, p. 57) can still fly circles around one. The drakkars are also equipped with oars, used to propel the ship when high winds make using the sails impractical or dangerous, or to pile on additional speed. Each drakkar normally requires a crew of at least five, though the characters can reduce this number by achieving Excellent or Extraordinary successes when making Air Sailing Tests.

Galleys: Drimsby's ship, the *Cloud Runner*, is a galley. Like the drakkars, the galleys in this adventure are smaller than most, measuring 200 feet long and 40 feet wide. They mount several fire cannons, and are fairly maneuverable despite their size. Galleys use both sails and oars, though they use the latter infrequently. A galley normally requires a crew of at least twenty sailors, but characters can reduce this number by achieving Excellent or Extraordinary successes when making Air Sailing Tests.

Search for the Ship

Karl pilots the *Tree Skimmer*. Once he has gotten the craft a reasonable distance from the city, have the characters make Perception (8) Tests to search for the missing ship. To find the downed drakkar takes a Base Time of 120 minutes, or 2 hours. For every point by which a player's die roll result exceeds 8, reduce the search time by five minutes. For example, if a player achieves a result of 11 on his or her Perception (8) Test, reduce the Base Time by 15 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes ($11 - 8 = 3$, $3 \times 5 = 15$). If the gamemaster wishes, he or she may make Perception (8) Tests for Karl and Yorlk and use the successes generated for those gamemaster characters to further reduce the search time. Regardless of how successful the players are, the characters must spend at least 30 minutes searching.

After the characters have searched for the appropriate amount of time, have one of the characters spot a large kalamis tree at the edge of a forest just outside Travar. Something large has split it down the middle, and several large limbs lie at its base. If the *Tree Skimmer* moves in for a closer look, the adventurers can see the missing drakkar wedged high in the tree's remaining, twisted branches. At this point, one of the characters must climb the tree to look for survivors.

Kalamis trees exude a sweet sap used as a syrup on pastries and other sweet foods. The tasty sap is a favorite delicacy of most animals, and so the tree developed a natural defense consisting of several wicked barbs that stick out along its limbs and branches. Climbing over these thorns is extremely difficult and painful. The climber must make a Climbing (12) Test; if the test is successful, the climber takes no damage. If the test fails, the climber takes damage equal to the difference between the die roll result and 12. For example, a character who achieves a result of 9 takes 3 points of damage ($12 - 9 = 3$). The damage inflicted by the tree is painful, but rarely fatal, and armor protects against it.

All but one of the craft's three crewmen perished in the crash landing. The sole survivor, a t'skrang named Slilith, is unconscious and requires immediate aid. To get





Slilith into the *Tree Skimmer*, the rescuing character must make a successful Climbing (14) Test. The added difficulty reflects the extra encumbrance of the t'skrang's dead weight.

Once Slilith heals, either at the hands of a skilled character or of the questors of Garlen in Travar, he can tell the characters what happened during the attack on the *Crimson Dawn* (see **Rumors and Research**, p. 83). The characters should take the bodies of the *Dawn's* remaining crewmen back to Travar; to recover each one requires another successful Climbing (14) Test. If any of these tests is unsuccessful, the characters cannot get that body out of the ship and must leave it behind.

Returning to Travar

Once the characters have reported to Drimsby, the Air Warden thanks and dismisses them, then calls for another crew to salvage the remains of the ruined drakkar.

Hull Jumping

After the salvage ship departs, Karl and Yorlk challenge the characters to their favorite sport, hull jumping.

Though Karl seems calm to the point of indifference, he is a die-hard thrill seeker who developed hull jumping to while away some of the dull hours aboard airships. In this dangerous pastime, the hull jumper secures himself to the middle seat of a drakkar with a short length of rope, leaps off one side, and swings around to the other, landing back on the deck (hopefully). As the jumper pushes himself off the side, he also pushes the boat away behind him, which helps pull the rope tight during the initial swing and shoves the craft down and back into a better position for the landing. The shortest length of rope used is 20 feet. The longer the rope, the harder it is to complete the swing and land safely back in the drakkar. Karl brags to the characters that his current record stands at 35 feet of rope.

In game terms, anyone courageous (or foolish) enough to try this stunt must make a Dexterity Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the length of the rope minus 5. Hull jumping is extremely difficult, but an agile character can probably make one out of every five jumps. An Average success lets the leaper grab onto the

side of the boat and drag himself in. A Good success throws him or her haphazardly into the ship, and an Excellent success or better places the jumper on his feet in the center of the drakkar. A Poor success does Step 4 damage to the character, who must be hauled back into the boat.

Karl bets a single silver piece per jump. He jumps not for the money or to prove anything, but simply because he likes the thrill of hurling himself out of the drakkar. Yorlk, on the other hand, enjoys the gambling. He comes from a wealthy family, and bets up to a gold piece per jump.

If a character seems able to keep up with Karl, the airman challenges him or her to a jumping duel. Each participant starts with 20 feet of rope and makes a jump. For every successful jump, each adds 3 feet of rope to his line and jumps again. If one of them misses a jump, he must keep trying at his current length of rope until he succeeds. The duel continues until one of the two reaches Karl's record of 35 feet of rope. The winner receives whatever Yorlk has bet (up to 5 gold pieces) and whatever Karl has bet (up to 1 gold piece), as well as 200 Legend Points to reflect the character's newly gained reputation as a daredevil.

ESCORT DUTY

During the course of the day, two more ships leave Travar, one belonging to the Merris merchant house and the other to an independent hauler. Drimbsy calls in all of his three-ship patrols to escort them. The first ship leaves in late afternoon, the second at dinner time.

Though nothing happens during these two flights, the gamemaster should ask the players where their characters are sitting in the drakkar and where their ship flies in relation to the others. These details will be necessary during the next encounter, **Obsidian Flyer**, when the rakken finally attack.

BACK TO EARTH

At day's end, Karl and Yorlk may decide to take their new compatriots out carousing. Lovable and loyal, these two make ideal companions for the player characters. The gamemaster should encourage a friendly relationship for several reasons. First, adding familiar and trustworthy gamemaster characters enriches the flavor of Travar and makes it seem more real to the players. Second, because Karl and Yorlk are loyal to the Flying Patrol, their friendship may well encourage the player characters to feel the same way. When the rakken strike later in the night, the adventurers are more likely to act heroically than they might if they saw the Flying Patrol as just another job.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Hopefully, Karl and Yorlk befriend the player characters. Unfortunately, the hull jumping competition may create some enmity between Karl and his challenger. If Karl does much better than his opponent, have the airman quit before reaching the 35-foot limit and offer to buy the character a drink for being such a good sport. If the character beats the pants off Karl, the airman is happy to find a kindred spirit rather than insulted at being bested. Who knows, the two might spend all night downing drinks and thinking up new and more dangerous endeavors.

The gamemaster should try to forge a relationship between these two gamemaster characters and the heroes. The rest of the adventure stands to be much less mercenary and more fun to play if the heroes care about their mission for reasons other than pay.



OBSIDIAN FLYER



OVERVIEW

In this encounter, the heroes fight their first battle with the rakken, the terrible creatures that the Horror Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor has summoned to terrorize Travar's shipping lanes. As the battle rages, the characters realize that defeating these creatures requires more strength than even the most powerful among them possesses. The fight becomes both a temporary setback and a foreshadowing of trials to come.

SETTING THE STAGE

The sound of someone hammering on the door of your room rouses you from sleep. Still dizzy from the evening's drinking, you open the door. One of Drimsby's runners gasps out his message: a merchant ship, the *Obsidian Flyer*, is on its way in. As the messenger regains his breath, you scramble into your clothes and pick up your gear, then hot-foot it through Travar's shadowed streets to the dock.

Karl and Yorlk have beaten you there. Breathless, you join them aboard the *Tree Skimmer*, followed by the rest of the drakkar's crew. The lights of Travar disappear behind you as the *Tree Skimmer* flies northwest to rendezvous with the incoming merchant ship. Drimsby's runner told you that the ship sent word of its approach more than two hours ago. As your ship flies in formation with the other two drakkars in the patrol, you and your companions search the night skies for the Merris merchant vessel.

Suddenly, you spot a glint of pale moonlight off something far ahead. Steering nearer, you see a ship like none you've ever seen before. This stone behemoth hangs in the air like a floating brick; beside it, your wooden drakkar seems no bigger than a child's toy. What few stone airships you've seen have all belonged to the Therans, but even those have looked nothing like this one. True to its name, the *Flyer* is built of shiny, black obsidian from prow to stern. Sailing nearer still, you see the scarlet flag of the Merris family waving proudly from the vast ship's mainmast.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Most of the *Obsidian Flyer*'s crew are humans, though several elves, orks, and t'skrang also serve aboard her. Many of the elves carry crossbows, which they finger nervously as the escort approaches. Once convinced that the airmen are indeed Travar's Flying Patrol, the *Flyer* crewmen resume their tense watch over the night skies. Those crew members with heat sight stand ready to act as point defense, should the rakken attack the ship.

The *Flyer*'s deck is lit by several light quartz crystals mounted around the airship's perimeter. Though an air-

ship's cargo is almost always stored below decks, several crates secured with thick ropes sit on the deck of the *Flyer*. The ship's trademaster has come home with a surplus of goods, hoping to compensate his bosses, crewmen, and himself for the expensive losses of the other Merris-owned airships downed by the rakken.

As the *Obsidian Flyer* and its escort pass over the city's outskirts, read the following aloud:

As you return to safe harbor in Travar alongside the *Obsidian Flyer*, you stifle a bored yawn. No demons, no attack, just another uneventful patrol. Your sword was meant to sing a hero's ballad, not rest unbloodied in its sheath. A few more trips like this and you'll be off seeking fame elsewhere.

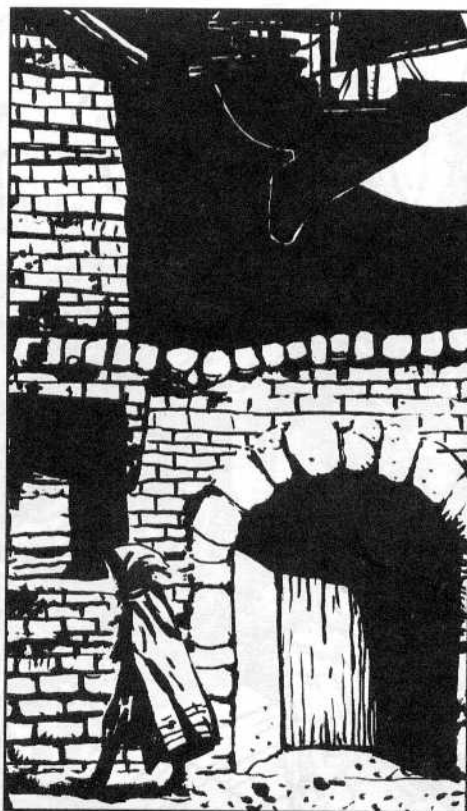
You shift your weight, searching in vain for a comfortable seat on the drakkar's hard, wooden benches, and lean back against its wooden side. A spark of reddish-orange light appears low in the southwestern sky, just off the ship's bow. A star, no doubt. Lazily, you watch it move, trying to remember which stars hang that low in Travar's skies at this time of night. But surely stars don't move? You swallow hard, your mouth suddenly dry as you realize that the light is no star!

What the characters take for a star is actually the flame that shoots from the circular arms of the rakken. Though the creatures primarily use their wings to propel themselves, their powerful flame jets can boost

their speed enormously and help them make impossibly quick, tight turns. The three rakken approaching the *Flyer* use these flame jets to make their initial attack run.

FIGHTING THE RAKKEN

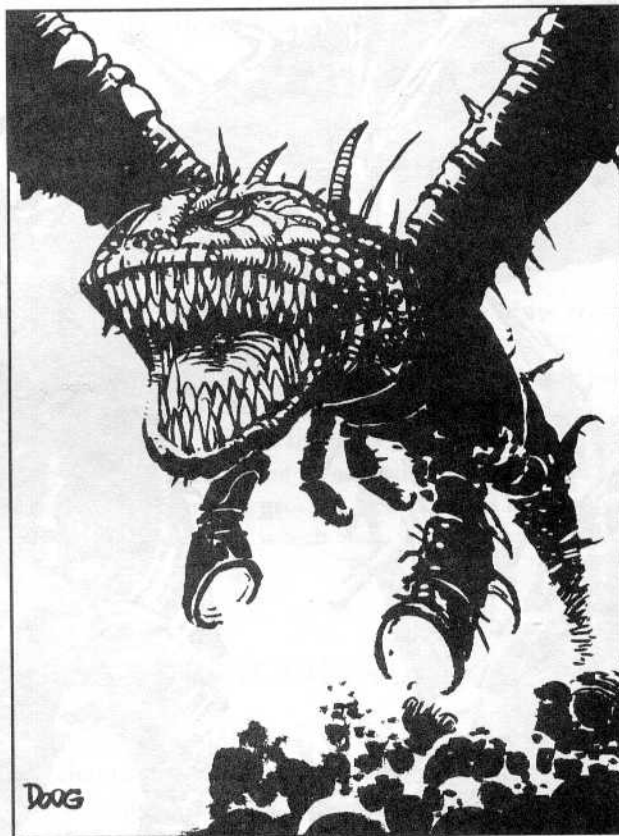
The gamemaster must tell the players when the rakken arrive and combat begins. During the first Combat Round, two of the rakken streak toward the mainsails of the *Obsidian Flyer* and set them aflame. Several of the elves fire their crossbows at the creatures, to no effect. The third rakken swoops down to attack the player characters in the *Tree Skimmer*. The speed and suddenness of its attack gives this rakken Initiative during this first Combat Round. In subsequent rounds, play proceeds normally.



Even though the battle in this encounter does not really involve ship-to-ship combat, many of the rules for such battles apply. With four airships in close flight formation, the gamemaster will need to maneuver them when fighting the rakken. For ship combat rules, see **Ship Combat Rules**, p. 88 of this book, as well as p. 129 of the **Earthdawn Companion**. Note that in this encounter it is most important to know where the characters are within the drakkar and the drakkar's position in relation to the *Obsidian Flyer*. To make keeping track of these variables easier, photocopy and cut out the maps of the drakkar and the *Cloud Runner* galley on pp. 61 and 62. Use the *Cloud Runner* to represent the *Obsidian Flyer*. Place figures on the scale drawings or pencil in everyone's position, so that all players can see exactly where everyone is and what actions each of their characters can feasibly perform. The rakken attacking the drakkar tends to position itself off the bow where it can use its flame and bite attacks on several opponents at once. The physical distance between the creature and the characters makes it more difficult to hit the rakken with melee weapons. To reflect this fact, increase the rakken's Physical Defense by +1 for melee combat.

The drakkar's pilot must make a successful Air Sailing (8) Test each Combat Round to keep the boat steady enough for other characters to attack the rakken. After 2 rounds, the creature flies beneath the ship and attempts to set it afire from below. To execute this maneuver, the creature makes a Dexterity (12) Test. If the test is successful, the drakkar pilot can prevent the attack by making an Air Sailing Test with a result higher than the result of the creature's Dexterity Test. Alternatively, anyone daring enough to hull jump with 20 to 25 feet of rope may make a Melee Attack Test, reducing the step of this test by -4. If this bold maneuver hits the creature, the rakken becomes unnerved and flies away to join its mates in torching the *Obsidian Flyer*. Of course, a jumper who fails will be left dangling from a rope at the vicious creature's mercy. If the characters fail to either drive off the rakken or maneuver the drakkar away from it, the drakkar catches fire after 3 Combat Rounds. If this happens, the ship crashes (see **Inevitable Defeat**, p. 29).

A character may want to leap from the drakkar to the *Flyer* to battle the two rakken besieging the merchantman. The two rakken attacking the *Flyer* spend 2 Combat Rounds setting the ship's masts and sails on fire, then attack the steersman and the ship's wheel in the third and fourth Combat Rounds. When the rakken move toward the deck of the ship, they fly within melee combat range. Unless the characters can prevent the rakken from attacking the *Flyer*'s crew, the creatures succeed in disabling the ship, causing it to plunge earthward.



RAKKEN (3)

Attributes

DEX: 12
PER: 10

STR: 13
WIL: 8

TOU: 10
CHA: 5

Initiative: 10

Number of Attacks: 3

Attack: 15

Damage:

Flame: 8

Bite: 12

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 60

Wound Threshold: 12

Unconsciousness Rating: 52

Karma Points: 30

Legend Points: 865

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Physical Defense: 12

Spell Defense: 10

Social Defense: 12

Armor: 10

Mystic Armor: 5

Knockdown: 15

Recovery Tests: 2

Combat Movement: 57

Full Movement: 29

Karma Step: 12



Commentary

This particularly bizarre Horror construct has a round head with no visible mouth and a long body that tapers into an open tube, from which the rakken emits a constant jet of fire. Huge, leathery wings adorn its back, and its two arms each end in a charred ring of flesh from which the creature shoots powerful flame jets that it uses both to attack and to maneuver in flight. It can rotate its arms in a full circle at any of the arms' major joints. This

flexibility allows the rakken to fly circles around bewildered opponents. Its mouth, visible only when open, contains rows of razor-sharp teeth. Because the mouth is hidden when closed, the rakken's skull appears to literally split in half whenever the creature opens its vicious maw.

The rakken's favorite close-quarters tactic is to bathe its prey in flame, incapacitating its opponent in order to follow the flame attack with its ferocious bite.



Any time a rakken successfully hits a character with both flame jets, it may then bite the target. The effect of the flames reduces the target's Physical Defense by -2.

Rakken are resistant to normal weapons. Any character attacking one with non-magical weapons must achieve an Extraordinary success on his or her Attack Test in order to achieve an Armor-defeating Hit. Because rakken are Horror constructs, talents and spells meant to achieve animal control or dominance are useless against them.

INEVITABLE DEFEAT

No matter how powerful or clever the characters may be, their efforts cannot save the doomed *Obsidian Flyer*. They may slow the rakken down, but cannot prevent them from leaving the drakkar to burn the *Flyer*'s masts and sails. The loss of the sails sends the merchant airship plummeting toward the ground. Because the *Flyer* is made of stone rather than flammable wood, the rakken cannot utterly destroy it, and so they attempt to ensure that the crash kills as many crewmen as possible. If the rakken destroy the ship's wheel or slay the steersman, they accomplish their nefarious goal.

Crashing

Once the *Flyer* has lost its sails and mast, assume that it hits the ground 15 rounds later. The crewman at the wheel at the time of impact must make a successful Air Sailing (12) Test to avoid hitting buildings, rocks, or trees that might damage the ship further. If the test is unsuccessful, the *Flyer* crashes with a tremendous impact. All persons aboard her take Step 23 damage, including any player characters who leapt onto the *Flyer* to battle the rakken. Rather than making individual damage tests for all of the *Flyer*'s crew, assume that the crash kills or critically injures half of them and leaves the rest with minor injuries. It will take at least two months to repair the damage to the stone ship.

If the steersman's Air Sailing Test is successful, a few crewmen are gravely wounded but most escape with bumps and bruises. Once the rakken have grounded the *Flyer*, they fly off, not attacking again for another three nights.

If the drakkar catches fire, its pilot must make a successful Air Sailing (10) Test to avoid crashing into trees, rocks, buildings, and so on. If the test is successful, the drakkar lands roughly, but no one aboard is hurt. If the test is unsuccessful, all aboard the ship take Step 17 damage from the impact.

The best result that the heroes can hope for is to keep the rakken away from the *Flyer*'s crew and the wheel. The ship crashes no matter what, but the steersman can land it

without significant loss of life if he survives long enough.

Use the statistics given for the crew of the *Cloud Runner* (see **Broadsides**, p. 60) for the crew of the *Obsidian Flyer*. Note that the captain, an ork named Trolm, has an Air Sailing rank of 6, giving him a total Air Sailing Step of 10.

GROUNDED

Once the *Flyer* has crash-landed, one of its crew members tries to flag down and thank the Flying Patrol for their efforts. If Captain Trolm is still alive, he is the one who attempts to contact the patrol ships.

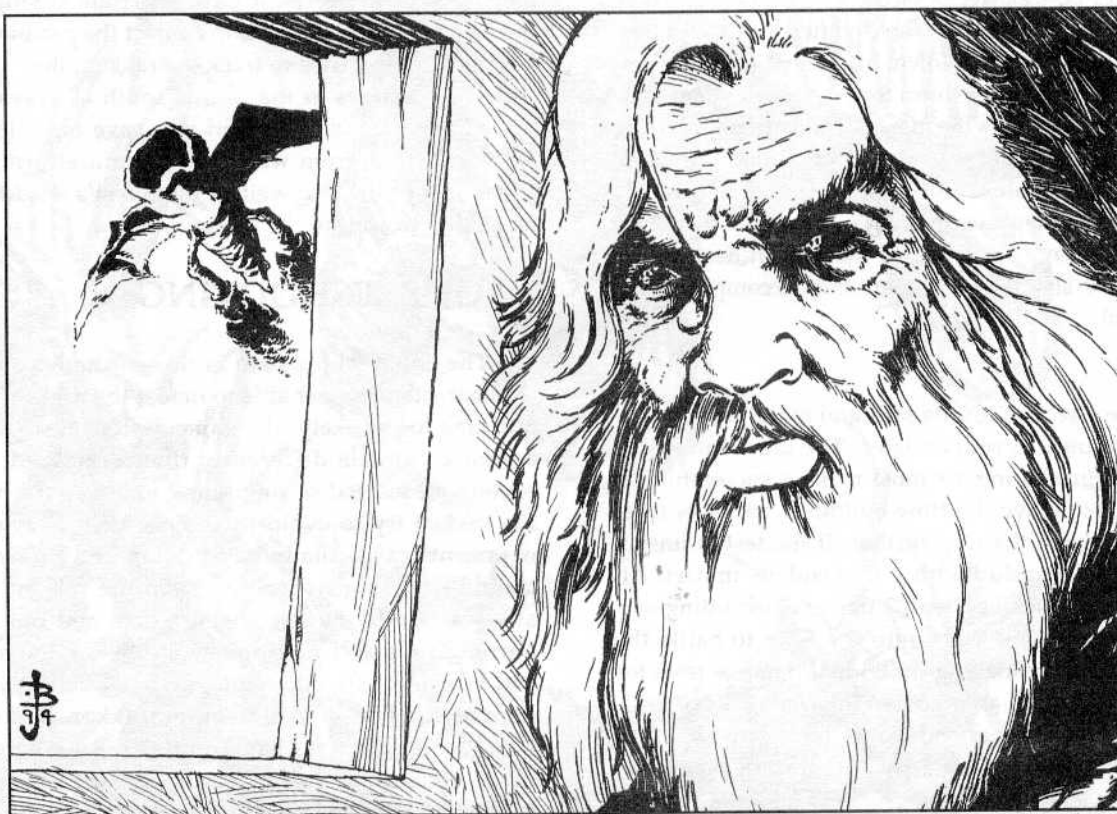
If the patrol tries to track the rakken, they quickly lose the creatures in the forests south of Travar. The rakken have gone to ground in a cave far below the earth's surface, from which they venture forth every three or four days to wait in the forest's shadows for an airship to appear.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The only real problem in this encounter occurs if the characters appear able to defeat the rakken. If this outcome looks likely, the gamemaster must play the creatures a little differently than described in the encounter. Instead of continuing to attack the heroes, the rakken try to avoid them once they realize their opponents can actually harm them. The gamemaster should find it fairly easy to keep the rakken out of attack range by having them dart in and out of the burning sails and rigging, swoop below the airship and around to its other side, and generally fly rings around the less-maneuverable drakkar. Make sure that the adventurers have no desire to tangle with these vicious creatures again. If the rakken have frightened them sufficiently, the characters will gladly seek the grimoire whose spells can send the creatures back to their native plane (see **Baiting the Trap**, following).

Because this battle is only the first of many fights in this adventure, be careful not to kill any of the characters in combat. To ensure the characters' survival, spread out the attacks made by the rakken buzzing the drakkar. Instead of using all three of its attacks against one character, have the rakken use one attack for each of three different characters. This tactic should prevent death or irreparable damage to the characters, while still convincing them that these creatures are a bit beyond their ability to defeat.

BAITING THE TRAP



OVERVIEW

Though no one knows it, the Horror who set this saga in motion is in Travar posing as a traveler. From his room in a low-rent inn in one of Travar's run-down districts, Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor watches each of the rakken attacks, hoping to find a band of adventurers capable of surviving the trek to the windling kaer on Talon Peak. After seeing the heroes' battle with the rakken to save the *Obsidian Flyer*, the Horror believes he has found the necessary dupes and sets the next part of his plan in motion. He sends Air Warden Drimsby a letter (see **Player Handouts**, p. 94) telling him about the Tome of Banishment hidden in the windling kaer. The text of this letter appears within this encounter as well as in the **Player Handouts** section.

SETTING THE STAGE

You have hardly woken when a knock at your door reveals a messenger from Air Warden Drimsby. The dwarf wishes to see you as soon as possible.

The city of Travar looks impossibly bright and clean in the early morning light. You squint against the sunlight as you walk toward the dock, munching on the bread and honey you bought at a cookshop. After your harrowing battle in the night, you can scarcely believe that you still breathe, and are actually grateful to be awake at this Passion-forsaken hour.

A stern-faced Drimsby greets you as you walk into his office. Hastily, you brush the crumbs from your clothes and seat yourselves. Drimsby leans against the edge of his desk, regarding you with the troubled look that never seems to leave him. "Thank you for coming so early. I heard of your efforts to save the *Obsidian Flyer* yestereve; I would like you to tell me the tale."

BEHIND THE SCENES

Drimsby wants the characters to describe the battle with the rakken, not only to satisfy his curiosity, but also to gather all the information he can about the flying Horrors. If his newly hired airmen get killed, he can pass on whatever they have learned to their replacements. Needless to say, he does not express this pessimistic view to the characters.

Drimsby also wants to tell the characters about the letter he received just a short while ago, from an out-of-town gentleman named Tyrannis. The letter refers to the Tome of Banishment, noting that the magical knowledge within it might serve to dispel the creatures attacking airships near Travar.

Once the characters have finished relating the previous night's battle, Drimsby informs them of the letter. Read the following aloud:

To the Air Warden of Travar
Dear Sir,

I have learned of the terrible creatures that roam the skies over Travar, and I believe I know somewhat of the creatures that plague you. Unless I am grievously mistaken, these rakken are Horror constructs, the same dreadful creatures that I encountered upon emerging from our kaer eighty years ago. I was barely able to defeat them, even with my considerable talent in the magical arts.

I recall, however, that one mage among us had studied these creatures, and even devised a means of dispelling them to their native plane. He wrote down this knowledge in a grimoire called the Tome of Banishment, which I believe still remains within the ruins of our kaer. Though I

am human, I dwelt with the windlings in their kaer atop the Talon, a craggy peak in the Thunder Mountains. The windling mage Skeethen who compiled the Tome of Banishment was by misfortune buried in his laboratory when a portion of our haven collapsed. We sealed the breach with warding magics lest the Horrors exploit it, by oversight sealing the book up along with our departed friend. I thought little more of poor Skeethen and his book until I heard of your recent troubles.

I believe that this grimoire might aid you immensely, but alas, my bones are far too old to brave the hazards of travel so high and far into the mountains. If a band of true-hearted persons were to venture there in my stead, I believe they could recover the Tome with little difficulty.

I have enclosed a map of the laboratory's location within the kaer, drawn to the best of my ability. Please excuse this tired old mind if the map is less than perfectly accurate; it has been many a long year since I left my former home, and my memory does not always serve me as I might wish.

I wish you well, friends.
Tyrannis of the Thunder Mountains

After some discussion between Drimsby and the heroes, the air warden asks them to join him in the search for the windling kaer and the Tome of Banishment. If they agree, Drimsby makes the preparations described below.

DRIMSBY'S OFFER

Drimsby provides a fully crewed galley, the *Cloud Runner*, to transport the characters to the Thunder Mountains, as well as a smaller drakkar to convey them to Talon Peak. He also offers the characters 500 silver pieces each, half of which he gives them outright with the other half to be paid upon their safe return to Travar.

The characters have one day to gather any equipment they deem necessary before leaving. In the meantime, Drimsby calls in a favor from a friend and has the galley delivered from Throal. For more information on the *Cloud Runner* and its crew, see **Broadsides**, p. 55. Drimsby has promised to reimburse the galley's provider from his own pocket if the ship is destroyed.

MEETING JULIAK MERRIS

Some characters may want to meet with the obsidian merchant Juliak Merris to demand additional money or aid, because his business has suffered the most from the rakken. If this occurs, Merris will react in one of two ways depending on the characters' position in Travar.

If the heroes have officially joined the Flying Patrol, Merris is outraged at their demands. They have a duty to protect Merris' airships, and Merris sees no reason to pay

them extra for doing it. If pressed, the most he will offer is 50 gold pieces for slaying all three of the rakken that attacked the *Obsidian Flyer*—a task he knows is virtually impossible. If the heroes have not joined the Flying Patrol and instead are only working for Drimsby's bounty (see *Crimson Dawn*, p. 18), Merris feels more tolerant toward them and will offer a reward of 100 gold pieces for slaying all three of the rakken.

In either case, he can spare a few men. If a character informing Merris about the expedition makes a successful Persuasion (12) Test against Merris' Social Defense, Merris will send 10 of his crewmen along on the journey to Talon Peak. The gamemaster should add these airmen to the crew listed for the *Cloud Runner* in *Broadsides*, p. 60.

KATHLEEN'S PLEA

At some point while the team is planning their next course of action or purchasing supplies for the expedition to Talon Peak, Kathleen from The Picky Palate approaches them. If a character tried to comfort her the night her betrothed was slain, she speaks with that character in private. If not, Kathleen approaches an elf in the group or the character with the highest Charisma. Read the players the following or paraphrase it:

"I have heard you swore to destroy the creatures that slew my Berthon, and that you go to seek a mighty weapon against them. If this is true, let me join you; I wish to avenge Berthon's death. And please, do not warn me of danger. I have no desire to stay safe in Travar. . .not anymore."

Kathleen's plea forces the characters to make a tough decision. If they say yes, Kathleen may well come to harm. Despite the magical abilities she possesses (see *Cast of Characters*, p. 78), Kathleen has never faced the rigors of adventuring and has no real experience with the kind of brutal combat in which the group will most likely engage. If they say no, she angrily declares that she will undertake this quest on her own. Kathleen then storms off and makes her own preparations to fight the rakken, eventually stowing away on the *Cloud Runner*.

RADLIN JOINS UP

Radlin, the elf who survived the wreck of the *Crimson Dawn*, also wants to go on the journey. If the heroes refuse him, Drimsby orders them to take Radlin, figuring they can use all the help they can get. If the characters are working for bounty and therefore not subject to Drimsby's orders, have Radlin stow away on the *Cloud Runner*. Point out to one of the characters that though Radlin is an experienced air sailor, he has fought very little and may need watching.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Two things can go wrong in this encounter: the characters may find a way to defeat the rakken, or they may refuse to search for the Tome of Banishment. If the former occurs, allow the characters to plot and scheme as much as they like, taking several days if necessary. The rakken should be intelligent and powerful enough to escape most traps. If the group comes up with a really good plan, however, the gamemaster may have to put in extra effort to ensure that it fails. If this happens, give the heroes some reward for their efforts. Let them catch or kill one of the rakken, have Drimsby give them a bonus, or both. The gamemaster might even consider giving the characters 100 Legend Points apiece at the end of the adventure by way of compensation for shooting down their bright idea.

If the characters defeat the rakken by some impossible method, Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor simply summons more. The group may be able to battle the things to a standstill, but at least a few crewmen will die during each fight. The heroes should eventually seek out the Tome of Banishment, if only to put an end to the fighting once and for all.

If the characters reject Drimsby's reward for finding the Tome of Banishment, the air warden may order them on the quest as part of their job. If the characters still refuse or if they have not joined the Flying Patrol, Drimsby uses his position as air warden to convince Travar's magistrates to order the characters out of the city. The threat of banishment should be a terrific incentive to change the characters' minds.

If the characters refuse the quest for the Tome and leave Travar, the adventure is over. Award the characters any Legend Points they have earned thus far for defeating creatures, but give them no Session or Adventure Goal awards because they have failed to achieve the goals of the story. Make sure that the characters hear later of a swarm of Horrors and their constructs descending upon Travar and slaying many of its residents. The characters' decision to cut and run from this adventure could lead to further adventures in Travar, in which the characters must fight off the Horrors that now infest the city.

Though the above measures may seem a bit drastic, they should reinforce the idea that Barsaive is in dire need of heroes and that the characters must fill those shoes.

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO DOOM



OVERVIEW

In this encounter, the heroes travel to the windling kaer in the Thunder Mountains. During the journey, they forge bonds of friendship with their companions and rescue a village from a band of ork scorcher.

SETTING THE STAGE

The *Cloud Runner* lifts gently from the ground, its sails caught and filled by the morning trade winds. As the ground falls further and further away, the vessel turns its prow toward the crimson-and-purple sky that heralds the rising sun. The galley soars higher and higher, until Yorlk the steersman tells Drimsby that the *Runner* has reached the sailing lane. With the dangerous ascent over, half the crew stands down. Their work—and yours—will begin again in eight hours, when you relieve those who have worked all day on watch or manning the sails.

For now, you lean your elbows on the side of the galley and marvel at the beautiful spectacle of Barsaive stretching its skin beneath the caressing rays of the morning sun. Far to the west, you spy the criss-crossing canyons of the Badlands and the River of Bones. To the north, hot steam rises from the green canopy of the Servos Jungle. To the east lies your destination, the towering, white-and-purple peaks of the Thunder Mountains that seem to point jagged fingers into the lightening sky.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The *Cloud Runner* is a beautiful ship, built of sturdy wood from the Servos Jungle. The galley belongs to the Throal government, whose ministers frequently use it to explore the land or to scout ahead of the military's large warships. Air Warden Drimsby has had to pull some serious strings to borrow the vessel. Its crew includes Karl, Yorlk, Drimsby, ten members of the City Watch, the player characters, Radlin, Kathleen, and the entire Flying Patrol save for a skeleton force left behind to protect the city. This cut-down Flying Patrol cannot hope to adequately fend off rakken attacks for much more than four days, so the characters and the rest of the Flying Patrol must accomplish their mission and return to Travar swiftly.

The *Tree Skimmer* is lashed to the *Cloud Runner's* port side like a huge lifeboat. Because the galley is too large and cumbersome to maneuver in the treacherous wind currents that blow around the highest peaks of the mountains, the characters must approach Talon Peak in the smaller and more maneuverable drakkar.

The journey to the mountains lasts two days, after which the crew must look for the windlings' kaer. Yorlk knows the area around Talon Peak, but has never been to Talon Mountain itself. Each day after the second, have Yorlk or other spotters make a Perception (12) Test. When one of these characters makes a successful test, the group has found Talon Peak. Go to **Talon Kaer**, following.

The characters have little work to do on the voyage to the Thunder Mountains. This relative idleness gives them

time to make plans, chat with Kathleen or Radlin, go hull jumping with Karl, or engage in other activities through which they might make or deepen friendships (see **Bonding**, below). Around dinner time, the characters must join the rest of the eight-hour night shift to stand watch or man the sails. After midnight, a third shift takes over and the characters can get some sleep. Drimsby is willing to let anyone switch shifts as long as they find someone to trade with them, though he insists that at least one man with night vision be stationed in the crow's-nest after nightfall.

BONDING

After the first few encounters in this adventure, the player characters should regard at least some of the gamemaster characters as friends. Rather than acting like mercenaries interested only in gold, **Earthdawn** characters should act like heroes, joining with fellow Barsaivians to build a new future for the land they love. The encounters described below are intended to help the characters act more heroic by giving them personal motives for getting involved in the events of the adventure. These mini-encounters can take place on the decks of the *Cloud Runner* during the two-day journey to Talon Peak. These events are as important as slaying creatures or winning magical treasures, because they form a bond between the characters and the people they fight beside.

Training Kathleen

Kathleen's hatred of the horrible creatures that killed her fiancé is eating away at her soul like a cancer. In her zeal to avenge Berthon's death, she is looking for someone to train her in swordfighting or casting combat spells. If a character tries to help Kathleen cope with her loss by channeling her energies into training, he or she should receive Legend Points for doing so (see **Loose Ends**, p. 69). To train Kathleen, a character must make 3 successful Persuasion Tests against Kathleen's Social Defense. One player may make these tests once each day, and the player should also roleplay the comfort and support his or her character gives Kathleen. Though only one person may make the actual tests, other characters may give Kathleen words of encouragement to help the primary character achieve success in that day's Persuasion Tests. Each such act of support per day adds a +1 modifier to the die roll result for each test, up to a maximum modifier of +3.

Rather than telling the players about the above game mechanics or the possible rewards for helping Kathleen, the gamemaster should roleplay Kathleen's hatred of the rakken and desire for revenge. Hopefully, this display will prompt one of the player characters to try to help Kathleen channel her anger into a constructive path.



Training Radlin

Like Kathleen, Radlin is awash in hatred, desire for vengeance, and survivor guilt. He feels somehow responsible for the wreck of the *Crimson Dawn*, and that he should have done more to save his friends. In fact, he could have accomplished nothing, but guilt knows no logic. To regain his lost faith in himself, Radlin needs to successfully perform some act of courage. A brave elf by nature, Radlin will have little trouble acting heroic. Succeeding at it is another matter entirely. Neither an adept nor a mage and possessing no fantastic abilities, Radlin is just an ordinary elf trying to survive in a world of heroes. His courage will help him become a legend in time, but that day is many years of training away. A crushing defeat for Radlin at this point could rob Barsaive of a potential hero.

If one of the characters spends time with Radlin, he or she should notice that the courageous young elf has a natural aptitude for the short sword, but lacks training and experience. Anyone who tries to train Radlin instantly becomes the elf's idol, and Radlin chooses that hero's Discipline as his own. The pair can train aboard the *Runner* for the duration of the trip to the Thunder Mountains, but Radlin gains no extra abilities from the training. Though he shows potential, he lacks the confidence to place him on the same level as the characters.

The gamemaster may hint that Radlin needs a confidence builder, but should not point this out directly to the characters. Let them choose this course of action on their own. A character taking time to either encourage Radlin or actively train him should receive Legend Points for his or her efforts (see *Loose Ends*, p. 69).

Playing Games with Karl

Karl gets off-shift at the same time that the characters do, and is more than willing to renew his acquaintance with them. He prefers to do this through playing games that physically challenge both himself and his companions. In addition to hull jumping (see *Knights of the Sky*, p. 23) Karl might also be interested in seeing who can climb the rigging fastest, or teaching the characters to air-ski from the rear of the *Cloud Runner*. If the games get too competitive or unfriendly, Karl quietly bows out. He is looking for fellow daredevils, not fools, and has no interest in making money on wagers.

Knife-Throwing Competition

Many air sailors in Barsaive enjoy a little competitive knife-throwing, and the crew of the *Cloud Runner* is no exception. Attached to the bottom of the galley's mainmast is a circular board covered with concentric red and white circles. At least one sailor, most often Yorlk, can almost always be found throwing daggers at the target board. If the characters challenge someone to a match, use the following guidelines to play the encounter.

Two participants usually play each game. Each player takes turns making 10 throws. To make each throw requires the player to make a Throwing Weapons or Dexterity Test against a Difficulty of 12. A result of 6 hits the board. Each point over 6 puts the dagger or knife closer to the bull's eye. A result of 12 or better indicates a perfect bull's eye for that throw. After each throw, the two players each subtract 6 from their die roll result and add the remainder to their current score, up to the maximum of 6. After 10 throws apiece, the two players compare scores. The highest score wins the bet. The usual bet is 1 silver piece for every point by which the winner wins. Few of the crewmen are rich enough to raise the stakes higher.

If any character rolls all ones on a throw, his or her blade misses the board and soars off the ship.

Yorlk throws a knife. The gamemaster makes Yorlk's Throwing Weapons Test and achieves a result of 7. Yorlk's score is 1 (7 - 6 = 1). On his next throw he gets lucky and rolls a 16, indicating a bullseye. The gamemaster adds 6, the maximum allowed, to Yorlk's previous score of 1, giving him a total score of 7.

Crewmen who might play this game with the characters include Karl, Yorlk, Slilith (the t'skrang rescued from the kalamis tree in *Knights of the Sky*, p. 22), a human named Deborah, and a troll named Gut. Slilith has a Throwing Weapons Skill rank of 8, Deborah of 9, and Gut of 10. Also, Gut uses a small hatchet instead of a knife.

Playing Gonada

In this t'skrang game of skill, one player thinks of a proper noun, such as Barsaive, the *Cloud Runner*, Kratas, and so on. All other players ask the first player questions until someone guesses the noun. Each contestant may only guess once, however. If he guesses wrong, he is out of the game. The winner (or the last player still in) gets to think of the next word. Slilith loves to play this game, and uses words like Serpent River, Mist Swamps, and Air Warden Drimsby. All losers put a silver piece into the pot, and the player who guessed the most correct answers gets the loot at the end of the game.

One crewman who plays this game is a large, slow-witted human named Tobry. He asks ridiculous questions and keeps guessing answers, which should put him out of the game. No one says anything, however; all the other crewmen treat Tobry with gentle indulgence. Play this gamemaster character for humor, but keep in mind that if any player character acts cruel to Tobry, the others quickly turn a cold shoulder to the offender. Tobry has been with the Flying Patrol for years and has proven his

worth on many occasions. Though mentally slow, he has often risked life and limb to save passengers from burning airships and has pulled more than a few airmen to safety from their shattered drakkars.

RAIDERS BELOW!

As the ship nears the foothills of the Thunder Mountains, a watchman in the crow's-nest cries out, "Raiders below!" As the crewmen and the characters peer over the ship's sides, they see a band of ork scorchers swarming over the small village of Famlin like ants over a sugar bowl.

Though Drimsby refuses to risk the valuable galley by going in low, he allows the crew to take the drakkar and try to scare the raiders off. Up to 10 crew members can fit in the vessel. If the characters suggest this course of action, they are joined by Karl, Yorlk, Slilith, Tobry, and Kathleen or Radlin (or both).

Landing the drakkar poses enough difficulties to keep the characters from immediately engaging the ork scorchers in combat. If the characters choose to land and fight, use the statistics provided below for the orks and their mounts. If the heroes drive the scorchers off, the village constable rewards them with 25 silver pieces each.



ORK SCORCHERS (10)

Attributes

DEX: 5 STR: 5 TOU: 5
PER: 5 WIL: 6 CHA: 4

Initiative: 2	Physical Defense: 6
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 6
Attack: 7	Social Defense: 6
Damage: 10	Armor: 10
Number of Spells: NA	Mystic Armor: 1
Spellcasting: NA	Knockdown: 6
Effect: NA	Recovery Tests: 1

Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: Broadsword, footman's shield, chain mail, lance

Loot: 1D4 silver pieces per ork



THUNDRA BEASTS (10)

Attributes

DEX: 6 STR: 11 TOU: 12
PER: 5 WIL: 7 CHA: 4

Initiative: 7	Physical Defense: 8
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 7	Social Defense: 10
Damage: 15 (19)	Armor: 8
Number of Spells: NA	Mystic Armor: 1
Spellcasting: NA	Knockdown: 11
Effect: NA	Recovery Tests: 7

Death Rating: 66
Wound Threshold: 19
Unconsciousness Rating: 59

Combat Movement: 45
Full Movement: 90

Legend Points: 200

Equipment: None

Loot: From rider

Once the characters defeat or drive off the ork scorchers, they may then return to the *Cloud Runner*. Drimsby orders the *Cloud Runner* to circle around the area while the characters engage the orks. If the characters choose to land the drakkar and face the ork scorchers, remind them to keep the ship safe from damage. They



will need the drakkar to approach the windling kaer on Talon Peak in the following encounter, **Talon Kaer**.

REACHING TALON PEAK

When Yorlk or another crewman spots Talon Peak, read the following aloud:

Barsaive's vast plains and green fields give way to rocks and crags as you fly higher and further into the Thunder Mountains. Blinding blizzards whirl across the deck, and towering mountaintops jut out of the snow and fog like lonely islands in a sea of cloud.

Before you looms Talon Peak, at the end of a long maze of jagged spines that stab upward through the low cloud banks. The winds are strong enough to shake the mainmast, and a few extra-powerful gusts threaten to snap it like a toothpick. Yorlk and Drimsby dare not take the *Cloud Runner* any higher into the howling storm. Even from the lower level at which the galley hovers, the terrible gales toss the ship back and forth like a cork in a whirlpool. You hope desperately that the cloud sea you are passing through doesn't disguise a jagged, mountain shoal ready to tear the guts out of your vessel.

The deck lurches to leeward under your feet as a cursing Yorlk throws the wheel against the wind. You feel the ship shudder; a horrible grinding sound, rock against wood, screams through the decks. Drimsby shouts for the crew to get below and seal the breach. Within minutes the wind's howl is broken by furious hammering and shouting from below decks. Slowly, the *Cloud Runner* plows onward.

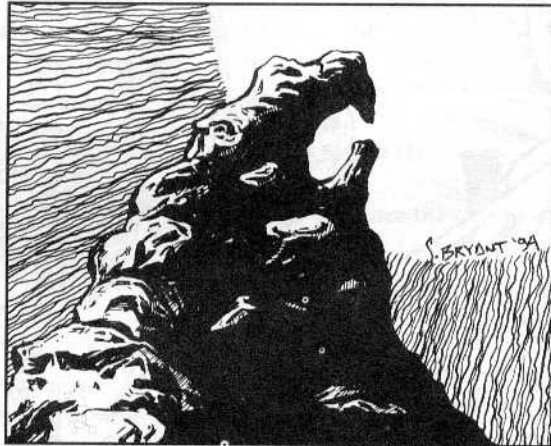
Two crags suddenly jut from the clouds ahead. The spotter at the prow screams for Yorlk to pull hard left. The ork does not turn, but glares straight ahead and grips the wheel, throwing the galley toward the looming slopes. Despite the frigid air, sweat runs down your forehead; you can feel it freezing on your cheeks. Has Yorlk gone mad?

The galley plunges straight ahead, the spotter screaming all the while. Against all odds, the *Cloud Runner* sails straight and true between the twin crags. The spotter turns as white as the driving snow as he spies another ridge, lying to the left of the *Runner* just below the milky clouds. Had Yorlk turned as he was told, the ridge would have gutted the *Cloud Runner* and sent all of you plunging to your deaths upon the mountains' teeth.

Just when your frantically beating hearts can stand no more, the ship reaches Talon Peak. Yorlk sails around the rocky slope, looking for an eddy on the mountain's far side. He guides the *Runner* into a relatively safe harbor. As the sails go slack, you swiftly help the crew secure the *Runner* to the mountain with spiked mooring lines.

The *Cloud Runner* can go no higher, nor withstand another trip back into the swirling, wild currents of the high mountain slopes without repairs. Drimsby insists that the adventurers take the drakkar and go farther up, toward the mountain's summit. He will need most of the crew to repair the damaged hull, but any of the gamemaster characters may accompany the team at the player characters' request. Kathleen and Radlin will insist on going with the exploration party, but if the gamemaster prefers not to run these two as gamemaster characters, he may keep them on the crippled galley.

Drimsby hopes to have the ship fixed in twelve hours or so, but will wait up to two days before giving the heroes up for lost. If the group wants to have the drakkar drop them off and then return to the galley, they must come up with a way to signal for its return once they have retrieved the Tome of Banishment. A flying character or the use of magic can accomplish this easily.



TROUBLESHOOTING

The greatest potential for trouble lies in the nature of this encounter. Hack-and-slash players will have enormous difficulty talking Kathleen or Radlin out of angst or socializing with the other crewmen. They may regard this entire encounter as a waste of time. If your players react this way, let their characters play some drunken games of knife-throwing or hull jumping and subtly work in the subplots involving Kathleen and/or Radlin. Try to play out each of the mini-encounters described, but do not force them down the players' throats if they are obviously uninterested.

This encounter is written to work well both as emotional drama and as action-adventure. Try both styles of play and see what happens. If the game starts to slow down, run the incident with the ork scorchers. This fight will be the last "easy" battle the group engages in for quite some time.

TALON KAER

**O** VERVIEW

Having reached the windling kaer, the heroes must make their way through the vast dwelling in search of the long-dead windling named Skeethen and the Tome of Banishment.

SETTING THE STAGE

As your drakkar nears the peak, you realize why folk call it the Talon. The summit of the mountain stabs toward you like the sharp claw of an eagle, as if it might spear your craft like a fish. Peering through the blinding snow, you can just make out the entrance to the kaer half-buried in a drift. It looks like the doors to a root cellar, two large squares embedded in the mountain face. Near the doors you see an overhanging rock that provides a small, natural shelter in which to land the drakkar.

Once the ship has landed, one of the characters must jump out and try to open the kaer doors. Read the following to him or her:

You leap over the side of the drakkar and sink knee-deep in snow. Feeling the sudden, chill wetness in your feet and legs, you curse yourself for not wearing warmer clothes. You stagger blindly to the doors, plowing through snow so heavy that the effort of moving through it makes your legs shake. Gasping, you finally reach the entrance to the kaer. With some surprise, you see that the doors are broken, splintered down the middle by giant claws. According to Tyrannis's letter, his people survived the Scourge unharmed. Knowing that, these shattered doors mystify you. A Horror must have done this after the Scourge's end; uneasily, you wonder if it still lurks somewhere in these inhospitable heights.

THEMES AND IMAGES

Exploring the kaer should fill the adventurers with awe. Almost everything they see in this windling domain is designed for beings capable of flight. Most doorways, for example, are in ceilings and floors rather than in walls. As individuals to whom walking is the natural mode of movement, the characters should feel clumsy, huge, earthbound. The few elements of the kaer's design convenient for walkers appear to have been built to ease the carrying of heavy loads, or for aged windlings whose wings could no longer support them for long distances.

Along with the awe comes dread and confusion. Tyrannis's letter stated that the kaer survived the Scourge intact, but the hundreds of tiny corpses, shattered buildings, and ominous piles of bones tell a different story. Describe the signs of violence to the characters, and let them solve the apparent mystery.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Unless a character makes a successful Endure Cold (9) Test, the blowing snow and ice on the peak reduces most skills by 1 step. Battling the extreme weather conditions, the

pilot of the drakkar must make a successful Air Sailing (10) Test to dock the craft without damaging it. On a result of 8 or 9, the vessel takes damage equal to the difference between 10 and the die roll result, but the pilot still manages to land the ship in the shelter near the kaer doors. On a result of less than 8, the wind forces the craft back and the pilot must try again. The ship still takes damage equal to the difference between the Difficulty Number and the die roll result.

Once safely inside the kaer, the characters should explore it. Read the following pages carefully, and consult the map of Talon Kaer on p. 42 of this section.

The kaer's rock walls constantly drip with run-off from the melting snows high above. The hollow plopping and trickling of these numerous, small flows echoes eerily throughout the kaer. The dribbling also keeps the glow-moss colonies at the kaer's lower levels alive. These slimy plants make climbing difficult, reducing the step number for all Climbing Tests by -1 (see p. 206, ED).

LOCATIONS

The following text describes the places the characters discover as they explore the kaer (see map, p. 42).

Lift (1)

Once the heroes enter the kaer, read the following aloud:

Less than twenty feet from the entrance, the ledge you stand on drops away into darkness. Peering over the drop-off, you can see a wooden platform dangling from a sturdy rope. One end of the rope is tied to an iron ring in the ceiling. The other passes around a spool-shaped hand crank in the platform's center, then through a hole in the crank's middle, disappearing into the inky blackness. The lift seems to be the only way down into the kaer's shadowy depths.

This 10-foot-square platform consists of wooden planks laid across a metal frame, supported by a wooden cage and connected to diagonal, iron supports and a strong rope. The lift enabled the kaer's windling residents to move goods and supplies into the kaer from above.

Designed to transport large amounts of cargo, the lift can carry up to six characters, two of whom can be the size and weight of trolls. Roughly six inches of wood around any of the platform's edges is rotten and crumbling, and may break under the feet of any character unlucky enough to step there. The cage that supports the platform, however, is in excellent condition. Forming a boxed 'X' beneath the boards, it keeps the platform stable and secure. The rope that holds the lift is magically enhanced with a Spell Defense of 3, enabling it to hold up to 5,000 pounds without breaking. Iron spikes attach the rope to the ceiling where it passes through the ring, and from there the rope runs

downward to wrap around the crank before passing through the crank's middle and down the long shaft. The lift's operator can turn the crank (with some difficulty) even when the lift contains its maximum load. The platform ascends and descends at a rate of up to 5 feet per round.

If the characters want to test the rope, the lift platform, and the anchoring spikes, each of these actions requires a separate Perception (8) Test. All three items are still reasonably sturdy and secure, except for the dry rot at the edges of the platform. Because the crank was built by and for windlings, every non-windling character, including dwarfs, must kneel in order to turn it. This awkward position makes turning the crank extremely tiring, and so the crank operator suffers 2 points of Strain for every 100 feet that the lift moves.

The characters cannot possibly notice the lift's one, dangerous defect. The rope is frayed roughly 25 feet from the bottom of the shaft. When the lift reaches this damaged section, the rope snaps and sends the lift and any passengers tumbling toward the deep reservoir below (see **End of the Rope!**, p. 45 of this section).

Blood Bee Nest (2)

Though most of the Horrors that entered this place returned to their home plane when the Scourge ended, they left several horrible progeny behind, including a nest of blood bees. As the adventurers descend on the lift, a flock of these horrible creatures attacks them, one or two bees per character.

Blood bees resemble 2-foot wasps with an accordion-like sac flapping from the thorax. When attacking, the bees fly backward, strike their prey with the sticky sac, and then fly forward. The forward motion extrudes a hollow spine from within the sac, which punctures the victim's skin and drains his blood. Once filled, the bag becomes heavy enough for the bee to pull free. The laden insect then flies back to its nest to feast on the blood of its victim.

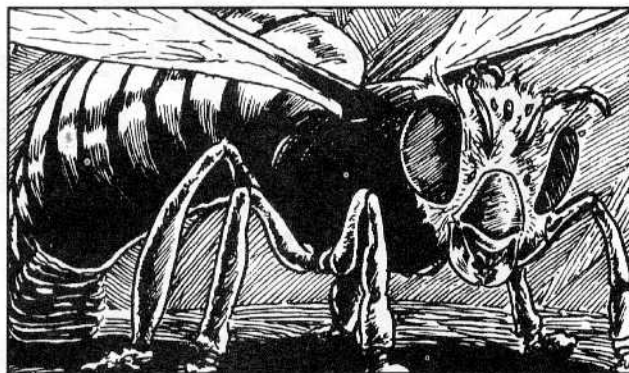
If a blood bee achieves an Armor-defeating Hit in its initial attack, loss of blood causes the target additional damage in each round equal to the result of a Damage Test using Step 5 dice. A blood bee's sac can hold nearly half a gallon of blood, so this blood loss can prove fatal. To remove the bee, the target character must knock it down by inflicting at least 8 points of damage on it. If the character succeeds in inflicting the necessary damage and the bee fails its Strength Test (see **Combat**, p. 195, **ED**), the bee is knocked down. Knocking down the bee may look easy, but keep in mind that the creatures always attack in swarms.

A blood bee's sac is terribly susceptible to salt. If a bee touches salt, it sustains Step 3 damage. A character who coats himself in salt enrages the bees, but the buzzing swarms rarely gather the courage to attack. There is a one-in-ten chance per Combat Round that the bees will attack a salt-covered character.

The flat, open-sided, partly rotting lift makes combat particularly hazardous. If a character rolls all ones on an Attack Test (see Rule of One, p. 34, **ED**), he has stepped too near the platform's rotting edge and must make a Dexterity (6) Test. If the test is successful, the character sees the boards bend and quickly steps away from the danger spot. If the test fails, the character's foot breaks off a piece of rotting wood, throwing him off balance. He must then make a successful Dexterity (8) Test or topple to his death. Up to two characters can try to catch their teetering companion. To do so, at least one of the characters must make successful Dexterity (6) and Strength (6) Tests. As the price of success, each of the three characters misses his or her next action.

If a character is knocked down on the lift, he or she must make a Knockdown Test to avoid being knocked off the platform (see **Combat**, p. 195, **ED**). An Average or Good success means that the character is knocked to his knees. An Excellent or Extraordinary success allows him to stay on his feet. Characters knocked down or off balance may receive assistance as described above.

Play this battle like violent sport, with the blood bees attacking and/or characters slipping just as the heroes think they have beaten the dreadful creatures off. The blood bees follow the lift up to 20 feet from their nest in either direction.



BLOOD BEES (30)

Attributes

DEX: 7	STR: 2	TOU: 5
PER: 5	WIL: 4	CHA: 2

Initiative: 7

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 9

Damage: 8

(+ Step 5 per round)

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 9

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 6

Armor: 2

Mystic Armor: 0

Knockdown: 2

Recovery Tests: 2



Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Combat Movement: 45
Full Movement: 90

Legend Points: 75
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Residential Areas (3)

When the characters reach the first residential area, read the following aloud:

As the lift drops farther down the shaft, a dull, green glow lightens the velvety darkness from below. Tiny rivulets of water race down the walls of the shaft, which widen as you near the bottom.

The shaft opens out into a vast cavern that holds the shattered ruins of a once-beautiful city. Jagged pieces of what must have been scores of conical towers, built of orange-yellow clay, jut like stained teeth from the cavern floor. Each tower once had a single, arched entry, most of which are cracked or broken. From amid the broken towers, the pitiful trunks of dead trees poke through the dust-dry soil. As the lift lowers you closer to the ruins, you spy countless tiny, windling skeletons splayed over the ravaged landscape.

The three residential caverns (see map, p. 42) contain the buildings that housed the kaer's residents during the Scourge. If the characters want to explore these ruins, let them, but remind them that Drimsby can only keep the *Cloud Runner* safe for so long. As they explore, the characters may find treasure, but may also encounter some of the macabre creatures that still lurk nearby. Go to **Searching the Ruins**, p. 43 of this section.

Windling buildings look like tall towers, rounded at the top, with an arched opening anywhere from 10 to 60 feet above the ground. Made from clay that has hardened into a thin, ceramic wall, many of the towers are decorated with carvings of windlings or such reminders of the outside world as trees and clouds. Each tower is 60 feet in diameter and consists of several levels. The topmost is almost always a den or receiving room, complete with once-plush cushions and even a potted plant or two. The next level houses the kitchen and dining room, and the rest of the levels contain private quarters. Circular holes in the floors and ceilings provide access between levels. Each level measures 10 feet high, giving the windlings ample room to fly around.

Because the entrances are so high off the ground, entering a windling tower is difficult for races without wings. To climb the smooth walls, a character must achieve a result of at least 10 on a Climbing Test (see p. 206, ED). The constant

drainage from the cavern ceiling reduces the character's Dexterity step by -1. If a character elects to bash through the thin, ceramic walls, he or she creates a foot-square hole in the appropriate side of the building for every 3 points of damage inflicted. If the character does more than 30 points of damage, the whole structure collapses, and causes Step 15 damage to anyone inside.

Needless to say, windling-sized doorways are too small for larger creatures to get through easily, if at all. Any character larger than a dwarf takes 2 rounds to pull himself through such an opening, during which time his or her Physical Defense Rating is halved. Trolls and obsidimen may only enter after breaking away part of the wall, and even then such characters take 3 rounds to crawl through the gap. Characters can travel between levels by dropping through a doorway or hole to the rooms below or by climbing toward the top. Successfully climbing between levels requires a result of at least 8 on a Climbing Test.

Rotting Derrick (4)

At the bottom of the lift shaft lies a reservoir that once housed the windlings' central water supply. The windlings built a derrick over this reservoir, including steps in the design so that they could transport the heavy buckets of water without having to fly. Over the centuries, the constant drip of snow-melt down the walls has slowly rotted the wooden derrick.

Farm/Garden/Tunnel Area (5)

The windlings devoted nearly a third of the kaer's lowest chamber to farmland, mines, and a large garden. A waterfall pours through a hole in one wall, emptying into the Stained Lake. When the characters reach this area, go to **Rock Bottom**, p. 46 of this section.

Merchant Towers (6)

Of all the business establishments throughout the kaer, the merchant towers that border the Stained Lake and its raging waterfall have survived with the least damage. When the team reaches this area, go to **Getting the Goods**, p. 47 of this section.

Stained Lake (7)

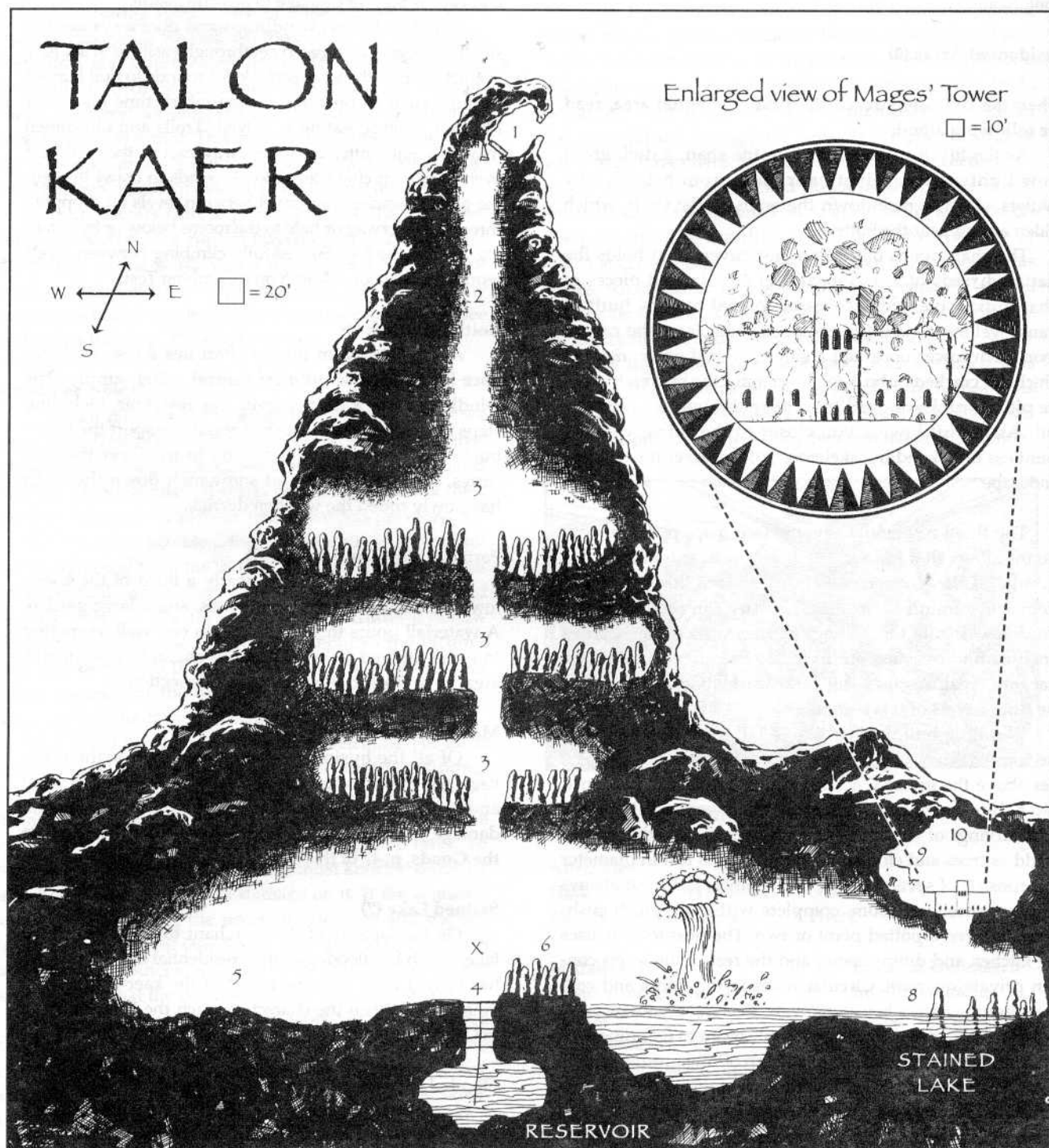
On the far side of the merchant towers lies a huge lake, which has flooded a small residential area. The water has turned dark with the blood of the kaer's murdered inhabitants. When the characters reach the lake shore, go to **Crossing the Stained Lake**, p. 48 of this section.

Flooded City (8)

In the centuries since the kaer was built, the lake has flooded a section of the windling city

located beneath the Mages' Cavern (see map). Some of the towers jut out of the water, and a few even remain intact. When the characters reach this area, go to **Exploring the Drowned City**, p. 49 of this section. **Mages' Cavern (9, 10)**

The Mages' Cavern contains two buildings: a barracks (9) and the Mages' Tower (10). The characters will not reach this area until the following encounter, **Finding the Sanctuary** (p. 50).



SEARCHING THE RUINS

During every thirty-minute period that a character or characters spends searching the residences, have the character with the highest Perception make a Perception (9) Test. Windlings with astral sight or wizards using the Astral Sense spell add 2 steps to their Perception step for this test. If the test is successful, the characters find an item or treasure or encounter a creature.

While searching the ruins, the characters may experience any or all of the ten mini-encounters described below. Encounters with blood bees can occur multiple times. Those with other creatures or those in which the characters find treasure may occur only once. If the group splits up during the search, the character with the highest Perception in each of the sub-groups makes the Perception (9) Test referred to above. Though more than one group may encounter similar creatures, only one may find each treasure.

Encounter 1

More blood bees swoop down from their nests in the glow-moss and attack the characters. Use the statistics for blood bees given on p. 40 of this section.

Encounter 2

Read the following aloud:

After climbing to the top of one conical tower, you look down and see something that chills your soul. Several tiny, windling skeletons are pinned to the bloodstained walls by chitinous barbs. Many other skeletons have broken apart and fallen to the floor, the half-decayed bones and cracked skulls lying scattered across the floor like a dreadful game of jackstraws played by a child Horror.

The barbs are the broken-off appendages of the black mantises that Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor used to attack the kaer almost five centuries ago. If the characters pry the barbs loose, they can use the chitinous points as daggers.

Encounter 3

Read the following aloud:

Beside the rubble of a shattered wall lies the corpse of a windling warrior. A metal chest plate still covers its stick-thin ribs and a small spear lies beside its bony hand.

The 2-foot windling spear, though not magical, shows fine craftsmanship. Its sharp point and excellent balance add an additional step to the weapon's Damage step, so that it inflicts damage equal to its Damage step + 3.

Encounter 4

Read the following aloud:

Your gaze attracted by a pale glow from within one of the towers, you cautiously peer through a hole in the wall. By the light of the glow-moss growing in a clay basin in the middle of the tower's ground level, you see the corpses of three windlings sprawled in the center of the room. Their furniture is piled high against one wall, clearly in the vain hope of keeping some terrible creature from breaking through. A large hole in the opposite wall hints at how the windlings met their doom.

Hidden amid the glow-moss, the characters may find a bag containing 40 silver pieces.

Encounter 5

Read the following aloud:

Spying a tower with an opening nearer its base than most, you cautiously look inside. Near the opening, a windling skeleton lies amid a pile of coins. Noticing the jars of long-spoiled food and drink on the shelves that line the walls, you guess that this tower once belonged to a food merchant.

The pile of coins contains 120 copper and 20 silver pieces.

Encounter 6

Read the following aloud:

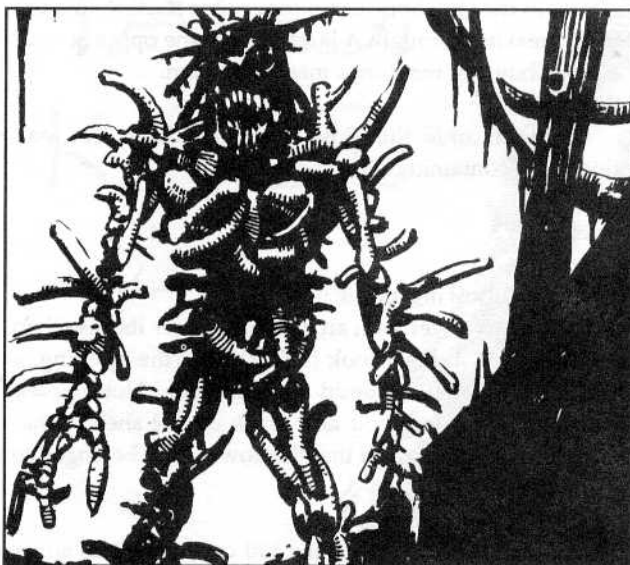
As you step around a group of the towers, you wonder if the windlings who built this place ever heard of streets. They have placed their towers so close together that in many spots you cannot pass between them. As you gaze upward at yet another tapering tower, it strikes you that windling streets lie high above your lowly, earthbound position.

A terrible noise from behind you snaps you out of your musings. Poised to run, you suddenly realize with a sinking heart that you are trapped in a cul-de-sac. If only you had wings!

Behind the unfortunate character is a bone-shambler, a horrible form of undead Horror construct built from the thousands of bones that litter the kaer. The shambler moves by rolling, its bones and their accompanying armor and weapons rattling with a sound guaranteed to set teeth on edge. When the bone-shambler attacks, jagged bones and broken weapons protrude from its "arms" like giant spikes. The bone-shambler

sees through "eyes" made of smaller bones, and can ambush a target from behind. If it takes damage equal to its Death Rating, the bone-shambler shatters into hundreds of bone fragments. Unless these fragments are scattered or destroyed, the bone-shambler can re-form itself in 1 to 4 hours.

This particular bone-shambler has 10 gold and 15 silver pieces incorporated into its body.



BONE-SHAMBLER

Attributes

DEX: 10 STR: 15 TOU: 20
PER: 7 WIL: 7 CHA: 2

Initiative: 10

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: 12

Damage: 15

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 75

Wound Threshold: 15

Unconsciousness Rating: 50

Karma Points: 5

Legend Points: 700

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Physical Defense: 7

Spell Defense: 5

Social Defense: 15

Armor: 10

Mystic Armor: 5

Knockdown: 20

Recovery Tests: 3

Combat Movement: 20

Full Movement: 40

Karma Step: 10

Encounter 7

Read the following aloud:

Beyond the jagged remnants of several fallen towers you spy a beautiful statue of a Passion, perhaps Astendar. A score of tiny skeletons lie at the statue's feet, as if slain in some brave last stand. Among their broken bodies lies the hard, shiny, black corpse of a giant insect. It looks like a mantis, except that its eight long arms end in spiked points rather than gripping claws. Several points are missing, as if broken off. Looking more closely, you see the broken points lying between many a windling's skeletal ribs.

Though long dead, the mantis provides some clues as to what kind of creature destroyed this kaer. The heroes should take careful notice of the mantis, because one like it lives elsewhere in the ruins.

Encounter 8

Read the following aloud:

Off to your left, you hear a suspicious noise. You scale a nearby, low hill ringed by broken towers, hoping to get a better view of your surroundings. Centuries-old bones lie scattered across the hilltop. The earth below them looks freshly disturbed. Peering at the soil, you spy a fragment of something pale and mottled that is not bone. Slowly, it dawns on you that you are standing in a nest.

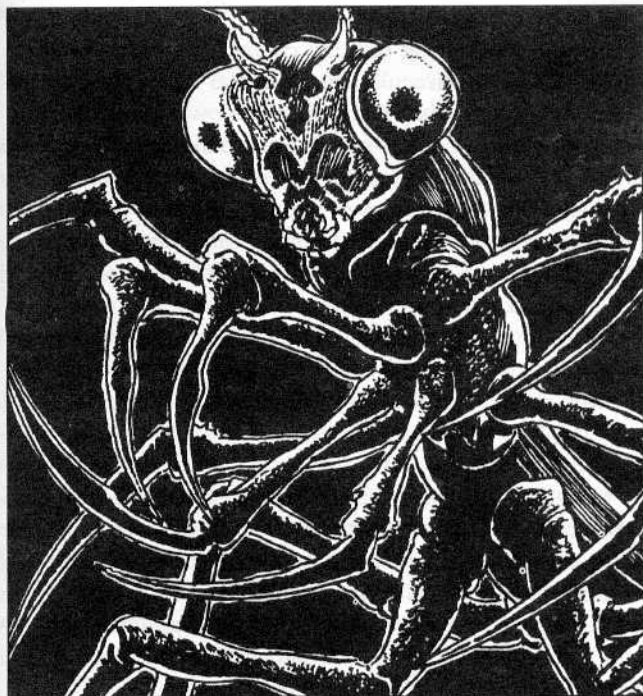
Before you can run, a tremendous crash deafens you. A large, black shape smashes through the only ceramic wall still standing. Shards of jagged pottery rain down on you as the huge shape charges straight toward you!

The black mantis attacks immediately, believing that the adventurers are after its eggs. Assuming the characters defeat the mantis, they may find a small niche in the surrounding rock where the giant insect stored those items that attracted its attention. Within the niche lie several windling-sized chest plates, spears and short swords, most broken in pieces. If the characters dig in the disturbed earth, they may also find a clutch of 10 eggs, each roughly 6 inches in diameter.

The Horror Rasper-Nor created the black mantises and used them as soldiers when it attacked Talon Kaer. The horrible creatures climbed the kaer's walls using tangled fronds of glow-moss and other natural handholds, and ravaged the kaer more swiftly than even Rasper-Nor had thought possible. Each 9-foot mantis has a thick, black carapace that acts as natural armor, and each of its eight arms ends in a barbed spike. The mantis uses these



spikes to spear its prey, then carries the prey to its mandibles and devours it. Six legs supports each mantis' 15-inch thorax, and also help it climb most rough surfaces.



BLACK MANTIS

Attributes

DEX: 8 STR: 16 TOU: 10
PER: 8 WIL: 7 CHA: 2

Initiative: 10

Number of Attacks: 4

Attack: 10

Damage: 17

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 51

Wound Threshold: 16

Unconsciousness Rating: 44

Karma Points: 5

Legend Points: 550

Equipment: None

Loot: Eggs worth 150 silver pieces each. The eggs also count as treasure worth Legend Points.

Physical Defense: 10

Spell Defense: 5

Social Defense: 15

Armor: 8

Mystic Armor: 2

Knockdown: 16

Recovery Tests: 4

Combat Movement: 45

Full Movement: 90

Karma Steps: 10

Encounter 9

Read the following aloud:

Chorrolis be praised, you've stumbled across a small fortune! This tower must have belonged to a thief or a miser. Inside a torn feather mattress lies a small, bulging sack with gemstones and jewels spilling out of it, including several large emeralds, a ruby, and a gold ring!

The five emeralds are worth 40 silver pieces each, the ruby is worth 30, and the ring is worth 100.

Encounter 10

Read the following aloud:

You climb through a hole in what seems like the hundredth ceramic wall, and find yourself in a laboratory. Shattered glass carpets the floor, but, amazingly, a few vials remain intact amid the debris.

Resist Desecrate Potion
This room contains a potion of life (see p. 275, ED).

END OF THE ROPE!

As noted earlier in this section, the rope is frayed near the bottom of the shaft. When the lift reaches the frayed section of the rope, its weight snaps the remaining strands. Because the player characters cannot see the rope below them, they cannot possibly anticipate it breaking. The X marked on the map near the derrick (see map, p. 42) indicates the frayed section.

When the lift drops below the X marked on the map, read the following aloud:

Desperately in need of something to think of besides the carnage that makes your stomach turn, you turn your gaze toward the crank and watch the rope unwind from around it. The flowing, steady motion reassures you, calms you. On the lift, you feel safer than in any other place in this cursed kaer.

Suddenly, the lift bucks like a startled horse. From below the descending platform comes an ominous tearing sound—then a snap like a breaking twig. You grab wildly for a handhold as the lift plummets through the darkness toward the rocky floor far below.

The characters have just enough time to realize what is happening before the lift plunges 25 feet through the dark shaft and smashes into the rotting derrick at the top of the windlings' reservoir (see map, p. 42). As they crash through the first level of the derrick, have every character make a Damage Test using Step 8 dice. Armor does not reduce this damage. In addition, any character

holding any object must make a Strength (12) Test. If the test is successful, the character hangs onto whatever he holds. If the test is unsuccessful, the object falls into the wreckage below and the character must retrieve it.

Once the lift has hit the derrick, the players choose one of their number to make a test to determine whether or not the lift continues to fall. The player rolls Step 5 dice to indicate the falling damage caused by the initial plunge, adding 1 step for each character aboard the lift. If four characters are riding the lift when it crashes, for example, the chosen player rolls Step 9 dice to determine damage for falling through the next level of the derrick ($5 + 4 = 9$). On a result of 18 or better, the lift smashes through the next level and everyone aboard takes Step 5 damage. Armor protects against this damage because most of it comes from splintering wood and falling timbers rather than from impact. If the lift breaks through the derrick's second level, have another player make the same test for the next level. If the lift breaks through that level, have another player make the test for the next, and so on. The lift can fall through up to seven levels, each roughly 4 feet apart, so everyone should get a chance to cause harm to themselves and their companions.

Landing

Depending on how many levels the lift falls through, the adventurers end up sprawled either amid the derrick's wet, splintered timbers or at the bottom the kaer's reservoir 30 feet below the lowest level of the derrick. If the characters are caught in the derrick, have every character make a Dexterity or Climbing (6) Test, subtracting 2 steps from each character's Dexterity step to reflect his or her stunned condition. Those whose tests are unsuccessful slide down to the derrick's next level and take additional Step 2 damage.

If the characters fall into the reservoir, each of them must make a Dexterity (6) Test immediately to keep from drowning. If the test is unsuccessful, the character must continue making Dexterity (6) Tests until he either succeeds or dies, taking Step 3 damage for each unsuccessful test. Once the character has made a successful Dexterity (6) Test, he or she must climb the 30-foot walls of the reservoir to reach relative safety on the bottom level of the derrick (see **Climbing**, p. 206, ED).

Getting Out

To climb up out of the derrick, a character must make a successful Climbing (8) Test for each level that he or she ascends. If the test is unsuccessful, the character slides back to the previous level and suffers additional Step 2 damage. On a result of all ones, the unfortunate climber falls backward through the number of levels between his

or her current height and the level at which the lift stopped. Each level that the character falls through adds another step to the damage normally taken for the height from which the character falls (see **Falling Damage Table**, p. 207, ED).

Instead of climbing out, the characters may attempt to repair the lift. Miraculously, its metal frame remains intact. The crank is jammed with rotted wood from the derrick, but the characters can fix it by making a successful Repair Test against a Difficulty of 4. Reattaching the two split ends of the broken rope may prove difficult unless the heroes have a flyer among their number who can reach the rope's dangling end, but if they can accomplish this task, the retied rope stays steady and secure. Lift riders must stand on the bars of the frame, a precarious position that carries its own dangers (see **Return to the Ship**, p. 54 of **Finding the Sanctuary**).

ROCK BOTTOM

Once the characters climb out of the wreckage of the derrick and/or the reservoir, they find themselves in the kaer's lowest chamber. This vast cavern measures hundreds of yards across. Tyrannis's map guides the characters through this chamber, across the Stained Lake, and toward the Mages' Cavern, a smaller chamber that contains the Mages' Tower and the Sanctuary.

After the characters untangle themselves from the derrick, read the following aloud:

Around you stretches an immense cavern, several times larger than anything you expected windlings to inhabit. A waterfall pours into a vast lake from a hole in one wall. Its roar echoes off the rock, ringing loudly in your ears. The overwhelming noise turns your head dizzy and makes conversation almost impossible. You refrain from shouting to each other, fearing to disturb some hidden presence.

Looking westward, away from the lake, you see stands of rotting trees interspersed with a bewildering variety of dead plants. The fetid smell of decaying vegetation floats through the cavern, fouling the air. You imagine this forest-garden as it must have been once, lovingly tended by the windlings who dwelt here.

Huge steps have been carved into the chamber's western wall. In front of them you see the remains of a large, wooden structure made of several platforms, each 3 feet apart. You have seen something similar before; windlings customarily use such platforms to grow large amounts of food in small places. In the walls next to the garden are a number of small holes, the entrances to tunnels too small for any but windlings to enter.



Farm

The frame that served as the kaer's farm lies along the western wall of Area 5 (see map, p. 42). The windlings grew moss and other plants on the multi-leveled frames and on the wall itself.

Garden

Once the home of thriving trees and other plants too large to grow on the farm platform, the garden fills the remainder of Area 5. The trees have rotted to the point where they crumble at a touch. If the characters attempt to rebuild the lift platform using this wood, inform them that the wood is unusable.

Tunnels

Only 4 feet high by 3 feet wide, the tunnels are located along the eastern and northern walls of Area 5. They continue into the mountain for several hundred winding feet. Though these mine tunnels once provided the windlings with minerals and ore for craftsmen and builders, nothing of value remains in them. Swarms of rats have taken over the disused mine shafts. A few of the tunnels open onto the mountain's surface and bring fresh air into the kaer's depths. Any non-windling character will find traveling down any of these tiny mines extremely difficult.

GETTING THE GOODS

When the characters head for the lake, read the following aloud:

According to Tyrannisis' map, the lake lies on the far side of the towers that stand before you. Though similar to those you saw on the upper levels, these towers look more sturdily built and somewhat more intact. However, grim evidence of carnage—the worst you have yet encountered—lies all around these structures. Hundreds of windling corpses litter the floors, and thousands more hang from the cracked and broken walls of the ceramic towers. These windlings sold their lives dearly, safeguarding the Mages' Cavern that lies beyond the towers and lake. More than a few black mantis husks lie trapped between the close-built towers, tiny spears sticking up from their ebony carapaces.

Exploring the buildings yields little of worth to the characters. Most goods in the merchant towers were either destroyed, taken by armies of marauding creatures, or collected over the centuries by the Trader (see below). This odd being has left behind only a few coins and scattered pieces of windling weapons and armor.

As the characters walk through the merchant towers toward the lake, read them the following:

As you move through the ruins of windling shops and taverns, you smell smoke. Someone—or something—inhabits this huge chamber. Hands on your weapons, you creep forward, straining eyes and ears for some trace of the mysterious enemy's presence. Just ahead of you, you spy the flicker of firelight against the ochre walls of a tower. Slowly, breath held and heart hammering, you creep closer to the light.

By the shore of the huge, dark lake sits a bizarre figure poking listlessly at a campfire. Its mottled skin hangs in loose folds about its naked body, and amber-colored eyes peer out from its dark face. With one wrinkled hand, it turns a spit above the flame, slowly roasting a chunk of flesh from you know not what beast. The firelight dances off piles of salvaged weapons, treasures of many kinds, and the hull of a small boat beached on the shore of the dark, still water.

**THE TRADER****Attributes**

DEX: 5 STR: 5 TOU: 4
PER: 6 WIL: 6 CHA: 3

Initiative: 5

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 5

Damage: 5

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 4

Spell Defense: 8

Social Defense: 3

Armor: 0

Mystic Armor: 2

Recovery Tests: 1

Knockdown: 5

Death Rating: 23

Wound Threshold: 5

Unconsciousness Rating: 14

Combat Movement: 18

Full Movement: 35

Legend Points: 0

Equipment: None

Loot: See below

The figure on the beach is an unfortunate, dimwitted creature possessed by a Horror known as the Trader. From its home on the astral plane, the Trader uses hundreds of possessed minions to wreak havoc on the physical world. No two of these Horror-possessed Traders ever look the same, and so tales of the Trader describe it in hundreds of different ways.

When the Horror finds a violated kaer or ruined village, it sends a Trader to gather from that site any treasure it can find. Though the Horror usually makes some attempt to safeguard its minions as they undertake this task, it occasionally sacrifices one for sheer amusement. If a Trader dies, the Horror simply takes over another unwilling soul.

The Horror took this particular minion from another plane and dropped it into the lowest level of the windling kaer. This Trader has sat here for approximately three centuries undisturbed, sustaining itself with the bloated fish that swim in the Stained Lake.

If a character wants to get a piece of equipment from the Trader, the creature points at something equally valuable carried by that character or one of his companions to be surrendered in exchange. Though it usually chooses a weapon or piece of armor, other items such as books, a backpack minus its contents, and so on may be exchanged at the gamemaster's discretion. The Trader asks only for items worth up to 25 percent more than the object the character desires, and never accepts coin. If the buyer accepts or declines the transaction, the Trader ignores him, but does him no harm.

Stealing from the Trader

If a character attempts to take goods without giving something up in exchange, the purloined item immediately becomes cursed. To determine the specific effects of any given curse, see *Adventuring in Earthdawn*, pp. 211–12, ED. The nature of the curse depends on the item stolen, but in general, the more expensive the item, the worse the curse placed upon it. The curse almost always ruins the item, and some curses may also harm the character. Once cursed, an item remains cursed forever, even if given away. No magic can remove such a curse.

Killing the Trader

Because the Trader wishes to end its miserable existence, it does not fight back, and so any attack kills it. Killing the minion saddles the attacking character with a Major Curse (see pp. 211–12, ED), automatically reducing by 3 an Attribute Value important to the attacking character's Discipline. A warrior or beastmaster, for example, might lose Strength, whereas a wizard would lose either Perception or Willpower. The gamemaster chooses which

Attribute to reduce, and also decides whether or not the character redeems himself. Because the character earned the curse by slaying a Horror's innocent victim, any act of redemption should involve saving an innocent victim.

Trader's Hoard

The Trader's hoard includes the following items that the heroes may find useful. The description of each item includes a suggested curse if the item is stolen.

Large Sack: This ordinary sack can hold up to 100 pounds of food, coin, equipment, and so on.

Suggested Curse: The bag rips and spills its contents at the worst possible moment, preferably in some location from which the goods cannot be retrieved without considerable difficulty.

Boat: Used by the windlings to ferry heavy goods across the lake, the boat seats up to six normal-sized Name-givers. More than six weigh enough to push it below the waterline, and may sink it.

Suggested Curse: The boat begins to sink halfway across the Stained Lake.

Short Sword of Dazzling Speed: Borne by a captain of the windlings' best fighters, this item is described in detail in *Rumors and Research*, p. 86.

Suggested Curse: If the wielder makes more than one attack using this weapon, the second attack always hits a friend. If no friend stands nearby, the sword strikes the user.

Blinding Stones: This small sack, embroidered with the word "Flash," contains six stones. Flash is the key word for a spell. Uttering the key word causes a thrown stones to explode with light, blinding opponents. For a complete description of this item's effects in game terms, see *Rumors and Research*, p. 84.

Suggested Curse: The user and all of his companions cannot close their eyes in time to avoid the effects of the flash.

Grappling Hook and Rope: This sturdy rope and small grappling hook may prove extremely useful later on in the adventure. Be sure to mention this item to the players.

Suggested Curse: The rope breaks while a character is climbing it.

CROSSING THE STAINED LAKE

When the characters approach the lake, read the following aloud:

The waters of the vast lake shine dark purple, like aged plum wine. Ripples from the pounding waterfall dance across the surface, making it look as if the water was trying to crawl out of the lake bed. Its eastern shore already has; the lake has drowned the feet of the towers

that face you across its breadth. Just your luck, that the flood waters lie across the path that you must follow. Adventuring in Barsaive is never easy...

The adventurers can cross the lake by flying, sailing in the Trader's boat, or scaling the entire length of the wall that runs behind the waterfall. Flight is the safest way across, but requires mages with the proper spells to do quite a bit of ferrying. Traveling by boat poses the danger of attack by the carrion fish that live in the lake. Scaling the slippery rock of the wall is the most dangerous way to cross, but offers some chance of success for the group's most expert climbers. Any character attempting this feat must make a Climbing (12) Test. If the test is unsuccessful, record the difference between the test result and the Difficulty Number, then add this number to a Base Difficulty Number of 6. The character must then make a Climbing Test against this new Difficulty Number to see if he succeeds in making a last-ditch grab at the wall. If this test is unsuccessful, the climber plunges into the water.

A character falling into the lake must immediately make a successful Dexterity (6) Test to keep from drowning. If the test is unsuccessful, the character takes Step 3 damage. He or she must repeat the test until he either swims to shore, is rescued, or takes enough damage to drown. Each successful test moves the character 10 feet closer to the shore that he wishes to reach.

Carrion Fish

These blunt-headed fish attack in schools, and through sheer numbers always succeed at every attack they make. They cannot be taunted and are immune to any spells except area-effect spells that affect the entire school. The school has an 18 for any statistic that may become important during combat. Individual fish have a 1.

Like area-effect spells, area-effect weapons also harm the entire school. For the purposes of an area-effect attack, the school has a Death Rating of 100, but no Unconsciousness Rating, and can make no Recovery Tests. Defeating the entire school earns the characters 300 Legend Points.

These fish feed off dead matter, but must often kill their own prey in order to get the carrion they need. Whenever they sense something entering the water, the fish swim toward it and batter it to death. Though a single fish causes no real harm, hundreds of them cause Step 3 damage during every round that a character stays in the water. Their presence increases the Difficulty Number of any Swimming Tests by +5.

Exploring the Drowned City

If they choose to, the characters may crawl out of the boat and descend to the base of any of the six watertight, unbroken towers in the flooded city section, where they may find a few treasures amid centuries of debris. Have the character make a Perception Test for each of the towers that he or she enters. On a result of 8, the character finds 10 silver pieces. On a result of 10, he finds 75 silver pieces. Multiple characters may find coin.

As the character or characters descend into each tower, have them make several Dexterity or Silent Walk (8) Tests to determine how quietly they move through the doorway. If one of these tests is unsuccessful, the carrion fish hear the noise and begin to batter the tower. At first, the adventurer hears only a few muffled thumps, then more and more until the sounds reverberate through the water-encased structure like thunder.

When the sounds are at their loudest, the character or characters have 6 rounds to get out of the building. The character(s) must climb the tower's entire 60-foot height, and so must move quickly. As the character(s) climb, cracks and small holes appear in the ceramic walls. The grotesque carrion fish fall through the holes, water spurting through each crack they create. Once the base of the tower fills with water, the next wave of carrion fish falls unharmed into the rising pool. If a climbing character falls into the water, he takes half the damage normally inflicted by a school of carrion fish in addition to standard damage for the fall (see p. 206, ED). Eventually the tower fills completely, and the frenzied fish search the structure for their prey.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the characters spend too much time exploring the ruins, remind them that the *Cloud Runner* remains in danger from the elements and may leave them rather than wait too long.

The falling lift should add excitement and danger to the encounter without killing or seriously wounding the characters. Feel free to fudge dice roll results if necessary.

If the characters have not already realized that the mysterious mage Tyrannis lied to Drimsby in his letter, the sights in the vast chamber at the bottom of the kaer should drive home that fact. The hundreds of windling skeletons, the mantis corpses, the bloodstained lake and the sheer volume of destruction show clearly that none of the kaer's inhabitants could possibly have survived the Scourge.

FINDING THE SANCTUARY



O VERVIEW

In this encounter, the heroes reach the cavern containing the tower in which the widdling mages died. Once they find the Sanctuary within it, they must solve a long-dead mage's riddle to breach the magical wards that have kept the Sanctuary safe from Horrors ever since the earliest days of the Scourge.

SETTING THE STAGE

In the cave ceiling just above the half-submerged towers, you see a hole leading to yet another dimly lit, rocky chamber. Tyrannisis' map marks this chamber as the Mages' Cavern. Within it somewhere lies your goal—the tomb of a long-dead windling mage and his precious book of spells. You study the cavern's funnel-shaped entrance, racking your brain for a way to climb through it without breaking your neck. The ceiling around the hole has twigs and branches carved into the stone, mingled with the figures of windlings. Most of the sculpted figures are helping build the wreath of twigs, though a few play musical instruments. The windling musicians wink down at you invitingly, their stone faces full of mirth. The sight of such joy in the charnel house that this kaer has become makes you unbearably sad, so you shift your gaze from the entrance to what you can see of the cavern's interior. You can barely see the stone foundation of the Mages' Tower, where Tyrannisis' friend Skeethen lies buried.

THEMES AND IMAGES

After the breathless excitement of the harrowing ride on the crashing lift, the battle with the black mantis, and the hair-raising crossing of the Stained Lake, this encounter should feel far too quiet. The sights in the cavern are eerie and unsettling, and the characters should eagerly anticipate completing their dangerous task. Let them believe that the dangers in this encounter are the last ones they will face.

BEHIND THE SCENES

No matter what method of entry the player characters choose, the climb into the cavern is risky. Remind the heroes that the smallest misstep may send them tumbling into the blood-dark waters of the Stained Lake. Once they have climbed inside, the characters may explore the large barracks and its ruined garden if they wish. The gamemaster should remind them that their real goal, Skeethen's tomb, lies at the top of the Mages' Tower.

Once the characters have climbed through the vertical entrance, read the following aloud:

The little glow-moss left in this cavern gives you hardly enough light to see by, and casts strange, dancing shadows on the rocky walls. It looks as though something tore the moss out by the roots, leaving only enough patches to bathe the cavern and its buildings in a pale, eerie glow.

The Mages' Tower lies ahead, its doorway shattered by the passage of something larger than a thousand windlings. To the left stands a terraced building dotted with arched

entranceways. The withered remnants of once-lovely flowers and rare plants cling to its eastern and southern walls, as a dying child clings to the comfort of a mother's hand. Torn, dead roots and stumps protruding from the gashed soil give mute evidence of a once-thriving garden's destruction at the hands of a malicious and powerful enemy.

The tiny bones of the kaer's defenders lie piled on the terraces, strewn through the ruined gardens, and smashed against the shattered entrance of the Mages' Tower. A few pieces of black mantis shell lie scattered among them, along with brittle windling spears and broken windling swords.

LOCATIONS

The following locations appear on the map of the kaer, p. 42.

Barracks (9)

A hundred windling warriors once lived in this building. In addition to their spartan quarters, the barracks includes a large, common mess hall at its center that also doubled as an aerial sparring ground. A portion of the southern wing has been partially barricaded by piles of furniture. Halfway through the blockage lies the carcass of a black mantis. On the other side lie twelve windling skeletons, several of them with black barbs sticking up from their tiny chests and skulls. The characters can find little of value in the ruins.

Mages' Tower (10)

The tower's valiant defenders tried to barricade its smashed doorway with tables and other furniture. A pile of tiny bones beyond the shattered portal bears grim testimony to their failure. In the tower's large central chamber, centuries of dust combined with the dark brown stains of windling blood and piles of rubble from shattered sections of wall obscure the brilliant images of birds, dragons, and other aerial creatures painted across the ceramic walls.

To the right and left of the central hall are more empty audience chambers where the windlings once held important affairs. A few broken bodies, but little else, lie scattered across the floors. A hole in the central chamber's ceiling leads upward into darkness. The glow-moss colonies that once lit the tower's upper levels appear to have died.

On the tower's second level, the characters find offices where the windling mages stored important papers. Leakage from the cavern walls above has rotted the parchment, but the characters may recover the following few artifacts: an official seal of Talon Kaer, a skeletal finger sporting a silver ring worth 15 silver pieces, and 2D6 copper coins. Desks and trunks in all the offices have been ripped apart, indicating that the tower has been searched

for valuables by some type of intelligent and probably angry being.

Lavish bedrooms and living areas compose the third level. Curtains, pillows, quilts, and other decorations in jewel-like hues of scarlet, purple, sapphire, and so on lie around the rooms, most ripped to shreds or rotting in pools of moisture. Nothing of value, however, remains for the characters to find.

When the characters reach the tower's topmost chamber, read them the following:

You climb through a shattered stone doorway and enter the tower's topmost chamber. The single, large room contains several broken chairs and a table made from the polished stump of a huge oak tree. A wooden cabinet stands against one wall, close to an iron-barred window. The cabinet's doors have been ripped off of their hinges, the scrolls and books that once reposed within it torn in pieces and scattered around the room. Bits of parchment litter the floor, mingled with fragments of stone from the shattered entrance and the skeletons of six windlings.

Puzzled, you check your map. You have reached the place of Skeethen's tomb. . .but you see no sign of the cave-in that Tyrannisis led you to expect. As you gaze around the chamber, your heart sinks. Nowhere can you see any evidence of a tomb, or even of another chamber. Remembering the placement of doorways in the other windling dwellings you have seen, you look up. Praise the Passions, a stone portal in the ceiling frames a solid, oval doorway. From its middle, two bronze handles stick out, as if meant to pull two doors apart. Strangely, you see no seam between the handles; instead, the oval door looks like a single, solid block. Etched into the oval just above the bronze handles is a single sentence that reads, "Only one with the purest heart, tainted by the darkest evil, may unlock this gate."

EXAMINING THE SANCTUARY

The Sanctuary, referred to as Skeethen's Tomb by Tyrannisis, was carved out of the stone ceiling of the cavern where it brushes the top of the tower. The impenetrable stone and the enchantments that surround the irregular chamber protect it from physical and magical breach.

Skeethen and several other mages designed this room as a last-ditch retreat from invading Horrors. While researching the methods of dispelling the Horrors that eventually became the Tome of Banishment, the windlings also learned how to summon them. Knowing that they dared not allow the dangerous knowledge contained in their grimoire to fall into the hands of the Horrors or unscrupulous people, the windling wizards devised the

Sanctuary. Within it they could seal away the Tome, keeping it safe from the Horrors and their minions.

Before attempting to solve the riddle and open the door, the characters may want to check out the Sanctuary both physically and astrally. Though Tyrannisis knew of the secret vault, his windling friends did not agree upon the Sanctuary's magical protections until Tyrannisis had returned temporarily to his own retreat in the Delaris Mountains. Therefore, the Horror Rasper-Nor could not glean that information from Tyrannisis' mind when it possessed the human nethermancer.

For almost five years, the possessed Tyrannisis tried every possible trick, spell, or other tactic to violate the Sanctuary. Any character who makes a successful Perception (6) Test notices the following evidence of such efforts: scratches all around the bronze handles, a dried windling heart lying amid debris in the corner of the room, and deep gashes from an axe blade around the edges of the portal. Any character who uses his or her own axe against the stone door finds that even the mightiest blows dislodge only tiny flakes of stone.

With regard to astral enchantment, the mages built a similar structure out of the ethereal mists on the astral plane. Any character looking into the astral "copy" of the Sanctuary sees a sealed cube with the riddle written upon its circular door. Have the astral-gazing character make a Perception (5) Test. If he achieves an Average or Good success, he feels as if something is watching him. If he achieves an Excellent or Extraordinary success, he spots a black shadow peering at him from a distance. Though the character cannot know this, the shadow is Rasper-Nor.

THE MAGIC OF THE SANCTUARY

The windlings who built the Sanctuary hoped that the Tome sealed within it might someday find its way into the hands of a hero both brave and wise enough to use it against the Horrors. To ensure that only a true hero could breach the Sanctuary, the mages came up with a magical test and devised a riddle to tell the would-be hero how he or she might pass muster. The riddle carved into the Sanctuary door hints that only a hero "of the purest heart" marked by a Horror ("tainted by the darkest evil") can open the Sanctuary.

The windlings' magical protections, consisting of a simple magical lock and a Divine Aura spell, kept Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor at bay for almost five centuries. Anyone attempting to open the door triggers the Divine Aura spell woven into the matrix of the door's magical lock. Because Skeethen and the other mages worked together for several months to weave both the lock and the Divine Aura spell, each has a Spell Defense of 40. The locking spell keeps the door shut until the Divine Aura



spell detects the necessary true-hearted but Horror-marked individual. Once that individual attempts to open the Sanctuary door, both spells dissipate.

The windling mages chose to tailor their magical protections to a Horror-marked hero for two reasons. First, the presence of a Horror mark would mean that the Horrors still existed on the physical plane. The mages desired to keep the Tome and its dangerous secrets hidden if the Horrors ever truly left the world, lest some evil person choose to summon the Horrors and begin the Scourge again. Second, the wizards believed that only the strongest of heroes could be marked by a Horror and still generate a pure aura. If the spell only required pureness of heart, a child might be able to open the portal, and a child would certainly lack the strength to use or protect the Tome.

Of course, a Horror-marked hero who claimed the Tome could also be manipulated by the Horror that had marked him. To protect against this danger, the windlings placed a Scintillating Medallion within the Sanctuary. This magical treasure offers substantial protection against the powers of the Horrors. For more information concerning the powers of the medallion, see **Rumors and Research**, p. 84.

Solving the Riddle

The riddle requires a hero with two qualities to open the Sanctuary: a pure heart and a Horror mark. The pure heart refers to the goodness of a character's intentions and his or her basic, gut-level commitment to the cause of good, rather than to literal purity. After all, few people exist in **Earthdawn** who have never done anything bad. The gamemaster must make a judgment call with regard to a character's good intentions, but should give the adventurers the benefit of the doubt. Only characters who routinely steal from their friends, execute or torture prisoners, or demand exorbitant fees from the people who ask their help should be considered insufficiently pure of heart.

The need for a Horror mark presents obvious difficulties. Unless one of the characters already has a Horror mark, some brave hero in the group must willingly accept one. The easiest way to accomplish this is to have a magician in the group cast a spell using raw magic, which will send up a flare to any Horror in the immediate vicinity (see p. 155, **ED**). For spellcasting purposes, the entire Talon Kaer counts as a Corrupt area. If the magician is successful, the Horror that marks him (or another hero) is Rasper-Nor, currently hovering over Talon Peak in his airship, the *Shadow Skulker*.

Rather than hint at the answer to the riddle, let the players solve it themselves. Keeping a poker face also helps to create tension once the group thinks of deliberately gaining a Horror mark. The prospect of attracting the attentions

of a Horror without knowing for certain if he has made the right choice should terrify the unfortunate conjurer and his or her companions.

OPENING THE SANCTUARY

Once Horror-marked, the chosen character must physically grab the bronze handles on the Sanctuary door. As they are 15 feet above the floor, this task is not as easy as it might appear. Once the character is gripping both handles, read the following:

"A blue glow gradually forms around the doorway, accompanied by faint splintering sounds. Hairline cracks race through the thick stone above you. Chunk after chunk tumbles away. Suddenly the entire portal crashes to the ground, sending tremors throughout the tower. The Sanctuary and its hidden treasure now stands open before you."

Any character unable to move out of the way as the first chunks of stone fall is struck by several of them and takes Step 18 damage.

Finding the Tome

When the adventurers pull themselves through the broken doorway, read the following aloud:

The walls of the small, rock chamber seem to press in on you, and it is difficult to breathe for a moment or two. One of your companions passes you a light from below, and the frightening feeling of entombment eases a little. Suddenly, your heart leaps into your throat. Sitting barely an arm's length in front of you is a windling!

You wait for him to sense your presence, but he does not move or speak. As you look at him more closely, you realize that the windling breathed his last many ages ago. The skin that stretches so taut over his bones is as dry as a withered, autumn leaf. His shriveled arms are loosely clasped around a leather-bound book, a large one even by human standards. Golden letters dance across its cover; they read, "The Tome of Banishment."

When the character in the Sanctuary sees the windling, let him declare an action before continuing with the second narrative paragraph. He probably will not realize at first that the windling is mummified.

Once the gamemaster finishes reading aloud and the characters know that the windling is dead, have one of them take the book and the medallion gently from him. Having obtained their prize, the heroes must escape from the kaer and safely return to the *Cloud Runner*.



RETURN TO THE SHIP

The heroes have three ways to reach the surface of Talon Peak. They may fly, climb, or repair the broken lift. Flying obviously requires at least one character with that ability, who can then ferry his or her friends out one at a time. Keep in mind that traveling back up the lift shaft renders a flying character, particularly one burdened by carrying a companion, vulnerable to attack by blood bees. Climbing is even more dangerous than flying because the characters must not only face the blood bees again, but also risk falling several hundred feet to their deaths.

Repairing the lift poses the fewest risks (relatively speaking). Assuming they have not already done so in the previous encounter, **Talon Kaer**, the characters must tie the two ends of the broken rope together, meaning that one of them must climb 25 feet up the rocky wall of the shaft to the dangling end. Depending on how far the lift fell, the climbing character may also need to climb down through the levels of the derrick or even into the reservoir to reach the other end of the snapped rope.

If the adventurers succeed in making repairs, the character who turns the crank must come up with a way to support himself without using his hands. Tying himself to the frame represents the most obvious solution to the problem, but also greatly restricts the character's mobility in combat.

The remaining characters will find the frame much more difficult to stand on than the wooden platform it once held. When the blood bees return, any character who attacks them receives a -2 modifier to any Attack Test. This modifier reflects the fact that the character must keep one hand on the

frame to keep from falling, and so cannot move freely. If a character is knocked down, he must make a successful Dexterity (10) Test and a successful Strength (10) Test to grab onto the frame. If either test is unsuccessful, he hurtles to his death unless grabbed by his companions per the special rules given on p. 40 of **Talon Kaer**.

TROUBLESHOOTING

In this encounter, the group may have trouble getting into the Mages' Cavern and/or out of the kaer. An ill-prepared group may have neglected to bring rope or a grappling hook, and without this equipment the climb into the cavern becomes almost impossible. If this occurs, Kathleen or Radlin might have a convenient rope, or a player character may find these items in the ruins. Alternatively, the characters may take the rope and grappling hook from the Trader.

The heroes may also have trouble solving the riddle of the Sanctuary unless the players know about Horror marks. If the players (and their characters) do not have this information, the gamemaster may need to hint at it. If the gamemaster must take this last-resort option, listen carefully to the players' discussion for a reference to Horror powers. At this point, have one player make a Scourge History or Horror Lore Test. On a result of 6 or better, give the players a brief overview of Horror powers (see pp. 297-99, **ED**), dwelling just a little on the Horror Mark power. With this veiled hint, the players should eventually solve the riddle.

BROADSIDES!



OVERVIEW

In this encounter, the heroes emerge from Talon Kaer with their prize, only to lose it to Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor. The Horror-possessed nethermancer sails for Travar in his airship, the *Shadow Skulker*, closely pursued by the *Cloud Runner*.

SETTING THE STAGE

You burst through the kaer doors onto the snow-blanketed rock of Talon Peak. The fading light of day has never looked so lovely, or the crisp, fresh air smelled as sweet. You plow through the snowdrifts as fast as your tired legs and the heavy snow will let you, flinging yourselves into the drakkar as you reach it. Somehow, you find the strength to stay alert and sail the drakkar out of its sheltered nook. Fighting the howling blizzards that strike harder than a dozen bands of ork scorchers, you point your bucking, shuddering craft in the direction of the *Cloud Runner*.

The drakkar whips around the side of the peak just in time to see a huge fireball strike the *Cloud Runner's* deck. Some of the galley's crew race to quench the fire with buckets of water, while others saw furiously at the mooring lines that trap the ship against the side of the mountain. In the distance you see a vast, black shape arrowing toward the *Cloud Runner*.

As you land the drakkar on the galley deck, Drimsby shouts, "Sky raiders off the starboard side!"

THEMES AND IMAGES

Make the players feel the adrenaline rush of a high-speed chase. Chaos and danger abound in this encounter, as the Horror-controlled ship tries to lose its pursuers in the clouds. Whenever the two ships sail within firing range, the *Cloud Runner* attempts to close and board the enemy vessel, spitting gouts of flame from its firecannons as the galley's crew fights to the bitter end to retrieve the Tome of Banishment from the Horror who has just snatched it. Throughout the battle, Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor casts deadly spells to kill his enemies while the heroes try to hack their way to him over the bodies of his loathsome crew.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The **Setting the Stage** section above assumes that the characters have moored the drakkar under the overhanging rock just outside the kaer. If they chose in the previous encounter to send the drakkar back to the galley and have it return to pick them up, the gamemaster must edit **Setting the Stage** as appropriate.

The characters have retrieved the Tome of Banishment from the kaer, only to have Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor steal it from them soon after they reach the *Cloud Runner*. Once the Horror has stolen the book, he races back to Travar aboard his airship, the *Shadow Skulker*, with the *Cloud Runner* in hot pursuit. Though the Horror-possessed nethermancer would enjoy destroying the *Cloud Runner*, his primary goal is to steal the Tome of Banishment and get away clean. Much of this encounter involves chasing the *Shadow Skulker* back to Travar, engaging the *Skulker's* horrible crew in a running battle along the way. In order for this encounter to work, Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor must steal the Tome, and so the gamemaster should exercise considerable ingenuity toward accomplishing this task.

STEALING THE TOME

As soon as Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor sees the characters emerge from the kaer, he sends 20 eendwings to attack them. These small, flying Horrors attempt to overwhelm the drakkar when it first appears, hoping to wrestle the Tome of Banishment away from the heroes under cover of this attack. Because Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor knows that the adventurers can easily guard against the eendwings when alerted to their presence, he will only send the eendwing swarm once.

If the eendwing attack fails, the Horror will use his Horror Mark power against Air Warden Drimsby as he stands on the deck of the *Cloud Runner*.



Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor will attempt to force the Horror-marked dwarf to ask for the Tome and then hurl it over the galley's side, where the surviving eendwings can catch it. Once Drimsby hurls the book away, Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor will desert him, leaving the dwarf to the tender mercies of the angry characters and crew.

If this second approach also fails, the Horror has several powers as well as Tyrannis' spells and talents to fall back on. The gamemaster should study the Horror's abilities carefully and come up with a way to use them to purloin the Tome. Presumably, the Horror's first two attempts to steal the Tome have led the heroes to surround the grimoire with elaborate safeguards, so the gamemaster should take any such precautions into account when planning the Horror's strategy. At some point, Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor must succeed in snatching the Tome.

EENDWINGS (20)

Attributes

DEX: 9 STR: 4 TOU: 4
PER: 7 WIL: 9 CHA: 5

Initiative: 9

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 10

Damage: 6

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 10

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 4

Armor: NA

Mystic Armor: NA

Knockdown: 3

Recovery Tests: 1

Death Rating: 23

Wound Threshold: 5

Unconsciousness Rating: 14

Combat Movement: 20

Full Movement: 40

Flight: 60/120*

*Second value applies when flying during combat.

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Tiny imps with a nasty sense of humor, eendwings resemble fat, pink infants with wings, horns, and pointed ears. These little Horrors are prone to cruel pranks, and often carry out the wishes of more powerful Horrors in their own, diabolical way. Eendwings make personal survival a high priority, so if more than 30 percent of them are knocked out or slain, the remainder will flee. If possible, they drag the bodies of their companions away with them, less from a sense of loyalty than from self-preservation. The eendwings want to make sure that no mage ever figures out their weaknesses.



CHASING THE SHADOW SKULKER

The gamemaster can handle the chase back to Travar simply by setting the two airships in flight and then letting the dice determine the outcome of events. A more dramatic and therefore more memorable alternative is to integrate the actions of the player characters with the series of planned events described in the following pages, in order to create the greatest amount of tension and excitement. As always, the gamemaster should be prepared to deal with anything the characters choose to do.

First Battle

If Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor succeeds in stealing the Tome of Banishment before the drakkar lands on the *Cloud Runner's* deck, the characters may sail the drakkar in pursuit of the Horror's ship. If the drakkar gets too close to the *Shadow Skulker*, the *Skulker's* crew peppers it with crossbow fire. If the player characters land on the *Cloud Runner* and join their companions, either before or after the Horror takes the grimoire, they have 5 rounds in which to act before the *Skulker* pulls up alongside and the cadaver men attempt to board the galley.

When the drakkar or the *Cloud Runner* nears the *Shadow Skulker*, read the following aloud:

As the enemy ship looms closer, you see that its sails are made of satin as black as the vessel itself. From the forecandle comes a dull glow and the smell of flaming pitch. The shadow-ship pelts your vessel with cannon fire as the enemy crewmen shoot crossbow bolt after crossbow bolt at you. Their grisly faces, sagging flesh, and mutilated bodies mark them as cadaver men. They advance grimly toward you, and your heart sinks as you realize that they intend to board your ship!

Once the *Shadow Skulker* lies sufficiently close to the *Cloud Runner*, Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor sends 30 of his cadaver men to board the *Runner* and attack its crew in the hope of crashing the ship. Because most of the crew have their hands full flying the ship, the characters must repel the invaders.

In this first strike, Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor wants an easy victory over the *Cloud Runner*. If the airmen put up a tough enough fight, the Horror cuts his losses and tries to escape, abandoning the cadaver men if they seem to be losing. Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor stays out of sight during this first battle, along with his obsidian gargoyles and black servitors (see **Second Battle**, p. 59). He is holding these favored minions and his own considerable abilities in reserve, in case the heroes somehow manage to board his ship.

For specific rules regarding ship-to-ship combat, see **Running the Battles**, p. 61, and **Ship Combat Rules**, p. 88.

CADAVER MEN (30)

Attributes

DEX: 4 STR: 6 TOU: 7
PER: 3 WIL: 6 CHA: 4

Initiative: 4

Number of Attacks: 1 (4)

Attack: 7

Damage: 9

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 5

Spell Defense: 6

Social Defense: 11

Armor: NA

Mystic Armor: NA

Knockdown: 7

Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 36

Wound Threshold: 9

Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 25

Full Movement: 50

Legend Points: 110

Equipment: Crossbow (Damage 11/D10 +D8)

Loot: None



Escape

The first battle should occur near dusk. If this timing is not possible, have a storm front move in and turn the skies dark. At some point during the battle with the cadaver men on the *Cloud Runner*, the *Shadow Skulker* peels off, either when the tide of battle turns against the cadaver men or if the Horror's minions overwhelm the *Cloud Runner's* crew. If still able, the *Cloud Runner* and perhaps the drakkar give chase, but the Horror's black ship blends into the night sky and disappears. From their last glimpse of the *Skulker*, Drimsby and Yorlk realize that the enemy vessel is heading for Travar. Throughout the long, anxious night, the adventurers plot their next course of action while Drimsby and Yorlk keep the *Cloud Runner* on course for Travar.

Break of Day

The morning light shows the *Shadow Skulker* several miles ahead of the *Cloud Runner*, trying to use a dark cloud bank as camouflage. The black ship, however, shows up clearly against gray stormclouds.

Now that the characters can once again see the enemy, allow them to try whatever schemes they wish throughout the day. They may attempt another frontal assault, sneak onto the ship from below, or even land aboard the *Skulker* and try to fight their way to Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor's cabin. No matter what the characters attempt, they face stiff opposition, including obsidian gargoyles, black servitors, and



possibly even Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor himself. Ideally, the characters fail to retrieve the Tome of Banishment, but succeed in weakening the Horror's forces for the final battle (see *Pyres over Travar*, p. 65).

Second Battle

At some point during the day, one of the two ships moves within firing range and pelts the other with cannon fire. Play out the drama of extinguishing the fires before they spread and trying to outsail the enemy ship before it can close to boarding range. Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor and his dreadful minions follow up the cannon fire with physical and magical assaults against the characters and the *Runner's* crew. Crew statistics are given on p. 60.

During this battle, Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor casts spells and releases the obsidian gargoyles and black servitors. Game statistics for these Horror-constructs appear below and on p. 60. The gargoyles resemble standard gargoyles in most respects, but their obsidian bodies make them difficult to see at night. To spot them at a distance greater than 15 meters away after sundown, a character must make a successful Perception (12) Test. The golem-like black servitors resemble troll skeletons encased in a breastplate and helm of greenish stone. Each servitor wields a blood-red sword that does damage of Step 15 + 1 point of damage from bleeding per round until the victim either makes a successful Recovery Test or receives aid. For more information on servitor swords, see *Rumors and Research*, p. 85. Any character who defeats a servitor can wear its breastplate and helm, but these armor pieces reduce the wearer's Initiative by -2 steps. The breastplate weighs 50 pounds, the helm 15 pounds.

The gamemaster must strike a balance between an all-out assault and a small skirmish, keeping in mind the goal of whittling down the Horror's forces so that the characters have a prayer of defeating him in the final encounter. The characters cannot find the Tome of Banishment during this battle, because Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor has hidden it in a pocket of astral space.

OBSIDIAN GARGOYLES (2)

Attributes

DEX: 8 STR: 18 TOU: 12
PER: 4 WIL: 5 CHA: 4

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: 11

Damage: 22

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 12

Spell Defense: 9

Social Defense: 11

Armor: 13

Mystic Armor: 6

Knockdown: 18

Recovery Tests: 4



Death Rating: 55

Wound Threshold: 13

Unconsciousness Rating: 48

Combat Movement: 25

Full Movement: 50

Flight: 45/90*

*Second value applies when flying during combat.

Legend Points: 570

Equipment: None

Loot: Horns worth 5D6 x 10 silver pieces each. These items count as treasure worth Legend Points.



BLACK SERVITORS (2)

Attributes

DEX: 12 STR: 8 TOU: 18
PER: 13 WIL: 11 CHA: 8

Initiative: 13

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 13

Damage: 15+

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 11

Spell Defense: 11

Social Defense: 10

Armor: 12

Mystic Armor: 8

Knockdown: 8

Recovery Tests: 6

Death Rating: 90

Wound Threshold: 13

Unconsciousness Rating: 60

Combat Movement: 30

Full Movement: 60

Legend Points: 550

Equipment: Servitor sword, stone armor.

Loot: Servitor sword worth 2,000 silver pieces.

CLOUD RUNNER CREW (15)

Attributes

DEX: 4 STR: 5 TOU: 5
PER: 4 WIL: 4 CHA: 4

Initiative: 4

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 4

Damage: 9/10*

*See Equipment, below.

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 5

Spell Defense: 5

Social Defense: 5

Armor: 3/7*

Mystic Armor: 0

Knockdown: 5

Recovery Tests: 1

Death Rating: 30

Wound Threshold: 7

Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Combat Movement: 22

Full Movement: 43



Equipment: Ten of the crewmen are members of the City Watch. They wear chain mail armor with an Armor Rating of 7 and carry broadswords that do Step 10 damage. The remaining five are members of the Flying Patrol. They wear leather armor with an Armor Rating of 3 and carry short swords that do Step 9 damage.

Loot: None

Last Respite

After the battle, allow both sides a lull in which to heal, repair damage to their ships, and prepare for the final battle (see **Pyres Over Travar**, p. 65). As dusk approaches once more, the adventurers see the distant lights of Travar on the horizon and realize that they will reach its sky lanes in less than an hour.

RUNNING THE BATTLES

The ship combat rules given in this book and in the *Earthdawn Companion* are intended to blend individual human actions with piloting tactics and strategy. Whenever the *Cloud Runner* battles the *Shadow Skulker*, have the players choose a character to control the ship's actions and make tests for the *Cloud Runner*. If they wish, the players may split the responsibility among themselves. The gamemaster controls the *Shadow Skulker*. For further information on ship-to-ship combat, see **Ship Combat Rules**, pp. 88–93. Some additional rules for individual actions in ship combat appear below.

Swinging from the Rigging

Particularly exuberant heroes may want to swing from the *Cloud Runner*'s rigging to the deck of the *Shadow Skulker*. To do so, the character must be standing near the *Runner*'s mainmast in the Combat Round in which he swings, and the two vessels must be within 15 feet of each other. The character then makes a Climbing (8) Test, using either his Dexterity Attribute or Acrobatics Skill. On a result of 9 or better, the daredevil can swing across to the *Skulker* in the following Combat Round. On a result of 8 or less, the character can try again in the next round. If he rolls all ones, he falls overboard.

Once either a player character or the daredevil Karl swings across safely, the rest of the crew will also take to the rigging if ordered to do so.

Hand-to-Hand Combat Resolution

To avoid the time-consuming, game-slowng dozens of die rolls necessary during combat between the *Cloud Runner*'s crew and the cadaver men, the gamemaster can use the following quick resolution rules to simulate hand-to-hand combat. Roll D6 for each battling crewman and for each battling cadaver man, except for those fighting the

player characters or major gamemaster characters (Karl, Yorlk, Drimsby, and so on). Every result of 6 rolled for each crewman or cadaver man eliminates a single opponent from one side or the other. Make the battle between the crew and the cadaver men an even fight; unless the adventurers act soon, the tide could turn either way.

For the player characters and named gamemaster characters such as Karl, Yorlk, Drimsby, and so on, play out the combat per normal rules. Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor remains hidden within his shadowed balcony (see **Shadow Skulker Map Key**, following) and casts whatever spells the gamemaster deems appropriate. The obsidian gargoyles use their wings to knock down the character who seems either the most dangerous or the most vulnerable. The extremely powerful black servitors head straight for the character who poses the greatest threat to their dreadful master.

AIRSHIP STATISTICS

Game statistics and map keys for the drakkar, the *Cloud Runner*, and the *Shadow Skulker* appear below.

DRAKKAR

Speed: 8 (300 yards/turn)

Maneuverability: 10

Firepower: 10/13

Hull

Armor Rating: 12

Ramming: 20

Damage

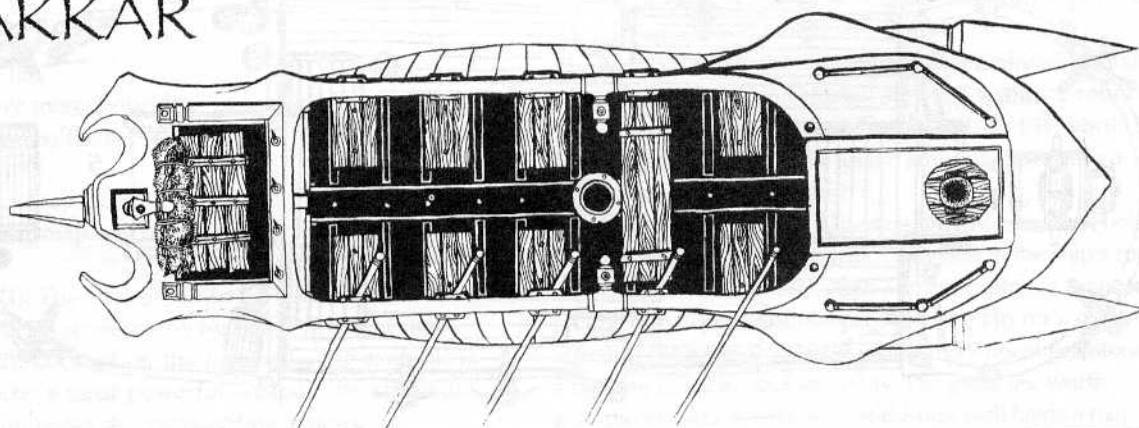
Critical: 17

Derelict: 54

Destroyed: 61

Crew: A drakkar carries up to ten human-sized individuals.

DRAKKAR



CLOUD RUNNER

Speed: 8 (300 yards/turn)

Maneuverability: 9

Firepower: 20/20

Hull

Armor Rating: 15

Ramming: 25

Damage

Critical: 18

Derelict: 63

Destroyed: 70

Crew: Karl, Yorlk, Drimsby, and 15 additional crewmen.

Cloud Runner Map Key

The following map key refers to the map of the *Cloud Runner*.

Forecastle (1): This elevated section of the deck contains the wheel, with which the steersman guides the ship. The wheel is connected to oversized rudders beneath the vessel.

Foresail (2): This triangular sail is affixed to the foremast located on the ship's main deck. It catches the headwinds and helps propel the galley.

Mainsail (3): The ship's principal sail, the mainsail flies from the mainmast on the ship's main deck.

Hold (4): This space below decks contains enough food and water to keep the galley's crew alive for two weeks. The hold provides ample room for sleeping, or for setting up a makeshift hospital if necessary. The crew can reach the hold from the deck by climbing down a narrow ladder.

Rear Deck (5): This flat, open area is located at the ship's stern, a short flight of steps above the main deck. Beneath the rear deck are the captain's quarters, occupied by Drimsby. The captain's quarters also contain a chest filled with 100 gold coins intended to pay for emergency repairs or extra rations. If the characters have not joined the Flying Patrol and are simply working for bounty (see *Crimson Dawn*, p. 18), Drimsby shares his quarters with them. Otherwise, the characters bunk with their mates in the hold.

Drakkar (6): The drakkar is lashed to the deck in this spot whenever the smaller vessel is not in use, with an old canvas sail draped over it to prevent rain from getting in.

Fire Cannons (7): The *Cloud Runner*'s two fire cannons are located in these positions.

THE CLOUD RUNNER

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Forecastle | 4. Entrance to Hold |
| 2. Foresail | 5. Rear Deck |
| 3. Mainsail | 6. Drakkar |

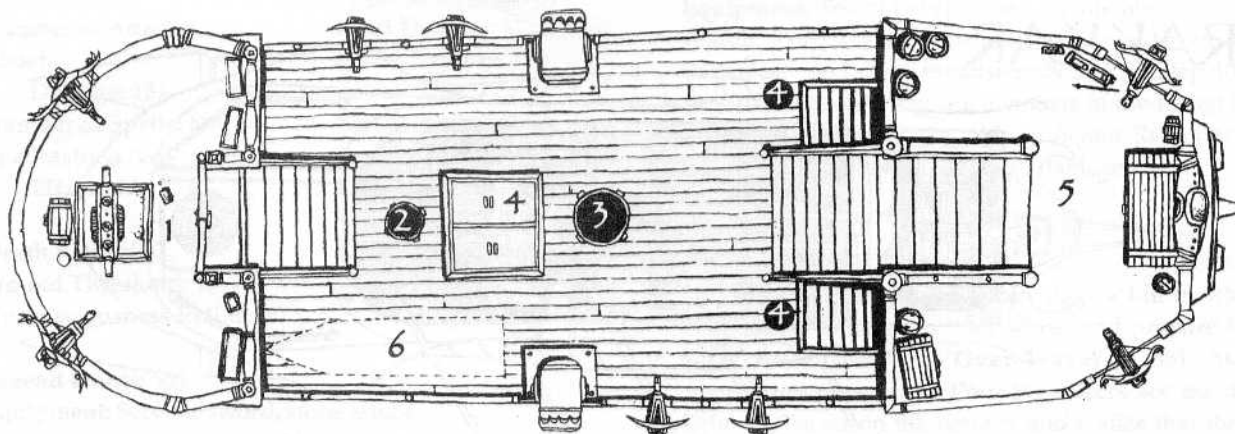
□ = 1'

 Captain's Wheel

 Ballista

 Cannon

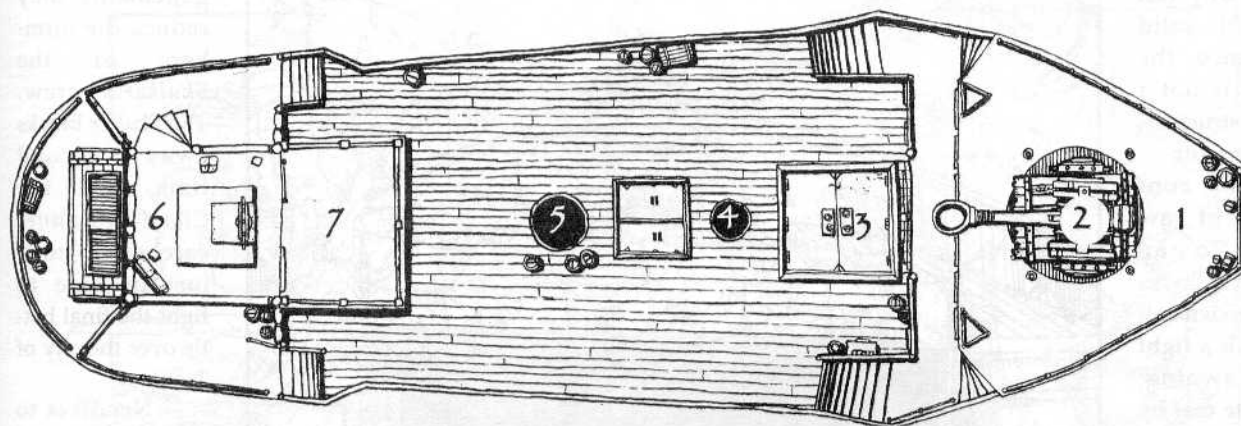
 Stairs



THE SHADOW SKULKER

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Forecastle | 5. Main Sail |
| 2. Catapult | 6. Rear Deck/Captain's Quarters |
| 3. Pitch Bin | 7. Balcony to Captain's Quarters |
| 4. Fore Sail | □ = 1' |

 Captain's Wheel

 Stairs


SHADOW SKULKER

Speed: 10 (300 yards/turn)

Maneuverability: 9

Firepower: 15/18

Hull

Armor Rating: 15

Ramming: 25

Damage

Critical: 18

Derelict: 95

Destroyed: 120

Crew: 49 cadaver men, 2 obsidian gargoyles, 2 black servants, Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor

Shadow Skulker Map Key

The following map key refers to the map of the *Shadow Skulker*.

Forecastle (1): The *Shadow Skulker's* forecastle is elevated above the main deck, accessible by two short flights of steps.

Catapult (2): Located on the forecastle, the catapult is the *Shadow Skulker's* most powerful weapon. Its minimum range makes it unusable during boarding actions.

Pitch Bin (3): Located on the main deck next to the forecastle, this bin contains boiling pitch. The *Skulker's* cadaverous crewmen carry the pitch to the catapult in shovels and set it alight, then fling it toward the enemy ship. The bin contains enough pitch for 50 shots.

Foresail (4): Located on the ship's main deck, the foresail catches the headwinds and helps propel the galle. The sail is made of satin and is worth 30 gold pieces if intact, or a lesser amount determined by the gamemaster if damaged. Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor can repair the sail by magical means within 2 rounds.

Mainsail (5): Like the foresail, the mainsail is made of satin and can be magically repaired within 2 rounds. The mainsail is larger than the foresail, and is worth 50 gold pieces if intact, or a lesser amount determined by the gamemaster if damaged.

Rear Deck/Captain's Quarters (6): The rear deck holds the *Shadow Skulker's* wheel, which connects to the ship's rudder. Underneath the rear deck are the captain's quarters, occupied by Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor. The Horror's quarters contain a chest full of 210 gold pieces and 7 uncut gemstones, a mixture of rubies and emeralds. The gems are worth 1–20 gold pieces each. A table against the rear wall holds a map of

Barsaive with the city of Travar circled in red ink. The cabin also contains a bed, on which Tyrannisis' body sleeps for at least 4 hours out of every 24. A mirror on the cabin's front wall houses an astral portal that leads to Tyrannisis' retreat in the Delaris Mountains. Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor keeps the Tome in the nethermancer's stronghold, hidden in an astral pocket, until the final battle in which he attempts to use it. The heroes will find it nearly impossible to recover the book until that point in the adventure.

Balcony (7): Despite its solid appearance, the balcony is not a physical structure, but a barrier of darkness constructed of raw magic. To an observer, it looks like a wooden balcony with a light green awning. The shade cast by the awning is far darker than normal, and anyone standing beneath the awning cannot be seen. The shade reduces the effectiveness of all missile attacks by -3 steps and also blocks line of sight, meaning that mages who cast spells against Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor must see him using astral sight or a similar ability.

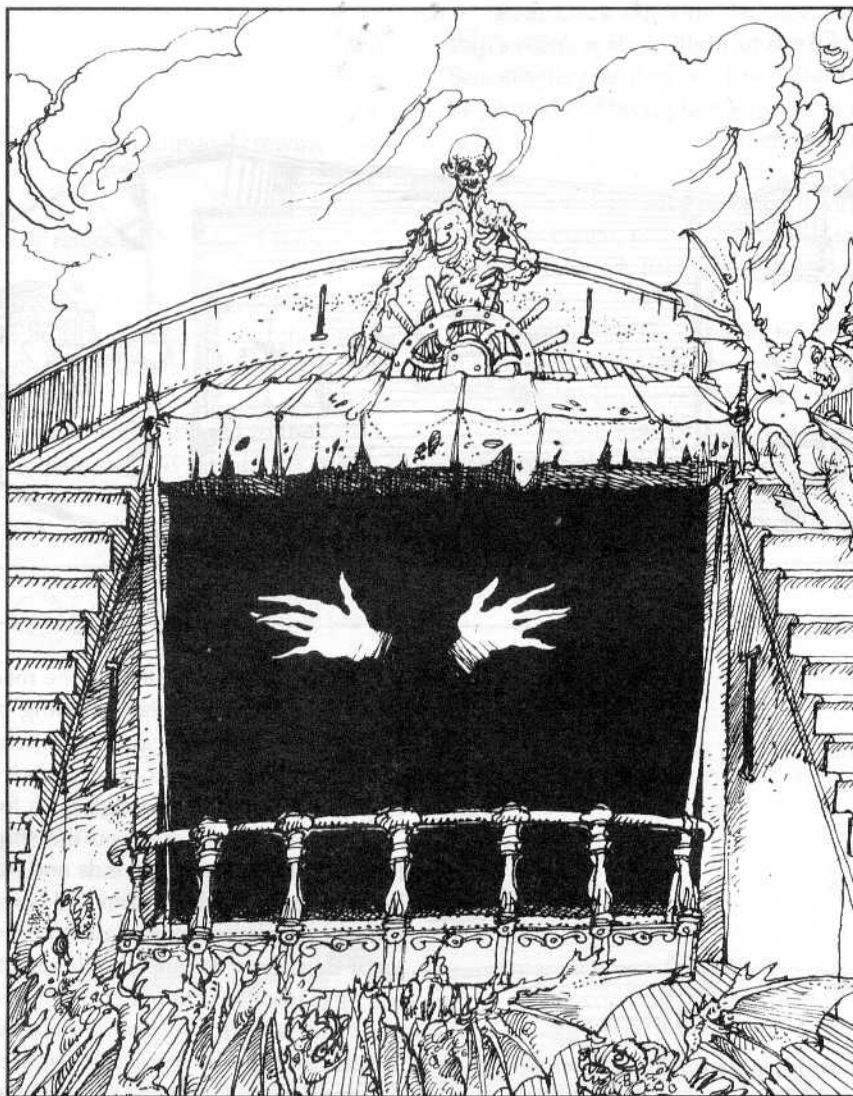
TROUBLESHOOTING

This encounter should unfold as follows. Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor steals the Tome of Banishment and races off in the *Shadow Skulker* with the *Cloud Runner* in hot pursuit. During the first hours of the chase, the two

ships exchange a few volleys of fire that do more damage to the vessels' respective crews than to the ships themselves. The *Shadow Skulker* slips away after nightfall, remaining hidden until just after dawn. The *Cloud Runner*'s crewmen spot the Horror's vessel a few miles away in the lightening sky, at which point they close to do battle and the player characters carry out their plans (if any). Though the characters fail to recover the Tome of Banishment during this engagement, they reduce the numbers of the *Skulker*'s crew. The *Skulker* breaks away a second time, and the *Cloud Runner* catches up to it just in time to fight the final battle over the city of Travar.

Needless to say, in a sequence of events as complex as those described above, almost anything can go wrong. In this encounter, the gamemaster will need every ounce of his or her creativity and resourcefulness to keep things on track. As with any encounter, events need not occur precisely as written, but the gamemaster should follow the

written encounter fairly closely in order to give the players a dramatic and exciting chain of events. If the encounter drifts off course, try to ensure that the *Cloud Runner* reaches the *Shadow Skulker* after nightfall over Travar. If the final battle takes place elsewhere or at a different time, be prepared to adjust the final encounter as appropriate.



PYRES OVER TRAVAR



OVERVIEW

In this encounter, the *Cloud Runner* and the *Shadow Skulker* fight their final, climactic battle in the skies over Travar. During the battle, Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor retrieves the Tome of Banishment from its astral hiding place and uses it to summon more Horrors into the physical world, as the characters and the airmen of the Flying Patrol fight their way through a throng of cadaver men and other dreadful opponents in a desperate attempt to stop him. If they recover the Tome of Banishment, the characters use it to send Rasper-Nor back to the nether region that spawned him.

SETTING THE STAGE

The *Cloud Runner* arrows toward the shadow-ship, closing on its quarry as the last light fades from the evening sky. The lights of Travar glitter below, a mute reminder of the thousands of lives at stake. As your galley draws near the *Shadow Skulker*, you see someone standing on the fore-castle, screaming up at the storm clouds. Though you cannot hear his words, the rhythm of incantation is unmistakable. Thunder rumbles and lightning crackles through the clouds; the sudden, stark light illuminates the Tome of Banishment in the nethermancer's hands.

THEMES AND IMAGES

In the climax of this adventure, the two huge galleys spit fire at each other like furious dragons as the heroes battle through mobs of the infernal to stop Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor from casting his evil spell. Fire and noise and creatures from the darkest nightmares abound in this final, epic encounter. Play up the drama and danger; inspire the player characters to act like heroes.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This encounter takes place over Travar, approximately 18 hours after the adventurers have escaped from Talon Kaer. By this time, the crew of the *Cloud Runner* should have finished licking their wounds from the opening skirmishes and whittled down the Horror's forces considerably.

Allow the characters to try whatever plan of attack they like to steal back the Tome of Banishment. Ideally, the two ships should be close enough for boarding before the Horror-possessed nethermancer begins his incantation, so that the adventurers and crewmen have a fighting chance to reach him before he casts his evil spell.

The heroes must somehow take the Tome from Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor. They may swing aboard the *Shadow Skulker* from the rigging, or land the drakkar on the *Skulker's* deck, or try any other scheme they have in mind. No matter what strategy they follow, the characters must fight the remaining obsidian gargoyles, black servitors, and cadaver men to get to the Horror and the book he holds. Statistics for the cadaver men, gargoyles, and servitors appear in *Broadsides*, pp. 58–60. Throughout the battle, Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor

stands atop the fore-castle and throws summoning spells at the night sky. His curses raise a raging storm, and the furious lightning illuminates him like a damned soul in hell. At some point during the fight, the dark clouds tear open and pelt the ships and land below with rain and hail. The slick, chilly rain makes footing treacherous, reducing all skills and talents based on Dexterity by –2 steps. The rain may also damage the Tome of Banishment (see *Loose Ends*, p. 72).

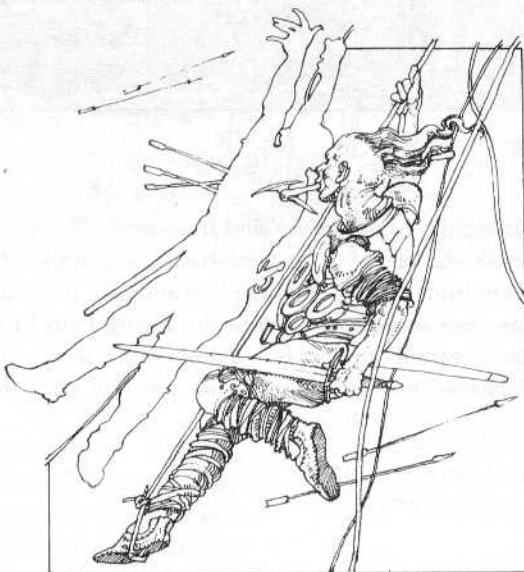
REACHING TYRANNISIS/RASPER-NOR

When the characters finally reach Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor, read the following aloud:

Dressed in black from head to toe, the pale-faced nethermancer continues to rail at the heavens. Black storm clouds seem to swirl across the plate-mail armor he wears, making your head swim. As the incantation from the stolen Tome of Banishment rolls off his tongue, the skies grow even darker and the air seems to freeze. A brief flash of lightning illuminates the nethermancer's crazed face, and for an instant you see another face imposed over that of the ancient mage, like the faintest wisp of an illusionist's spell. This face looks younger, but its ancient eyes glitter with malevolence. It smiles at you, revealing rows of small, razor-sharp teeth.

A successful attack by any character disrupts the spell and sends Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor into a rage. He attacks the characters with spells and with his magical sword, Screech, until he either defeats the player characters or loses the battle. Given the Horror/nethermancer's incredible power; the heroes will find him almost impossible to defeat by force of arms. The storm armor he wears adds to his power; he has attached four threads to it, giving him its magical effects listed for Ranks 1 through 4 (see *Rumors and Research*, p. 86). The characters can, however, defeat him through the magic in the Tome of Banishment, which he drops during the fight.

A magician who picks up the Tome finds a bookmark in it at the page that holds the spell Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor was casting. If the character makes a successful Perception (6) Test, he or she notices on the opposite page several incantations for banishing powerful Horrors. The Horrors are described in terms of their astral appearance, so the magician must use Astral Sense or a similar spell to see if Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor is among those listed. If the characters have



Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor is among those listed. If the characters have managed to kill Tyrannisis' body by this time, Rasper-Nor's true form grows out of the corpse, eliminating the need for an Astral Sense spell. Once the magician sees Rasper-Nor's astral form clearly, he or she recognizes it as one of the five Horrors described in the Tome. At this point, the magician may begin weaving the threads to cast the appropriate banishing spell.

If the magician is unable to catch an astral glimpse of the Horror, he or she must rely on the process of elimination. In this case, the character weaves two incorrect banishing spells before finally picking the right one. The Banish Circadius spell given below is a Circle 5 spell that either a wizard or a nethermancer may cast, and will banish Rasper-Nor. Treat all other banishing spells that a character casts in the same way, except that other spells have no effect. For information on casting spells from a grimoire, see pp. 154–155, ED.

As the magician struggles to weave the threads and cast the banishing spell, Rasper-Nor does his utmost to kill him or her and any other character within range of the Horror's sword or magical attacks. Once the spell is cast, Rasper-Nor ceases to exist in the physical world. If the characters have not yet killed Tyrannisis' body by the time Rasper-Nor disappears, the body of the possessed mage crumbles into five-century-old dust.

Banish Circadius

Threads: 5 **Weaving Difficulty:** 14/10
Range: 10 yards **Duration:** Instant
Effect: Special
Casting Difficulty: Rasper-Nor's Spell Defense

DEFEATING THE ENEMY

When the magician casts the Banish Circadius spell, read the following aloud:

The nethermancer shrieks in agony, dropping his jagged-edged sword. His spine arches backward in a sudden convulsion, the cold rain filling his open mouth. Black fluid leaks from his eyes and ears, blending with the icy water that cascades down his tortured face. His screams dissolve into agonized choking sounds. As lightning flashes behind him, his human form grows opaque; you see within him a slimy, shapeless mass, its grotesque face twisted in torture. The shadow within grows thicker and more tangible, until some mighty, invisible hand seems to rip it out of the nethermancer's body. The body collapses to the deck in a heap of broken bones. The Horror writhes in pain, snapping its sharp teeth against the empty air. Its dreadful sounds begin to fade as it slowly dissolves into a steaming puddle of rancid grease. As the Horror's last faint,

choking gasps die away, the broken human body crumbles to dust. The wind blows the dust into oblivion, along with the fading odor of rotting meat that the Horror left behind.

When Rasper-Nor disappears, he loses control over his minions. Any surviving obsidian gargoyles and eendwings flee; the cadaver men and black servitors continue to fight, but attack erratically and with less energy. Because the cadaver men serve as the crew of the *Shadow Skulker*, the loss of Rasper-Nor's controlling influence causes the airship to fly out of control and crash within 6 Combat Rounds. Unless the characters get off the *Shadow Skulker* within those 6 Combat Rounds, they go down with the vessel.

The characters have several possible escape routes from the Horror's doomed ship. If they flew to it in the drakkar, they can board the drakkar and fly back to the *Cloud Runner*. If they swung across to the *Skulker*, they must either take over the *Skulker's* steering wheel or hope that a rescue party from the *Cloud Runner* plucks them off the deck before they crash. Guidelines for piloting the airship are given in **Knights of the Sky**, p. 22.

If the characters choose to try to pilot the *Skulker* to safety, they will find ready takers for the ship in Drimsby and Juliak Merris. Both of these gentlemen will want the ship for their own fleets, but can give the characters nothing save gratitude for salvaging it. The gamemaster should not give the ship to the characters or allow them to sell it to Drimsby or Merris. After all, the characters do not own the ship, so either Drimsby or Merris can legitimately claim it as a spoil of war. In addition, selling an airship would net the characters so much money that they would no longer need to take on adventures for pay, thereby removing an often important motivation for **Earthdawn** characters.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the characters attempt to eliminate the crew of the *Shadow Skulker* in hopes that a crash will kill Rasper-Nor and his minions, they are sadly mistaken. A crash kills Tyrannisis' body, at which point Rasper-Nor manifests and flies aboard the *Cloud Runner* to attack Drimsby and the characters. If this happens, recast the characters' attempt to banish the Horror so that it occurs on the *Cloud Runner* rather than on the *Shadow Skulker*.

If none of the adventurers possess the necessary magical abilities to banish the Horror, have Kathleen pick up the fallen Tome of Banishment and recite the banishing spell. Because having a gamemaster character enact the encounter's pivotal event robs the players of the thrill of victory, the gamemaster is advised to use this option only as a last resort.

LOOSE ENDS



The information in this section allows the gamemaster to tie up the adventure's loose ends, and suggests ways to use story elements and characters from *Terror in the Skies* in future *Earthdawn* adventures and campaigns.



AFTER THE ADVENTURE

Soon after the climactic battle over Travar, the battered *Cloud Runner* sets down in a green meadow just south of the city. At this point the heroes can examine the Tome of Banishment. A mage who makes a successful Read and Write Magic (8) Test discovers that one of the banishing spells in the Tome applies to a class of lesser Horrors that strongly resembles the rakken. Upon finding the spell, the magician automatically casts it, sending magical energies swirling around his head and then off into the woods toward the city. The gamemaster should assume that the spell works.

As the characters and the surviving *Cloud Runner* crew limp back into town, citizens throng around them, asking what happened. The crowd swells to more than a hundred strong, and the characters find it difficult to escape to their comfortable beds and waiting baths. Several grateful merchants give the player characters small rewards, up to 10 silver pieces each, and Juliak Merris offers to throw them a free dinner party at The Picky Palate the next day. If the group stays in Travar, they can count on plenty of company and an occasional free drink for the next several months.

If the adventurers have stayed on good terms with Drimsby, he allows them to keep whatever treasures they found in Talon Kaer. He even gives them the Tome of Banishment, on the condition that they copy its contents for him so that he and the Flying Patrol can deal with any future threats to Travar's shipping lanes.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

This section provides guidelines for awarding Legend Points to the players. As recommended in the **Introduction**, p. 9, the gamemaster should award Legend Points at the end of each game session as well as at the end of the adventure. The following guidelines for Legend Awards indicate the points to be awarded by the gamemaster for each task accomplished or goal reached in a game session.

GAME SESSIONS

The two suggested game sessions outlined in the following pages each include certain encounters. If the gamemaster has organized the encounters differently in his game sessions, he should award Legend Points as appropriate. Reflecting the fact that **Terror in the Skies** includes several particularly difficult situations for beginning **Earthdawn** players, the system for awarding Legend Points described below differs slightly from the system given in the **Earthdawn** rulebook (pp. 241–42). Instead of awarding a character a number of Legend Points determined by his Circle and consulting the Legend Award Table (p. 242, **ED**),

the points for each Legend Award are already given. In addition, these Legend Awards are somewhat higher than the average First, Second, or Third Circle character might normally achieve.

Each game session also includes several different Legend Point awards. The **session goal** is the objective of the session. If the characters achieved this goal, each of them gets a given number of Legend Points, called the **Session Legend Award**. Note that each session has a different Session Legend Award, depending on the difficulty the characters face in achieving that goal.

The **Creature Legend Award** appears in the Creature/Opponent Award Table on p. 71. This table lists the available Legend Points for defeating creatures and/or opponents in each game session, arranged by the type and number of each creature and opponent fought as well as by the number of player characters. The Legend Points listed for each creature represent the total number of points for each type, not the number of Legend Points per creature; for example, the Creature Legend Award for the eendwings that the characters battle in **Broadsides**, p. 57, is 600 Legend Points for all the eendwings, not 600 for each one. The gamemaster should divide the total Creature Legend Award equally among the player characters (see p. 242, **ED**). Round points per character down to the nearest multiple of 10; for example, 500 Legend Points divided by 6 characters equals 83.3 points per character, rounded down to 80 points per character.

Entries marked with an asterisk indicate creatures or opponents that the characters may choose not to fight. If they battle these opponents, add the indicated Legend Points to the total Creature Legend Award, and divide that total by the number of player characters.

A character can also receive a certain number of Legend Points for **creative roleplaying and/or heroics**. Each game session below includes a list of the types of actions characters might take that warrant this award. A single character may only receive one such award during a given session. Unlike other Legend Awards, the Legend Points listed for various acts of creative roleplaying or heroics are not divided among the characters.

Finding or acquiring specific treasures in each encounter earns the characters **Treasure Legend Points**. As with points for defeating creatures, the gamemaster should divide the Legend Points for each treasure equally among the player characters. If they choose, the player characters may sell certain items for a number of silver pieces equal to the Legend Points that the item is worth.

The **adventure goal** appears in the final game session, in lieu of a session goal. The final session also includes an **Adventure Legend Award** in place of the Session Legend Award, representing the Legend Points awarded for com-

pleting the adventure successfully. For more information on completing adventure goals and earning Adventure Legend Awards, see p. 242, ED.

Session One

In the first game session, the characters arrive in Travar, help Drimsby and the townspeople fight the fire set by the crashed *Crimson Dawn*, and either join the Flying Patrol or agree to hunt the rakken for bounty. The characters also find the lost patrol drakkar, try to save the *Obsidian Flyer* from a rakken attack, and begin the trek to Talon Peak in search of the Tome of Banishment.

This session includes the encounters **Prelude to Terror**, **Crimson Dawn**, **Knights of the Sky**, **Obsidian Flyer**, **Baiting the Trap**, and **Long Day's Journey into Doom**. The characters' session goal is to meet Drimsby, join the Flying Patrol or take the bounty for hunting the rakken, and agree to seek out the Tome of Banishment in Talon Kaer. The Session Legend Award is 60 Legend Points.

The gamemaster should award Legend Points for defeating creatures and/or opponents according to the Creature/Opponent Award Table on p. 71. Though unlikely, the characters may defeat one or all of the rakken; if they do, each rakken earns them 865 Legend Points.

The gamemaster should award characters Legend Points for creative roleplaying and/or heroics if they take the following actions:

Helping fight the fire set by the <i>Crimson Dawn</i>	30
Rescuing Radlin from the <i>Crimson Dawn</i>	30
Hull jumping with Karl	30
Rescuing Slilith from the kalamis tree	30
Attacking the rakken by hull jumping	30
Agreeing to search for the Tome without negotiation	30
Training either Kathleen or Radlin	30

The characters gain no Treasure Legend Points in this session.

Session Two

In this session, the characters arrive at Talon Kaer and explore it in search of the Tome of Banishment. After dealing with the kaer's various, dangerous creatures and tak-

ing the Tome from the Sanctuary, they return to the *Cloud Runner* to find it under attack by Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor. The Horror steals the Tome of Banishment and sets sail for Travar, with the *Cloud Runner* in hot pursuit. The characters battle the Horror and his dreadful minions in a dramatic airship battle over Travar, attempting to win back the Tome and banish the Horror to astral space.

This session includes the encounters **Talon Kaer**, **Finding the Sanctuary**, **Broadsides**, and **Pyres Over Travar**. The adventure goal is to retrieve the Tome of Banishment and banish both Rasper-Nor and the rakken to astral space. The Adventure Legend Award is 300 Legend Points.

The gamemaster should award Legend Points for defeating creatures and/or opponents according to the Creature/Opponent Award Table on p. 71.

The gamemaster should award Legend Points for creative roleplaying and/or heroics if the characters take the following actions:

Trading with the Trader	50
Devising a plan for crossing the Stained Lake safely	50
Exploring the drowned city	50
Solving the riddle of the Sanctuary	50
Deliberately acquiring a Horror mark to get the Tome	150
Swinging over to the <i>Shadow Skulker</i> to battle the Horror	50
Casting the Banish Circadius spell	100
Piloting the <i>Shadow Skulker</i> to safety	50

The treasure the characters can gain in this session include the Scintillating Medallion and the Tome of Banishment, each worth 100 Legend Points. The characters may also find black mantis eggs worth 150 Legend Points each, a potion of life worth 100 Legend Points, the Short Sword of Dazzling Speed worth 100 Legend Points, and Blinding Stones worth 50 Legend Points. Tyrannisis' sword Screech and the armor and swords used by the black servitors do not count as treasure worth Legend Points, because the Creature Legend Point Awards for defeating the servitors and Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor take the presence of those items into account.



TOTAL LEGEND POINT AWARD

The Total Legend Point Award serves as a guideline for the gamemaster. He may award more or fewer Legend Points depending on the circumstances of his game, but the total should not vary drastically from the average given below. Based on the figures listed above in each game session, a single character who completes **Terror in the Skies** should receive an average of 2,560 Legend Points. This average assumes 7 players in a group, and does not include points earned for battling optional opponents or for finding additional treasure in the windling kaer.

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

Published **Earthdawn** adventures are designed to fit into an existing campaign with little or no extra work on the part of the gamemaster. Some of the situations and people the characters face in an adventure need not pertain to that adventure only, but can lead to other adventures in the gamemaster's overall campaign. For example, if the characters drive a Horror from a town or city but do not kill it, the

Horror can turn up to plague the characters in a later adventure.

Similarly, the events preceding an adventure can lead to any number of other situations. For example, if an adventure's background involves disputes among the Blood Warders in the Elven Court as in **Mists of Betrayal**, these disputes might lead to a full-scale war between the elves of Blood Wood and the Kingdom of Throal in a later adventure.

As the previous examples make clear, adventures do not exist by themselves. The world of an **Earthdawn** campaign should be dynamic, and should change over time. By using events in adventures to trigger changes in the overall campaign, the players and characters can watch the changes happen from day one, giving the adventures the sense of reality vital to good roleplaying.

By providing adventures that you can integrate into your campaigns, we hope to help make your **Earthdawn** game the best it can be. Whether or not you use a given adventure as written, you should be able to draw ideas and information from it that you can use to enhance your own **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns.

CREATURE/OPPONENT AWARD TABLE

SESSION 1

Creature/Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
Rakken (3)	2,595 (865 each)	2,595 (865 each)	2,595 (865 each)
Ork Scorchers*	500*	500*	500*
Thundra Beasts*	2,000*	2,000*	2,000*
Total (w/out ork scorched or thundra beasts)	865-2,595	865-2,595	865-2,595
Award Per Character	145-430[†]	125-370[†]	110-320[†]
[†] Depending on number of rakken slain			

SESSION 2

Creature/Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
Blood Bees	2,250	2,250	2,250
Bone-shambler	700	700	700
Black Mantis	550	550	550
Eendwings	1,200	1,200	1,200
Cadaver Men	5,500	5,500	5,500
Obsidian Gargoyles	1,140	1,140	1,140
Black Servitors	1,100	1,100	1,100
Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor	2,000	2,000	2,000
Total	14,440	14,440	14,440
Award Per Character	2,400	2,060	1,800

The following characters and story elements from **Terror in the Skies** can most easily be used in further adventures. The gamemaster should feel free to use the information in whatever way he sees fit in his **Earthdawn** campaign.

FRIENDSHIPS

Whether the heroes remain in Travar or move on, they can always count Kathleen, Radlin, and the men and women of the Flying Patrol as friends. **Terror in the Skies** gives the player characters unprecedented opportunities to form such lasting friendships. During the course of **Terror in the Skies**, these men and women bond with the characters and can provide favors, information, or simple companionship in later adventures. If the gamemaster uses **Terror in the Skies** as a part of his **Earthdawn** campaign, the relationships formed within it will give that campaign greater depth, reality, and meaning for the players involved.

Though the player characters cannot expect their former compatriots to drop everything and turn up at a moment's notice, the gamemaster characters from **Terror in the Skies** should answer any reasonable request for aid. For example, Karl and Yorlk might easily take a temporary vacation from the Flying Patrol long enough to assist the player characters on an expedition near Travar. Kathleen and Radlin might also turn up again, probably more than once. Both of these gamemaster characters will certainly wish to continue any training they may have started, and are eager for more adventures. If either of these characters accompany the player character who has trained them after the adventure, the gamemaster should award Kathleen and/or Radlin Legend Points and continue to track their progress through their chosen Disciplines. As time goes by, these sidekick characters may become lifelong lovers or companions to the player characters, helping them to forge their personal legends.

FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

Terror in the Skies also provides the player characters with a constant source of employment, should they choose to take advantage of it. If Drimsby or Juliak Merris ever needs stout-hearted adventurers, both of them will most likely offer the player characters the job. The gamemaster can use both Drimsby and Merris to start the player characters on the road to a new adventure. For example, Merris may decide to open a new mine near the notorious Blasted Ridge located somewhere in the Thunder Mountains, and may ask the adventurers to scout the terrain for him. Alternatively, Drimsby may hire the adventurers to hunt down a particularly vile band of sky raiders.

TOME OF BANISHMENT

The Tome of Banishment offers the characters potential rewards of money and power. If the characters choose to sell the grimoire, Air Warden Drimsby recommends that the Travarian government purchase it. Travarian officials will pay up to 1,000 silver pieces for the Tome.

Reading the entire Tome takes at least two weeks of game time, but gains any character who accomplishes that task 1 rank in the Horror Lore Knowledge Skill. This knowledge enables a character to identify a type of Horror, such as a bloatform, but not a specific Horror's name. If a character who has read the Tome makes a successful Horror Lore (13) Test, he finds a list in the Tome of that type of Horror's weaknesses, as well as particularly effective defenses against it.

Though the windlings' choice of Circadius as a name for Rasper-Nor remains a mystery, the text makes it clear that the original windling researchers studied Rasper-Nor specifically. Rasper-Nor and five other major Horrors described in the Tome of Banishment, including the Horror Duaga described in **Mists of Betrayal**, roamed the general vicinity of the Thunder Mountains for several decades before the Scourge began in earnest, and therefore posed an immediate threat to the Tome's compilers. The characters can use the information in the Tome to track down the Horrors and attempt to banish them from the world, offering several possibilities for adventures or campaigns. After all, any one of the five Horrors might still be plotting and executing diabolical mischief somewhere in the region of Travar and the Thunder Mountains. Have fun creating the Horror's history and its present situation. To make things even more interesting, try sowing a little misinformation in the Tome of Banishment.

In addition to the five major Horrors, the Tome lists at least fifteen types of minor Horrors. Though most of these disappeared at the end of the Scourge, a few may still roam the Thunder Mountains or the nearby Badlands. Any or all of these might turn up to plague the characters during any subsequent adventures they undertake in those regions.

TYRANNISIS' RETREAT

Long before the Scourge, Tyrannisis built a hidden retreat in the Delaris Mountains where he researched and practiced his nethermancy. When the Horror Rasper-Nor possessed Tyrannisis, it discovered and took over the retreat. In Tyrannisis/Rasper-Nor's cabin aboard the *Shadow Skulker*, the characters may find a map of the Delaris Mountains that indicates the location of the retreat, which the gamemaster can use to create an adventure in which the characters travel to and explore the nethermancer's sanctuary. Among the





many possibilities for such an adventure, the gamemaster might populate the retreat with creatures and Horror-constructs from the characters' worst nightmares, or seed it with lethal magical and mundane traps. The nethermancer's stronghold might also contain magical treasures of great power, such as evil charms left behind by departing Horrors or items that hold within

them the power of legendary heroes. The retreat might even contain grimoires and ancient scrolls that give their owner power over Horrors and their constructs. If so, the characters can use these items to help rid the world of the Horrors and their dreadful legacy.

CAST OF CHARACTERS



This section provides information and game statistics for the gamemaster characters who play a major role in *Terror in the Skies*. If necessary or appropriate, the gamemaster may change some of these statistics to suit the abilities of the player characters in his game. Because these characters will likely appear more than once in the course of the adventure, their statistics and descriptions are grouped here for convenience. The gamemaster characters are presented in order of general importance to the story. Descriptions and statistics for other, minor characters are given in the encounter in which they make their first appearance.

AIR WARDEN DRIMSBY

Drimsby has served as Travar's air warden for almost twenty years, most of which he spent fighting off bands of troll sky raiders. He has never encountered anything as dangerous or vicious as the rakken. Fearing that the terrible creatures may be the first enemy he cannot defeat, Drimsby has unconsciously distanced himself from the trouble the rakken have caused. By taking the *Cloud Runner* to Talon Peak, Drimsby re-enters the forefront of the fray, and relishes his ability to finally strike a potentially decisive blow in the defense of the city he loves. Drimsby is a Sixth Circle air sailor (p. 148, *Companion*).

Attributes

Dexterity (10): 5/D8
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (13): 6/D10
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (13): 6/D10
Charisma (13): 6/D10

Talents

Acrobatic Strike (3): 8/2D6
Air Dance (2): 7/D12
Air Sailing (6): 11/D10 + D8
Avoid Blow (4): 9/D8 + D6
Durability (6)
Great Leap (3): 9/D8 + D6
Karma Ritual (6)
Maneuver (3): 8/2D6
Melee Weapons (6): 11/D10 + D8
Momentum Attack (3): 8/2D6
Riposte (6): 14/D20 + D4
Sky Weaving (6): 12/2D10
Throwing Weapons (3): 8/2D6
Unarmed Combat (6): 11/D10 + D8
Wind Catcher (6): 12/2D10

Movement

Full: 50
Combat: 25

Skills

Artisan/Wood Carving (3): 9/D8 + D6
Knowledge/Barsaive History (5): 11/D10 + D8
Knowledge/Airships (5): 11/D10 + D8

Initiative

Dice: D4



Karma

Dice: D6
Points: 6

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 1

Damage

Death Rating: 72
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 58
Recovery Tests/Day: 3
Recovery Dice: 6/D10

Equipment

Broadsword (Damage 10/D10 + D6)
Dwarf sword (Damage 8/2D6)
Plate mail chest plate

KARL

Karl has flown with the Flying Patrol for the past few years, working hard to master the abilities of his sky raider Discipline. Despite his choice of Discipline, Karl resents being likened to the crystal raiders of the Twilight Peaks. A daredevil by nature, Karl enjoys sports that challenge him physically, such as hull jumping. Karl is a First Circle sky raider.

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (11): 5/D8
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (12): 5/D8
Charisma (14): 6/D10

Talents

Air Sailing (1): 6/D10
Avoid Blow (2): 8/2D6
Battle Shout (1): 7/D12
Fireblood (2): 7/D12
Karma Ritual (1)
Melee Weapons (2): 8/2D6

Movement

Full: 65
Combat: 33

Skills

Artisan/Crystal Carving (1): 7/D12
Knowledge/Creature Lore (1): 6/D10
Knowledge/Human History (1): 6/D10

Initiative

Dice: D10

Karma

Dice: D8
Points: 5

Combat

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1

Damage

Death Rating: 32



Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24
Recovery Tests/Day: 2
Recovery Dice: 5/D8

Equipment

Battle-axe (Damage 11/D10 + D8)
Padded leather armor
Short sword (Damage 9/D8 + D6)

YORKL

Like Karl, Yorkl is a First Circle sky raider. Unlike his human friend, the ork enjoys the connection between his Discipline and the barbarian trolls who make up most of its adherents. Yorkl is also a thrill-seeker, but gets his kicks flying airships.

Attributes

Dexterity (10): 5/D8
Strength (18): 7/D12
Toughness (16): 7/D12
Perception (11): 6/D10
Willpower (9): 5/D8
Charisma (9): 4/D6

Talents

Air Sailing (1): 6/D10
Avoid Blow (2): 8/2D6
Battle Shout (1): 5/D8
Fireblood (2): 9/D8 + D6
Karma Ritual (2)
Melee Weapons (1): 7/D12

Movement

Full: 50
Combat: 25

Skills

Artisan/Runic Carving (1): 4/D6
Knowledge/Scourge Lore (1): 7/D12

Initiative

Dice: D6

Karma

Dice: D8
Points: 5

Combat

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 0

Damage

Death Rating: 39
Wound Threshold: 11



Unconsciousness Rating: 31
Recovery Tests/Day: 3
Recovery Dice: 7/D12

Equipment

Hide armor
Pole-axe (Damage 15/D20 + D6)

KATHLEEN

Though no one in Travar remembers it, Kathleen is Mad Martin's niece and has inherited the family aptitude for magic. Her wizard uncle taught her several protective spells when she was a child. Unfortunately for Kathleen, Martin attempted a spell powered by raw magic and attracted the attentions of a Horror, which drove him insane within weeks. With Martin incapacitated, Kathleen's tutelage came to an abrupt halt.

Kathleen is eager to continue learning the Discipline of the wizard, especially after the death of her fiancé. She sees adventuring with the characters as a way to leave Travar and its painful memories behind her. Kathleen is a First Circle wizard.

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10
Strength (9): 4/D6
Toughness (9): 4/D6
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (17): 7/D12
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Talents

Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
Read and Write Magic (1): 7/D12
Spellcasting (2): 8/2D6
Spell Matrix (1)
Spell Matrix (1)
Wizardry (2): 8/2D6

Movement

Full: 60
Combat: 30

Skills

Artisan/Embroidery (1): 7/D12
Knowledge/Horror Lore (1): 7/D12
Knowledge/Magic Lore (1): 7/D12

Initiative

Dice: D10

Karma

Dice: D8
Points: 10

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8



Social Defense: 8

Armor: 2

Mystic Armor: 3

Damage

Death Rating: 30
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21
Recovery Tests/Day: 2
Recovery Dice: 4/D6

Equipment

Dagger (Damage 6/D10)
Leather armor

Spells

Ignite
Iron Hand
Mind Dagger

RADLIN

A young elf with considerable courage but little experience, Radlin has not yet achieved his goal of becoming an adept. His brush with death aboard the *Crimson Dawn* has left him with plenty of survivor guilt and a desperate need to prove himself. As a recent recruit to the Flying Patrol, he remains unsure of his abilities.

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (9): 4/D6
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (9): 4/D6
Charisma (11): 5/D8

Movement

Full: 70
Combat: 35

Skills

Air Sailing (1): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (1): 7/D12

Initiative

Dice: D10

Karma

Dice: D6
Points: 10

Combat

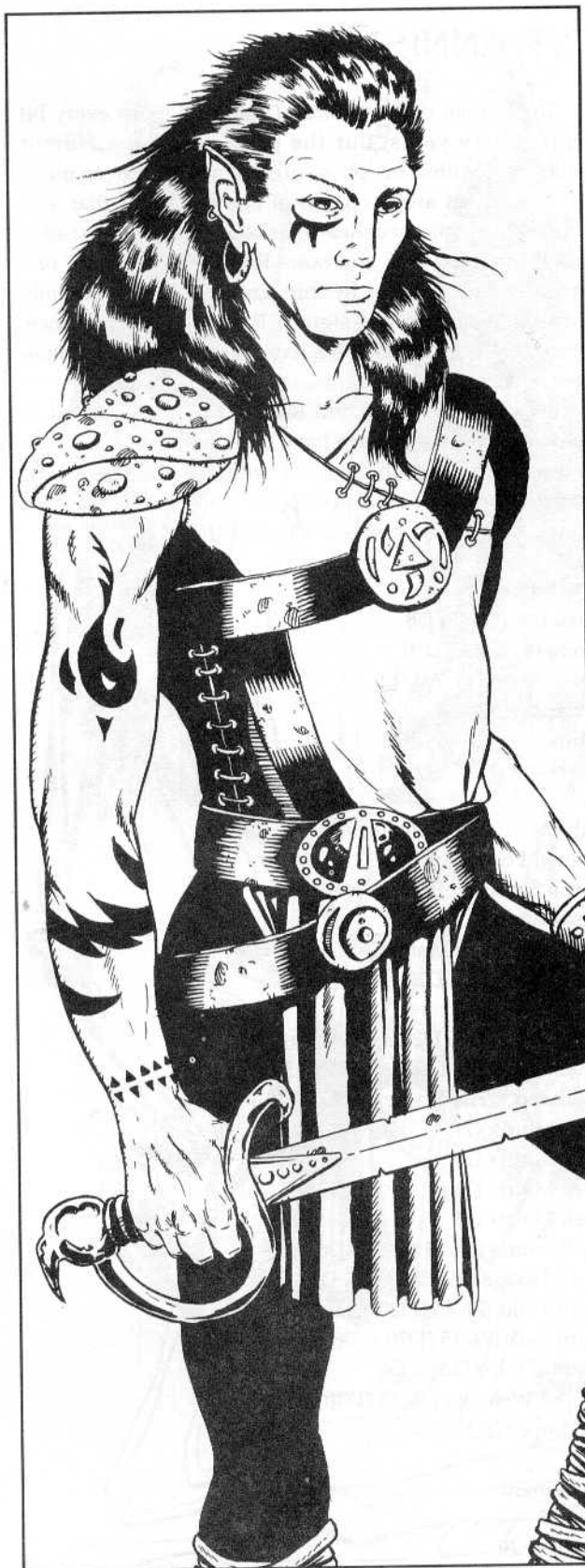
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Damage

Death Rating: 30
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21
Recovery Tests/Day: 2
Recovery Dice: 4/D6

Equipment

Broadsword (Damage 10/D10 + D6)
Leather armor



TYRANNISIS

The human nethermancer Tyrannisis looks every bit of his ninety years, but the presence of the Horror Rasper-Nor within his physical shell allows him to move with the speed and strength of someone half that age. Long, white hair brushes his shoulders and cascades from his pointed chin and nose. Rotting teeth jut out of a snarling mouth framed by thin, cracked lips. In the only unmistakable, physical sign of Rasper-Nor's presence, Tyrannisis' pitch-black eyes have no whites, resembling those of a shark.

Because Tyrannisis and Rasper-Nor once existed as separate entities, they each have their own game statistics. As long as Rasper-Nor remains within Tyrannisis' body, the nethermancer's statistics apply. Note that Rasper-Nor can use his Horror powers in any form he takes.

Attributes

Dexterity (12): 5/D8
Strength (15): 6/D10
Toughness (16): 7/D12
Perception (19): 8/2D6
Willpower (21): 8/2D6
Charisma (17): 7/D12

Talents

Animal Possession (4): 12/2D10
Astral Sight (7): 15/D20 + D6
Durability (7)
Enhanced Spell Matrix (5)
Frighten (7): 15/D20 + D6
Karma Ritual (6)
Lifesight (7): 15/D20 + D6
Read and Write Language (7): 15/D20 + D6
Read and Write Magic (7): 15/D20 + D6
Spell Matrix (7)
Spell Matrix (7)
Spell Matrix (7)
Spell Matrix (7)
Spellcasting (7): 15/D20 + D6
Spirit Dodge (7): 15/D20 + D6
Spirit Hold (7): 15/D20 + D6
Spirit Talk (7): 15/D20 + D6
Taunt (7): 15/D20 + D6
Thread Weaving (7): 15/D20 + D6
Willforce (7): 15

Movement

Full: 57
Combat: 29



Skills

Artisan/Embroidery (4): 11/D10 + D8
Knowledge/Horror Lore (7): 15/D20 + D6
Knowledge/Scourge Lore (7): 15/D20 + D6

Initiative

Dice: D10

Karma

Dice: 2D10
Points: 30

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 10
Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: 4

Damage

Death Rating: 67
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 52
Recovery Tests/Day: 3
Recovery Dice: 7/D12

Equipment

Screech, a magical sword (Damage 16/D20 + D8)
Storm armor
210 gold pieces

Spells

All spells available to Seventh Circle nethermancer.

RASPER-NOR

This Horror inhabited the nethermancer Tyrannisis' dying body, keeping the mage's physical shell alive throughout the centuries of the Scourge. Using Tyrannisis' memories and abilities in addition to his own Horror powers, Rasper-Nor has spent five hundred years trying to remove the Tome of Banishment from its tomb in the windling kaer so that he might use its arcane knowledge to summon more Horrors and their minions to ravage Barsaive.

If Tyrannisis dies, his death drives Rasper-Nor from the nethermancer's body. A tattered, shadowy form wafts out of the nethermancer's nose, mouth, and ears, gradually manifesting into Rasper-Nor's true form. This process takes 2 Combat Rounds, during which the Horror's Physical Defense is reduced to 2. Once manifested, the enraged Horror will fight his enemies to the death. Unable to command the nethermancer's abilities, the Horror can only use spells available to a Third Circle wizard, and Tyrannisis' game statistics no longer apply. Because his manifest form is not completely tangible, Rasper-Nor alone cannot wear the storm armor or wield Screech.

Attributes

DEX: 8 STR: 6 TOU: 6
PER: 8 WIL: 8 CHA: 7

Initiative: 8

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: 10

Damage: 12 (see below)

Number of Spells: 2

Spellcasting: 14

Effect: See below

Death Rating: 90

Wound Threshold: 20

Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Physical Defense: 12

Spell Defense: 11

Social Defense: 10

Armor: 10

Mystic Armor: 10

Knockdown: 10

Recovery Tests/Day: 4

Combat Movement: 55

Full Movement: 110

Flight: 60/120*

*Second value applies to movement during combat.

Karma Points: 30

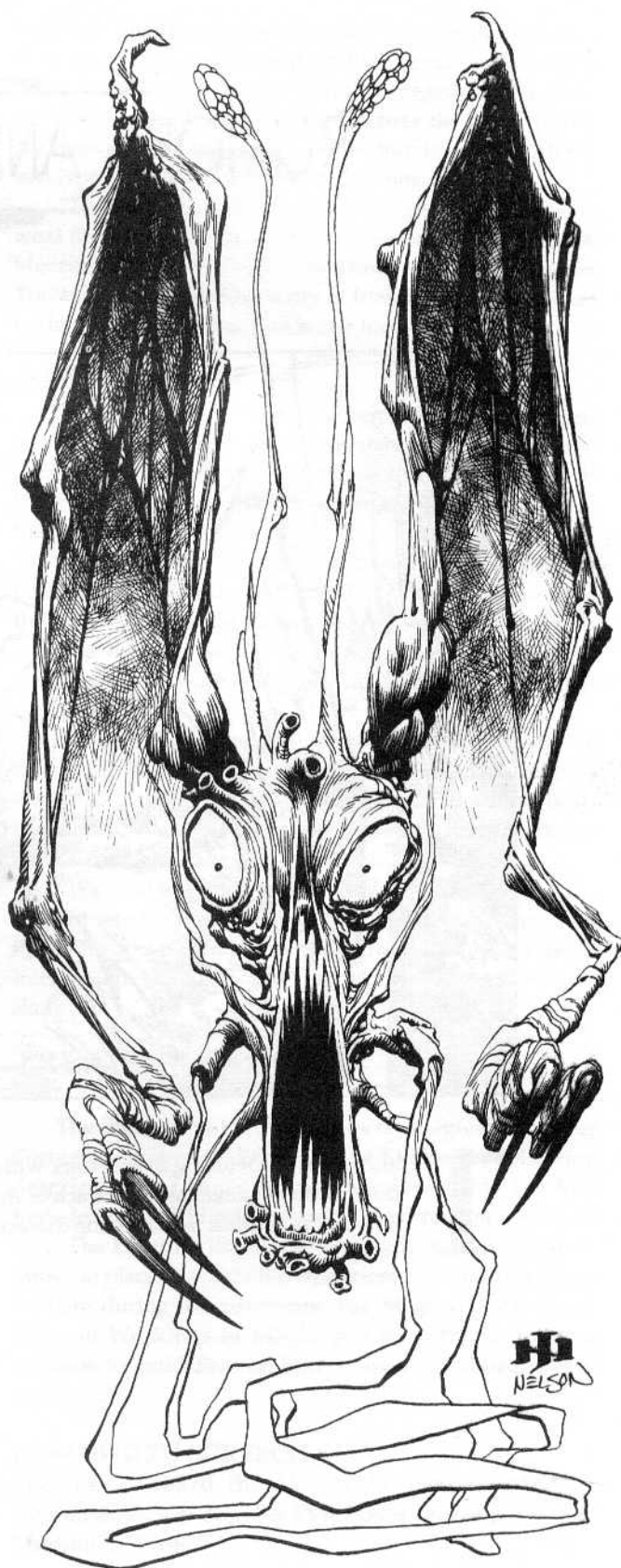
Karma Step: 12

Powers: Animate Dead 12, Corrupt Karma 12, Karma Tap 10, Horror Mark 15, Thought Worm 8, Spells: Third Circle wizard spells

Legend Points: 2,000

Equipment: None

Loot: See Tyrannisis' game statistics, p. 80.



RUMORS AND RESEARCH



This section provides gamemasters with information that the player characters may glean from various gamemaster characters during the adventure, and includes detailed descriptions of the magical treasures the characters may come across.

TALES OF THE RAKKEN

During their stay in Travar, the characters can learn about the nature of the rakken from survivors of rakken assaults, from Drimsby, and from local folk. The information available from each source is given below.

RADLIN'S TALE

The lone survivor of the *Crimson Dawn* disaster knows about the rakken firsthand. When he is able to speak to the characters, read them the following:

"They came from nowhere, shooting fire from their arms and flapping their huge wings near our heads. I kept firing arrows at them, but my shafts never pierced them. They attacked my friend Berthon in the rigging; he struck a good blow before one of the demons slew him. It bathed him in flame, then its head seemed to split and it ripped him in half with slavering, sharp teeth.

"All of my companions died, but the Passions let me live. Or maybe those things did. I don't know. I wish I had died—and that I'd taken a few demons with me."

As the sole survivor, Radlin feels guilty. A truly heroic character will try to comfort him, and may suggest he join the Flying Patrol in order to take revenge against the rakken. Though Radlin does not think of vengeance himself, he eagerly agrees if someone mentions that possibility to him. If not, he plans to leave Travar as soon as his wounds heal.

A character who helps the elf cope with his guilt need not make Persuasion Tests. Instead, roleplay the conversation to its conclusion, keeping in mind that heroes can build legends with kind words as well as with steel.

WHAT DRIMSBY KNOWS

If the characters ask Drimsby about the earlier rakken attacks, read them the following:

"They hit the *Day Dreamer* first, an empty ore carrier headed toward Merris' mines in the Thunder Mountains. The Merris merchant house uses airships to cart ore to Travar, where Juliak Merris sells it to local foundries. The creatures struck in broad daylight. The *Dreamer* was a sturdy ship, built to last centuries if need be—those flying Horrors breached the hull and brought the *Dreamer* down with all hands. We also lost several men from the Flying Patrol ships flying escort. We plucked nine survivors out of the wreckage; they all described their attackers as three huge, winged demons that shot fire from their arms.

"Six days later, the things attacked the *Rigula*, a wooden galley loaded with goods from several local merchants. My friend Captain Guidon owned the *Rigula* and made his living ferrying merchandise between Travar and Kratas. Most of the merchants in Travar had cargo on the galley;

they took plenty of losses when the Horrors destroyed it. They set it afire, and it went up like a pitch-soaked torch before crashing. The Flying Patrol managed to save fourteen of the *Rigula's* crew, swooping over the galley in fast drakkars and snatching them off the burning decks. All the survivors described the same fire-spitting demons.

"Their third target was the *Crimson Dawn*. You saw what they did to it. The *Dawn* is the second freighter Juliak Merris has lost. He's an obsidiman—been trading in Travar for years. He has plenty of friends, and a reputation for fair dealing. He deserves better luck—so do we all."

SLILITH'S TALE

The t'skrang airman that the heroes may have rescued in *Knights of the Sky* (p. 22) was the only survivor of the patrol ship lost during the attack on the *Crimson Dawn*. If the player characters ask him about the attack, read them the following:

"The winged monsters came from nowhere, shooting past us on great gouts of flame. The things shot fire from their arms, using the flames to bank and roll and dive down at us. They set the *Dawn's* sails afire; one of them roasted my best mate, Valiirye. I can still hear him screaming. . .

"One of them swooped close and I struck it with my sword, but the blow bounced off. Jarred my hand, hard—I almost dropped my blade. The demon flew off, and I thought I'd scared it away; then I saw it fly beneath the drakkar and bite clear through the hull!

"We tried to bring our ship down in a clearing, but fell straight into the trees. They tell me Pietor and Hajim died in the crash. I remember nothing after we hit the kalamis tree, though I'm told that its branches nearly crushed my skull."

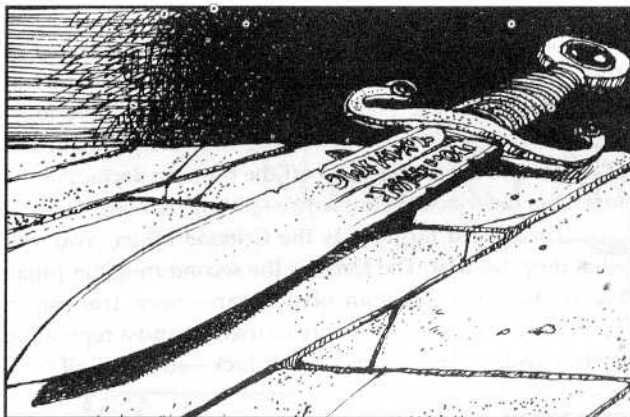
TREASURES

The characters may find several magical treasures during the course of *Terror in the Skies*. The following descriptions of these magical items include the Key Knowledges and Effects for each thread rank of each treasure. The **Location** listing given in each entry below indicates the place at which the characters can find that magical item during the adventure. See *Magical Treasure*, p. 270, and *Workings of Magic*, p. 136, in the *Earthdawn* rulebook for guidelines on how to use magical treasures in a campaign.

BANESWORD SCREECH

Location: Aboard the *Shadow Skulker*, wielded by Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor. See *Pyres Over Travar*, p. 66.

Maximum Threads: 1



Spell Defense: 12

Throughout the centuries of the Scourge, Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor experimented with raw magic in the nethermancer's mountain retreat. Among other things, the Horror created a magical sword, which he named the Banesword Screech. The name "Banesword" refers to the killings necessary to weave threads to the weapon's true pattern, and demonstrates the Horror's hatred of the physical world. Forged in evil, this blade will almost certainly taint any characters who rush to gain its benefits.

Screech has only one thread rank. Whenever the blade slays a Name-giver, it traps the victim's soul and uses his or her pain to increase its magical power. Until someone else slays a Name-giver of a different race and thereby weaves a thread to the sword, the weapon does additional damage of Str + 10 steps to members of the most recent victim's race.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The character must slay a dwarf, elf, human, obsidiman, t'skrang, windling, ork, or troll.

Effect: The sword adds +10 steps to the wielder's Strength step when used against all members of the most recent victim's race.

BLINDING STONES

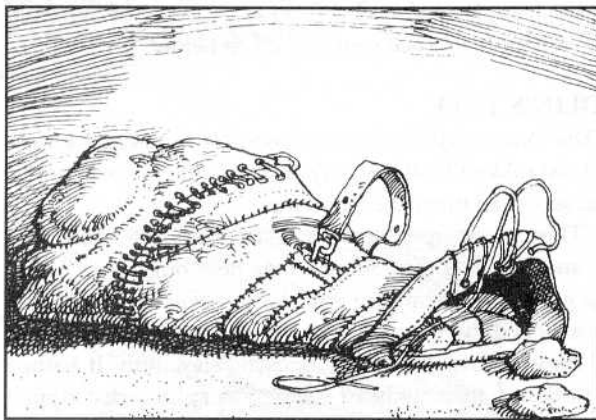
Location: Merchant towers, Talon Kaer. See **Talon Kaer**, p. 48.

Maximum Threads: 1

Spell Defense: 9

A favorite defensive weapon of windlings, blinding stones give off a sudden flash that blinds opponents when the user speaks the key word and throws the stones to the ground. The flash allows the windling to make a quick attack or an even quicker escape. As the weapon earns additional ranks, the flash becomes more intense.

A bag of blinding stones usually contains 3D6 stones, each good for only one use. Each thread woven counts toward all stones in the bag rather than to a particular stone.



Thread Ranks

Rank 1

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the name of the wizard who made the stones.

Effect: When the user throws a stone, everyone within a 5-yard radius must make a Perception (8) Test. If a character's test fails, the stone blinds him or her, reducing step numbers for all tests by -3 steps for the next 3 rounds. Any character who anticipates the flash adds +3 steps to his or her Perception step to avoid the stone's effect.

Rank 2

Cost: 200

Effect: As above, within an 8-yard radius.

Rank 3

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the name of the mage who invented the stones and taught others to make them.

Effect: As above, at a 10-yard radius. The Difficulty of the Perception Test to avoid the blinding effect is now 10.

Rank 4

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the name of the windling hero who first used the stones to delay a Horror while the rest of his clan escaped.

Effect: As above, at a 15-yard radius.

SCINTILLATING MEDALLION

Location: The Sanctuary, Talon Kaer. See **Finding the Sanctuary**, p. 53.

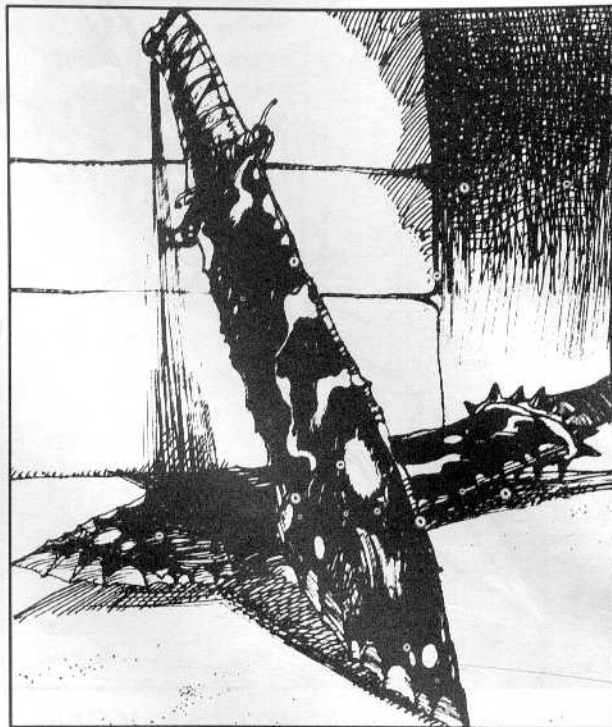
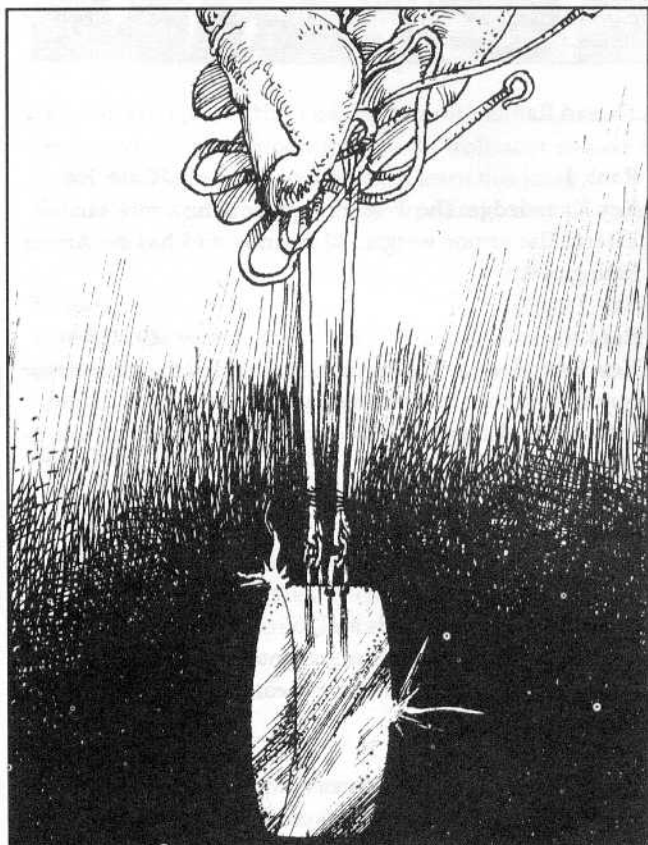
Maximum Threads: 1

Spell Defense: 16



A small, brass disc about an inch thick, the medallion is hollow and contains a physical manifestation of Skeethen's soul. When shaken, this physical object rattles inside it. Upon sealing himself and the Tome of Banishment within the Sanctuary, the dying windling mage placed his life force within the medallion in order to protect the Tome and its eventual rescuer from the powers of the Horror that had marked the would-be hero.

When the would-be hero puts on the medallion, crackling purple lightning surrounds the character as Skeethen's dormant soul awakens. From the moment the eerie display ceases until a year and a day later, the character can resist the following Horror powers: Corrupt Karma, Karma Tap, Terror, and Thought Worm. When a Horror uses any of these powers against the wearer, the character adds +5 to his Spell Defense or Social Defense, as appropriate. The medallion offers similar protection against any spells intended to dominate the wearer's mind or control his actions. After a year and a day, Skeethen's spirit escapes and the medallion becomes no more than a pretty piece of jewelry. The presence of Skeethen's life force within the medallion means that the wearer need not spend Legend Points or weave a thread to the medallion's true pattern in order to use it.



SERVITOR SWORD

Location: Aboard the *Shadow Skulker*, wielded by black servitors. See *Broadsides*, p. 59.

Maximum Threads: 1

Spell Defense: 8

A Horror that lives in the Thunder Mountains created these obsidian weapons for the black servitors to wield. As the weapon's thread ranks increase, the sword's edge becomes harder and sharper.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the name of the Horror that created the sword.

Effect: The sword adds +8 steps to the wielder's Strength step for all Damage Tests.

Rank 2

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the weapon is called a servitor sword.

Effect: The sword adds +9 steps to the wielder's Strength step for all Damage Tests.

Rank 3

Cost: 500

Effect: The sword adds +10 steps to the wielder's Strength step for all Damage Tests.



SHORT SWORD OF DAZZLING SPEED

Location: Trader's hoard, Talon Kaer. See *Talon Kaer*, p. 48.

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 12

Forged for a wealthy t'skrang swordsman long ago, this weapon's blinding speed and shiny surface distract foes and allow the wielder to strike twice as many blows.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the name of the sword.

Effect: The weapon adds +1 step to the wielder's Initiative step.

Rank 2

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the name of the t'skrang swordsman who commissioned the sword.

Effect: The sword adds +5 steps to the wielder's Strength step for all Damage Tests.

Rank 3

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The blade's first owner captained a famous pirate ship. The wielder must learn the name of that vessel.

Effect: The weapon adds +1 step to the wielder's Initiative step.

Rank 4

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The pirate once used his gleaming blade to win an important battle on the Serpent River. The wielder must learn the name and details of the battle.

Effect: Any opponent who engages the wielder in melee combat and can also see the sword is nearly blinded by the light reflecting off the shining blade. The opponent must make a Perception (8) Test; if the test fails, the wielder may make an extra attack in that Combat Round.

Rank 5

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The pirate was eventually caught and hanged for his crimes. The wielder must learn the name of the man who brought him to justice.

Effect: The sword adds +1 step to the wielder's Initiative step, and adds +7 steps to the wielder's Strength step for all Damage Tests.

STORM ARMOR

Location: Aboard the *Shadow Skulker*, worn by Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor. See *Pyres Over Travar*, p. 66.

Maximum Threads: 1

Spell Defense: 15

Another of Tyrannis/Rasper-Nor's creations, this special plate mail armor was forged under the sizzling caress of lightning from a violent electrical storm. Black clouds swirl constantly across the dark surface of this thin, metal suit.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the armor's name.

Effect: The armor weighs 30 pounds and has an Armor Rating of 9.

Rank 2

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the armor comes from the Delaris Mountains.

Effect: The elemental air woven into the armor lightens its weight to 10 pounds.

Rank 3

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that Rasper-Nor made the armor.

Effect: The cooling winds and rains woven into the armor enable the wearer to withstand intense heat. The Armor Rating rises to 10 against fire or heat damage.

Rank 4

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The storm that Rasper-Nor trapped within the armor ravaged the countryside and tore apart



several villages in the Delaris Mountains, causing such severe winds and flooding that one trollmoot named the storm "the Rage." The wearer must learn this name.

Effect: The armor weighs only 5 pounds, and its Armor Rating rises to 12.

Rank 5

Cost: 1,300

Effect: If the wearer takes damage during a storm, the suit grants him 2 additional Recovery Tests over the next 12 hours. This effect occurs once per storm.

RUMORS

During the characters' stay in Travar, they may hear rumors about the people and recent events described below. The gamemaster must determine which of the rumors are true and which false. The gamemaster may adapt the tone and wording of each rumor, depending on which of the various townsfolk the heroes ask.

DRIMSBY

"Drimsby's been air warden for more than ten years. He's an old hand at air sailing—used to fly with his patrol

up until a few years ago. What with these demon attacks, I pity the man. He's doing the best he can—can you blame him for not defeating those fiendish things?"

"Don't be startin' me on Drimsby, friend. The dwarf's a coward and a fool. Says he's too old to take ship and face the demons—says he leaves the fightin' to the younger men. Like my son—Drimsby killed him, as sure as if he'd slit his throat. The dwarf sat safe on the ground while my son fought Horrors and died for it."

JULIAK MERRIS/MERRIS MERCHANT HOUSE

"Quite the wealthy obsidiman, Juliak Merris. He's spent close to ten years building up his merchant house in Travar. He's a fair dealer, but canny—don't try to take advantage of him."

"I remember when the Merris merchant house was a caravan of mule carts. Juliak Merris drove 'em into town one day, loaded with ore from the Thunder Mountains where he comes from. That ore bought him an airship within two years—within two more, he had a three-ship fleet. Be quite a shame to see him lose it all now."

MAD MARTIN

"Aye, I remember Mad Martin. Poor old soul. Enchanter, he was—sold healing balms and the like. Didn't charge more than a body could pay, neither. Something happened to him a few years back, no one knows what. Went mad, he did—stark, starin' mad. Makes me sad to see him, but the poor creature's harmless."

"A good man, Martin, but foolish. Some say he tried to cast a spell using raw magic, and his madness comes of a Horror mark. I can neither prove nor disprove that claim—still, I have never known him to do harm."

THE RAKKEN

"Horrors. Definitely Horrors."

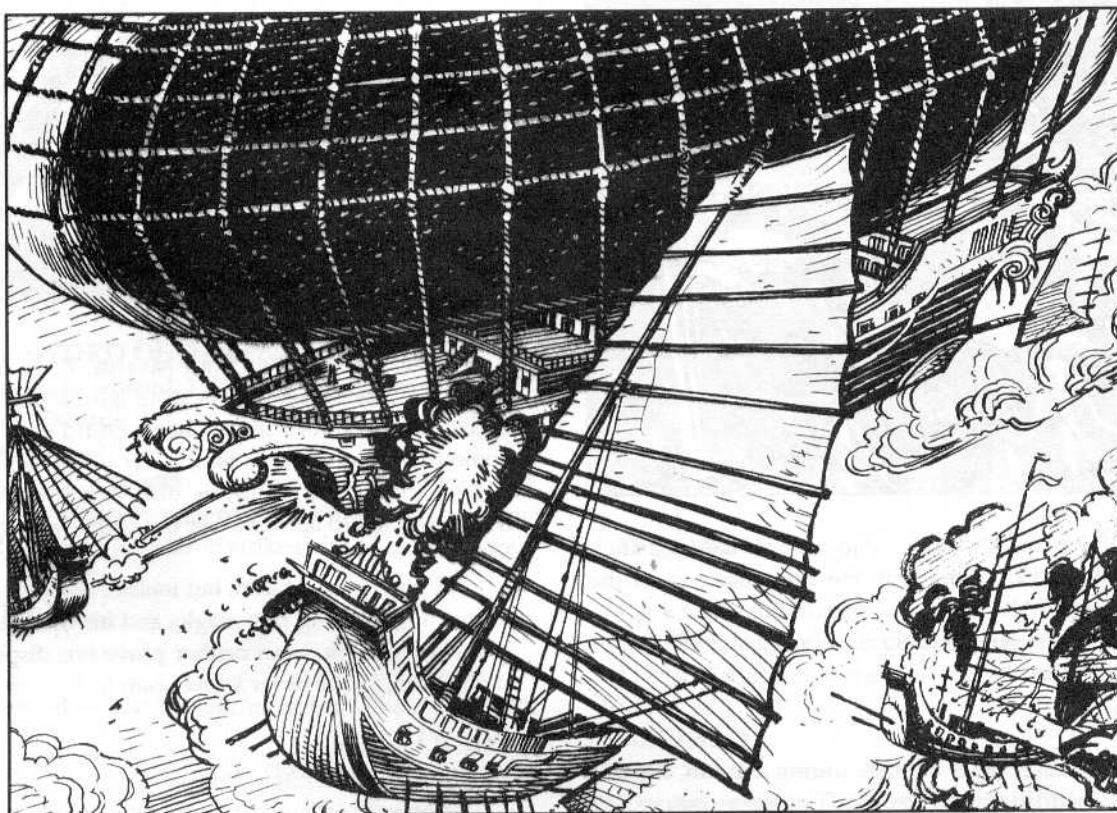
"Anybody tells you they're Horrors, don't you listen. The Horrors are gone. You ask me, the Passion Vestrial sent those flying demons. What d'you mean, why? He's a Mad Passion, isn't he? Why does he do anything?"

"I don't know what they are. I just want them gone."

TYRANNISIS

"Tyrannisis? Never heard of any by that name. Nethermancer, eh? They do say that plenty of them wizards dwell in the high peaks of the Thunder Mountains. He may be one of them."

SHIP COMBAT RULES



The rules for airship combat presented in the following pages are a condensed version of the ship combat rules given on pp. 129–136 of the **Earthdawn Companion**. Intended to support the events of the adventure, these rules were not designed to provide a separate tactical game within the adventure. The system makes several assumptions to reflect this emphasis.

First, the rules work best when left abstract. Gamemasters and players do not need to draw maps or determine the precise nature or position of ships involved in combat. More important than tactical precision are the descriptions of the battle at hand: the wind rushing against the sailors' faces, the heat of the fireballs crashing to the deck, the expression on the face of a character's opponent.

Second, the purpose of ship-to-ship combat within the context of a roleplaying adventure is to advance the action and answer the question, What happens next? Will the adventurers catch the *Shadow Skulker* and stop Rasper-Nor before he summons more Horrors into the world? Though each encounter between ships should be exciting, that encounter is not an end unto itself. It is only a link in the chain of the adventure.

Finally, roleplaying games should focus on the specific actions of the player characters. Because ship battle invariably involves the abstract activities of many gamemaster characters, it is difficult for the characters to influence such battles directly. Because the characters are the real focus of the story, the gamemaster should avoid putting them into situations in which they have little impact on events.

These rules assume that the goal of any crew is to either board another ship and attack its crew in hand-to-hand combat, or to escape an attack. The first goal allows the player characters to directly influence the outcome of an event (the battle) using their own skills, talents, and powers. The second goal allows adventurers to carry on with their business without interruption, which also means that they can directly influence events with their own skills, talents, and powers.

These rules generally serve to move ships farther apart or closer together, either way allowing the player characters to regain the spotlight. If the ships move closer, player characters may engage in combat. If the ships draw apart, either ship may attack and defeat its opponent from a distance, or flee.

SCALE

In keeping with our desire to make this combat system abstract, these rules do not base combat resolutions on the distances between ships. Time is treated equally abstractly, with captains maneuvering their ships in turns of unspecified length. If players want to limit the amount of time allocated to each ship's movement, we suggest that each turn last 1 minute. Remember that as soon as the action moves back to the characters, time is divided into Combat Rounds, as described in the **Combat** section of the **ED** rulebook (pp. 190–203).

SHIP ATTRIBUTES

All ships have four Attributes: Speed, Maneuverability, Firepower, and Hull. Each ship Attribute is given as a step number, taken from the Step/Action Dice Table provided in the **Earthdawn** rulebook (p. 36) and other **Earthdawn** products.

All ships use three ratings to represent damage: Destroyed Rating, Critical Threshold, and Derelict Rating. These three numbers serve the same function as a character's Death Rating, Wound Threshold, and Unconsciousness Rating, and are used in the same way.

SPEED

The Speed Attribute dictates how fast a ship may move. This rating appears in step numbers as well as in yards per turn. In general, large ships can move faster than small ships. The Speed step provides the maximum, unenchanted speed at which the ship may travel, though most pilots know several magical means of increasing the speed of a ship beyond its maximum. A ship engaged in battle seldom moves at full speed, instead reducing its speed in order to turn and maneuver around other ships.

MANEUVERABILITY

A ship's Maneuverability Attribute reflects how quickly it can change course, flank opponents, and break off an attack. In combat, use Maneuverability in place of Speed to determine how quickly the ship moves. In general, large ships are less maneuverable than small ships.

FIREPOWER

Firepower provides an abstract representation of a ship's offensive capabilities. A ship's Firepower step takes into account the number of guns on a ship, their placement, and their range. It does not assume that each cannon fires when the ship attacks a target. A ship's Firepower Attribute is represented by two step numbers separated by a slash. The first number is used to make Ship Assault Tests (see **Ship Maneuvers**, p. 91) and the second is used to make Damage Tests.

HULL

The Hull Attribute measures the durability of a ship. A ship's Hull Attribute represents the actual thickness of the ship's walls, how cleverly the design protects vital areas, and so on. A ship's Hull is rated by two factors, the Armor Rating and the Ramming step. When an attack defeats a ship's Armor Rating, the ship takes damage and must decrease one or more of its Attributes, including both Hull numbers. When the Armor Rating is reduced to 0, the ship has suffered critical damage and will soon sink.

The Ramming step is used to make Damage Tests when the ship makes a successful ramming maneuver (see **Ship Maneuvers**, p. 91).

PURSUIT AND ENGAGEMENT

Two ships that can see each other across a distance of air may react in two ways: either the ships engage in combat, or they do not. How the ships react is determined by the desires of the ships' captains and the capabilities of the vessels. If the captains of all ships involved decide to engage in battle, the players use the rules below to initiate combat. If none of the captains wish to fight, then the ships simply go their separate ways.

If some of the ships wish to avoid combat and others want to engage in it, those determined to engage begin pursuit. At the beginning of each round, each ship makes a Speed Test. If the ship is in pursuit, make the Speed Test against the lowest Speed step of the ships it is pursuing. If the ship is being pursued, make the Speed Test against the highest Speed step of the pursuing ships. The first ship to make 3 successful tests achieves its goal. If, at the start of the pursuit, each ship makes 3 successful tests in a row, the pursuit continues until one ship succeeds at 3 tests and the other fails.

For example, if the ship trying to escape makes 3 successful tests first, it moves beyond the pursuing ship's firing range. If the pursuing ship makes 3 successful tests first, it engages the fleeing ship and uses the combat rules to attack.

A pursuing ship that falls behind a fleeing ship can continue to follow the fleeing ship, and might eventually catch it. If, during the subsequent hour of travel, the pursuing ship gets a Speed Test result higher than the Speed step of the fleeing ship, it can again attempt to engage the fleeing ship by repeating the sequence of play above. As long as the pursuing ship fails to get a Speed Test result higher than the fleeing ship's Speed step, it can continue to follow but will not catch the fleeing ship.

COMBAT

Airship-to-airship combat is conducted according to a standard, three-step procedure consisting of Declaration, Initiative, and Resolve Actions.

Various maneuvers that can be used during the combat sequence appear at the end of this section.

The following steps for ship combat are explained in more detail below.

1. Declaration: The captain of each ship chooses one of the ship's available maneuvers.

2. Initiative: The captain of each ship makes an Initiative Test.

3. Resolve Actions: In descending order of Initiative, each captain resolves the maneuver chosen in the Declaration phase.



DECLARATION

Before any actions are taken in a round, the captain of each ship declares that his or her ship will perform a specific maneuver.



This phase allows the players to create a strategy. Captains can change their choice of maneuver for the round after they hear the captains of other ships declare their maneuvers. Each captain can continue to alter his strategy in response to other captains' strategies until everyone has a plan they are willing to implement. The Initiative Test determines the order of the actions, and so the captain's Initiative Test result determines the outcome of the round.

The gamemaster should allow the players to control any ship on which the characters are passengers or crew. By allowing the players to control the ship and its captain, the gamemaster keeps the characters involved in the game during the ship battle.

INITIATIVE

Each captain makes an Initiative Test using the ship's Maneuverability step (see **Combat**, p. 192, ED). If the players are controlling the ship for a gamemaster character captain, they should make the Initiative Test.

RESOLVE ACTIONS

Resolve each ship's maneuver in descending order of Initiative. Each ship makes a test for each maneuver, as described in **Ship Maneuvers**, below. As soon as a ship succeeds at its declared maneuver, no other ship can complete a maneuver against that ship.

A Theran vedette comes under attack by two crystal raider drakkars. The captains of the two drakkars declare that they will close and attempt to board the vedette. The vedette's captain declares that it will attempt to ram the second drakkar.

The captains make their Initiative Tests. The first drakkar goes first, the vedette goes second, and the second drakkar goes last.

The first drakkar makes a Boarding Test to board the vedette and succeeds. It rushes up to the vedette and its crew begins swinging across to the enemy decks, even as the vedette builds up speed and attempts to ram the second drakkar. (If the vedette's captain had decided to ram the first drakkar, the ramming maneuver would be aborted because the first drakkar made a successful maneuver.) The gamemaster makes a Ram Test for the captain of the vedette and successfully rams the second drakkar. The second drakkar takes damage and may not make its attempt to board the vedette. If the vedette failed to ram the second drakkar, however, it would mean the second drakkar had successfully maneuvered around the ramming attempt and could make a Boarding Test to board the vedette.

SHIP MANEUVERS

Airships can make 5 different maneuvers during combat. The following information appears for each maneuver. The name of the maneuver appears first, followed by a description of the maneuver. The description lists the combat effects of the maneuver, the type of test required, and the Difficulty Number for the test.

All maneuvers have a Failure Modifier. This modifier is a number of steps that all opposing captains add to all Maneuver Tests made against a ship after it fails its declared maneuver in a given round. Ships with the highest Initiative never gain this bonus. Though moving first offers many advantages, a ship that moves first and fails its Maneuver Test may suffer serious consequences.

The captain of a drakkar declares she will make a boarding maneuver against a Theran vedette. The vedette's captain declares it will attack the drakkar with its fire cannons. The gamemaster, playing the drakkar's captain, makes a Boarding Test and fails. The player makes the vedette's Ship Assault Test against the drakkar and adds +4 steps to the test, because the drakkar failed its maneuver.

Boarding

A successful boarding maneuver brings a ship alongside another ship through the use of ropes and hooks arranged specifically to pull the two ships together. Once pulled alongside, the ropes stabilize the two ships long enough for the crew of the first ship to board the second. In the round following a successful boarding maneuver, all combat uses the standard combat rules, p. 190, ED.

To attempt a boarding maneuver, the ship's captain makes a Maneuverability Test against the Maneuverability step of the ship he wishes to board.

Failure Modifier: +4 steps

Break Off

A ship can attempt to break off from a battle and retreat. To break off, the captain makes a Speed Test against the highest Maneuverability step of all the ships in the battle. If the captain can make 3 successful attempts to break off in 3 consecutive rounds, the ship escapes the conflict. As long as the escaping ship moves at a faster Speed than any pursuing ships, it is safe. If faster ships pursue a ship that breaks off, use the **Pursuit and Engagement** rules, p. 90.

If the test fails, the enemy captain saw the path the escaping ship had chosen, and managed to cut off that line of retreat.

Failure Modifier: +2 steps



Ground Assault

An airship may swoop low and use its weapons against a grounded ship. This tactic makes a ship quite vulnerable if the maneuver fails.

To make a ground assault, the airship's captain makes a Maneuverability Test against a Difficulty Number of 8. If the test is successful, the ship swoops down low over the ground, fires its weapons, and rushes back up into the sky. If the test fails, the ship approached the ground at an awkward angle and could not make the assault.

Failure Modifier: +4 steps

Ramming

A ship can attempt to ram an enemy ship. A successful attempt causes damage.

To attempt a ramming maneuver, the captain of the ship makes a Speed Test against the Maneuverability step of the ship he wishes to ram. If the test is successful, the

ramming ship crashes into the target ship.

To determine damage, the ramming ship makes a Damage Test using the Ramming step. The result is the damage caused to the target ship. The target ship's Hull Armor Rating protects against this damage.

Failure Modifier: +6 steps

Ship Assault

Ships can make long-distance attacks by firing their weapons at each other. The captain must decide how many ships she wishes to attack, and how to divide the ship's Firepower step between those targets. For example, a ship with Firepower 15 could divide its attack among three ships in the following ways:

Attack one ship using Step 15

Attack two ships, one using Step 10, another using Step 5



Attack all three ships, one using Step 3, the other two using Step 6 each.

To attack, the captain makes a Firepower Test against the Maneuverability of each ship, using the Firepower step allocated to each attack. If the test is successful, make a Damage Test for each target. The target ship's Hull Armor Rating protects against this damage. Apply damage to ships as described below.

Failure Modifier: +0 steps if attacking one ship/+1 step per each additional ship attacked

DAMAGE

Ships can take damage from two sources, Firepower and ramming. Players determine damage the same way for each type of attack by making the Damage Test described in each maneuver. The Hull Armor Rating of the target ship always protects against damage inflicted on the ship.

Cumulative damage eventually has serious effects on a ship's performance. Ships may take critical hits, become derelict, or be destroyed.

Critical Threshold: If the damage inflicted on a ship from a single attack equals or exceeds the ship's Critical Threshold, it has taken a Critical Hit, just as characters receive Wounds. For each Critical Hit starting with the first, the player subtracts 1 step from all the ship's Attributes. Each Critical Hit also indicates that 10 percent of the ship's remaining crew and passengers are Wounded or killed.

Derelict Rating: If a ship's total damage equals or exceeds the Derelict Rating, the ship has sustained enough damage to render it inoperable. It cannot fire or move according to the crew's will. The ship floats with the air currents, or moves on a straight path.

Destroyed Rating: If a ship's total damage equals or exceeds the Destroyed Rating, the ship falls to the ground. Destroyed ships cannot be salvaged except under extraordinary circumstances and according to the gamemaster's whim.

EFFECTS OF DAMAGE

Critical Hits decrease the step number of all four ship Attributes. As soon as an Attribute step drops to 0, the ship is considered Derelict or Destroyed, which decreases all ship Attributes to 0. Each Critical Hit has the following effect on Speed, Maneuverability, Firepower, and Hull.

Speed

As a ship's Speed step is reduced, it moves more slowly. If the Speed step reaches 0, the ship no longer moves. This means that the oars are all broken, the masts have collapsed, the fire engine is destroyed, and so on.

Each step of Speed lost to damage takes one week to repair and costs 200 silver pieces.

Maneuverability

Damage to a ship's Maneuverability increases the time required to respond to changing circumstances. Because it responds less quickly, it may suffer even more damage. Damage to Maneuverability means that the rudder is ruined, the controls are damaged, the sail masts are damaged and cannot function properly, and so on.

Each step of Maneuverability lost to damage takes one week to repair and costs 300 silver pieces.

Firepower

When a ship loses Firepower, it means one or more of its fire cannons have been destroyed. Each Critical Hit reduces both the Ship Assault step and the Damage step by 1. When either value reaches 0, the ship has no fire cannons left.

Each point of Firepower costs 15,000 silver pieces to repair.

Hull

Damage to the hull compromises the structural integrity of the ship, reducing the Armor Rating and the Ramming step. If the ship's Hull step reaches zero, the ship sinks.

The cost and time needed to repair a ship's hull depends on the type of ship and the percent of damage done to it. If the ship suffered total damage of 25 percent or less of its Destroyed Rating, the cost and time needed to repair a wooden ship is 200 silver pieces per step lost and 2 weeks' work, and for a stone ship, 400 silver pieces per step lost and 3 weeks' work. If the ship suffered total damage of 26–75 percent of its Destroyed Rating, repair time and cost is 800 silver pieces per step lost and one month's work for wooden ships, and 15,000 silver pieces per step lost and 2 months' work for stone ships. If the ship suffers total damage of more than 75 percent of its Destroyed Rating, repair costs for both types of ship are two-thirds of the ship's original cost and six months' work.

GROUNDING SHIPS

If a ship wants to land, it simply does so, at that point abandoning the ship combat rules. Attacking airships may make ground assault maneuvers against a grounded ship, adding 2 steps to any Maneuver Tests made against the target vessel. The grounded ship receives no bonus against other ships whether the attackers fail their maneuver or not, because the grounded ship cannot outmaneuver attacking ships.

To the Air Warden of Travar

Dear Sir,

I have learned of the terrible creatures that roam the skies over Travar, and I believe I know somewhat of the creatures that plague you. Unless I am grievously mistaken, these rakken are Horror constructs, the same dreadful creatures that I encountered upon emerging from our kaer eighty years ago. I was barely able to defeat them, even with my considerable talent in the magical arts.

I recall, however, that one mage among us had studied these creatures, and even devised a means of dispelling them to their native plane. He wrote down this knowledge in a book called the Tome of Banishment, which I believe still remains within the ruins of our kaer. Though I am human, I dwelt with the windlings in their kaer atop the Talon, a craggy peak in the Thunder Mountains. The windling mage Skeethen who compiled the Tome of Banishment was by misfortune buried in his laboratory when a portion of our haven collapsed. We sealed the breach with warding magics lest the Horrors exploit it, by oversight sealing the book up along with our departed friend. I thought little more of poor Skeethen and his book until I heard of your recent troubles.

I believe that this book might aid you immensely, but alas, my bones are far too old to brave the hazards of travel so high and far into the mountains. If a band of true-hearted persons were to venture there in my stead, I believe they could recover the Tome with little difficulty.

I have enclosed a map of the laboratory's location within the kaer, drawn to the best of my ability. Please excuse this tired old mind if the map is less than perfectly accurate; it has been many a long year since I left my former home, and my memory does not always serve me as I might wish.

I wish you well, friends.

Tyrannis of the Thunder Mountains



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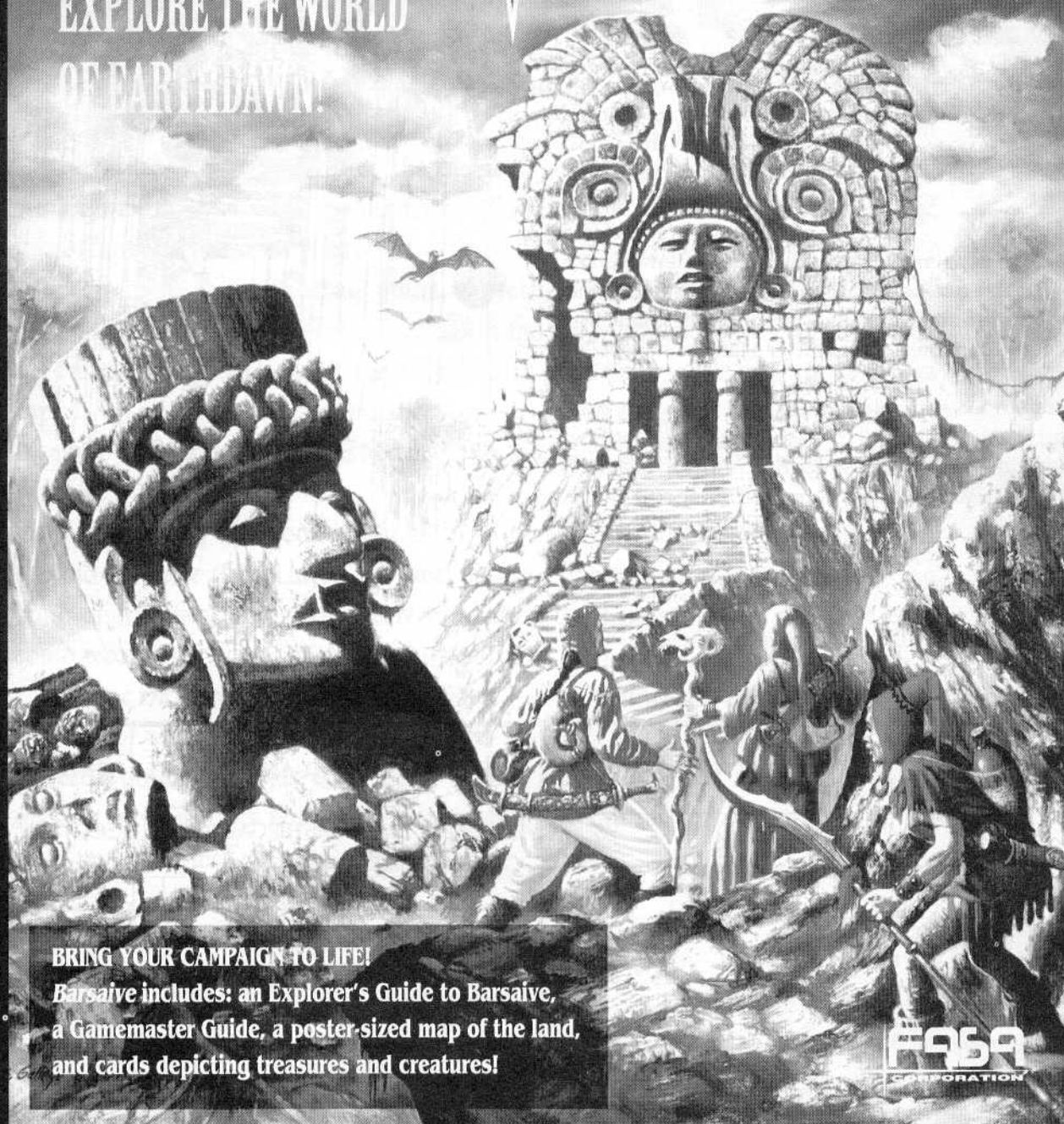
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