

Warrior UNBOUND



A Tribe  Cycle



Dream Pod 9

A Tribe 8 Cycle

Warrior UNBOUND

Some whisper that I have forgotten my duty. They will learn all too soon how wrong they are. I am a child of the Goddess and with Her grace I will cleave away the rot and leave a stronger Nation in my wake! Fools stand in my way, and I will ensure their last living sight is my Brother's rage and fury reflected within my eyes.

- the Promise of Joan

Warrior Unbound is a complete Cycle for Tribe 8. The PCs are charged with the most vital of duties: destroy those who plot against Joan, for with Her death comes the end of all that lives. Faced also with a dark conspiracy to rip open the Fold and the appearance of Isaac the Seer, the so-called Fatima of the Keepers, the Player Characters will decide the ultimate fate of Vimary. Warrior Unbound also includes:

- four complete quests and many side scenarios and plot hooks;
- an introduction to Weaving the River of Dream;
- Information on Isaac the Seer, 'Fatima of the Keepers'.

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Conquest



Part One

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Prelude

The sword swings,
The bones rattle,
What once was lost will be found,
In dream come reality!
Dance with me, in the place between worlds,
Where one day,
You will all be free.

- from the remembrances of Castor



ON THE CUSP OF A NEW AGE

Dominic, leader of the Bereaved's Tears

Joan and Joshua are no more. I guess at one time, the two could have been considered one. Those times are certainly long gone and it is a shame, really. The death of Joshua was more than the loss of a great and important leader, it was the end of an era. The Nation still grieves for His loss and I for one, cannot blame them. Joshua represented a certain force for change that Vimary hasn't seen since His passing. Joan seems to occasionally show signs of that energy, which She once shared with Her Brother, but those times are too few and far between for my liking.

Still, since the Inquisition, things have been changing. Maybe they have always been changing and I am now only realizing it. Regardless, Hom is infused with a new vision for the future. The Nation is no longer what it once was and Hom is beginning to realize this. Go there, you will see. Then return to me and try to tell me the Fallen are not the successors of Joshua's Legacy. Soon, even the Tribes will recognize this and the real healing can finally begin.

SEASONS CHANGE

Baba Yaga, the Thousand Lessons

There was a time when the Nation was whole and when spirit and flesh were one. There was even a time when my Sisters and myself were not needed. Those times, one and same, are long gone. Now, what we have is ourselves. Where once my Sisters and I were merely a dream as fleeting as freedom, we now stand, a testament to the Goddess's strength. At your side, we have endured death and birth. Together, we have moved past simple existence to an exploration of ourselves. We have become more than the World Before ever was.

Mirroring growth and death is the place you know as the River of Dream. This mystical place changes with the physical world, just as the world changes with Vimary. The River and the spirits that dwell there never cease to amaze me. On one hand, they reflect this physical world of the flesh and recreate what makes this reality familiar, while at the same time they retain a vibrancy of their own, changing things to suit their own ends.

The River of Dream will not always be a mystery. I am here to ensure that. Soon, we will all look toward the Spirit World in an effort to explore the unknown found within our souls. I will be here, ready to aid you, as I journey with your souls towards safety.

True, humanity will never understand the River of Dream in its entirety, for your mind is of this plane. That is why my Sisters and I will always be needed. We are the sacred bridge between the physical world the Nation knows and the spiritual world they can never understand.

Soon, the time will come for me to guide you on a journey of discovery into the River of Dream, until then, my children and I must remain vigilant in our duties. The mysteries of the River are many indeed, as are the dangers.

FORCED REVELATION

High Priest Jest, Speaking to Isaac's Chosen

The day is coming, have no doubt. Our time is soon at hand. Our mothers and fathers had the foresight to seclude themselves from a dying world and we are here today as a testament to their wisdom. We are on the cusp of realizing their ultimate vision, one where society can be rebuilt; free from the monsters that hounded our parents' every step.

Amazingly, we are not alone. These past years we have fallen under the grace of an angel, one sent from beyond to pave the way for our triumphant return to the world. We took our first few tentative steps into this world as we stepped from the shelter that held us for so many years. Now, we are to join the world in truth. We will be heralded as heroes, with Isaac the Seer, lord of us all, at our van.

It is our time. It is our love. The world is our inheritance.

SPIRIT IN FLESH

Halos, Guide

I have seen the Fatimas in the River of Dream. To my surprise They looked very similar to how the Tribals see Them. The Fatimas seem to have a reflection in the River, a shadow of Their form that mimics Their physical actions. They are as much creatures of spirit as of the physical world, and are due a heavy level of respect if, for nothing else, than the havoc this dual nature can wreck on the fragile River.

They know little of Their own spiritual power, content to rule here in the physical, ignoring Their dreaming animas. They will learn soon enough just how foolish such ignorance really is. The Piper is coming and even the vaunted Fatimas will have to pay.

THE LONG SILENCE BROKEN

Joan, Book of the Awakening

It is time to create a new beginning. I have held myself in check by force of will, driven by loyalty and fear. It is time to end that legacy and to push away my lingering doubt. For me, there is the Nation and none other. I now fear only death.

Too many spirits have haunted my past and plagued my every step. I must begin a new path to quiet my tormentors, one that is my own, unencumbered by anything but love for my children and what we have created. It is time to forge a new future.

Some whisper that I have forgotten my duty, that I no longer know how to wield my weapons in defense of the Nation. They will learn all too soon how wrong they are. I am a child of the Goddess and with Her grace I will cleave away their apathy and ignorance and leave a stronger Nation in my wake! Fools will stand in my way and I will ensure their last living sight is my Brother's rage and fury reflected within my eyes.

Chapter 1: Against the Deluge

Halos,

What started out as simple research into our mutual devotion turned out to be a run-in with the Beasts. I know about the upcoming events and I am just as excited to see them unfold as you are. But grant me this guilty pleasure, my friend, and let me follow these Z'bri to their nest. I think they may be connected to the coming events. Either way, I will see you in a day or so.

-Castor



COMING OF AGE

It hurts to grow. To find out all you knew was not all that much. The world is a large place, too large for a child. When someone forgets their past, they leave the magic of childhood and become less worthy of the world's many gifts. The world is amazing; we must always, always remember that. To forget such a thing makes all the hardship and pain of growing useless.

- The Musings of Agnes

INTRODUCTION TO WARRIOR UNBOUND

Warrior Unbound is the first cycle book for the second **Tribe 8** story cycle, entitled **Conquest**. It is a continuation of the previous cycle, **Children of Prophecy** and continues from the end of the first story arc. Having played **Children of Prophecy** is not necessary to enjoy **Warrior Unbound** nor the **Conquest** storyline. It should be noted that a number of events have transpired between the **Tribe 8 Rulebook** and **Warrior Unbound** that have changed the dynamics of Vimary and it will be helpful for the Weaver to familiarize herself with the **Children of Prophecy** story line. Of course, for groups that have run through some or all of **Children of Prophecy** then the transition to the **Conquest** line should be a smooth one.

If you intend on playing through any part of **Warrior Unbound** or believe your Weaver may use any or all of this supplement for her cycle then you should stop reading now. What follows is for the Weaver's eyes only.

The focus of **Warrior Unbound** is twofold, encompassing both Joan's acceptance of the Fallen into Her Tribe and a plot that is hatched to destroy both Joan and the River of Dream. This book is broken up into four Quests with supplemental information contained in *Weaver's Resources* at the back of the book which details the River of Dream, NPCs and other useful tidbits that can be used whole or in part with **Warrior Unbound**.

Warrior Unbound centers on the actions of Joan as She changes the course of the Nation forever. While a series of events unfold across Vimary, the PCs are caught up in a Z'bri plot to open the Fold by slaying Joan. It falls to the PCs to race against the clock to uncover the plot, gather the necessary resources to thwart the Z'bri masterminds and then stop the Z'bri from doing the unthinkable. If the PCs fail then Joan will fail and the world will find itself crumbling at the seams. The PCs, on a mission to find a lost Fallen spiritualist named Castor, travel to a Skyrealm and thwart a group of Z'bri in the middle of a set of dark experiments. As they learn more and more about the Z'bri and their goals, the Characters then journey across Vimary to gather weapons and to undermine the allies of the Z'bri in an effort to prepare for a final showdown with the Beasts.

THE TRUTH BEHIND WARRIOR UNBOUND

A reconciliation begins between the Fallen and the Sister of Joshua at the beginning of the story and by the end Joan has the opportunity to prove both Her own and the Fallen's worth. However, **Warrior Unbound** is more than a story about Joan. **Warrior Unbound** focuses on the PCs as they move to ensure that Joan's actions are a success.

A number of Cells that believe Joan's opening of Her Tribe is a ploy to weaken the already decimated Fallen band together and prepare a retaliatory attack. The Cells, led mostly by Herites, conduct a series of assassination attempts and try to scare the Tribals away from meddling in the affairs of the Fallen. The attempt to assassinate so many individuals in such a short time becomes known as the 'Night of Crimson Tears.' Many Tribals die at the hands of the disenfranchised Fallen, something which pushes the Tribes further away from the Fallen and undermines Joan's recent proclamations of acceptance. In particular, a number of heroes prevent an attempt on the life of the Fisher King. The Night of Crimson Tears fails to stop many of the Fallen and Joanites from proceeding with their reconciliation. Horn and Haven, after being ravaged in **Trial By Fire**, begin rebuilding in earnest with the newfound help of the Joanites.



1. Against the Deluge

Across the river, Vimary is in turmoil. Elements in both the Tribes and the Fallen are outraged and intend to do what they can to stop the events from running their course. Tera Sheba in particular is adamantly against Joan's actions and calls for a trial condemning Joan's 'heresy.' Tera Sheba demands that Joan prove the legitimacy of Her actions by delving into the Sea of the Lost to recover the souls of dead Tribals. All of Vimary groans to a halt as Joan is set upon Her Quest.

Meanwhile, a group of Joh'an Z'bri, calling themselves the **Blooded Blades**, work diligently to uncover the secrets of the Fold. Through an alliance with a group of Keepers, the Blades uncover what they think is a process that can rend open the Fold. The Blades hope to return to the Seed, or at the very least have the spiritual world come crashing into the physical. The Trial and Quest of Joan provide a unique and promising opportunity for these Z'bri and they put a plan into action to destroy a weakened Joan as She returns from Her trial.

Baba Yaga and Agnes begin to see some of the Blade's plot and, along with others like Halos the Guide, do what they can to aid the heroes. By and large though, this is the PCs' mission, and the burden of success or failure falls squarely on their shoulders.

CONTENTS

In **Warrior Unbound** the *Prelude* presents narrative pieces that binds **Warrior Unbound** to the events of **Word from the North** and **Trial by Fire**. *Chapter One: Against the Deluge* details the Herite-led assassinations, called the Night of Crimson Tears, and the foundations for the Trial of Joan. *Chapter Two: Lost and Found* begins with the PCs encountering the leavings of the Blooded Blades and discovering their first major clue about the existence of the Blades and their plot. The PCs must then search out more about the Z'bri and their plans. In *Chapter Three: Id, Ego and Superego* the PCs are prodded by rumors and dreams regarding Joan's quest while at the same time trying to gather the resources necessary to defeat the Z'bri. *Chapter Four: Aegis of the Protector* sees Joan return successful while the Blades' plan erupts in their final strike. Finally, *Chapter Five: Weaver's Resources* contains extra information to aid the Weaver in utilizing the River of Dream and the NPCs found throughout the book.

FORMAT

Chapter One: Against the Deluge presents the events that precede the Blooded Blades' plot and concentrates on involving the PCs in the rest of the story. Chapters *Two: Lost and Found*, *Three: Id, Ego and Superego* and *Four: Aegis of the Protector* then focus on the Blades' plot and involving the PCs to stop those plans. *Chapter Three: Id, Ego and Superego* in particular is a non-linear plot. The Weaver, if she so chooses, may use the Quests in *Chapter Three: Id Ego and Superego* in the order they are presented, but this is not necessary. The Weaver may also delete any of the Quests if they become inappropriate for her story, such as the PCs missing a series of clues or deciding to

ignore aspects of the Quest in favor of other subplots. The Weaver should also feel free to add Quests into **Warrior Unbound** specifically tailored to her group of Players and their Characters.

A number of synopses, tips and resources have been placed throughout the book that the Weaver may find useful. Each Chapter contains a number of Quest Hooks — ideas and short synopses of adventures that may continue from the events unfolding throughout **Warrior Unbound**. The Hooks are entirely optional and should be viewed as the seeds of side adventures to help spice up the story or to lay the foundation of a new campaign outside of the Conquest Cycle.

The attempt on Joan's life, which is the major event of **Warrior Unbound**, is easily integrated into an existing campaign. The time-frame of **Warrior Unbound** is purposefully ambiguous to aid the Weaver in placing the events of this book into her own Cycle. The key then, is creating a reason for Joan to finally make Her break with Tera Sheba. For example, in the **Children of Prophecy** Cycle, this break begins after Tera Sheba goes too far in Her persecution of the Fallen. With Joan's decision to distance Herself from Tera Sheba, the Weaver will have little difficulty playing through the Quests of **Warrior Unbound**.

Each Quest contains an Introduction, which helps place the Quest as a whole into the larger series of events within **Warrior Unbound**. Each Quest is usually broken down into three Acts, which are, in turn, composed of the *Weaver's Synopsis* and *Tips and Resources*. The *Weaver's Synopsis* forms the bulk of each Quest and presents the appropriate NPCs, events and scenes. The *Tips and Resources* sections provide extra tidbits and advice on how to play through and manage each Quest.

WHAT HAS COME BEFORE

The Weaver needs to have passing knowledge of events that occurred before **Warrior Unbound**. In **Children of Lilith**, Lilith the Liberator, a pseudo-Fatima, came to Hom and led the Fallen. As the self-proclaimed child of Joshua, She united much of the Eighth Tribe under her leadership and became the focus of a new Outlook, the Children of Lilith. Eventually, the truth behind Lilith's heritage, that She had been, in fact, created by Dahlia in an effort to test the Fallen, was revealed. In the end, Lilith was destroyed and the first signs of Joan's rebellion against Tera Sheba manifested.

A couple of events from **Trial by Fire** should be kept in mind while preparing to run **Warrior Unbound**. The devastation on Hom left by the Inquisition in **Trial by Fire** sets the stage for the opening acts of **Warrior Unbound**. Hom and Haven have recently undergone a concentrated attack by the Pillars and are still trying to recover from that devastation. The most recognizable structures of Hom are still standing, though, with most of the damage being localized to those areas closest to Bazaar, such as the shores of the island. Besides the physical destruction, a number of prominent Fallen, Veruka the Wraith and Kara the Hunter most notably, have perished at the hands of the Sheban Inquisition.

Familiarity with **Word from the North** is useful due to its concentration on Capal. However, intimate knowledge of Capal is not necessary for this campaign. In fact, only the knowledge that Capal is a newly discovered city dominated by Z'bri is required. From there, the Weaver can feel free to create Capal as she sees fit.

THEMES

Treachery, Subtlety and Urgency are all central themes of **Warrior Unbound**. Joan's Trial and Quest are stories that will be told for generations to come. There is a feeling across Vimary that this is a watershed for the events to come and everyone seems quite concerned about Joan and the Fallen. The Fallen begin to gain a reputation during Joan's Quest that they never before possessed. Instead accepting the labels of wayward, insane, or simply dangerous given to them by the Nation, the Fallen begin to define themselves. The Eighth Tribe is becoming more than a reflection of the Nation. Rumors and suppositions fly, and it seems as if nothing else could possibly overshadow these events.

As the PCs encounter the NPCs of **Warrior Unbound**, especially if they journey through the River of Dream, many of the above themes should be stressed. The Z'bri plot itself is a masterstroke of subtlety, taking place at a time when all of Vimary is concentrating on Joan's Trial. Similarly, engaging the Z'bri known as the Blooded Blades is an action that should be managed quickly — should the PCs wait too long, their opportunity to uncover the plot and save Joan will fly by.

ATMOSPHERE

Warrior Unbound combines a strong sense of spirituality with one of heroism. As Joan delves into the spiritual world, so do the PCs. A sense of intangible power and alienation should accompany any encounter with the River of Dream. Omens and dreams become powerful tools helping to guide the PCs, but should never give them all the answers they wish for. Similarly, the weapons and plans the PCs devise should deal on some level with the River of Dream. The PCs are working within a world few understand, which is exactly why their adversaries use that world for their own ends.

The plot uncovered is one with implications that have been almost inconceivable since the Fall. Many Dreamers consider tampering with the Fold an impossible and deadly task, yet the Blooded Blades invent a way to do the unthinkable. Besting the Z'bri using the PCs' wits, strength and a hefty helping of Synthesis is no mean task. They must slink in the shadows while the rest of humanity is enraptured with the events of the day. With the conclusion of **Warrior Unbound** the PCs will be heroes known throughout Vimary.

TIMELINE

The events of **Warrior Unbound** take place a number of weeks after Chantalle's return in **Word from the North**. As was stated earlier, Hom and the Fallen are occupied with recovering from the ordeal of the Inquisition. After the attack by the Joanites and Shebans it takes the Fallen a good deal of time to regroup and begin the rebuilding process. As such, the reconstruction of Hom is just starting to gain some momentum as *Chapter 1: Against the Deluge* opens.

The Weaver can feel free to play with the amount of game-time that **Warrior Unbound** actually requires. In its original format, **Warrior Unbound** requires only a short amount of in-game time, covering only two weeks from the beginning of *Chapter 1: Against the Deluge* until the end of *Chapter 4: Aegis of the Protector*. If the Weaver does decide to modify the timeline then she should keep in mind the sense of urgency that is central to **Warrior Unbound**. If the Characters are supplied too much time then the immediacy of the threat presented by the Blooded Blades declines sharply. Of course, the Weaver can give the Characters more time, having Joan take longer in the River of Dream, but the PCs should still believe they have only a few short days of preparation before combating the Z'bri.

THE BLADES' GOAL

The Blades have the ambitious goal of rending a hole in the Fold and disrupting the River of Dream, to then use that portal to catapult them back into the Seed. The Blades were once loyal subjects of the Baron in the H'l Kar, but a series of social blunders forced each of them to seek asylum as a Joh'an in the Skyrealms. Due to their 'unjust' banishments, their ultimate revenge over their brethren, they reason, is to do what none of the other can accomplish but what all Z'bri desperately desire.

One of the reasons the goal of the Blades is so dangerous is that it tampers with forces the Blades barely understand. Their research has been as much based on intuitive leaps as it has been actual investigation into the nature of the River of Dream and Synthesis. Due to their ignorance in a number of metaphysical areas, they put into motion forces that they can barely control and instead of opening a hole in the Fold, they may destroy the River of Dream for all time.

To create the portal the Blades plan to create a catastrophic imbalance in the River of Dream. Since the Spirit World and the Physical World are images of each other, connected to the River of Dream and maintaining a delicate harmony, something so devastating will have ramifications in all of reality. As the two realms try to reach a new equilibrium, the Blades expect a time of imbalance that they can then harness to 'break' the Fold and open a passage back to their own realm. This is where Joan fits into the picture. Destroying Joan will allow them to control and channel immensely powerful energies to effect their imbalance.

The PCs must stop the Blooded Blades, or the world as they know it may very well be shattered beyond repair.

1. Against the Deluge

QUEST ONE: AGAINST THE DELUGE

Warrior Unbound begins with this Quest and by the time of *Act One: The Meeting* Joan occasionally wanders the streets of Hom. Though She says nothing, nor acknowledges anyone, the Fallen pray Her intentions stay away from the militaristic. At times the Fatima silently aids the rebuilding process. After a few weeks Joan breaks Her silence and calls for a meeting with some of Her followers and the leaders of the Fallen. Her fateful request for the meeting begins the process of opening Her heart and Tribe to the Fallen.

Following Joan's announcement, *Act 2: The Breaking Dam* brings the PCs into a violent confrontation with a Cell known as the Trashman's Bane. Joan's actions carry unintended consequences and the belligerency of the Trashman's Bane is one of these. The Herite-led Cell is part of a growing conspiracy that is revealed to the PCs following the brawl; as a violent minority of Hom is uncomfortable with the unfolding events and is preparing to take matters into their own hands.

In *Act Three: The Raid* the PCs track the Trashman's Bane to the Sunken City and prevent the other Cell's night attack on the legendary Fisher King. The Quest closes with the PCs returning to Hom and hearing about the results of the Night of Crimson Tears. The Characters also return with a sense that the Night of Crimson Tears may only be the beginning of what is to come, that they are now witnessing history.

The first real obstacle for the Weaver to overcome in order to run **Warrior Unbound** is connecting the PCs to the plot. To this

end, a number of resources are at the Weaver's disposal. Dreams and omens, a staple of **Tribe 8**, are invaluable for passing crucial information to the PCs without directly revealing what the future holds.

The Weaver may precede *Act One: Against the Deluge* with a session or two dealing with the dreams, hopefully creating the idea that something major regarding the Pillars will happen in the near future. When Joan does speak and calls for Her meeting, the Characters should already have an idea of the importance of the events and that somehow they are intertwined with Joan's intentions. With a bit of preparation on the part of the Weaver, the PCs can undergo a number of dream sessions and vision quests well before **Warrior Unbound** begins, making it easier for the Weaver to introduce **Warrior Unbound** into an existing cycle.

Similarly, generating rumors that are associated with the plot conveys a considerable amount of information while leaving enough ambiguity to keep the PCs wary. Specifically, rumors regarding the coming of the Night of Crimson Tears (after Joan makes Her announcement) can bring the PCs into initial confrontation with the Herites or possibly to the rescue of the Fisher King without ever encountering the Trashman's Bane.

NPCs can also be a great help in **Warrior Unbound**; the Guide Halos, in particular, can be an asset. Halos' extensive knowledge of the River of Dream and his formidable precognition ability make him ideal to help bring the Characters into the plot and to aid their endeavors as they continue. Finally, simply having some of the events unfold in proximity to the PCs can also serve as a useful device to involve the Player Cell.



QUEST PRELUDE

Quest One: Against the Deluge presents the beginning of a number of plots few, if any, in Vimary are prepared for. The events put in motion are not totally unexpected, however. Many people across Vimary noticed that Joan was acting strangely following the failure of the Inquisition.

The events of the *Children of Prophecy* story line, and *Trial by Fire* in particular, left Joan searching Her soul for answers. A living god in many senses of the word, Joan's philosophical exploration has a number of effects on those close to Her, particularly Her Tribe. Prior to the events in *Quest One: Against the Deluge* many Joanites wake from particularly intense dreams of Joan walking with Her brother. Other Joanites are wracked by dreams where their bodies convulse and change into an array of colors and shapes, not unlike shattered stained glass. Joan is going through emotional and mental changes and Her followers share Her dreams, unaware of the reason behind these visions.

Joan's frequent forays into Hom and Haven also affect many of the Eighth Tribe. Many Doomsayers have dreams much like those of the Joanites. Additionally, most of the Fallen who were once part of Joan's Tribe begin to show signs of uncontrollable depression and even a few cases of multiple personality disorder. Joan, of course, had removed Her love and protection from those fallen from Her grace and thus their reactions to Her soul searching are a bit more erratic. This is an excellent opportunity for the Weaver to begin introducing seeds of *Warrior Unbound* into stories well before actually running the cycle. Talk of Joan's sojourn into Hom and rumors of intense dreams can serve to quietly prepare the PCs for the events in *Quest One: Against the Deluge*.

A few of the Fallen are prepared for Joan's announcement. Halos the Guide, for one, is able to interpret many of the dreams and changes that are befalling the Eighth Tribe. He is one of the few that links Joan's arrival in Hom and Haven with the dreams and bouts of depression afflicting so many of the Fallen. Most of the Eighth Tribe simply blames the unsettled mood on the chaos brought by the Inquisition. However, Halos realizes that the mental and spiritual problems the Joanites and

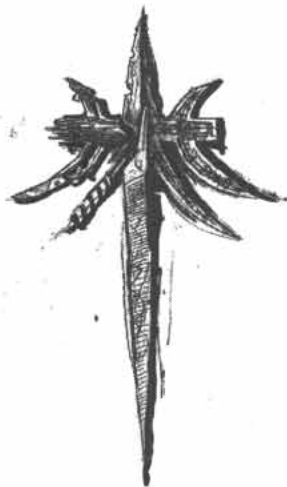


Outcasts are experiencing are not at all normal, and that something is deeply wrong with Joan.

Should the PCs already have a relationship with Halos or another Guide (such as Den-Hades) then they may be asked by that Guide to watch Joan as the Fatima wanders Hom and Haven. Halos (or an NPC taking his place) asks this of the Characters to see if they begin to have intense dreams like those of the Joanites, possibly due to the PCs' physical proximity to Joan. This way, the Weaver will have an excellent reason to have the Cell present at Joan's announcement in *Act One: The Meeting*.

Another NPC that can help guide the Characters into the plot is **Dominic**, a Black Marian and leader of the *Bereaved's Tears*. Dominic has been concentrating on healing the rift between the Joanites and the Fallen, in hopes of bringing the Tribes and their destined successors into a stronger relationship. Dominic has no particular knowledge of or insight into the events of *Quest One: Against the Deluge*, but he has worked his entire life for this very event. He has played each scenario out in his head and he will spring into action when he hears of Joan's announcement.

Prior to *Quest One: Against the Deluge*, Dominic can be brought into contact with the PCs as an NPC in the Weaver's own cycle, creating a link between the *Bereaved's Tears* and the PCs' Cell. Dominic can serve as a strong ally with abilities to heal and purify as well as serve as a font of information on more esoteric and hidden aspects of Vimary. On the other hand, Dominic and his Cell can become excellent adversaries. One way to use Dominic in an adversarial role is to have the *Bereaved's Tears* learn of artifacts held by the *Blooded Blades* at the same time as the PCs. It then becomes a race to see which Cell can reach the prize first. Such a race can help maintain the sense of urgency that features prominently throughout *Warrior Unbound*.



ACT ONE: THE MEETING

Eighth Tribe, Children of the Nation, listen to me. My Sisters and I have made a grave mistake. You are not trash to be discarded, nor are you bad memories that should be forgotten. You are the successors of what My Sisters and I began. Many here today were once My children until I blindly turned them away. I am sorry. Truly, I am sorry. It is time to make amends, to correct some of My past mistakes. My Tribe and My destiny will support you in your future. I now open My Tribe up to the Eighth Tribe. If you choose, My love will be yours. Deny me and I will still be here, forever repentant.

- Joan's speech to the Fallen

WEAVER'S SYNOPSIS

Joan wanders through Hom as She has done a number of times. This is a fairly common sight on Hom by this point, but the locals are still unnerved. The Characters are in the area at some point, attending to their own business. Joan passes through the square, sits down and announces the names of a number of Fallen and Joanite leaders. When most of those who were called for are gathered, Joan announces Her intent to renounce the outcasts' banishment and accept them into Her Tribe, if they wish. The PCs are all present for this occasion, as is a huge throng of the Fallen.

INVOLVING THE PLAYERS

The events of *Act One: The Meeting* require that the PCs be in the right place at the right time. To this end, the PCs need to be in Hom or Haven, preferably near a square or other open area conducive to the gathering of a large crowd. Joan's announcement can take place anywhere on Hom. One suggestion is to have the PCs on Hom, helping to repair any number of structures or items destroyed in the Inquisition of *Trial by Fire* (or another similar violent event such as a fire or Gek'roh attack). Specifically, an NPC the PCs are particularly close to may ask for their aid in repairing a house or workplace.

An option to set up future events for the PCs is to use dreams and visions taking place in or emphasizing the importance of a specific gathering place on Hom or Haven. The dream should keep reoccurring until the PC is convinced that something important will occur in the area, possibly driving the PC to obsess about the location or event.

ERHARD

One plot hook that may have ramifications later on in the story is to have a burdened old man in tattered rags approach the PCs while they are a bit busy with an errand. The old man, almost a cliché himself, asks the able-bodied PCs to help him put his home back together. He does not have anything to offer the Characters besides his boundless gratitude. The homeless old man, who introduces himself as Erhard, is a charity case, his house little more than a decrepit shack even before it was destroyed. Should the PCs endeavor to help the man they will be rewarded later for their actions. They will have made a very valuable and powerful friend in the old man.

The Weaver should make the work to help Erhard taxing, but not overwhelming. Since the old man has no home to speak of it will take resources on the PCs' part to actually build him a shelter. Erhard is very demanding on the specifics of repairing his home, since it was his one worldly possession. He wants everything perfect and is not afraid to badger the PCs into capitulating with his demands. In the end though, the Weaver is left to her own devices on making the encounter — and Erhard — a challenge for the PCs.

Should the PCs play the role of Good Samaritan, they will in fact be helping the Hunter known as Herne. Erhard is simply a cover used by the Hunter to discover if the PCs will aid him, regardless of what form he takes. Should the Characters help Herne/Erhard he will reward them with weapons later on (see p. 50) that will be effective against the Blades even while the Z'bri are within the River of Dream.

JOAN'S SILENCE BROKEN

As Joan strides through Hom the PCs are involved in other activities. They take note of Her passing and are possibly affected at that time by any psychological disturbances that the Weaver has associated with Joan's growing depression. As the excitement of Her arrival begins to fade, Joan takes an unceremonious seat. The outcasts nearby that are able to see this act immediately stop what they are doing, tools dropping to the ground and errands forgotten. Soon whispers and veiled glances fill the air as the people try to figure out what exactly is about to happen. Joan eventually makes Her intentions known in a commanding voice.

Joan calls the names of Hal Ninva, Mek, Kymber Reva, Emulaan the Poet, Deus, Havark, Troy Fenris, Vivian Luther'on (the Watch Commander patrolling the South Tier Bridge) and Castor the Seer. Stolidly, Joan speaks no more. Whispers again rip through the crowd and many of the Fallen gathered scramble off to find those whose names were called. Many of the Eighth Tribe that remain drop to their knees, visibly shaking. Quiet weeping is heard over the hushed whispers of the stunned crowd. A couple of outcasts begin to pull away from the group that is gathering to see the spectacle. If the PCs pay these Fallen any mind, they will see Herite tattoos across their exposed flesh. The Herites slowly and warily retreat from the presence of the Fatima and disappear into the shadows.

An hour later, when the nine leaders are gathered and seated around Her, the Fatima begins a speech in which She asks for tolerance between the Fallen and the Tribes. Beyond the small circle of Fallen and Joanite leaders with Joan, a huge throng of people gathers in the clearing in anticipation. Joan continues Her announcement by stating that She feels compelled to act on Eighth Tribe's behalf. She has stayed silent too long, watched too much and has finally decided to act. She wishes to use Her rediscovered voice to champion the Eighth Tribe as well as Her own children. She knows what it is to be without a voice, and She will rectify their forced silence with the Eighth Tribe's permission and support.

Joan proposes to allow the members of the Eighth Tribe to once again join the Nation. In an act of faith, She opens Her Tribe to allow the Fallen to rediscover Her love. Immediately, a shouted uproar by the gathered Fallen drowns out any further announcements by Joan or the gathered leaders. Patiently, the Fatima waits for the questions and side-conversations to die out and then continues with Her speech. When things quiet, She describes a series of trials, mental and physical, that members of the Fallen may undertake to prove their wish and worth to rejoin the Nation. Should they pass the tests then they will enter into the ranks of the Joanites and once again be a full member of the Nation.

Joan then falls silent again, a satisfied smile across Her pale face. The crowd is stunned into silence, the only noticeable movement is that of Joan's eyes slowly and methodically surveying the crowd.

The Fallen leaders respond by asking for some time to make their decision. Joan agrees by serenely nodding Her head and standing in preparation to leave. She summons Vivian Luther'on to Her side and asks the Watch Commander to spread the word to the other Joanites. Joan then turns and announces She will return in a week's time to see if the Eighth Tribe has decided on their destiny. If they have not, then She will return to this place, at this time, each week until they have.

STREET PROPHETS

Well after most of the crowd has drifted away from Joan's speech the Characters notice that they are being followed. A lithe and well-muscled man dogs their every step. If they enter an establishment, he waits patiently outside. If the PCs travel from one side of Hom to the other, he is always within sight. Even if the Cell travels into Bazaar, they still find that they are followed. It is particularly easy to pick out their pursuer since he is dressed in strange and archaic garb, proudly showing his status as a Keeper.

Sooner or later the Characters are going to either try to lose the Keeper or accost him. If they try to evade his pursuit, he is remarkably resourceful in finding their new location. He is armed with a number of devices (like binoculars) that allow him to scan crowds much more quickly than normal. It is possible to get away from him eventually, but it is very difficult.

Instead, if the PCs confront the man, he does nothing to avoid them. In fact, this is exactly what he was hoping for. His name is Danyael and he is indeed, a Keeper. The first thing the Characters notice is a strong acrid smell, from the large amounts of gunpowder he handles. He is part of a withdrawn, isolationist sect of Keepers that call themselves Isaac's Chosen, and their Priest, Lord Jest, sent Danyael to scout the Fallen lands. When he saw the amazing sight of Joan he was enraptured. Unfortunately, he has little idea of the significance of Her words to the Fallen and wishes to know why She said what She did. Danyael saw that the PCs were present for most of the speech and decided that they would probably know what was going on, so he followed them.

Danyael is an excellent tracker but is not too socially adept, which is why he followed the Characters for so long; he did not know if he could approach them. He is attentive to whatever the PCs share. If they decide to ignore him, he will follow them for as long as possible. He is nothing if not persistent and with any luck he will finally get the PCs to talk to him. If they continually rebuff his questions, Danyael will become angry and, considering the large amount of weapons and explosives Isaac's Chosen have access to, it will not be hard for him to exact revenge. Besides being nice but socially inept, Danyael is also a fanatic.

The PCs will probably ask Danyael about himself and his group. He is quite open about Isaac's Chosen, sharing the fact that their leader is a great and powerful man by the name of Isaac. Isaac can perform all manner of miracles for his 'chosen,' and plans to lead them to a great a powerful destiny, one that is linked to the Nation in some way (though Danyael is not sure how). Danyael will not reveal that he believes (erroneously) that Isaac is a Fatima, nor that they plan to become part of the Nation. Isaac's Chosen is truthfully less of a Keeper group, and more a religious cult.

Once Danyael has learned about who Joan is and why She made Her announcement, he will be on his way. He is charged with watching the Outcasts and to see how they fit into the Nation. At this point, the Characters may remember having seen Danyael or other similarly-dressed Keepers standing about on the streets of Hom as though they were street prophets with nothing to say (simple test using WIL vs. a Threshold of 4). Apparently, Danyael and his people have been watching the Fallen for some time.

The Cell should be left with a feeling that Danyael was after more information than he got, and that, despite his outgoing attitude, his intentions were not the most benevolent.



TIPS AND RESOURCES

The Weaver should have a good idea of Joan's speech before beginning the Quest. Joan is a Fatima, a living god, and as such should not have trouble with Her words. It is highly suggested that the Weaver prepare the speech Joan will give before the Players sit down for the game. The Weaver should feel free to use the quote at the beginning of this Act for inspiration. Joan is apologetic for the current situation the Fallen find themselves in. She is partly to blame for the state of affairs, and wishes to take the emotional burden upon Herself. Joan wants to bring closure to the death of Joshua, and this is Her first step.

Joan will not tolerate any questions and should things get out of hand She will simply rise up and remove Herself from the situation. Should things get violent, then Joan will leave with Vivian cradled in Her arms and later send emissaries to the leaders of the Eighth Tribe with a request to see them in a private audience. The meeting will still be conducted, this time outside of Hom and outside of the sight of the Eighth Tribe. Tensions will be higher, but no worse than they have been through such events as the Coming of Lilith and the Inquisition.

Joan is powerful and the Weaver should convey that power. This may be the first time the PCs have been close to a Fatima, and the wonder and excitement of such an encounter is an excellent role-playing opportunity. The Weaver should stress the shimmering effect that plays across the steel that makes up Joan's resilient form. Even the air around Joan seems to throb and occasionally sparkle with the implication of both physical and spiritual strength. Joan's face is like a mask, except the one time She smiles after Her speech. Her sword is the greatest weapon anyone has ever seen — possibly even imagined. It is as large as a man and unnaturally sharp. Joan makes sure no one comes near to the blade, claiming it is for their own safety.

Statistics for Danyael the Keeper (Member of Isaac's Chosen) should follow the template found on p. 94 of the *Weaver's Resources*. Add Sneak 2/0 and Notice 2/+1.

Character write-ups for the Fallen Elders can be found:

Hal Ninva: Rulebook p. 101

Mek: Rulebook p. 95

Kymber Reva: Rulebook p. 105

Emulaan the Poet: Book of Legends p. 51, or use Deus, with KNO +3.

Deus: Rulebook p. 106

Havark: Vimary Sourcebook p.106, or use Mek with AGI +2 and PSY -1.

Troy Fenys: Rulebook p. 96

Vivian Luther'on: use Shera Uhan'on from Rulebook p. 56

Castor the Seer: use Malachai from the Companion p. 63 or Den-Hades from the Rulebook, p. 100



ACT TWO: THE BREAKING DAM

What do I think of Joan's offer? Just remember that every offer has a motivation behind it that you are not always aware of. Life is a lot like that as well. Joan is powerful right now, but the Eighth Tribe is growing in their own power. I certainly do not believe it is a coincidence that her openness comes now. I just hope we make the right decision and that we see the truth behind Her intentions. If we jump into this before thinking of the consequences, well, there are sure to be repercussions.

- Havark, at the Cage

WEAVER'S SYNOPSIS

The Characters encounter a Fallen Cell called 'The Trashman's Bane' making the none-too-subtle point that they are quite unhappy with Joan's recent offer. Before long, the Trashman's Bane starts a brawl after hearing someone speak well of Joan. The Trashman's Bane is itching to start a fight and to release some pent-up anger and unfortunately, the PCs provide that release. The brawl draws to a close and the Characters are presented with a number of clues which can lead them to become involved in the impending Night of Crimson Tears.

THE SET-UP

The Trashman's Bane is encountered in a public place often frequented by the Characters. The place can be a bar, like Junks, or a heavily traveled street, or any convenient location. If the PCs do nothing to quiet the Trashman's Bane as they boldly announce Joan is a farce and no better than the fraud Lilith was, a passerby or patron (depending on the location) makes an offhand remark to a friend that returning to the Nation is an intriguing possibility. A member of the Trashman's Bane overhears this statement and picks a fight with the patron/ passerby with the PCs directly in front of the brawl.

If the Characters hesitate to intervene, then a patron/passerby will be beaten to within an inch of her life by the belligerent Trashman's Bane. If the PCs still refuse to intervene, then eventually, another group will step in and try to save the victim.

When an outside force intervenes and begins to gain the upper hand over the Trashman's Bane (whether it is the Characters or another group), the Cell will run off, hoping to cut their losses. The Trashman's Bane is looking for a stress release, not a knock-down-drag-out fight, and when things go sour they have little motivation to stay. The Trashman's Bane will soon be involved in the Night of Crimson Tears and a bad brawl here seriously reduces their available manpower. Jonas, the leader of the Trashman's Bane will signal for his Cell to leave as soon as one of his members looks to be losing the battle. If the PCs move quickly and decisively they can gain information about the Night of Crimson Tears as the Trashman's Bane scrambles to escape.

A SIMPLE PLAN

The Trashman's Bane has recently been contacted by a number of other Fallen Cells in order to arrange a number of assassinations on key Tribal leaders. The goal of these assassinations is to anger the Tribes enough that they will pull away from any possibility of a reconciliation. Leaders of the Sheban Tribe are particularly sought out in hopes that Tera Sheba will lash out against the Fallen in response to the killings and force Joan away from the Eighth Tribe. The Trashman's Bane's mission is to sneak into the Sunken City and kill the Fisher King, once Tera Sheba's favorite follower. Jonas knows that The Fisher King is still an important symbol to the Nation, and that his death will be a great affront to Tera Sheba. Jonas' goal is nothing short of terrorism.

The best thing for the Eighth Tribe, with the impending Night of Crimson Tears, is to take up Joan's cause. The Nation is beginning to change and without allies like the Joanites, the Nation's wrath will devastate the Eighth Tribe. The extension of Joan's favor towards the Fallen means She is no longer going to follow Tera Sheba blindly, which can be nothing but good for the outcasts. Even in the short term, aiding Joan and Her Tribe will greatly benefit the Fallen. Right now Joan and Her Tribe are all that stands between the Fallen and an enraged and confused Nation. With Hom and Haven still recovering from the Inquisition, the outcasts can little afford another invasion. Considering Joan's past She may not be the most ideal ally for the Fallen, but Her Tribe's favor could be instrumental in helping the Fallen to build their own lives.

The PCs need to learn about the assassination plot, but just enough to get them on their way towards the Fisher King and intervene on his behalf. This information can be imparted in a number of ways and the Weaver should pick the one (or ones) most appropriate to her PCs.



1. Against the Deluge

- Molly, one of the more recent inductees into the Trashman's Bane, becomes fed up with the belligerency of the Cell and runs to the PCs during the fight. She asks that they get her out of the area so that she can separate herself from her former Cell. She will plead with the PCs, emphatically begging for her life. If Jonas or any of the Trashman's Bane notice what Molly is up to, they will stop what they are doing and try to forcefully remove her from the scene. If they accomplish this, Molly will find herself the recipient of Jonas' rage. If, on the other hand, the PCs take Molly up on her request and spirit her to a safe haven she will impart to the PCs what she knows about the Night of Crimson Tears. Molly knows that the Fisher King is the target and that the Trashman's Bane will attempt to cross the river the following night at the height of the moon. However, Molly has no idea how the Cell will arrive or their plans to break into the Fisher King's tower and kill him.

Molly is in the throes of a spiritual dilemma and sees the PCs' Cell as an avenue to correct her past sins. By helping the PCs, Molly hopes to take her first step along the road towards salvation. If, by some slim chance, the PCs are successful in saving the Fisher King's life due to her aid, then maybe when she dies Baba Yaga will take pity on her soul and lead her across the Fold.

The Characters may require more tangible encouragement and, if so, Molly can provide it. Fancying herself a spy she has poked through all of the members of the Trashman's Bane's belongings. She knows the Cell as a whole has a number of Tribal Amulets and the leader, a gruff Doomsayer by the name of Jonas, constantly brags that his sword has been blessed and can cut through Gek'roh hide like butter. Molly claims to have held the sword and felt energy creep up her arm as she held the blade. She has no doubts as to the power of the sword. It is up to the Weaver to decide whether the blade actually is blessed with Synthesis, if it is cursed, or if the sword's powers are just the musings of a braggart Doomsayer looking for respect from his unruly Cell.

Should the PCs prove kind and helpful, Molly may even consider joining their Cell. Otherwise, Molly will make her way back into the Eighth Tribe where she can serve as a contact for the Characters.

- The PCs may kill one of the Trashman's Bane during the brawl. Once the other members of the Cell see this they immediately leave the scene. The death of the member of the Trashman's Bane releases his spirit and the Character who slays the Cell member feels a chill pass through her body. As the chill feeling passes the PC receives a blurry image of a tower half-submerged in a murky river, blood in a pool of water and a sense of immediacy. As the spirit of the slain Cell member finishes passing through the PC, the images fade.

Similarly, a roughly drawn map of the Sunken City with an area circled roughly corresponding to the Fisher King's Tower may be found on the body, or dropped as the other members flee.

- If a Character has encountered the Fisher King before then they may succumb to a number of recurring dreams and visions involving the Sheban and the Trashman's Bane. Before encountering the opposing Cell, the PC is wracked each night by visions of a man battling with the Fisher King. Slowly, the Fisher King's resolve fails and the young stranger strikes him down. The killer then falls across the dead body in a cannibalistic orgy. Other angry faces emerge from the surrounding shadows and partake in the foul victory.

When the PCs' Cell meets with the Trashman's Bane, the Character that has experienced the dreams will immediately recognize the leader, Jonas, as the one who strikes the Fisher King down and begins eating the Sheban's remains.

If accused of such an act Jonas will nervously dismiss the accusations, but observant PCs (Human Perception, Threshold 4) will notice Jonas' discomfort and may follow up on the questioning. Eventually, Jonas will be driven to end the conversation, probably through violence. The Characters will know something is wrong and may follow up by checking on the Fisher King or tracking down the Trashman's Bane.

Either way, the Trashman's Bane's presence should give the Characters an idea that there are many groups within the Eighth Tribe that are violently opposed to the reconciliation between the Tribes and the Fallen. Joan's offer is not without a price and that price seems to be the blood of the Nation.

INVOLVING THE PLAYERS

This encounter, instrumental in getting the PCs caught up in the Night of Crimson Tears, can be played out in just about any environment. If the PCs find themselves in Tribal lands, then the Trashman's Bane can easily be converted by the Weaver to a circle of Tribals that is also opposed to the reconciliation. If this option plays out, then the Weaver should be prepared to deal with implications of Tribal and Fallen cooperation in undermining Joan, possibly implying a larger plot. The PCs may be burdened with a considerable responsibility, particularly during the Night of Crimson Tears, as elements of the Fallen and the Tribes try to keep Joan from growing closer to the Eighth Tribe. Instead of having only to deal with a few Cells, the PCs will now have to prepare for conflict with Tribal circles as well.

If the Players decide to ignore the clues left about the upcoming Night of Crimson Tears, then so be it. Instead of being on the cusp of the adventure, the PCs can hear of the events second hand. The PCs may have a harder time being associated with the rest of the story later on, but the events will not be unrecoverable.

THE BRAWLERS

The Trashman's Bane is composed of Herites, but is led by a Doomsayer. The Weaver should tweak the abilities of the Trashman's Bane according to the power of the PCs. The opposing Cell should number just less than the Characters at the time of the encounter, hopefully encouraging the PCs to intervene in the brawl. Any number of members of the Trashman's Bane can be absent from the encounter doing other errands in preparation for their mission if the Weaver is concerned with the numbers involved in the fight.

Statistics for the members of the **Trashman's Bane**, **Jonas** and **Molly** can all be found in *Weaver's Resources*, page 92. There are normally eight members of the Cell, including Jonas and Molly. The members of the Trashman's Bane fight with their fists, even though each of the members is armed with an array of short swords and daggers. However, unless weapons are pulled by others, the Trashman's Bane will not resort to their weapons.

THE HEART OF THE KING

The Trashman's Bane plans to gain entrance to the Fisher King's Tower by taking a number of rowboats across the Great River and into the Sunken City. Jonas plans to shove off just before midnight. As the twilight dwindles, it turns out that there is a decent amount of cloud cover hiding the crescent moon, masking the traitors' approach. A total of three boats are ready transport the Cell, with a Child of Lilith guide hired by the Cell leading the way. Callista's job is to maneuver the three boats past the few lookouts and guards posted around the Sunken City and approach the Fisher King's tower undetected.

Once the boats are close enough to the Tower the Cell plans to use grappling hooks and climbing equipment to scale the walls up from the water. Climbing the walls on the far side of the Tower, away from the Sunken City, is more difficult and much darker than using any of the other sides, but Jonas is very concerned with detection from the shore and gauges the risk worth staying away from wayward eyes.

The Cell plans to gain entrance through the first window they come to, assault the lone Fisher King and escape back across the river. Jonas is relying on the Fisher King's isolation in order to prevent any premature detection or the timely arrival of any curious lookouts.

After the assault, to add insult to injury, Jonas intends to scrawl a number of Fallen sayings and slogans across the Tower's walls using the Fisher King's blood. He hopes the shock and horror of the act will be enough to incense Tera Sheba into ordering Joan away from the Eighth Tribe.

GETTING THERE

The PCs can arrive at the Tower in a number of ways. However, their timing does not have to be exact, and a rough approximation will do. Whenever the PCs do arrive, the Weaver can have the raid on the Tower at any stage of completion she sees appropriate.

One way for the PCs to reach the Sunken City is for them to acquire the aid of a willing and able guide. **Callista**, the Child of Lilith helping the Trashman's Bane, is a member of a small 'guild' (more a loose association) of individuals knowledgeable in the Great River. Many of the 'River Walkers,' as they call themselves, were once Sheban Stiltwalkers and specialize in the environs of the Sunken City. Callista's and the Trashman's Bane's recent journey into the Sunken City and towards the Tower is common knowledge to the River Walkers, though no one knows the exact route taken. The PCs, should they use their contacts to find an appropriate guide, can be directed to this group. If given enough in barter, a member of the River Walkers may share knowledge of Callista's destination and those she was guiding.

If the PCs have any contacts within the Shebans they may well try to bribe a Stiltwalker or guard into smuggling them into the Sunken City, possibly hiding in the City during the day to emerge at night. Bribery will only get the PCs so far though; the Fisher King's Tower is normally given a wide berth by the Shebans and being smuggled into the Sunken City will still leave the PCs with a considerable journey to the Tower (over swift and cold water as well as rooftops, no less).

The PCs may simply acquire a boat and navigate their own way to the Sunken City. Should they do so, a number of Notice, Sneak and Navigation tests are appropriate. Should the PCs lack any sort of Water Navigation skills then the Weaver should feel free to penalize the Players -2 on their rolls.

It falls to the PCs to settle on their method of approach and to stage any plan they may have for ambushing the Trashman's Bane. The Fisher King will not tolerate the PCs anywhere near his Tower before the night of the attack. To frustrate any would-be intruders the Tower itself is normally locked up tight, with the windows only open at night. It should also be noted that tensions between the Tribes and the Fallen are once again increasing and the PCs should be wary of traveling about Tribal lands on their own, particularly after dark. The Fisher King lives on the outskirts of Sheban controlled lands and the Shebans are currently very unhappy with both the Joanites and Eighth Tribe. The PCs may need a reminder about the danger of wandering about the Sunken City.

DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS

Before the PCs leave, they may hear a number of rumors about the Tower. The seclusion of the Fisher King and his Tower has prompted a number of fanciful stories over the years. Many of the rumors talk of the Fisher King's Tower having long been haunted, particularly by the serpent Z'bri that the Fisher King slew many years ago. Others whisper that it is the resting place of a number of Z'bri spirits and that they still seek to torment humanity and that the Fisher King is the only person strong enough to endure their spiritual onslaught. Different ghost stories talk of the Tower having been built with the bones of many Tribals embedded into its walls. The bones are supposedly the remains of those innocents executed by the Fisher King. Other tales tell of Mary's fractured body held in a vault below the water level, the Fisher King charged with protecting the body until his dying breath. Supposedly the residual Synthesis of Mary's body will keep the Fisher King alive forever, though he may never leave the Tower or his body will crumble into ashes.

All these rumors are untrue, though the stories referring to the Fisher King being tormented by the souls of those he has slain are the closest to the truth. Of course, any one of these rumors can become as true as the Weaver finds necessary or interesting, with a little work and forethought.

The Weaver should feel free to make up any other legends or stories, particularly if those rumors may entice the Characters into taking the journey to the Tower and encountering the Trashman's Bane once again.

TIPS AND RESOURCES

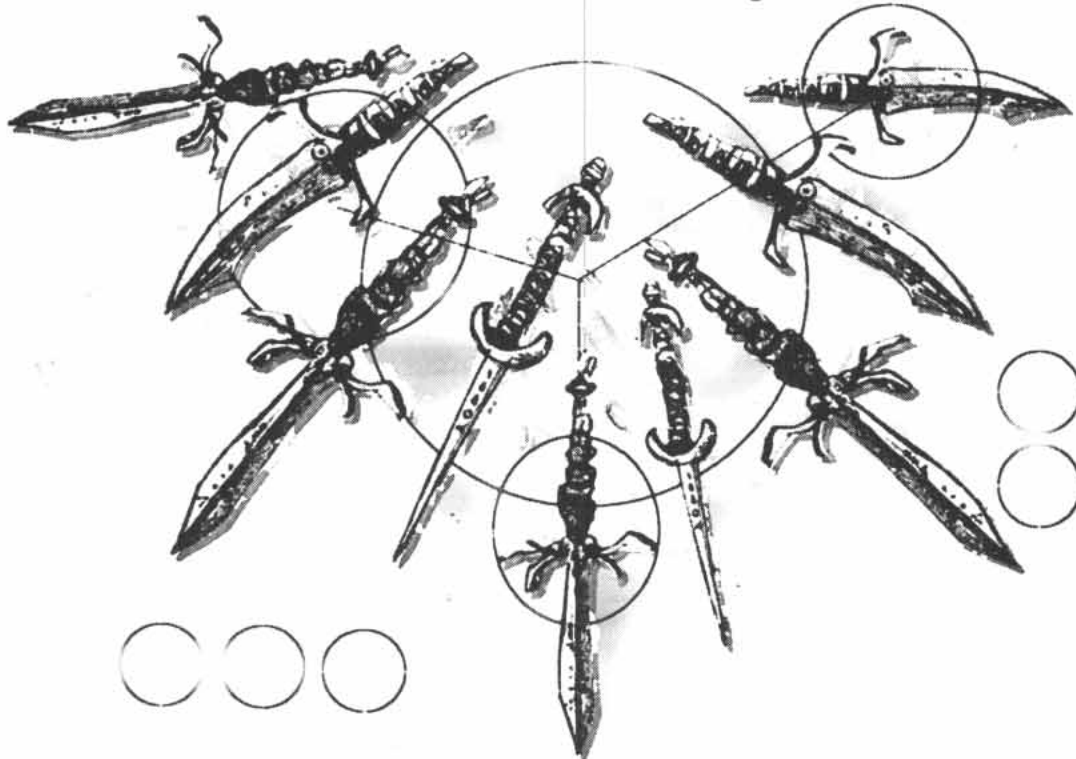
It is assumed the PCs will take up the cause of the Fisher King (for whatever reason) and intervene in this part of the Night of Crimson Tears. If the PCs ignore the clues or decide that helping the Fisher King (a complete stranger, after all) is just not worth the danger, then the Weaver may wish to change the targets of the assassinations. The Weaver can remove the Trashman's Bane from the plot and replace it with any number of other Cells, or use the statistics for the Trashman's Bane while changing targets. The new target can be a loved one of the PCs, a plot that they barely get wind of before the plan is put into motion. Similarly the new plot may involve a Fallen leader the PCs respect, which will encourage their involvement. However, the more accessible the target is to the PCs then the less time the PCs should have to plan.

For Statistics on **Callista** the Weaver should use the Herite template from page 96.

ACT THREE: THE RAID

Tera Sheba and Joan are two different creatures. Yes, once they battled for similar causes, but Joan has given up that cause. Now, only Tera Sheba understands what true sacrifice requires and only Tera Sheba maintains the Pillars. At some time or another, everyone in the Nation has been forced into acts which we later regret, but Joan cannot allow that regret to consume Her. Nor can Joan allow that regret to prevent Her from doing Her duty to the Nation. Joan is weak and that weakness must be purged for the safety of us all.

- The Fisher King



WEAVER'S SYNOPSIS

The attack on the Fisher King commences, and, to the surprise of the Trashman's Bane and Jonas in particular, the Fisher King is not the defenseless old man that they were expecting. Spiritual defenses warn the Fisher King about the upcoming assault and the venerable warrior lays his own trap. Powerful spirits soul-linked to the Fisher King tear through the cramped hallways of the Tower as the Trashman's Bane gains access, ready to attack the invaders. Surprised and bewildered, the Trashman's Bane fights the Fisher King to a stalemate. The arrival of the PCs turns the balance of power and, with the PCs' help, the Fisher King expels the attackers from his Tower.

Not surprisingly, the Fisher King is grateful but a bit suspicious of the PCs' aid. They must explain their involvement in the evening's affairs to the Fisher King's satisfaction before he allows them to leave. Otherwise, he is more than ready to turn the PCs over to the Watch.

THE COMING STORM

The attacking Cell approaches in the night, quietly rowing up to the Tower under the cover of Illusion and Shadow Eminencies as well as the more mundane cloud cover that blankets Vimary. They slip by the few Sheban guards posted around the Sunken City and prepare their attack. With barely the sound of the metal of the grappling hook against the cold stone, the Trashman's Bane makes their way towards their bloody goal.

It will be quite possible for the PCs to intervene at this point, instead of later while the battle is already raging. The PCs, if sharp-eyed and well prepared, may try to stop the Trashman's Bane from breaching the Tower. If this happens, the Weaver should be prepared to have the PCs and NPCs duel using distance weapons like bows, blowpipes and the occasional firearm. Of course, if firearms are used then it will certainly alert the Watch and any nearby Shebans that something is happening at the Tower. On the other hand, should the PCs engage the Trashman's Bane while the Herites scale the Tower then the PCs have an excellent chance of striking the other Cell at a vulnerable time. The Trashman's Bane is ill-prepared for fighting with ranged weapons, as they are presently armed with weapons that are more useful for fighting in corridors.

If the PCs eliminate the Trashman's Bane before the assassins breach the Tower, then the Weaver should find another opportunity for the Fisher King to encounter the PCs. Due to his spiritual host (see below), the Fisher King will be alert and watching the battle, but will not participate. After the fight, as the victors are recovering from their exertions, the Fisher King will enigmatically emerge from the fog rising off the river to thank and question the PCs. Alternately, he may secrete himself into Hom the day after and proceed with his questioning there. Either way, the Fisher King will know the PCs' faces and will want to know more about them.

If the PCs do not intervene early, the scene will unfold according to Jonas' plan, except that the Fisher King is better prepared to defend himself than Jonas originally thought. As the last member of the Trashman's Bane crawls through the window, the Fisher King's attack begins, and a spirit ravages the last Cell member to enter the Tower. Jonas scrambles to quiet his Cellmate, who is screaming horribly and flailing at what appears to be nothing. Confused and worried that his surprise has been ruined, Jonas then gathers the rest of his Cell in order to strike as quickly as possible. As the Cell navigates the unfamiliar halls, they see wisps of movement and flickers at the corners of their vision. The Cell becomes distracted and harried even before encountering the veteran Fisher King.

STORMING THE DEFENSES

If the PCs fail to stop or engage the Trashman's Bane before they begin their assault, then this scene opens with a description of the Fisher King's Tower and the surrounding area. The Tower itself is composed of four moderately tall buildings that form the points of a square. Each building contains six to eight stories total, with only three to four above the water line. The buildings, in close proximity to each other, have a number of wooden passageways crisscrossing between their crumbling walls. The passageways serve to connect the buildings to each other forming, in effect, one large tower. There are only a few openings into the Tower, the largest and most noticeable one lying just at the water level.

This is the main entrance, where food and supplies are delivered. There are a few moorings for boats (the Fisher King has one tied up at the time of the attack) and a rickety wooden stair crawls up the side of the Tower from the moorings to the entrance, a few meters up from the water line. The lower windows of the four buildings that compose the Tower have long ago been mortared up or boarded over. The walkways between the buildings are completely covered and it is nearly impossible to tell when someone moves between the different parts of the Tower. It is dark, cold and foreboding. Moreover, it is a very lonely place. The Tower is not terribly large, but is more than any one man could ever hope to defend on his own. Around the Tower, smells of algae, decaying fish and assorted water plants permeate the air. The only sounds are those of the occasional bird disturbed from its nest or the lapping of water against the ages-old concrete.

When the PCs themselves breach the Tower on the evening of the Night of Crimson Tears they will encounter a couple of the Trashman's Bane members who have been separated from the rest of the Cell. These poor souls have been battling with visions and hallucinations brought about by the spirit host, and are quite near an emotional breakdown. One member, a fairly young Herite named Miki, becomes separated from Jonas and the rest of the Cell and, horrified by the screaming spirits and unfamiliar surroundings, pushes herself into a corner and curls up in the fetal position. Miki's eyes stare off into nothing as her mind frantically tries to cope. She may become violent if the PCs do not approach her calmly and confidently, otherwise, she does not communicate with the PCs at all.

1. Against the Deluge

Another member the PCs encounter is just as distraught, since he has become similarly lost from the Trashman's Bane. Jaky is relieved to see the PCs and he runs to them despite not knowing who they are. Even if he recognizes the PCs from the brawl earlier, he reasons they are safer than the spirits haunting the Tower. Jaky refuses to be left alone, demanding that the PCs go nowhere without him.

The large group of the Trashman's Bane is fighting the Fisher King. The Fisher King utilizes the bottlenecks created by the corridors and rooms of the Tower to his advantage, doing battle with one Cell member at a time. The PCs timely arrival comes as a shock to Jonas and the Trashman's Bane, who are now stuck between the PCs and the Fisher King with little chance of escape (though the Weaver can create a convenient window if she would like to use any of the surviving members of the Trashman's Bane later).

The Fisher King, with the PCs' aid, forces the Trashman's Bane to surrender. The Fisher King binds and gags the surviving members and announces they will be promptly turned over to the Watch. Because of the PCs, the Fisher King is still alive and at least this portion of the Night of Crimson Tears is a failure.

THE STORM QUIETED

Once the Trashman's Bane has been run off or defeated, the Fisher King will keep his distance from the PCs. He questions them, asking the PCs why they are in his Tower, how they got in and how they knew of the raid. The Fisher King requires convincing, since his home and sanctuary was just violated by a number of armed strangers, some of whom claim to be helping him. It is very appropriate for the PCs to have to roll as well as role-play their way into the Fisher King's confidence. If the PCs are successful, then the Fisher King asks for their immediate aid in cleaning up any 'undesirables' (blood, body parts, etc.) and then invites them for some tea. Whether they accept his offer or not, he makes a kettle for his nerves and sets about to learn a little about the PCs. The Fisher King has not had guests recently and would like to carry on a bit of conversation with the PCs.

The Fisher King can act as a font of information on Joan, Tera Sheba and the history of the Tribes, as well as to help galvanize the PCs for their coming trials. Throughout the conversation, he remains wary of the PCs and questions their stories in as many different ways as possible, using his own stories to prompt the PCs to tell their own and simultaneously reveal information about their background.

Occasionally throughout the conversation, the Fisher King grimaces in pain. This grimace is the only outward sign of the Fisher King keeping his tormentor spirits in check and preventing the ghosts from attacking the PCs. Should the PCs inquire about the pained looks or anything else that refers directly to the Fisher King's spirits, he prevaricates, seeming to explain away much of the phenomena while quickly changing the subject. His refusal to talk about the spirits is in deference to Tera Sheba and Baba Yaga (see *Weaver's Resources* for more details, p. 91).

Characters with high Synthesis ratings or who are closely attuned to the spirit world will notice that the spirit world is particularly close in the Tower, modifying any Conjunctional Synthesis attempts by +1, as long as the rituals are not rushed. The Tower is a Gully and more information on Gullies and their relation to the River of Dream can be found in *Weaver's Resources*, page 79. On a similar note, more spiritually-sensitive PCs will note that Synthesis-related powers are highest when the Fisher King grimaces, and the atmosphere becomes more Dream-like as the ghosts try to break away from the Fisher King's control.

The Fisher King will question and swap stories with the PCs until he is convinced of their benevolent intentions. When he is finally comfortable with their motivations he politely asks them to leave and to never come back. The Fisher King is certainly grateful and should the PCs push the matter, he rewards them with a Sheban amulet. Otherwise, the Fisher King does not reward the PCs beyond a heartfelt thanks, though he makes sure the Characters' passage back to Hom and Haven is a safe one.

Should the PCs see fit to attack the Fisher King after the battle with the Trashman's Bane, he lets the spirits loose and escapes into the Sunken City. He is not capable of withstanding another fight and uses his superior knowledge of the area to find a group of Shebans in the area or a nearby Watch patrol.

TIPS AND RESOURCES

The Fisher King is preparing himself for his evening devotional to Tera Sheba when his spirit tormentors inform him of the attack. If for some reason the spirits are quieted, this is where the Fisher King is found, bowing before an altar of Tera Sheba and tracing symbols of the Goddess on the floor with charcoal.

The spirits that are bound to the Fisher King are the souls of the innocent people he slew in Tera Sheba's name. They returned to torment him, their hatred and need for vengeance more powerful than the Sea of the Lost itself. They protect the Fisher King for the simple reason that if he is killed, his torment and suffering will end. To that end, a special love-hate relationship between the Fisher King and the spirits has developed; the people that he executed are now his only companions, and he theirs. Normally, the Fisher King holds little control over the spirits, but he does have the ability to prevent them from manifesting in the real world, at tremendous cost to himself.

Should the PCs impress the Fisher King (*Weaver's discretion*) he begins keeping track of them and may become an occasional ally and contact for the Characters.

Statistics and a write-up for the Fisher King can be found in *Weaver's Resources*, p. 91.

BETWEEN QUESTS: BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE

My decisions have never been driven by popular consent, nor have they been influenced by any sort of loyalty. There is no question that I am the embodiment of law in the Nation. Joan has overstepped Her bounds and violated the law, and such an act must be dealt with properly.

- The Judgment of Tera Sheba

BEHIND THE SCENES: BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Joan is placed on Trial in a closed court and only the Fatimas and one Chosen from each Tribe are allowed to participate. Tera Sheba formally accuses Joan of treason and suggests that Her actions are not in accordance with the plans of the Goddess. Tera Sheba, with the support of the Fates and over the fervent objections of Agnes, calls for a Trial. If Joan is successful then She must have the blessing of the Goddess. If Joan fails, then Her actions were obviously against the natural order and She will be punished accordingly. Even though it is not explicitly stated, there is a definite chance of Joan's destruction. The Fatimas know that Joan's will and the honor of Her Tribe are in question, and She will not return if unsuccessful. Agnes continually objects to the Trial and is the only Fatima that brings up the possibility of Joan's death. Eva shushes Agnes before the young Fatima is able to do something drastic.

Beyond the formal accusation by Tera Sheba, the meeting is quick and to the point. Tera Sheba asks Her Sisters to suggest an appropriate Trial to test Joan. Baba Yaga quickly responds and calls for a journey into the River of Dream and the Sea of the Lost to recover those souls She Herself cannot find. Tera Sheba and the Fates agree that this is an appropriate task, and leave to make preparations for a ceremony to formally commence Joan's leave-taking. Baba Yaga leaves with the task of deciding which souls Joan will search for during Her test.

Joan is surprisingly quiet during the trial and only speaks when directly asked a question. Agnes repeatedly tries to goad Joan into a verbal confrontation with Tera Sheba, but Joan seems resigned to the Trial as Her best chance to justify Her actions. Eva is the most adamant of the Fates on the topic of the Trial, with Baba Yaga and Magdalen falling in behind Their Sister. Dahlia, like Joan, is quiet through most of the trial, knowing that any objections on Her part will fall on deaf ears, since Joan refuses to muster the courage to defend Herself.

Awarnak Kil'on stands at Joan's side during the meeting. He is silent, like his Fatima, throughout the proceedings, but his emotion-filled eyes betray his anger at Tera Sheba and the gathered Fatimas for accusing Joan of treachery. Kil'on believes Tera Sheba and the Fates are the ones betraying the Nation with their 'Trial.' When he emerges from the chambers he no longer holds his anger in check, and shares the news with his friends and the leadership of the Joanites. Like Awarnak, the coming Trial incenses much of the Tribe of Joan. It does not take long for their anger and emotion to aid the spread of the news. Soon, all of Vimary learns of the Trial and its outcome.



HOOK: SIMULTANEOUS STRIKES CLIMAX

Besides the attempt on the Fisher King, attempts are made on the lives of Basyl Loren, Inquisitor Valed and Hal Ninva. The attack on Loren fails miserably, as the infiltrators are discovered well before they approach Loren's stronghold. Some of the Fallen Cell moving to kill Hal Ninva, the Tears of Blood, have second thoughts about the morality of their plans. Half of the Cell decides not to continue with the plan and the entire Cell turns on each other just before they arrive at Hal Ninva's home. When the quarreling is done, most of the Cell members refuse to continue with the mission. The remaining members of the Tears of Blood are left with a Cell that is under-strength and demoralized. Despite this, those left commence the attack, only to be surprised themselves by a Children of Lilith Cell visiting with Hal Ninva. The assassination attempt on Ninva fails. Inquisitor Valed, the third target, is away from his home on the initial night of the attack. When Valed returns to his home he discovers that it has been ransacked and that the assassins are still present. Valed, the only major casualty of the Night of Crimson Tears, dies the morning after most of the attacks.

The Weaver should feel free to seed this information as part of the rampant rumor-mill that engulfs Horn and Haven as the Night of Crimson Tears closes.

SCENES

The Weaver, if she so chooses, can involve the Characters in any one of the assassination attempts. The easiest way to involve them is the attack on Hal Ninva. Hal Ninva hears of the PCs' exploits via one of his informers and invites the PCs to his home. Ninva plans to ingratiate himself with the PCs' Cell and to tries to convince them of his cause to supplant the Grand Council. The PCs will, of course, then be present for the attack. In effect, the PCs replace the Children of Lilith Cell that would otherwise thwart the attempt on Ninva.

Similarly, the PCs may hear of the plans to attack Loren or Valed and it falls to them to somehow get word to either of these individuals before the fateful night. Loren has a set routine and doesn't stray much from his usual habits, but getting to him will prove difficult. On the other hand, Inquisitor Valed is a minor player in Tera Sheba's Tribe and will be easier to track down. Valed is quite disdainful of the PCs' outcast status and may even be outright accusatory.

In either case, the Weaver can easily make the attempts on Basyl Loren or Inquisitor Valed much more of a legitimate threat. Instead of happenstance preventing their assassinations (in Valed's case, only for a day), the PCs' actions can become the defining factor. The PCs probably will remain removed from both Loren and Valed until the very last moment, since both are likely to be hostile towards the PCs if they're not given any hard evidence that what the Characters say is true. This may create an interesting scene if the PCs develop a tense history with either Valed or Loren, only to appear just in the nick of time to save the target. The PCs could find themselves talking their way out of being taken captive by the person they just saved.

The battles commence with or without the PCs attending, and, lacking any PC intervention, Valed falls. Either way, the PCs hear afterwards of the relative successes or failures of the Night of Crimson Tears.



AFTERMATH

The result of the Night of Crimson Tears is that tribal society, in particular the leadership, is outraged as well as scared of what the Fallen are capable of doing. In their minds, many of the worst fears of the Tribes are verified. Basyl Loren, for one, tries to put the event behind him and continue on with his daily life. There is just too much going on elsewhere for him to break his pattern. When the Inquisitors discover Valed's emaciated body, the guild calls for revenge against the treacherous Fallen, though their saber rattling is overshadowed by the events surrounding Joan's Trial. Hal Ninva takes his near miss with death as a sign that he must redouble his work in maneuvering the Eighth Tribe towards his own goals.

Despite all the commotion and fright the Night of Crimson Tears creates, a good number of the planned killings can be averted. If the Weaver wants to make the Night of Crimson Tears more bloody, then additional targets may be nominated. Specific targets may include Mek of the Jackers, any number of prominent Shebans, or any member of the Grand Council (particularly either Nostra Guy'on or Iris Medi'on).

Should the Night of Crimson Tears prove more 'productive' than originally planned, Tera Sheba becomes outraged over the deaths of Tribals at the hands of the Fallen. She calls for the executions of a number of Fallen prisoners currently held by the Watch; particularly those caught attempting to attack Loren.

HOOK: VISIONS OF THE ACCUSED SCENES

A few days after the encounter with the Fisher King, on the same day that Tera Sheba calls for the Trial, the PCs enter a common dream. While the PCs are asleep they are pulled into a dream where they receive images of the recent meeting of the Fatimas. In the dream, one of the PCs (the most belligerent and argumentative, in the Weaver's opinion) is placed on trial. The other PCs take the role of those accusing the PC on trial of heresy and treachery. The Weaver may also participate to help prod the trial along.

The PC on trial is accused of treason, of giving over information to the 'enemy.' The PC must defend herself from the accusations to the best of her ability. In the end she is judged guilty, regardless of how well she defends her actions. The punishment is held pending the condemned's ability to complete an undefined task. The task is never suggested, since the dream ends abruptly at that moment.

Obviously, the PC's Cell recreates the Trial of Joan, leaving out a few of the specifics, but still providing them with an idea of what happened. It falls to the Weaver to make a few notes on cards to give to the Players to help prompt them into their roles. Utilizing some of the Cell's recent past and memorable moments will be a great boon to this scene. This is an opportunity for the PCs to revisit a number of events throughout their collective history. The more specific the events brought up and questioned, the more probable the chance that the Players will take this scene and run with it.

The one scene is that of the trial hall, a crumbling high-rise building in the middle of Bazaar that has recently been cleared of a Z'bri Joh'an. The building has had many of its lower floors removed to create a huge meeting room of sterile concrete and stone. The PCs' forms are so large in the dream that they take up one full floor. Had not the lowest floors been removed, the PCs would be too large to fit, as they seem to be easily ten to fifteen feet tall. They carry no weapons.

CLIMAX

The PC on trial, representing Joan, must repeatedly defend actions she undertook and try to convince the Weaver of the truth behind her convictions. The Weaver should lead the attack on the PC, revealing a few tidbits of the actual trial by occasionally explaining scenes similar to Joan's Trial, but with different voices coming from the PCs' mouths. The Weaver should encourage the other Characters to join in chastising the Character on trial.

AFTERMATH

Should the PC in Joan's place perform spectacularly then she should be rewarded, most likely with a temporary aura around her that makes the PC much more amiable to Joanites. The guilty verdict is unavoidable, however, no matter how well the Character representing Joan role-plays. Joan is found guilty and unfortunately, there is nothing the PCs can do to prevent this.



1. Against the Deluge

HOOK: ON THE OTHER SIDE

The Characters may decide that working within Joan's plan and averting the Night of Crimson Tears is not desirable. Some Cells may just not like the NPCs involved, particularly Joan or the Fisher King, or see an opportunity to achieve their own goals by aiding the events of the Night of Crimson Tears. This is quite possible, though not in the best interests of the Eighth Tribe, Vimary, or the plot of **Warrior Unbound**.

Still, if the PCs decide to embark on such a series of missions, the Weaver should be prepared.

SCENES

If the PCs agree with many of the Herite ideals, then the meeting with the Trashman's Bane will probably be a converging of like-minded Cells. Instead of fighting the Herites, the PCs may instead try to work with them after they learn about the upcoming assassinations. If Jonas believes the PCs' sincerity about distrusting Joan and Her motivations, then he will be more than happy to gain the Characters' support. However, Jonas is not normally a trusting soul and will want the new Cell close by until the time of the attack.

The attack will go as planned, with the Cells crossing the Great River and assaulting the Tower. However, with so many Characters and NPCs attacking the Tower the Weaver may see fit to add more spirit defenders to the Tower (one per PC is appropriate).

SPIRIT DEFENDERS:

Attributes: AGI +2, BLD +1, FIT +1, WIL +2, STR +1, HEA +1, STA 35, UD5

Skills: Combat Sense 2/0, Dodge 2/+2, Hand to Hand 2/+2

Special Abilities: Claws (x5 damage), Float (20m/round), Intangibility (the spirit may fade into and out of the River of Dream at the beginning of a given round. While in the River of Dream they cannot be attacked by anything in the Physical Realm).

CLIMAX

The battle in the Tower will be a tough one. The defenders are mostly spirits and can jump into and out of the Physical Realm at will. The PCs and their allies will have to be quick on their feet to race through the cramped quarters of the Tower, find the well-prepared Fisher King and slay him before they themselves are killed.

The Fisher King will not be an easy target; he is a veteran of the Liberation and was once one of the most deadly men alive. His skills are still formidable. He will set a number of traps for the invaders to further slow their progress into his Tower.

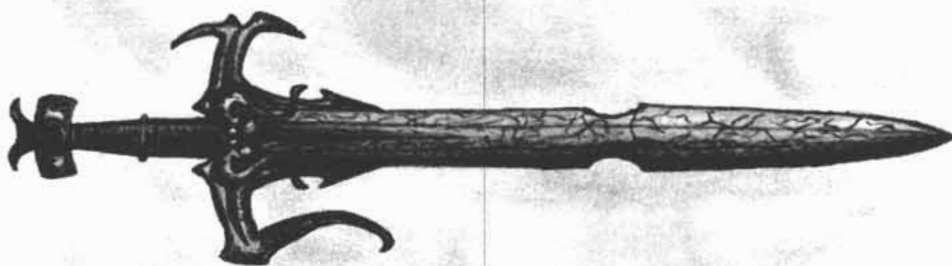
If they are successful, Jonas will propose that they set the Tower on fire as the two Cells retreat to announce to all of Vimary that the Fisher King is dead. As the boats row away, the Trashman's Bane leaves what seems to be a hundred pieces of paper inscribed with the Herite symbol floating in the water around the burning Tower.

AFTERMATH

Tera Sheba will be outraged and will set Her Tribe to the task of tracking down the Trashman's Bane and the Characters' Cell. The Shebans will want vengeance and they will go to the ends of Vimary to find it. With Joan no longer working as the right hand of Tera Sheba, the Wise One is prevented from calling another Inquisition against the Eighth Tribe, and instead embarks on Her mission to exile Joan. Calls for the Trial and Quest. **Warrior Unbound** can continue normally from here.

The PCs now have an ally in the Trashman's Bane, but have gained Tera Sheba Herself as a potent adversary. Sooner or later, the Characters will have to pay for their deed. Within the Herite faction of the Eighth Tribe, the PCs will be heralded (with the Trashman's Bane) as heroes, the saving grace to the Night of Crimson Tears.

Incidentally, it is through this act that Halos may later hear of the PCs and then call on their aid.





Chapter 2: Lost and Found

I was born of a love between Brother and Sister, and came to lead the successors of man. I love my Tribe, just as Joan and Joshua loved each other. That exquisite faith is so powerful that even death and destruction cannot hold it in check.

- Lilith the Liberator, False Fatima of the Eighth Tribe



QUEST TWO: LOST AND FOUND

The PCs are approached by Halos and asked to grant him a favor. Castor, a friend of Halos', has gone missing. Castor vanished a few nights previously, during the Night of Crimson Tears, and Halos is beginning to become concerned. Halos knows that Castor was traveling to a Skyrealm in Bazaar that was supposed to be clear of Z'bri presence. When the Characters find the remains of Castor they also discover a Z'bri plot to destroy Joan in order to open a rift in the Fold. The PCs then venture through the River of Dream to find the Z'bri, known as the Blooded Blades, and begin to make plans to destroy the beasts.

QUEST PRELUDE

Only a few days have passed since the events of the Night of Crimson Tears. Bazaar and the Nation are still in a state of shock. Fearful, many Tribals now return to their homes well before dark. The Fallen that venture into Bazaar and Tribal lands are not treated well. Despite the unsuccessful end of the Night of Crimson Tears, the Nation is still scared and confused by the Eighth Tribe. Many Tribals maintain violent attitudes towards the Fallen. Public humiliations and arbitrary hassling of the Outcasts is a common occurrence. Occasionally, the bullying gets out of hand and an Outcast is physically beaten by a mob. Otherwise quiet and unassuming Tribals react dangerously to the state of flux that is gripping Vimary. The Eighth Tribe is an easy target, and the Fallen suffer for their status as second-class citizens.

The Watch does not hesitate to confront any clearly identified Fallen. However, the Watch is one of the more subdued groups in Vimary at this time, and stay their hands more frequently in respect to their Fatima's wishes. Confusion grips much of the Watch over what is happening to Joan and the apparent sacrifice She is willing to undergo for the Eighth Tribe. This confusion prevents most of the Watch from succumbing to reactionary thought like the rest of Vimary. In fact, it is the sudden moderation and hesitation of the Watch and Joanite society at large that helps keep Bazaar from falling into a full-blown riot.

Preparations are made for Joan's Quest and the coming mission is common knowledge across Vimary due to Awarnak Kil'on's fury. Rumors abound as to who or what Joan will have to search for, and most everyone has a strong opinion about the matter, and is willing to share it — at the top of their lungs, if they have to. Much of normal life in Vimary, and Bazaar particularly, slows to a halt. The coming Trial is the first time a major split between the Pillars has been seen by the Tribes, and Tribal society as a whole is under a considerable amount of stress.

Should Joan prove successful in Her Quest, those banished from Tribal society will be allowed back into the Nation. Every Tribal knows that when a Fatima revokes Her love during the banishment ceremony it is an irreconcilable break. What Joan proposes is unthinkable to many within the Nation. On the other hand, should Joan fail, Tribal society will still be forever changed. Joan has been the loyal servant of Her other Sisters, a mantle She is not willing to bear any longer.

The Tribes have undergone a number of challenges to their way of life before, but nothing this shattering has occurred since the Liberation.

Across the Great River, the scene is very different. The effort to rebuild Hom and Haven takes a frenzied pace. Numerous Joanites venture over into the Fallen lands during the day and lend their considerable skills to help rebuild what they at one time destroyed. The steady clanking of Joanite and Fallen blacksmiths is heard throughout the islands at all hours. Joan's Quest and Trial galvanizes many of the younger Joanites, and the Eighth Tribe takes the opportunity to repair some of the ill will between the two groups. The Children of Lilith in particular go out of their way to make sure that the Joanites feel welcome. Those of the Eighth Tribe who still bear grudges against the Joanites are surprisingly subdued, their complaints drowned out or ignored by the majority of the outcasts. Compared to the chaos of Bazaar, Hom is a sanctuary of peace.

In the shadows, the Guides are quite active. Even the normally reclusive Halos is seen during the day, participating in repair efforts that are surprisingly normal. Unfortunately, a good friend of the Guides, a man by the name of Castor, is missing. Much of the increased activity on the part of the Guides is due to their quiet and methodical tracking down of Castor's whereabouts.



WEAVER'S SYNOPSIS

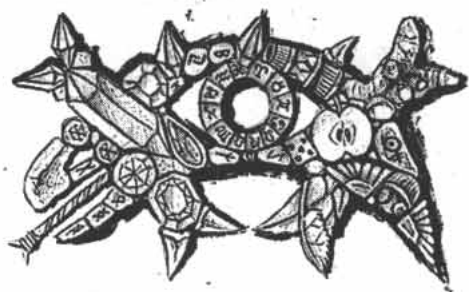


ACT ONE: A MISSION FROM ABOVE

It is those times that hold us captivated that are the most dangerous. We look one way, entranced with the wonders of the world, while powerful dangers move through the shadows, preparing to strike. Distraction is one of our greatest enemies; it saps away the will for change by creating a thin veneer of superficial flux. The Liberation is one such event, when our attention drew outside of ourselves and we reaped the consequences. While humanity looked upon all its accomplishments in destroying the Camps, they failed to see that the last titanic battle had yet to be fought. While congratulating each other on their grand triumph, Joshua was struck down, the single dark moment that forever marred the brilliance of humanity's freedom.

We must remain vigilant, even when the rigors of the world push us away from our duty.

- Halos, the Book of Foundations



The PCs are approached by a respected NPC, most probably the Guide named Halos. Halos is reserved, though he appears distracted and in a bit of a hurry. Halos asks the PCs in no uncertain terms for aid, for a dear friend of his has gone missing. They need to track down Castor, a friend of the Guides. Castor is, in fact, a Guide as well and was last known to be searching for a Z'bri group calling themselves the 'Blooded Blades' who were performing experiments on the Fold. Should they agree to search, Castor is dead by the time the PCs find him.

The Characters' exploits with the Fisher King (deeply connected to the River of Dream himself) during the Night of Crimson Tears brought their Cell to the attention of the NPC asking for their aid; Halos, in this case. Halos would normally undertake the search himself, confident in his abilities to find Castor and bring him back to Hom. However, already Halos has a number of pressing duties to perform and requires aid in this, the more mundane of his activities.

When the PCs accept Halos' proposal they are directed to Bazaar. Castor was last seen preparing to travel to a Skyrealm that was known to have a number of Joh'an active within its walls only a few weeks ago, though it is believed that the Joh'an have abandoned the tower; a fact which led Castor to travel there alone. The PCs travel to the Skyrealm and discover the signs of an intricate ritual throughout the Skyrealm. The ritual is an attempt by the group of Z'bri to tear open a hole in the Fold.

The PCs then discover that the ritual is not yet completed and that the soul of the deceased Castor is the final, necessary component to end the ceremony. The PCs' presence complicates the ritual for the Blades, bringing Dream into the pocket of non-Dream created by the beasts within the River, and the energies of the Sundering get out of hand. The ritual fails and the Blades become enraged by the PCs' intervention. The Z'bri attack forces the Characters to make a hasty retreat with the information they learned and run for their lives.

The Z'bri, in a realm formed by the forcing the flows of Synthesis away from an area within the River of Dream, bind Castor's spirit into a Z'bri heartstone before their ritual is interrupted by the Characters. If the PCs are observant, they can acquire the stone before they are forced to run.

Despite the PCs' intervention, the Z'bri ritual is still considered a success by the Beasts involved and they decide to continue on with their plan to destroy the Fold, hoping to escape back to the Seed.

INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

Normally, the Night of Crimson Tears serves as a convenient backdrop with which to bring the Characters into the plot of **Warrior Unbound**. However, if they refused to aid the Fisher King (or another target) during the assassinations or take a more belligerent role in the Night, then all is not lost.

If the Characters were not involved in aiding the Fisher King nor with the events of the Night of Crimson Tears, Halos' motivation for contacting the PCs will require a different justification, one more in line with the specifics of the Weaver's Cycle. The Weaver may select any significant deed performed by the PC Cell that may have come to the attention of the mysterious Guide. Time is of little matter to Halos normally, so the deed that captures his attention may have occurred well in the past and he is only now following up on it. Halos' work with the River of Dream may have granted him a prophetic vision that is fulfilled by the Characters' Cell. Perhaps he sees a vision that corresponds to the Cell's name, or a specific Character's tattoo. Remember that Halos is enigmatic, but not without motivations of his own. The Weaver should make sure those motivations are appropriate to her particular cycle and the Characters (and Players) involved.

ENCOUNTER WITH A LEGEND

Halos approaches the Characters and asks them to find Castor. Castor has long been a friend of his, and was supposed to meet with Halos two days previously. Halos knows about Castor's general intentions before he disappeared, and willingly shares the information with the PCs.

Castor was apparently tracking a group of Z'bri calling themselves the **Blooded Blades**, who were performing a number of mystical rituals on the River of Dream and the Fold itself. Castor traveled to a Skyrealm, just on the outskirts of Bazaar, where he believed the Blooded Blades conducted their foul experiments. Halos wishes to find Castor quickly, before Joan begins Her Quest into the River of Dream. He has seen the future, he claims, and the PCs' role is pivotal.

The Skyrealm is located fairly close to the building where Joan's Trial was recently held, and should be relatively easy for the PCs to find.

Halos can be persuasive if his presence itself is not enough to convince the Cell to undertake the mission at hand. Halos is happy to provide compensation, should the PCs need extra motivation. He is able to part with any number of barter items that may entice the Characters into fulfilling his request (see the **Companion** pp. 93-98). Specifically, Halos has a large amount of Yagan and Magdalite trading goods and can get access to just about any mundane item a Character may want (though most Keeper goods are not considered 'mundane'). Halos has a number of mystical artifacts and trinkets, but is hesitant to part with them until the PCs have proven their commitment to finding Castor.

If asked about Castor, Halos makes it sound like Castor is an accomplished Z'bri hunter and to some degree, this is true. Castor is actually a Guide and Halos is not so much a friend to Castor as he is a colleague. Halos expected Castor to aid him in his upcoming rituals associated with Joan's Trial, and time is getting short. Halos is tight-lipped about Castor's Guide status and refuses to reveal this fact to the PCs.

Before they part, Halos plants a memory of his into the minds of each of the Characters. This memory gives them a crystal-clear mental picture of what Castor looks like and how his voice sounds.

OTHER OPTIONS

Halos is not the only individual that can begin the Characters on this Quest, just the most convenient. Should the PCs not find Halos agreeable, or if Halos was removed from the Weaver's story for whatever reason, then a number of substitutes can be used in his place. One of the more obvious and easiest to use is Den-Hades. A Guide herself, Den-Hades has much of the same ambitions and goals as Halos. Little in the way of changing the story is needed if Den-Hades provides a suitable substitute.

If the PCs befriended Molly, the former Cell member of the Trashman's Bane, then she can be of some help finding Castor. Castor recently hired the Trashman's Bane to scout the Skyrealm and to possibly track down an artifact, a dagger used by the Blooded Blades during their acts of sacrifice. Molly was with the Trashman's Bane when they explored the Skyrealm, though they never found the artifact. She volunteers her services to help the PCs enter the Skyrealm and may encourage the Characters to look for the missing Castor. Molly sees Castor as a sort of father figure and since she is on the run from the Trashman's Bane, she is looking for someone with whom she can feel safe. Since Molly is familiar with the last-known whereabouts of Castor, the Weaver may use Molly as an instigator for the mission.

Another substitute for Halos is the Marian, Dominic. In Dominic's case he can serve as an excellent catalyst to the story if the PCs are distrustful of the Guides or of Synthesis in general. Dominic normally appears later in the story of **Warrior Unbound**, but his entrance can be moved up if the Weaver sees an opportunity or a need. Dominic, in his role as a healer, has treated a number of Castor's wounds (supposedly from Gek'roh hunting expeditions). He is simply a friend to the Guide and like Halos, has not been seen nor heard from his friend in some time. If Dominic is used in this way, then his role later in **Warrior Unbound** will not require much modification, except that the PCs will already know of Dominic and his Cell, the *Bereaved's Tears*, before they would normally be encountered.

STRANGERS IN A FAMILIAR LAND THE SKYREALM

The PCs travel to Bazaar looking for the Skyrealm where Castor was last seen traveling. Bazaar itself is not technically closed to the Fallen at the time, but any who try to go there undoubtedly find themselves harassed by the people milling about the great city. Unfortunately for the Characters, much of the population of Bazaar is not participating in their normal daily routine and many of them have extra time and attention to devote to harassing any outsiders that find their way into Bazaar. The safer places around Bazaar are those areas frequented by the Joanites and the Dancers. Agnites are particularly amenable to the Fallen at this time, after the events of *Trial By Fire* and do what they can to get the attention of any of the Eighth Tribe who pass by Playground. Even the Agnite Barrens, normally stoic and reserved, know that big things are happening and find themselves caught up in the excitement and anticipation of the coming Quest. Since the PCs' Skyrealm goal is near one the entrances to Playground, they are nearly assured of encountering an Agnite in one form or another.

Tribal society is in flux. Beyond happy Agnite Barrens, there are a number of subtle changes occurring in and around the island. Of course, the slow reconciliation between the Fallen and the Joanites is still underway. A number of Evans venture into Bazaar from Sanctuary and the surrounding fields and hear of the events first hand, often becoming outraged. Most Evans abhor this kind of flux in society and look for an easy scapegoat, someone to punish. Yagans are introspective and keep to themselves, while the Magdalites by-and-large act as would be expected, conducting business as usual. The Children of Magdalen revel in the rumor-mongering that is going on, as well as the increased patronage of their hostels. Many Tribals drown their worries and concerns in the arms of a convenient lover or in the haze of some Magdalite concoction. Surprisingly, many of the Dahlians are reserved compared to the activities of the other Tribes.

The Characters may hear of lynchings in Bazaar before they travel into the Nation, and decide to take a more clandestine route. If the PCs decide to sneak into Bazaar they may have an even harder time of it, especially if they are discovered. There are elements within the Watch that are still loyal to the ideals of Tera Sheba, and others in the Watch are quite torn between the different aspects of Joan. Some embrace the seemingly new, progressive direction, while others doggedly hold onto the image of Joan as the right arm of the law. It is entirely up to the Weaver as to the type of Watch members the PCs run across if they are caught trying to sneak into Bazaar.

The Skyrealm the PCs are looking for is located near the entrance to Playground. A token honor guard patrols the area around the structure, since Joh'an Z'bri are known to have recently occupied the highest reaches of the decaying building. The Characters need to formulate a plan to get into the upper levels of the Skyrealm, which may prove difficult because much of the lower levels of the Skyrealm are quite treacherous. The lower levels of the structure are unstable from disuse and little meaningful care over the many years. If the PCs are not careful, they may cause a cave-in or find themselves crashing through a weakened part of the floor. To compound matters, a guard patrol occasionally makes the rounds through the building. If the PCs take their time and are observant they can determine the predictable pattern of the patrols as well as discover the safest routes to travel through the lower half of the Skyrealm.

The Skyrealm itself is about ten stories tall, with the bottom five floors rotten and decaying. The top five floors have long been the provinces of a group of Joh'an, an occupation which, coupled with the instability of the lower levels, has kept the Tribes from settling in the building. Only the first three floors have anything resembling stairs to get from one level to another. These 'stairs' are merely rickety ladders precariously balanced on the dirty but slick concrete. The ladders are the property of the Watch, in place to help the guards patrol the building (one patrol will use each ladder each hour). Should the PCs steal a ladder from the first three levels to help them get to the higher levels, then the Watch is alerted that someone or something is within the confines of the building.

Debris, broken concrete, ripped shards of cloth and carpet, old human refuse and feces (left from some squatters chased off a few days ago) and other remnants of a dying building litter the floors of the lower half of the Skyrealm. At points the refuse gets to knee height and is quite precarious to navigate. The Watch guards have cleared a number of paths through the junk and these are by far the easiest ways to make it through the building. All sorts of vermin nest in the trash found throughout the building and will make a commotion should the Characters disturb their lairs.

The Weaver should have the PCs explain the methods of their entrance, how they plan to avoid the guards and their ideas for getting up the first five floors. A number of Sneak and Notice checks (Threshold 3) are appropriate, as are Agility (Threshold 4) tests to see if the PCs accidentally start a cave-in, step into a nest, or tumble into the debris. Investigation and Combat Sense tests (Threshold 5) can allow the PC to find out if a certain area before them may pose a hazard. A Character will have to be nimble (Dodge + AGI, Threshold 5) to avoid being crushed should they cause a cave-in or have the floor give way underneath them.

When the PCs make it to the upper levels, they will find quite a different scene from the mess of the lower levels. The structural integrity of the building is quite solid here. Bare concrete and stone dominates floors five and six. Scrawled across the concrete are a number of arcane symbols. These symbols are the work of Z'bri and serf hands and it seems as if the artists ran out of room and were forced to draw on top of previous writings. The symbols on top of symbols create a busily disturbing, almost entrancing collage. Geometric symbols crisscrossing each other in ways that hint of three dimensions are on every surface throughout floors five and six. Large circles, forty hands long, with a stylized symbol depicting the Melanis Z'bri sect, are the only symbols not marred or drawn over repeatedly. Upon closer inspection, the PCs discover that the symbols are drawn in a number of different mediums, some of the oldest in human blood and charcoal. More recent symbols, particularly the large circles on the floor, are drawn in a pasty liquid of flesh and feces. An odor, not overpowering, but definitely noticeable, is present on these floors, making the huge empty rooms smell like an overused and under-maintained outhouse.

Holes in the floors and ceilings where stairwells and elevator shafts once were provide the easiest method of getting between the levels. Beginning with the fifth floor, the windows are open to the air outside instead of boarded up as they are throughout the lower floors. A chill wind, despite the time of day, is felt if the Characters approach any of the gaping holes that were once windows. However, the wind cannot seem to make it farther than a few feet into the hollows of the floors, which leaves a stagnant feeling to the rooms and accentuates the smell of human feces and remains.

THE UPPER LEVELS

The seventh, eighth and ninth floors are the homes of the three members of the Blooded Blades. The seventh floor is the home of Issooc, the Sangis member of the Blades. Issooc fancies himself a leader of the Keepers, and has a number of their more archaic artifacts strewn about his floor. Issooc is not a tidy Z'bri and leaves his collectibles wherever he loses interest in them. His bed is located in the center of the floor and is composed of dead, bloated and decaying bodies of humans from every age group. The preserved bodies have been in contact for so long many have fused together into one huge lump of flesh. Other than the bed of dead bodies, there is little sign that this is the home of a Z'bri. Much of the artifacts and trinkets Issooc collects are much more mundane than might be expected of one of the beasts. A number of books in old Keep-speak are found all across the floor, many of which deal with ancient religious icons. One book, located in a puddle of runoff created by the bed of bodies, seems to be a collection of essays and random musings associated with dreams. Other Keeper artifacts include a number of pictures resting against the wall in broken glass frames and an ancient machine-altar (actually a Xerox machine that merely needs a power source to work). Issooc also maintains a fascination with dolls from the World Before and has a large pile of unclothed and dismembered dolls in one corner.

The eighth floor is home to Dah'am'pir. Dah'am'pir's level looks much more like one would expect from a Z'bri. Hundreds upon hundreds of chains hang from the ceiling. Most of the chains are of steel and iron, but a disturbing few are composed of glazed-over strands of flesh. Paper-thin sheets of human flesh create a number of sail-like contraptions connected by the flesh and iron chains. The many chains hanging from the ceiling, aided by the sails of skin, brush slightly against the concrete floor creating a noise almost like music. The chains are pushed into the stone of the ceiling like nails into wood. The walls host a number of Z'bri symbols much like those of floors five and six, though this time the symbols are carved directly into the stone in fluid, almost entrancing, motions. Many of Dah'am'pir's ideas and hypothesis on the Fold have been written down along the walls in a series of arcane symbols she and the Blades understand. The symbols are a creation of Dah'am'pir, using many of the Z'bri languages and glyphs as templates. She created the form of writing in order to protect the Blades' research. If a PC is familiar with the Z'bri and their writing (possessing Lore (Z'bri) or Lore (Melanis) at level 2 or above) she may be able to discern some of the meaning behind the symbols.

Most importantly, the symbols written across Dah'am'pir's level can be used as a translator for the rest of their writing, a sort of Rosetta Stone for the rest of the Blooded Blades' script. A considerable amount of the scrawl invented by Dah'am'pir is based on Keep-speak and Tribal, with a number of glyphs and pictograms expressing proper nouns. If the Characters are resourceful enough to break the code (repeated tests of CRE, KNO, Lore (Z'bri), Read/Write (any) and possibly Teaching — as well as a considerable amount of time) then they can use this knowledge to decipher some of the symbols on the fifth and sixth floors. The symbols on the lower levels talk of creating an imbalance in the physical world as well as the spiritual one to rend a tear in the Fold. In effect, the symbols on the first two Z'bri floors are one giant and on-going mathematical formula to calculate how to return to the Seed.

If the Weaver feels particularly generous, repeated rolls to see if the PCs can ascertain the meaning of the scrawl can be attempted each time they come across a new set of the writing.

The ninth level is home to Vezmal, a Melanis like Dah'am'pir. The entire floor is flooded with a giant pool of clear and viscous liquid. Small levies around the holes in the floor prevent the jelly-like substance from flowing away. The liquid is ankle-deep and is the only thing about the level that is noteworthy. It smells foul but is not quite recognizable. In fact, Vezmal considers the ichor one great piece of art, as well as a collection of knowledge. Vezmal has worked for years plucking out the eyes of Serfs and squeezing the vitreous humor from those eyes. The pool is the end result of his years of meticulous collection. Vezmal once read in one of Issooc's Keeper tomes that the eyes are the storehouses of knowledge, and, working on that assumption, Vezmal has been trying to create a library of sorts. He will be quite angry if one of the stone levies breaks and the ichor flows away.

BLOODSTAINS

When the PCs get to the upper-most level (the 10th floor) they find that the floor has recently been hastily cleared, save for a number of archaic and mysterious symbols, similar to the work of Dah'am'pir, scrawled across the walls. Crumpled in one corner of the floor, hidden in shadows, is the broken and emaciated body of Castor.

Castor's body looks like a rag doll, tossed haphazardly in the corner (much like Issooc's dolls). The bones in his corpse have been broken in a number of places, and his arms, legs and neck are all in very unnatural positions. His eyes have been removed, as have his finger- and toenails. His broken remains lack any moisture, his skin little more than paper-thin.

The Z'bri Taint within the room is palpable, but most of the physical evidence of their presence is gone. The Blades once used this floor as a common-room and research laboratory to prepare for their breaching of the Fold. In order to conduct the final and most ambitious experiment, they cleared the floor of everything except the few instruments they required. The Blooded Blades are dealing with both the Physical Realm and the River of Dream and want as little as possible to disrupt either world during their ritual.

The symbols across the wall are in the Blades' special script, this time written in charcoal and ash. If the PCs read the writing, they discover the three Z'bri have developed a complicated process by which the Beasts can create a pocket realm in the River of Dream devoid of Synthesis. In this realm, which was created by Sundering, the Z'bri are able to meld Castor's Synthesis with their own Sundering. Surprisingly, Joan and of the power of Her soul are specifically mentioned. Besides this revelation, the word 'Capal' is also understandable, though it is separate from the rest of the script.

As the PCs arrive on the top-most level of the Skyrealm, they stumble into the middle of the Blades' final experiment. The experiment is the culmination of many years of research and toil on the part of the three Z'bri. To return to the Seed, the Blades have researched the World Before in order to find clues about the Seed and Fold in ancient, more amenable (to the Z'bri at least) times.

Years ago, Issooc in his contact with the Keepers (they know him as Isaac), came across a number of texts that discussed the River of Dream and its relationship to the World of Flesh. The texts were from the point of view of a number of indigenous peoples of the World Before and though they did not mention the River of Dream specifically, Issooc realize that they were indeed discussing the link between Flesh and Spirit and the realm created by that link. Issooc shared this information with his brothers and, guided by the texts, they hypothesized that if they could disrupt the River of Dream in a certain way, then the balance between the Physical World and the Spiritual one would be in jeopardy. The ensuing unbalance would then be enough to rip a hole into the Fold, create a passageway through the Seed and finally return the three Z'bri to their home-realm. The passageway would last just as long as it took the two realms of Spirit and Flesh to come back into a semblance of balance.

To this end, the Blades prepared a number of experiments to attempt to unbalance the River of Dream, allowing them to rend a hole in the Fold. This is why the Blades captured Castor. Castor is a Guide, a spiritually powerful entity, and one who is particularly oriented towards the Fold. By destroying Castor's mortal casing and then trapping his soul inside a Z'bri heartstone, a small but significant imbalance in the River of Dream would be created. The River of Dream is a delicate realm, forever caught between the power of Flesh and Spirit, and the introduction of Castor's latent Synthesis and the Sundering of the heartstone could create a disruption in the flows of Dream that the Z'bri can then exploit.

To perform all this, the Blooded Blades have perfected a way to create a small, but powerful pocket-realm in the River of Dream where the powers of Dream and Synthesis can not intrude. Here, their powers of Sundering are quite powerful and allow them to introduce Synthesis and Sundering into the same space, with dangerous results.

The imbalance created using Castor's soul will be the first opportunity for the Blades to try to create a hole in the Fold, albeit a small one, but enough to prove whether their hypothesis works. If the experiment does indeed work then the Blades plan to enact the ritual on a larger scale, using Joan as their conduit, Her Synthesis clashing with their powerful Sundering in the pocket-realm. The Blades plan to attack Joan simultaneously in the Physical Realm and the River of Dream, destroy Her and create a hole large enough for the three to escape.

The Blades are just about to complete the ritual on Castor when the PCs enter, distracting the Z'bri and fouling the experiment. At first, the PCs are unaware of the ritual, since the Blades conduct the last stage of the experiment while in the River of Dream. Once the ritual is fouled, the Blooded Blades return to the Physical Realm in a rage and attack the PCs.

Besides the Z'bri taint and Castor's body, there is another clue that the PCs may uncover before the Z'bri attack. A number of feelings and thoughts, like a sixth sense, lead the PCs to believe that something out of the ordinary is occurring. If the PCs scour the room they find a bloodstain about the size of button. This bloodstain is still wet and for all appearances looks to have just spilled onto the floor. Touching the bloodstain will force a PC to fall immediately into a coma, her psyche transported to the River of Dream where the Blades are trying to complete their experiment.

If the PCs explore the River of Dream before they come across the bloodstain, possibly by using the Aspect of Dream Travel, then they will see three Z'bri, the Blades, huddled together, their spirit-forms struggling to push another spirit into an object held in their hands. The object looks to be a Z'bri heartstone and the something being pushed inside is the soul of Castor. This scene leaves little doubt as to who Castor's killers are. The Z'bri Vezmal will finish Castor's imprisonment as the other two begin quiet chanting to complete the ritual.

SOULSTONE

When Castor's soul is forced inside the heartstone, the Blades let fly with a number of Sundering abilities and a small floating portal is created. This hole is easily seen by anyone on the tenth floor in both the Physical World and in the River of Dream. A distortion effect surrounds the hole, much like the shimmering of intense heat. The portal creates a sound much like that of air escaping, and opens a small door between the two worlds of Dream and Flesh. It may take a little time for the PCs' eyes to adjust, but by looking at the rift they will see past the boundary between the Physical and Dream Realms. In effect, the Characters, if standing in the World of Flesh and looking into the hole, can see into the River of Dream and vice versa.

The Z'bri then bring their full attention upon the Cell. The arrival of the PCs and the burst of Dream that they inadvertently create distracts the three Z'bri and prevents them from fully concentrating on their ritual. As a result, the portal grows no larger than an outstretched hand, and then collapses upon itself.

With the experiment ended and nothing holding it any longer in the River of Dream, the Z'bri heartstone with Castor's soul in it returns to the World of Flesh. With the arrival of the heartstone the PCs will feel a huge influx of Spiritual and Synthesis energy. Shortly thereafter, the Z'bri return as well. The Characters should only have a few moments between the arrival of the heartstone and the arrival of the Z'bri to react.

Their experiment fails just as success seemed to be within their grasp, and the Z'bri grow outraged. Back in their own bodies, the Z'bri erupt from the walls surrounding the PCs (the Sangis Issooc used Appeasement to mold the Z'bri into and onto the walls to protect and hide their bodies while in a trance) and unleash their Sundering powers. The three Z'bri are angry as well as scared. They are scared that the PCs may have uncovered their entire plot (they do not know how much the Cell has learned) and will now do what they can to force a Character into revealing how much they know. Dah'am'pir is particularly enraged and constantly screams for them to "tell what they know," and that "they can never save Her!" (the 'Her' in this case, being Joan)

The Blades are as strong as the Weaver needs them to be, suggestions for their powers are located in *Weaver's Resources* (pp. 84-87). The three Z'bri are capable and powerful in their own right and the Characters should realize early on that this is a fight that they are unprepared for, and cannot win. If the PCs are observant then they may also discern that this is not the last step towards the Z'bri's goal.

If the Cell looks like they are going to engage the Blooded Blades in any meaningful combat, the Weaver should make sure the PCs know what they are going up against. Dah'am'pir is particularly menacing, muscular beyond anything the Characters have seen. Issooc carries a huge and wicked-looking sword, and wields it in such a way that he looks to be easily the match of the best PC warrior. Around all three Z'bri, the air is almost flooded with Sundering. Even before the PCs engage the Blades, they must fight off the powerful effects of the Z'bri's atmosphere.

The Blooded Blades are probably more than the PCs can handle right now.

Before the PCs make their escape from the Blades, they should have the opportunity to grab the heartstone. The time just after the experiment when the mystical object emerges into the physical world is an excellent opportunity for the Cell to acquire the heartstone. If the PCs are cautious with the stone, then Castor's soul will reach out to touch a Character's mind and beg for her help. If the group made contact with Halos in earlier scenes and had images of Castor implanted in their minds, then they will immediately recognize this call as originating from the man himself.

Another way to encourage the PCs to grab the artifact is to mention that it looks remarkably similar to other heartstones they may have seen (such as previous encounters with any Guides like Halos, Den-Hades or Malachai). Heartstones are rare and valuable artifacts to the Z'bri, the upper echelons of Tribal society (including the Fatimas) and especially for the Guides. If all else fails appeal to the PCs' sense of greed.

If the PCs decide to steer clear of the heartstone then the Weaver will need to take a different approach to give the Cell the necessary information about the Blades' plans. One way to do this is to have the NPC that asked for the Characters to find Castor (probably Halos) pay handsomely to track down the Z'bri and learn more about them. The NPC plans to extract justice at a later date and will need someone to find out about the Blades, their strengths, weaknesses, where they live, etc. From there the PCs can uncover the plot against Joan's life.

Another option is to have the Cell, when they least expect it, be ambushed by a large number of Serfs loyal to the Blooded Blades. If the Characters have the forethought to keep one of the Serfs alive, he will be able to tell the PCs about the Blooded Blades and their whereabouts at the laboratory in Capal. The Serf will not know what the Blades are planning, but will know that it involves the River of Dream and souls. Over the many years of service to the Blooded Blades he has seen other Serfs as their souls were ripped from their bodies and placed into crude receptacles.

Still another way to impart information if the Characters overlook something is to have a PC, during a particularly nasty nightmare, experience some of the thoughts of the Blooded Blades. Having previously come into contact with the Z'bri and their Sundering pocket in the River of Dream has altered the PC's ability to dream. To end the bestial nightmares and visions that they receive, the other members of the Cell need to delve into the River of Dream while the nightmare-plagued PC is asleep. There, they find a distortion surrounding the dreamer's 'anima' or dream-form, (see *Weaver's Resources* p. 76) for information on anima and dream-realms). The Cell must remove the distortion to end the dreams and nightmares (repeated tests involving WIL and CRE vs. a Threshold of 4). Once the distortion is removed the nightmares end, though the PC still retains the information she gained from those visions. They now know the way to the Laboratory and a portion of the Blooded Blades' plan to destroy Joan.

BEARING ILL TIDINGS

The PCs will eventually return from their harrowing experience with the Blades. With any luck they should have the heartstone in their possession, and be armed with an idea of what the Z'bri have planned. Regardless, the Cell should be encouraged to return to the individual who asked them to discover Castor's whereabouts.

When the PCs return to Halos and report what they've seen, Halos (or the Weaver's substitute) will immediately be suspicious of Castor's death, for the Joh'an of that particular Skyrealm were supposedly trustworthy. If the PCs recovered the heartstone and hand it to Halos, he taps into the stone to contact Castor's soul. Though Castor was sacrificed and his mind is gone, many of his perceptions imprinted on the stone and Halos can use those emotions and what is left of Castor's shattered psyche to recreate a few of Castor's memories.

Even without Halos, a considerable amount of information can be slowly gleaned from the heartstone. Though the Characters are probably not specifically equipped to delve into the inner workings of such an object, they should still be able to gain valuable information from the artifact. Synthesis is the best way to gain answers from the stone. The residual soul — though not the sentient mind — of Castor, forever trapped in the stone, will aid the PCs' endeavors if it can somehow be communicated that the PCs are trying to gain information to help him.

The Eminences of Recognition and Mystery will be useful in uncovering exactly what the heartstone is. Similarly, the Eminence of Inspiration will be quite helpful in revealing the Z'bri plot, as it revolves around the object. Empathy can also be used to touch Castor's residual emotions.

If the Aspect of Wonder is used on the stone, possibly in conjunction with the Eminence of Freedom, the heartstone could create itself a mouth with which to communicate. Such a creative use of Synthesis to solve a problem should be rewarded with information freely given (though the information may not be complete, or may be quite biased). If the PCs are creative and innovative then their mission should be made that much clearer. The stone knows what Castor and the Z'bri Viktanix (from whom the heartstone was created) know. If the PCs are resourceful they can gain access to that knowledge.

A Character (PC or NPC) with strong connections to the River of Dream can quickly become a valuable resource in uncovering the secrets of the heartstone. Most importantly, 'Castor' — what's left of him — knows the Blades have designs on attacking Joan and attacking soon. Castor was too disoriented throughout the experiment to know exactly what the Blades did, but he does know that the Z'bri are quite accomplished in Sundering and are fascinated with the River of Dream. Other than this, Castor knows very little and he can communicate only haltingly, suggesting that the Blades have another laboratory, though he has no idea where it is located. Should the Characters try to contact Viktanix, the Z'bri whose soul has become the heartstone, all he will be able to share is that the Blades' other laboratory is located on the outskirts of Capal.

Viktanix communicates exclusively in the form of visions and Castor will communicate in this form as well as with raw emotions. Neither can speak directly with the PCs and instead, the PCs will have to decipher the images and emotions expressed. The Weaver may want to reveal much of what is gleaned from the heartstone by drawing quick pictures and using single word adjectives. Visions may include images of Capal, a sprawling, walled city with twisting spires clutching at the dark and gloomy sky. Images portraying the Blooded Blades pushing away water-like flows of Dream may help to communicate their ability to create the pocket-realm devoid of Dream. Other visions may be of certain pieces of the Blades' script and an accompanying emotion that can help decipher that specific piece of writing. The translations of 'the Seed', 'the Fold', 'Destruction' and 'Joan' may be of particular interest to the Characters.

If this information is shared with Halos, then the normally reserved Halos is visibly shaken, though not for the reasons the Characters probably believe. Halos is beginning to get an idea of what the Blooded Blades are planning, and the potential damage that such a plan can wreak on the Fold and River of Dream is staggering.

Halos asks the Cell to keep on with the mission; to find the Z'bri and stop them. Halos suggests delving into the River of Dream, for the Blooded Blades have fled their Skyrealm and are sure to be well hidden in this world. Traveling to Capal via the Spirit World is also a safer option for the PCs, circumventing the physical dangers of the Outlands, the H'I Kar and Capal itself. Dream travel is still dangerous, as well as emotionally and mentally taxing, but the journey is quicker in the River of Dream.

After some time for preparation, Halos hands over small amulets, one for each PC. Similar in look and make-up to a Fatimal medallion, these amulets have a number of tribal symbols etched upon their surface, with the most prominent being that of the Guides. If the Characters have any background with the Guides then this symbol is easily identifiable. The amulets simulate the effect of the Yagan Aspect of Dream Travel, allowing the PCs not only to manifest their psyches in the River of Dream but to venture through it as well.

With or without the help from Halos, the PCs should realize that they have specific knowledge that makes them particularly suited to finding the Blades. While in the Skyrealm, the PCs felt the Taint, the unconscious after-effects following the use of Sundering, much like a spiritual stench left behind by the Z'bri. Since the Cell has 'seen' the Taint specific to the Blades, they will be able to recognize that specific Taint should they come into contact with it again. In fact, the Taint is much more prominent in the River of Dream, possibly further encouraging the Characters to make the journey to Capal using the River.

It is possible for the PCs to return to the Skyrealm and from there enter the River of Dream. If they do so then the trail of Taint left by the Z'bri will be faint, but in such quantity that Characters with good skills in Tracking and Notice (roll vs. a Threshold of 5) should be able to follow the trail to Capal. If the Cell did not uncover the existence of the laboratory in Capal by using the heartstone, then the discovery of the Taint trail may place them on the right track.

The day following the PCs' encounter with the Blooded Blades, Joan begins Her Quest. Rumors again abound, some of which speak of the possibility of Joan's destruction and what such an event would mean for the Nation. The Watch plans to guard the Trial Hall closely until Joan's return. At this point the PCs may be able to put the clues together and ascertain that the Blades have definite plans on attacking Joan, probably when She returns from Her journey.

TIPS AND RESOURCES

It should be kept in mind that Halos is merely a catalyst to get the PCs thinking along the right directions. The Characters, at this point, should have enough information to start putting everything together in the terms of the Z'bri plot. The key for the Weaver is to provide enough information scattered throughout the scenes so that the PCs are not left without an opportunity to uncover the plot for themselves. Halos, while powerful and inscrutable in his own right, should not be used to provide all the answers. If anything, Halos should merely nudge the PCs in the right direction, helping to fine-tune what information they already have and then possibly suggesting new avenues for them to explore.

There is a considerable amount of information to impart to the PCs. The Weaver should be quite aware of the coming scenes and prepare to deal with whatever the Cell decides. Nothing in the above Quest *must* be taken in order, and if the Weaver sees an opportunity to move locations or change time-tables while still imparting the same information, then she should do just that. Names and locations are not as important as the concepts and clues found in the Act.

The location of the Skyrealm found in *A Mission from Above* is intentionally kept ambiguous. It is possible to place the Skyrealm just about anywhere within Bazaar. If the Weaver so desires, the Skyrealm can cease to be a Skyrealm and instead become another complex, possibly underground or located in the Outlands. The original location of the Skyrealm, near one of the entrances to Playground and by a hidden Marian temple, is to help bring the PCs to encounter certain elements within the story. Locating the Skyrealm near Playground allows the PCs to come into contact with the Agnites and discover (or reaffirm)

that not all the Tribals outside of the Joanites are hostile to the Fallen. Statistics and more information on the Z'bri of the Blooded Blades can be found on pages 84-87 in the *Weaver's Resources*.

It is possible that the plot on Joan's life will be uncovered during the Act, using information from the heartstone in connection with the clues from the Skyrealm. The ramifications of the plot are staggering to anyone familiar with the role of the Fold and the River of Dream. The Blades are experimenting with a very fragile aspect of the world. Should their experiments continue on the scale they propose, then the balance between the Physical World and that of the Spiritual One is in great peril. If the Fold is ruptured irreparably then the worlds of Flesh and Spirit could collapse, an apocalypse of sorts far worse than the Fall. Normally this would be a preposterous thought, but if Joan is attacked while weakened from Her Quest and Trial, then the Blades' plans will bear fruit.

Statistics on Den-Hades, should she replace Halos, are found in the *Rulebook*, p. 100.

Statistics on the Watch should follow the Joanite Warrior template found in the *Companion*, p. 106.

ACT TWO: WHERE MEN FEAR TO TREAD

The River of Dream is not a bridge nor is it like a river, unlike what others may have told you. The place where you Dream is more akin to the waves of the Great River than anything else. Go there and watch those waves. You will see that they are formless, sometimes reaching into the sky and at other dipping into the River itself. The waves are never part of one world or the other, forever created and destroyed between places that they are not.

Like waves, the River of Dream is transition. It is neither here in the Flesh, with us, nor there, in the Spirit World, a place you cannot know.

-Baba Yaga, the Thousand Lessons



WEAVER SYNOPSIS

Now armed with a few thoughts and names gleaned from their encounter with the Blooded Blades, the PCs venture by way of the River of Dream to Capal. In the River of Dream the PC Cell is caught up in the dream of Valerie Ben'on, now tainted by the Flemis she has been fighting.

Recently, in **Word from the North**, Valerie did battle with a great collection of Flemis. Though she was defeated, she was able to escape with her life and cost the Flemis dearly. It is after this battle that she encounters the Characters.

Through their interaction with the nightmare, the PCs are able to orient themselves and complete the last leg of their journey. They discover the Blades' hideaway and the specifics of the plan to destroy Joan, create a large rift in the Fold and then return to the Seed. Moreover, the Cell learns of the Keeper allies of the Blades. Eventually, the Blades notice the PCs and they are forced to make a hasty retreat. The Characters can, however, leave with enough information to return to Vimary and prepare an ambush in order to stop the Blades from completing their plans.

THE BLESSING

Previously, at the end of *Bearing Ill Tidings*, the Characters received a number of amulets from Halos in return for their help in finding Castor. These amulets are more than a simple thank you; they are invested with powerful Dream abilities that will allow the PCs' psyches to enter the River of Dream even if they have no knowledge of Synthesis or Ritual. Halos instructs the Cell that they must be wearing the amulets while they are sleeping in order to utilize their powers.

If the PCs are not working with Halos or a closely-related NPC, then they may need another route into the River of Dream. If they know Emulaan the Poet, he will help the Cell in return for a small payment or favor. Using prolonged rituals, he can allow them to enter into the River of Dream as though they were using the Yagan Aspect of Dream Travel. Of course, if a PC has Dream Travel themselves, they may not have any need for help.

In any event, if the Cell is working with an NPC, then he prepares them for their travel, giving them pieces of advice on the River of Dream. Their ally makes it known that they are on their own since he will be quite occupied with Joan's Quest. He reassures them that traveling in the River of Dream is the fastest and safest way to reach Capal. He emphasizes that though they will not be able to physically reach Capal, their psyches will make the journey, which should be more than adequate for them to scout the area and search out the Blooded Blades.

Before the PCs leave, the Guide imparts a number of the memories he recovered from Castor into their minds. With the introduction of these memories the Characters view a series of disturbing images and must struggle to remain in control of their faculties.

The first image is that of Castor as his eyes are plucked away from his skull. The PCs experience this first hand, as if their own eyes are removed. Castor and the Characters scream for mercy, blood flowing freely down their cheeks from the empty sockets.

Abruptly the vision ends and a new one begins. This time, the PCs see Joan in a similar position. Her eyes are ripped from Her head as She screams for aid, Her arms hanging limply at Her sides.

The next image is of the Blades' script on a wall, specifically the pictogram that represents Capal. The Characters understand what the writing means, as if they always knew (though they will not automatically be able to read other parts of the language).

The final image they are left with is that of a young Castor kissing a girl for the first time. Once the PCs recover from the visions and begin puzzling over the memories and images, Halos sends them on their way.

THE BEACHHEAD

The Character's psyches leave their bodies and dive into the River of Dream. The Weaver should allow the PCs time to explore the limits of their new abilities. The Spirit World is much like the physical one, though more possibilities exist when it comes to movement. Senses like smell and taste, normally forgotten or secondary in the World of Flesh, become quite important in the River.

The specifics of the journey are left to the Weaver. A number of encounters with spirits are appropriate, however. By the end of the journey the Cell should be familiar with the more common denizens and concepts of the Spirit World (see *Weaver's Resources*, pp. 76-78.) The dangers of becoming caught in another Dreamer's dream realm should also become apparent, as should the relationship between the Dreamer and the pocket realm they create while dreaming.

This may be an opportunity for the less Synthesis-oriented PCs to explore aspects of the **Tribe 8** world that are normally closed to them. Allow the Characters to have a little fun, but make sure they are reminded that the River of Dream is a dangerous place and should not be taken lightly.

The journey takes the PCs through northern Vimary and into the Outlands, possibly through the Rust Wastes or the H'I Kar. The dreams and spirits that the Cell encounters should be appropriate to the areas they travel through.

If the Cell decides to avoid Dream Travel, or is not presented with the means to do so, then they must make the journey the old-fashioned way, through the Outlands. The Weaver should have the PCs trace their destination if they are familiar with the areas that will be traversed, or if they have any maps of the region.

If the PCs are unsure of how to get to Capal, or are concerned with the difficulty of the journey, it would be prudent for them to hire a guide. A number of Squats are excellent guides, and know the Outlands better than any Tribal or Fallen. Similarly, there is an unofficial guild of Joanites called the **Rangers** (see *Into the Outlands*, p. 12), who are well versed in the environs outside of Vimary. The Rangers know the hazards of traveling through the Outlands and are quite accessible to the PCs. This may be an excellent opportunity for the PCs to get close to a Joanite and find out their true feelings about the Trial and Quest of Joan.

Being assigned to the Rangers is usually seen as a punishment, a short step away from being outcast. Many of the Rangers are quite excited by the unfolding events and the reconciliation between the Joanites and Fallen, hoping their role in their Tribe may be bettered by the new developments. Other, more traditionalist Rangers, see the Quest as an affront to their positions, as many became Rangers to avoid becoming Fallen and now resent the growing closeness between the Outcasts and the Joanites.

As the journey unfolds the Weaver should select opposition and discoveries appropriate to the Cell. Gek'roh and Squat attacks are probably the most appropriate violent encounters for the PCs as they make their way towards Capal.

AGENDAS OF THE DEAD

While moving through the River of Dream the PCs make a fateful encounter. The Ghost of a recently departed member of Isaac's Chosen is wandering about, unsure of what to do. Confused and scared, the Ghost has begun to make its way towards Capal, where it encounters the PCs.

The Ghost, Artul, was a trusted member of the Keeper group known as Isaac's Chosen. He began to have doubts as to Isaac's divinity, and was punished severely for his lack of faith, the beatings leading to his death. He is beginning to think he was horribly mistaken and that Isaac could have led him to salvation instead of the waking hell he is caught in now.

The Characters may notice the smell of gunpowder that follows Artul even in death. However, this time they can notice that the smell is more than a simple annoyance, but it is also the spiritual mark of Isaac. Artul was at one time marked by *The Calling* (see *Horrors of the Z'bri* p. 91) and the residual dampening of his soul still is perceptible (PER, Threshold 6).

Artul will beg the PCs to "lead him to salvation." He has no idea what or where such a thing is, only that it is good and that he does not have it. He desperately wants to be put to rest and sees the PCs as the last, best chance he has.

Artul knows the general vicinity of where Isaac goes when he leaves the Keepers and can help correct the PCs' course. He does not know that the lab exists, merely the general direction it

is in. He knows all about Isaac and Isaac's Chosen and is willing to share his ideas that Isaac is not a Fatima. He has no idea what Isaac is (he has never before encountered a Z'bri), only that he seems more malicious than benevolent. Artul also knows that in the next few days Isaac plans to lead his followers to some new destiny, probably bringing them into contact with the Tribes. The 'Fatima' implied that the Keepers would be aiding him with some great 'miracle' upon their introduction to the Nation. Artul does not know exactly what the miracle is supposed to be, only that it greatly excited Isaac.

For Artul's statistics, use those for **Charles Ever-Weeping**, p. 80 of *Weaver's Resources*.

THE MAW OF MADNESS

The closer the PCs get to Capal, the more the dream-realms seem to increase with alarming regularity. With a bit of skill, the PCs are able to bypass most of them as they center in on the location of the Blades. The Taint that was faint in Vimary becomes more and more pervasive as the Characters journey closer and closer to the City of Hate. Normally, the specific taint of the Blades would be unremarkable against the combined atmosphere of the many Z'bri in the Capal area. However, the regularity of the Blades visits to an area just outside of Capal and outside of most Z'bri contact makes their specific 'stench' all the more recognizable to those looking for it. The trail becomes stronger and the group pushes forward.

As the PCs search for the laboratory, with little warning, they are caught up in a particularly vicious nightmare. The dream-realm rushes upon them with frightening speed and they have little chance of averting disaster. The nightmare plunges the Cell into a fierce battle with a Koleris-like being.

The beast, like so many Z'bri, presents a terrible picture. Standing almost four meters at the shoulder, the dream-beast has a number of large, insect-like appendages that continually erupt from beneath its skin to lash out, strike and then retreat back again. Each time an appendage comes forth, newly healed skin is ripped asunder. The form of the beast is human, though the fingers are unnaturally long, the teeth sharp like that of a wolf or dog, the eyes completely gray and the skin constantly ripples as if things crawl beneath it. The beast's hair is a mass of disheveled locks that mask much of the face but occasionally allow flashes of the eyes to be seen. The dream-beast is completely naked. Despite its similarity in appearance to the Z'bri, its mere presence in the River of Dream suggests that it is much more.

The beast seems to cry incessantly as the Cell does battle with it. The dream beast wails not from pain but from anguish. Each time the PCs seems to get the upper hand, the terrain itself seems to block the PCs from delivering the final, decisive blow. If a Character drops their weapon, or carries no weapons, the beast eventually approaches the unarmed figure and begins to speak in skilled and eloquent Tribal.

2. Lost and Found

If none of the PCs drop their weapons, then the beast will begin speaking just as it delivers the final blow or just before it is dispatched. Instead of killing the Character or fading into nothingness it will stop and begins talking to the gathered humans.

The beast converses cordially with the PCs. More than anything, the beast wants companionship, though it (it has no name that it can remember) randomly howls in agony and is constantly scratching and rubbing itself as though it feels dirty. If the Characters ask the right questions they can get very specific directions to the laboratory of the Blades, which is located in a cave not far from where the battle occurs. If the PCs further press the monster for more information they can uncover a little background on the Blooded Blades.

The monster, in its physical form, considers itself a great destroyer of life. It particularly likes taking the life of Z'bri (note that it refers to Z'bri as something other than itself). The beast is preparing for a great invasion, one that it knows will come but does not know how or when. It has been stalking the land outside of Capal preying on the weak for what seems like centuries. Because of its time outside of Capal it knows about the three Z'bri known as the Blades, even having crossed claws with the one called Vezmal. The beast also knows a considerable amount about the environs of Capal and will be willing to trade all sorts of information in return for stories of the Tribes. The beast is particularly interested in Vimary.

The PCs may believe that the beast is actually a Hunter if they have had contact with one of the rogue Z'bri before (see **Horrors of the Z'bri**, pp. 67-71) and the Weaver should do nothing to dissuade this idea. The creature sees itself as something very similar to the Hunters, though it does not know of the Hunters themselves.

As abruptly as the encounter begins, the nightmare fades and the Characters are left in the River of Dream where they were before the vision began. Interestingly, the PCs may detect a little residual Flemis Taint on their own psyches. (PER, Threshold 3)

Whether they realize it or not, the Cell has just conversed with a very confused and angry Valerie Ben'on. When her psyche detected the familiarity of mostly untainted, non-Serf humans in the area, her mind reacted and tried to bring the Characters into her dream to comfort her and remind her of home. Valerie is currently locked into an existence where each day is a struggle, but a struggle in which she strongly believes in. She has given herself a mission, and has vowed to fulfill it. Valerie is convinced that the Fallen are mounting a great campaign against the Z'bri and she is preparing Capal for that day. She operates deep in Z'bri territory, gathering information and scouting the area in hopes that one day her knowledge will aid the invasion. She is a fanatic and cannot be dissuaded from her goals. In fact, some of this determination may carry over into the encounter with the PCs.

If the PCs are venturing in the real world and the Weaver would like to add this scene into their cycle, then the encounter should occur while the Cell is asleep just outside of Capal. Most likely the entire group will not be able to participate in the encounter, assuming one or more of the Cell is on watch (a good idea, so close to Capal), otherwise, the encounter can run as it is.

Resourceful PCs may turn to the spirits that inhabit the environs surrounding Capal. Many of the more predatory animal spirits will know about the blight on the landscape left by the laboratory. Most know to avoid it and are quite familiar with the particular smells associated with the Blooded Blades and their lab. If the PCs encounter or seek out such a spirit (such as a ferret, dog, or wolf spirit) they may be able to convince it to help them find the laboratory. Nothing comes for free, however, and the spirit will want something in return (a game of some sort, information, a side quest on the part of the Characters).

SHADOWS AND DARKNESS

The PCs finally discover the cave where the Blades' second laboratory is located and venture inside. In the River of Dream they are able to observe the laboratory from a level of safety that the World of Flesh cannot provide. None of the Blades are in the laboratory as the PCs arrive, giving the Cell some time to investigate.

In the physical world, the laboratory is a large cave created by the toil of a number of Serfs. The entranceway is located within a copse of trees and is simply a large hole in the ground that is usually covered over by a camouflaged screen. Using a ladder to climb down into a hole, the passageway quickly opens up into a great hall that is the laboratory proper. The walls of the room are reinforced with sheets of flattened bone. The sheets give the room a sterile feeling, keeping all the walls, ceiling and floor completely white. Scrawled across the bone walls is the (by now) familiar script of the Blades. The writing is very similar to the large equation found on the fifth and sixth floors of the Skyrealm and is easily recognizable as such. However, these symbol-words, written painstakingly in blood, are much more refined and direct.

The equation in the laboratory is more legible and understandable than the equation in the Skyrealm and the Characters, given time, may finally decipher much of the text. The equation does not mention Joan, but does go into depth about the plan to disrupt the River of Dream and the two realms (Physical and Spiritual) to create a rip in the Fold. The catastrophic events that will be brought about by bringing the two worlds together is not their ultimate goal, just a side effect that barely concerns the Blades. Should their plan work, the problems of this world are of no concern of theirs.

The writing also describes the magnitude of disruption needed and a personal note by one of the Z'bri, off to the side, notes how difficult and rare such an opportunity will be. The names of all three of the Blades, Vezmal, Issooc and Dah'am'pir are all located at the end of the equation, like a signature. There are also the recognizable symbols of Z'bri households, two Melanis and one Sangis. The house symbols are not in the Blades' script and any PC versed in Z'bri lore will immediately recognize them.

Across the floor of the lab is another large circle, similar in size to the Skyrealm circle, except that this one contains another circle within it, looking somewhat like a target or a bullseye. Centered within both circles are three decaying corpses that were once Serfs. Each body has a knife wound in the center of their chest and the eyes have been brutally removed. One of the corpses does not have a tongue, merely a bloody and ragged stump.

Trash and refuse ring the walls as though swept there recently. Interestingly, a considerable amount of the trash is actually large pieces of scrap metal that look to have been purposefully fashioned into a specific form. Close inspection reveals the metal to be part of some large, muddled set of armor. The armor is too large for a human and would be useless in combat, since it would inadequately cover many vital body parts. Words are etched on much of the metal. If the PCs can read Keepspeak then they will discover that it is a series of names with one name, Isaac, repeated time and time again. The armor is actually discarded pieces of Issooc's costume for when he visits the Rust Wastes in the guise of the 'Fatima' Isaac.

Located in one corner on the wall, away from the great equation, are the writings of one of the Serfs sacrificed in the circles. The Serf was able to create the symbol of the Keepers, one of the only symbols she could readily recognize and associate with the Blades. Other writings beside the Keeper symbol are actually crude drawings (the Serf had no writing skills).

The drawings depict a monster attacking a naked human. The attacking monster comes at the poor human from the right side, and a blurry mirror image of the same beast attacks from above and to the left. The human, little more than a stick figure, cowers and covers its head in defense against the mirror-monster. The unfortunate Serf, before she was sacrificed, was used as a guinea pig to prove the Z'bri able to simultaneously attack something in the Physical and Spiritual worlds. The drawings are her interpretations of that harrowing event.

Eventually, one of the Melanis, Dah'am'pir, is alerted to the fact that something is amiss around the laboratory. Due to their acute senses, the Weres, which accompanied Dah'am'pir outside as the Characters searched the laboratory, become listless. Dah'am'pir who is already on edge from the battle in the Skyrealm, enters the lab to verify that nothing is awry.

If the PCs are in the River of Dream while investigating the laboratory then Dah'am'pir does not notice them initially. However, Dah'am'pir does detect the faint residue of Flemis taint if the PCs encountered Valerie's nightmare, and will start a ritual to peer into the River of Dream. Dah'am'pir hopes to find a better idea of where the taint leads, and instead discovers the PCs. If there is no discernible taint following the Cell, she spends some time using the aspect of Inspiration (see *Horrors of the Z'bri*, p. 92) to increase her own perceptive abilities to identify the intruders (whether they are in the River of Dream or not). When she detects the PCs, the Z'bri howls in rage at the second violation of her sanctum and immediately begins a ritual so that she can create a region of Dream void to attack the PCs in the River.

The howl of rage from Dah'am'pir will also bring the two large Weres into the laboratory. At first the PCs only see the naked forms of what they assume to be Serfs drop into the laboratory. Seconds later the skin on the 'Serfs' rips away and standing in their place are two hulking Weres. The Weres are not able to find the PCs unless they are in the Physical Realm, but will certainly create a graphic idea of the danger that the Blades pose. If the Characters are in the physical realm they have a fight on their hands, with two large Weres and Dah'am'pir out for their blood.

Statistics for the Weres can be found in *Weaver's Resources*, p. 95.

Should the PCs find some way to kill Dah'am'pir then the ritual to rend open the Fold still continues normally. Unfortunately for Issooc and Vezmal, Dah'am'pir will not be with them and their task will be that much harder, but neither they will not have to keep the hole open as long, since only two must pass. The Blades have come too far to allow a simple thing like the death of one of their members to halt the experiment.

After the second encounter with the Characters' Cell, the Blades step up their plans and begin preparing for their ambush on Joan. From this point on, the Blades are much more on their guard, wary of any further intrusions. They post a Were and a number of Serfs as guards for the laboratory in Capal and put works in motion to sneak a Were up to the Skyrealm in Vimary to prevent anyone from finding out anything more.

The PCs should realize they are under-equipped to fight the Blades, especially with possible Keeper and Were lackeys aiding the Z'bri. At this point, the Cell should begin to plan an ambush and try to gather the resources likely to aid them in their efforts to thwart the Z'bri plot.

THE JOURNEY HOME

On their way home through the River of Dream the PCs have a fairly uneventful journey. Throughout a good portion of their travel, however, they can see images of an old woman and what appears to be her granddaughter, just at the spiritual horizon. No matter how hard the Characters try, they cannot get any closer to the pair, who seem almost like an afterimage superimposed on whatever the PCs are looking at. Before the Cell makes it back to their bodies and just as they arrive on the outskirts of Vimary, the old woman and young girl disappear entirely from Dream.

The old lady is Baba Yaga, the young girl Agnes. Baba Yaga is spending time with the growing Fatima, teaching Agnes more about the nature of Synthesis and the River of Dream. Both Fatimas entered the River in an attempt to find Their questing Sister and covertly monitor Her progress. Baba Yaga in particular is interested in seeing Joan return successful as the Crone is worried about the consequences Joan's death would have on the Nation. Instead of finding Joan, however, They find the PCs and are intrigued that so many Fallen humans are freely and skillfully traveling the River of Dream. The two wish to maintain their anonymity and so never allow the PCs to get any closer than absolutely necessary.

Baba Yaga is the most skilled entity in Vimary regarding the River of Dream. In fact, She may be the most knowledgeable in the world next to the Goddess Herself. Keep this in mind if the PCs try to close the distance between themselves and the lady with the child. Baba Yaga can and will dictate when such a meeting takes place. However, if the Characters are creative and resourceful they may gain hints as to who really was watching them. Possible rewards should be subtle and probably delayed from the initial encounter. One such reward may be that the PCs find out when they return to Hom that someone unknown left them a 'debt owed.' The payment is in the form of two tribal medallions, Yagan or Agnite or both.

When finally back in their bodies, the PCs are exhausted and fall into a deep sleep. Despite their bodies being well rested because of the trance-state they were in, the Characters' minds have had no such rest. They wake just long enough to realize they are ravenously hungry and to feed that hunger. Once fed, however, the Characters need a good, solid night of rest. The trip takes about two full days in total if done by way of Dream Travel, and their minds have remained active for over forty-eight hours. If the journey is undertaken in the physical world, the trip can take upwards of a week, which, if the Weaver chooses, may be too long for the Cell to adequately prepare for Joan's return and the unfolding of the plot.

If the PCs are working with Halos, then when they wake there is a small man attending them. When he sees that the Characters have awakened, he immediately runs off to get them food and water. The man, Sebitz, directs the Cell towards Halos' current location, within the rubble of Veruka's home. Halos is writing in a journal, but takes the time to talk with the PCs. Halos' hands are blackened and much of his face is chalked with ritual markings of some sort. Huge bags under his eyes are very noticeable, and he looks as though he has not slept in days.

Halos does what he can to answer any questions the PCs have, but anything specific to the plot of **Warrior Unbound** will probably be out of his purview. General questions on the River of Dream, the Sea of the Lost, Synthesis and what happened in Vimary while they were in Capal are more apt to be answered by the Guide. No one is sure when Joan is going to return, not even Halos, so the Characters must make haste in their preparations.

TIPS AND RESOURCES

Much of the hints and resources that will help the Weaver in this act can be found in the *Weaver's Resources*, which details the workings of the River of Dream. It is best for the Weaver to be familiar with the River of Dream before running this quest, particularly if the River takes the prominent role intended in **Warrior Unbound**.

The Weaver should take the time to explain just what happens to the PCs when they enter the River of Dream. Their body is left in the real world as if sleeping or in a deep coma and from there, the mind of the Dreamer enters into the River. This happens to everyone, however, what makes the event disconcerting for the Characters is the next step. The mind of the Dreamer becomes untethered and is able to move about the spirit world at will. It would be as if one's legs started acting on their own and could then walk off and leave the rest of the body behind. The PCs should roll a WIL test, Threshold 3, to refrain from panicking altogether if this is their first time Dream-walking. The initial fright can be overwhelming and all-encompassing. After a few minutes, fear is overcome by the novelty of the event as the new Dream-Walkers explore the capabilities of their unburdened psyche.

It should be noted that if the body of a Dream-Walker is killed or dies for whatever reason while the psyche is in the River of Dream, then the psyche can be trapped in the Sea of the Lost.. Moreover, what makes Dream-Walking dangerous is that the body and mind are no longer linked and if the body is attacked or fails for some other reason while the Dreamer is in the River, then there is little chance of waking. The body is unable to force the mind back into the physical world because of the spiritual separation.

Statistics for the Nightmare Beast from *The Maw of Madness* can be found on page 94 in the *Weaver's Resources*.

Statistics for the Weres can be found in the *Weaver's Resources* section, p. 95. Statistics for Dah'am'pir can be found on p. 86 of the same section.

Finally, if the PCs decide to avoid the River of Dream, a number of changes have already been suggested. If the Weaver feels she needs to do so, any part or the Act itself can be placed in the physical world with only little modifications. Any mention later in **Warrior Unbound** of events which occurred in the River of Dream will need to be changed accordingly.

BETWEEN QUESTS

Baba Yaga chooses which souls Joan will hunt for, the announcement is made and Joan is sent on Her Quest. Baba Yaga makes Her announcement to the Grand Council and the gathered Fatimas, but the information is not kept quiet for long. Along with Awarnak Kil'on, a number of Dahlia's favorites are also able to come up with the information (leaked to them by Dahlia Herself) and spread it across Vimary. In less than half a day most of Vimary has heard of the decision.

Joan is sent to recover Uhanna, the Sheban hero, and Delastes, an obscure Evan. Rumor has it that Tera Sheba is not pleased with Baba Yaga's choices, though nobody has any idea as to why, and conjecture is rampant. Many suppose Tera Sheba wanted Joan to search for and recover more than two souls, to make Her Quest more difficult.

Much of the work around Vimary stops and an unofficial holiday is called. Interestingly, Eva has made a pointed effort to ignore the proceedings and has stressed to Her Tribe that their work must continue, despite the "circus" going on around them. At the other extreme are the Dahlians. Reveling in the tense and confused atmosphere of Bazaar, which has extended to all of Vimary, the Dahlians are turning Joan's Quest into a large party.

The Watch is hard pressed to keep any semblance of order, with many members succumbing to the spreading inactivity. A few clashes between the Watch and mobs of Shebans and Dahlians erupt near the Sunken City. The occasional vigilante group rises in the days following Joan's departure, often with an angry Sheban or Evan at the van. There are whispers that some of the vigilante mobs are not spontaneous, but actually the work of some organization within Tribal society, possibly the Grand Council itself, or the feared Black Owls.

Many Dreamers capable of Synthesis, Tribal and Fallen alike, are stricken by violent visions of Joan and Her Quest. The Templars of Joan, the Jackers and the Children of Lilith are all particularly targeted by the waking-dreams. Most of the visions place the Dreamer in the stead of Joan as She makes Her way through the River of Dream. Joan journeys through the Sea of the Lost, a disconcerting and uncomfortable place, even for one as powerful as the Fatima. Her presence is like a beacon to which many malevolent spirits and wayward dream-realms flock, like moths to a candle's flame. Creatures and shades from people's nightmares attack and harry Joan as She searches for Delastes. She works in haste, floating though the Sea of the Lost, spurred on by some unknown knowledge of which way to navigate in the trackless abyss. Throughout Hom and Haven the relative quiet of the night is shattered by the waking screams of someone escaping from the visions of Her torment.

Joan proves victorious, however. Two days into Her journey She is able to recover Delastes' soul. His spirit, seemingly long-lost to even the inscrutable Baba Yaga, is trapped within the warped dream realm of a dead Dreamer. The dream is powerful enough itself to continue on existing beyond the death of its inadvertent creator, gobbling up wayward souls to feed a hunger it can never satiate. Delastes is caught in the dream, a nightmare of blood and combat, and is forced to continually play out the deadly battles until Joan frees him. Joan navigates the dream, at great peril to Herself, manages to find Delastes and convinces the lost soul to follow Her back to Vimary. Once free, Joan takes Delastes' soul into Herself.

Joan then continues on. The third day begins with visions of Her arm broken, quite literally hanging in tatters by her side. Joan writhes in agony, the palpable smell of metal and rust all about Her. She is too far from help and must somehow pick Herself up and continue with Her Quest, hampered though She may be.



2. Lost and Found

The Templars are noticeably affected by the visions of a broken Joan, and rumors circulate of numerous Templars being driven insane by the horrible visions they see. Nearly every member of that group claims to have had some sort of vision of Joan on the third night of Her Quest, the shared dream possibly the effects of Her pained cries reverberating in the physical world.

Some whisper that, while asleep and dreaming, normal people are able to see into Joan's soul, Her agony shared with anyone unfortunate enough to get caught in one of the ripples of Her Dream. What they see no human was ever meant to know.

To many of the more conservative elements of Vimary, Tribal society — along with the minds of the more sensitive members of the Tribes — looks as if it is crumbling. Quietly and in private, people pray for a quick resolution to Joan's Quest and for a peaceful resolution to all the nightmares and anger plaguing the Nation.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Blades have stepped up their preparations. They know that if Joan is to return She will do so soon, or not at all. No augury on their part can foretell the time of Her return, so they make preparations for the earliest possible moment and settle in to wait for the Quest to end.

The Blooded Blades have returned to Vimary and are gathering their allies to place them around the place designated for Joan's arrival, the same place the Trial was held. The Trial Hall, as the building is coming to be called, is an immense building just on the shores of the Sunken City. A quarter of the building is submerged in the chilly waters of the river, but the rest of the building lies above the water line or on dry land. Sheban guards and Watch members keep a vigilant eye on the grounds surrounding the Trial Hall, and none but the most trusted advisors to the Fatimas are allowed to enter or leave.

HOOK: THE CRONE AND THE CHILD

The PCs encounter the older woman and the adolescent girl whom they saw in the River of Dream. To the Cell's surprise, they notice the pair walking the streets of Hom/Haven on an errand. At first the meeting appears to be by chance, but after the meeting, the Characters may be left with doubts as to how random the encounter really was.

SCENES

The setting is a busy street, with quietly ordinary people traveling and shopping for their groceries for the day. Overall, the scene is as normal and unassuming as possible. The exact setting does not matter all that much, though the streets of Hom are probably the most likely for the encounter to take place. While the PCs go about their business, they stumble across a woman and child who look remarkably like the woman and child they saw in the River of Dream. If any of the Characters confront the pair, they will be happy to take time out of their busy schedule to talk with them.

The Weaver can drop in this hook at just about any time in their story as a quick break from the main plotline.

CLIMAX

The pair, named Patrice (the old woman) and Kat (the pretty adolescent) are amiable and seem quite interested in talking, especially about the current events surrounding Joan. The two are particularly interested in finding out what the PCs think about Joan's quest. In return for the PCs sharing their information and opinions, the older lady, Patrice, will share a considerable amount of what she knows of the situation. Patrice will not reveal things she could not know as a normal human, but appears very knowledgeable and 'in the loop' regarding the current state of Tribal affairs. If asked about her extensive knowledge, she responds that she is quite good at listening to the truth behind rumors and has spent a lot of time listening. If asked about the River of Dream, the two act a bit confused and ignorant in the ways of Synthesis. They flatly deny ever being in the River of Dream, and in fact they find the idea ludicrous.

AFTERMATH

If the Weaver wishes, the pair can be just as they seem. Instead of Baba Yaga and Agnes they are merely the templates from which the two Fatimas took Their disguises while in the River of Dream. In effect, Baba Yaga and Agnes merely copied the forms of Patrice and Kat. If this option is used, Patrice and Kat are nothing more than the victims of circumstance. Still, the two are genuinely interested in the Cell and may become good contacts for the Characters as well as a nice opportunity to role-play. The encounter with 'normal' Patrice and Kat can serve to show the PCs that not every meeting in a cycle is spiritually or politically significant, that there are normal people in Vimary just trying to live their lives as well.

Similarly, Patrice and Kat can actually be Baba Yaga and Agnes, following up on what they saw while in the River of Dream. Intrigued by the PCs' ability to navigate the River of Dream, the two Fatimas now want to know what the Cell discovered. If the Characters are at all forthcoming, then Baba Yaga will take note of their help and eventually give them a crucial piece of advice, or place a few of Her followers in a position to help the PCs when they face off against the Blades and their allies.

If the Cell performed some exemplary act while in the River of Dream dealing with Baba Yaga and Agnes, this may be an opportune time for a reward.

A third option exists, where Patrice and Kat are favored followers of Baba Yaga and Agnes sent as proxies to discover what the Cell knows. In this case, Patrice and Kat are spies sent by their respective Fatimas. It is quite possible that Patrice and Kat are very skilled at Synthesis, having mastered the aspects of Curse of Dream and Naïveté, respectively (assume that both Kat and Patrice have level 2 in Synthesis). If the Characters are friendly and open, then Patrice and Kat will leave the PCs alone in short order. On the other hand, if the Cell decides to push Patrice or Kat around or act irreverently in their presence, Patrice will not hesitate to use any Synthesis powers she has (a dangerous proposition for the PCs if she has Curse of Dream) to defend herself or Kat.

HOOK: ASSASSIN

The PCs are stalked by a Sangis assassin, sent by the Baron to hunt down and destroy the Characters. The Baron, on the advice of Prince Sl'Onis (see *Vimary* p. 118) and his spies believe that the Characters' Cell is associated with the Blooded Blades. In an effort to flush out the Blooded Blades and undermine their power, the Baron is interested in destroying any and all of their allies or servants. Unfortunately for the PCs, one of Sl'Onis' spies was discreetly present at the Capal laboratory and identified the Characters. Now, it is their turn to be the hunted.

SCENES

The initial attack should be conducted in a place where the Cell feels relatively safe. The Sangis assassin is searching for them and them only. If he initially finds the PCs in a large group he will hesitate to attack, especially if the bystanders are Tribals or if the PCs are within the boundaries of the Nation. A delicate truce still exists between the Baron and the Fatimas, and the assassin has been instructed to be especially discreet in order to not further jeopardize the already unstable peace.

In the end, there should be little warning of the attack. The assassin is Nis'Vich, a member of the Talons, one of the Baron's personal bodyguard. He is quite skilled at disguising himself as a Tribal, which is why he was selected for this job. Nis'Vich uses his significant powers in Appeasement and artistic skills (to paint fake tattoos) to disguise himself as a normal human.

At Nis'Vich's aid are a handful of Tribals. Three Shebans escort Nis'Vich through Vimary, helping the Z'bri maintain a low profile. The Shebans, led by Judge Anders (use the Judge template from *Word of the Pillars* p. 79, or Verra Thaim'on from the *Rulebook*, p. 64) is a loyal associate of the Crucible and High Judge Cylix. He has been ordered by Cylix to maintain Nis'Vich's anonymity at all costs. Cylix, as well as a good part of the leadership of the Crucible, knows of Nis'Vich and his mission and does not want to be associated with the Z'bri, however, the Baron requested guides for Nis'Vich and as a show of faith, Cylix was ordered by Tera Sheba to provide the Sangis with just that.

Besides Judge Anders, two Stiltwalkers, Johns and Ridik, accompany the disguised Nis'Vich (use the Stiltwalker template from *Word of the Pillars*, p. 79) throughout Vimary. All three know that Nis'Vich is a Z'bri, as well as portions of his mission. All three also are extremely loyal to Tera Sheba and are prepared to die in order to protect the good name of their Fatima.



CLIMAX

The PCs are ambushed by the very capable assassin. The attack comes at a very inopportune time and they must scramble to first stay alive and then defend themselves. Luckily, Nis'Vich focuses exclusively on the Cell, ignoring any innocent bystanders that may be nearby, relying on the Shebans to take care of any distractions.

Before attacking the PCs, Nis'Vich asks for the Characters' names, a final preparatory act to identify his marks and avoid any embarrassing mistakes. As the attack commences, Judge Anders, Johns and Ridik quietly back away to the periphery of the melee, hoping to avoid becoming involved in the fight.

The three Shebans have been ordered to run interference with anyone that may intrude on the fight. To divert public attention away from the fight, Ridik stabs himself, then Judge Anders and Johns beg for aid from passers-by, hoping to buy Nis'Vich some time. Judge Anders is prepared to claim that Ridik's wound was caused by the Z'bri, hoping to avoid direct association with the beast and protect the secret of his Tribe's involvement.

If things begin to go badly for Nis'Vich, Anders instructs Johns and Ridik to flee and then attempts to intervene, distract the PCs and allow Nis'Vich time to escape. Judge Anders is under strict orders to make sure that the attack is a success and if not, to make sure there is no evidence of the attack (such as the dead body of the Z'bri)

If the Characters are quick on their feet they may be able to subdue and capture one of the Shebans, or possibly subdue Nis'Vich himself. The Shebans can provide a considerable amount of information, as Judge Anders has conversed at length with High Judge Cylix about their mission. The Judge knows that the Blooded Blades have moved much of their equipment to Vimary in preparation for some grand ritual or experiment. He knows of Sl'Onis' interest in the Blades and consequently, in the PCs. Anders believes that the Characters' Cell is working with the Blooded Blades, but may be persuaded to believe that they are, in fact, working against the goals of the Z'bri group.

AFTERMATH

The PCs should become quite paranoid, afraid they have involved themselves in a Z'bri civil war, or possibly that the Blooded Blades is a group larger than they first expected. Assuming the Cell fends off the attack, Judge Anders will not return to Cylix. Afraid for his life, he will hurry home, gather some personal effects and make his way to Hom. He plans on leaving for the Outlands, though he has little in the way of survival skills to fall back on. Anders plans on never speaking again of his involvement with the Z'bri nor of Tera Sheba's instructions to aid the beast.

The Baron is quite incensed at Nis'Vich's failure. The leader of the H'I Kar believes that Nis'Vich's failure is due to some kind of intervention on the part of the Fatimas, furthering his paranoia that the Fatimas are preparing to betray him. If Nis'Vich lives to return, but has not destroyed the PCs, the Baron kills the assassin. The Baron will not tolerate failure at this critical juncture in Tribal and Z'bri politics.

HOOK: VISIONS

The number of visions and nightmares spreading about Joan and Her Quest increase at an alarming rate, and it is only a matter of time before the PCs are forced to deal with these dreams themselves. The dreams and visions had previously been relegated to just images and the occasional mutterings, but now, however, the dreams are becoming more and more disturbed. A Templar close to the PCs (a friend, or contact perhaps) is very severely struck by one of these visions, and begins acting like a feral wolf.

SCENES

The scene is set just about anywhere the Weaver wishes. The Templar can either be a friend of the PCs or a random person just physically near the Cell when she undergoes her transformation. If the PCs have few contacts or friends in the Joanites, then the NPC can easily be a former Templar that is now a Jacker, Squat, or Ranger. However, if the wolf-possession strikes someone emotionally close to the Characters, the Weaver should deal delicately with the situation. The emotional impact and the ability to convey the threat to Joan's life may well be worth the effort and risk to an important NPC.

CLIMAX

After complaining of a series of dreams which have dramatically increased in intensity each night, the Templar screams in agony and drops to all fours, half-shredding, half-stripping off all her clothes. One of the most shocking things about this particular vision is that it is not a vision at all, but a possession by a spirit of the Winter Wolf acting on Joan's behalf. The spirit may even be the extension of an agonized Joan, reaching out across the River of Dream. The exact nature of the possession and reasons for the actions on the part of the Templar should remain a mystery for the PCs to puzzle over.

Descending into the throes of the possession, the Templar runs around almost comically, acting like a wolf. The PCs may think that the Templar is actually acting or playing around at first, but when the NPC refuses to listen and continues her actions the PCs should realize that the NPC is not play-acting at all. If the PCs try to detain or capture the Templar, she immediately attacks them in an effort to defend herself. She barks, snarls and snaps at any aggressors in such a way as to leave little doubt she will seriously injure anyone that touches her.

If left to her own devices, the Templar will run off and attack any Shebans or former Shebans in the area. It matters not if the Shebans are women or men, adult or child, the Templar will lay into her target with the intent to rip out their throat. The PCs should realize that they must subdue the possession-victim before she hurts herself or some innocent bystander. When she is finally subdued she wakes from her trance, unable to speak more than a few guttural statements. Before passing out, the Templar continually mutters the word, "talon," but is unable to respond to any questioning.

AFTERMATH

The Templar may well die from wounds received while acting as a wolf, unless the Characters intervene. If she does live, she wakes after the possession with a broken arm and numerous gashes and abrasions all along her battered body. She cannot recall how she did such wounds to herself and is particularly confused about her broken arm. The PCs, likewise, did not see any act in particular that broke that specific place on her arm.

If the Characters hesitate too long during the episode of possession, the victim may find herself on the business end of a

Watch spear or Jacker sword-tip. The PCs may have lost a good friend while at the same time they should now be encouraged to step up the pace. The strange events in Vimary seem to be escalating, possibly a sign that Joan is returning from Her Quest.

The "talon" that the Templar speaks of before passing out is actually a reference to how Joan broke Her arm. While in the deep of the Sea of the Lost, trying to find Uhanna, Joan is viciously attacked by a giant owl-spirit. The Owl is eventually beaten off, but not without costing Joan the immediate use of Her arm. The Templar suffers the same fate, sympathetically and mystically breaking her own limb.



Chapter 3: Id, Ego and Superego

People forget that the future is exactly like the past. Think of time as a piece of string. Even if you tear it apart, divide it into many pieces and then name those pieces, the string is still one entity. Just like that string, destroying time and labeling it as if it is composed of many parts, while convenient, is like chopping a string into smaller and smaller pieces all the while insisting each new piece deserves a new title. Foolish.

- Halos



QUEST THREE: ID, EGO AND SUPEREGO

Id, Ego and Superego deals with the PCs' preparation for the final battle with the Blades and their followers.

The Acts of *Chapter Three: Id, Ego and Superego* are not in the standard linear format like the rest of the Quests and Acts within **Warrior Unbound**. Instead, there are a number of specific avenues the PCs have the opportunity to take in order to gather the weapons necessary to defeat the Blades. There are specific weaknesses that may also be exploited, if the Characters are observant enough to pick up on them while engaging and investigating the Blades in the first two Quests.

Id, Ego and Superego presents a few of these weaknesses and weapons, as well as suggestions on how to direct the PCs so as to have access to these resources. The PCs have two days to prepare before Joan returns and the Blooded Blades spring their trap, though they will not know this. This Quest, more than any of the others, is meant to be used as a template for the Weaver to use as much or as little as she sees appropriate.

If the plans that the Characters put together seem to have merit and the weapons gathered effective, then the Cell should have a legitimate shot at stopping the Blades. The following Acts are presented as suggestions and guides, to get the mind of the Weaver working in the right direction. If the Weaver has a number of alternate ideas, then she should tailor her acts according to the desires and resources of the PCs, while making sure the Cell has the opportunity to stop the Blooded Blades.

Joan is coming; the frequency of visions and weird happenings all around Vimary verify this. The Cell must be ready by the time She returns.

QUEST PRELUDE

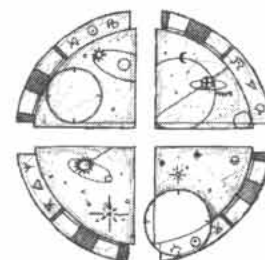
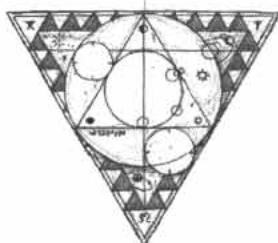
Not much time passes between *Lost and Found* and *Id, Ego and Superego*; only a day or so. The PCs spend the time recovering from their arduous journey in the River of Dream (and possibly from an assassination attempt) as well as formulating plans so they can engage the Blades and defeat them.

Joan is slowly recovering in the River of Dream. She has set Her broken arm in a splint, made from portions of Her own wings. The splint, while crude, allows Joan to continue on through Her Quest with rudimentary control of Her arm. Already, the powerful Synthesis that uplifts the Fatima is working to mend the break. With Her arm tended to, She sets out on Her quest again, determined to see victory. She still has to find Uhanna, and is starting to get desperate. She knows that She cannot last much longer in the River of Dream wounded as She is, Her link to the Physical World fading quickly as the energy seeps away from Her hastily mended arm. The repercussions of Her pain in the River of Dream temporarily warp the areas She passes through, a reflection of Her torment and worry.

Likewise, the Winter Wolf, totem of Joan, is becoming quite concerned. Joan is a valued member of the Winter Wolf's vast pack, as are Her children. Without their den mother, the children of Joan will be nothing but lost pups, more than even the powerful Winter Wolf can handle. The Winter Wolf musters many of the spirits loyal to Joan and the Duskfall and calls for them to aid Joan in Her Quest. Though Joan never asks for this aid, the Winter Wolf knows that it is necessary. The allies and pups of the Winter Wolf scatter across the River of Dream, some even braving the disorientation of the Sea of the Lost.

Many Templars in tune with the Spirit World note the new-found determination of the many spirits associated with Winter Wolf, as well as with Winter Wolf herself, and take heart in the renewed action. The Templars hold a number of vigils and prayers to speed Joan on Her way as well as to aid the friendly spirits.

While the PCs recover from their journey, a transformation begins to ripple throughout Tribal society. Many Joanites are openly hostile towards the followers of Tera Sheba; years of pent-up anger and resentment have begun to flow out, and the Warrior's Tribe moves to take action. Many posts of the Watch are left unfilled as Joanites refuse to continue the dirty work of the Shebans. The deserting Joanites travel to Hom and Haven to continue the rebuilding effort and join in a number of Rants and group prayers with the Eighth Tribe. Nearly thirty percent of the Watch refuses their duties during these days, and many of the posts in Bazaar and the Sunken City report desertions upwards of fifty or sixty percent. As an act of solidarity, none of the Joanite commanders turn in the names of those that are missing, merely reporting the numbers involved. In effect, the leadership of the Watch and the Joanites themselves turns a blind eye to the efforts on Hom and Haven.





Tera Sheba calls for the Watch to return to their posts, but most of the Joanites ignore the Wise One. Without their Fatima the Joanites feel as though they had been set adrift, and find their situation painfully close to that of the Eighth Tribe. Many of the Joanites refuse to use any Synthesis or Rituals while Joan is gone, symbolically sacrificing their own powers of Dream to aid The Warrior (some secretly hope that this effort is more than a symbol, and that Joan will find strength in their ambient Synthesis powers).

Hom and Haven have a number of new faces among the crowds, as a considerable number of Joanites either decide to join the Fallen or are doing all that they can to aid the Outcasts. A certain air of camaraderie is fostered while Joan is away. The Joanites are confused, and many feel lonelier than they imagined they could. The Eighth Tribe is all too familiar with such emotions and many of the Fallen return the Joanites' favor, and go out of their way to comfort Her Tribe in their time of need.

Interestingly, a number of Agnites also make the daily journey to Hom and Haven. They know full well the pain of losing their divine guidance (see **Trial by Fire**), and feel a new kinship with those similarly forsaken. The lands of the Fallen have never been so full or overflowed with so much anxiety for the future.

Back in Vimary, the Evans still toil away in their fields. Most heed the words of their Fatima and continue with the work of growing foodstuffs and supplying the Tribes. They turn in towards themselves, becoming even more insular than before. Those outside of the Evans find suspicious eyes watching their every move as they pass through those areas dominated by the Mother's Tribe. Many of the lynch mobs fade away, but new groups still rise every once in a while to 'punish' the Fallen for their crimes. Yet not all of the Evans are belligerent towards the

Outcasts. Some Evans from Westholm and large numbers from Griffentowne (at the behest of Benjamin Aria'on) make the pilgrimage to Bazaar and Hom to wait and see if Joan does, indeed, return.

Magdalites and Dahlians, as well as many of the Agnites, take to mass prayer and vigils in the streets during the day and to silent prayer at night. They are still enthralled by the novelty and energy of the situation, and a good piece of the Dahlians still revel in the chaos and confusion. Under the impetus of the Dancers, many impromptu parties and get-togethers are held within the confines of Bazaar.

In a surprising turn of events, Dahlia forbids any Caravans from leaving Bazaar, and calls all those that are nearby to return to the center of the city. The large influx of Caravans bloats the streets and hostels of Bazaar, adding to the stress and excitement within the city. Dahlia knows some of the nature of the flux that Vimary is experiencing and the dangers it holds. This is motion and change that She did not begin or motivate, and She is beginning to feel some measure of concern over Her lack of direct control. Dahlia, in a strangely conservative act, wants Her children close should they need to band together for their own protection.

Anaky, Little Trickster of the Bazaar Caravan, is not particularly enraptured with this conservative turn of events. The environment surrounding Bazaar and her Caravan is almost palpable with a sense of excitement and, despite Dahlia's warnings, Anaky cannot ignore her environs. The Little Trickster does her best to keep things subdued, but honestly believes that Dahlia silently wishes for her to continue with the revelry. The Bazaar Caravan continues, the streets flooded with new and old personalities.

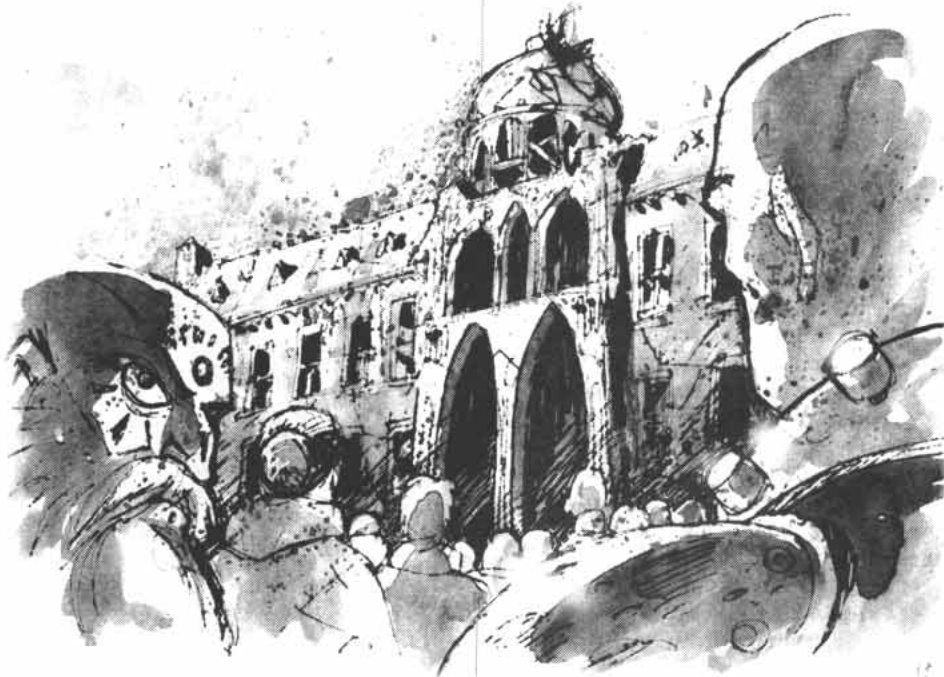
THE BLOODED BLADES' PLAN

The Weaver needs to be quite familiar with the Blades' plans, step by step. Though a considerable amount of the plan has been revealed earlier in the text of *Warrior Unbound*, a clear and concise summation may help keep things straight, as well as aid in any changes the Weaver may want to institute.

Normally the Blades would have no hope of ever destroying a powerful construct like a Fatima, but when Joan returns She is severely weakened and all of Vimary will be distracted, giving the Blades an excellent time to strike.

The Blades' Plan is as follows:

- move 60 or so Serfs into the area around the Skyrealm/Trial Hall to ambush anyone who tries to interfere. The Blades expect a large crowd to gather to witness Joan's return. To offset the huge number of Tribals present, the Blades order the Serfs to strike fast and hard, to leave the gathered Tribals in a state of shock while the Z'bri enact the ritual. With any luck the gathered Tribals will be so confused they will not react in time or will flee the area, leaving the Fatimas similarly confused and abandoned.
- bring in Issoc's Keepers when the crowds begin to gather. The confusion of the crowd will allow the Keepers to hide a large amount of devastating weapons. When Joan reappears, Issoc will attack. The Keepers will see Issoc, whom they believe to their Fatima and protector, in combat with Joan and will jump to his aid. With the Keeper weapons and his Z'bri companions, Issoc believes he has an excellent chance of felling the Fatima.
- smuggle three very strong and capable Weres into the gathered crowd. The Weres will attack the other Fatimas to keep them busy. The Blades know that the gathered Fatimas will be more than enough to eventually strike down the Weres, but with Joan tied up in Her own battle, the Fatimas will be confused and hesitant. The Weres are simply there to buy time for the Blades.
- The Blades are concerned that someone will detect the Weres, or even the Z'bri themselves, before the attack. However, whenever the Blades create their 'pocket realm' in the River of Dream, they have discovered that the complex interplay between Synthesis and Sundering helps to mask their presence (see *Related Rituals* in the *Weaver's Resources* section p. 84)
- Dah'am'pir and Vezmal, the Melanis members of the Blades, will be in the River of Dream ready to strike at Joan using their Sundering powers. Joan is already weak from Her various injuries, and the two Melanis have little doubt their attack will be effective against the wounded Fatima.
- Issoc will use his powers of Appeasement to camouflage himself and hide near the Trial Hall. He does not want to be too close, otherwise the Fatimas may be able to detect him even with the confusion in Dream hiding his presence. He plans to mold himself onto a wall of a nearby building to camouflage his physical form.
- simultaneous attacks in both the Physical World and the River of Dream (the Blades believe) will be enough to shatter the physical form of Joan as well as to capture Her spirit, just as they did with Castor. The relative levels of spiritual energies will shift and the ripples that the shift creates will be enough for the Blades to act quickly and tear a rift in the Fold, and then hopefully return to the Seed.



ACT ONE: SPEARS OF GRATITUDE / TRACES OF A HUNTER

Hope is a new concept to me. I never knew such a thing while living in the accursed H'I Kar. There, I knew only loyalty and lust. Now... now I know of things ever more exciting and fulfilling. My brothers can never share this with me; I will not let them.

- Paenitere, the Shadow-Cloaked

WEAVER'S SYNOPSIS

This is the best time for the Characters to gather their resources and get their hands on weapons capable of battling a foe in both the Physical World and in the River of Dream. One way to create such weapons is through the power of Dream, blessing them through Synthesis. The PCs can seek out a mentor or other NPC that can help them track down and/or create those weapons, called **BainShigh**.

The easiest route for the PCs to take is to ask an NPC mentor, such as Halos, if such weapons exist and where they may be found. The mentor needs to have a good deal of information and knowledge about the River of Dream and Synthesis, as well as Lore: Artifacts or Lore: Weapons, to justify knowing about BainShigh. If the Cell has made no specific contacts with such an NPC, then they need to come up with a solution on their own. If they have heard any legends about the Hunters, enigmatic creatures that stalk the Z'bri, then they may well try to track down the Hunters themselves in hopes of convincing one of the enigmatic creatures to aid the Cell.

At the beginning of **Warrior Unbound**, a hook was included where the Characters were asked to help an ailing old man by the name of Erhard rebuild his house. If the Characters performed such a selfless act previously, then Herne the Cloven-Hoofed (**Horrors of the Z'bri**, p. 71, 121) approaches the Cell at this point in the cycle and offers magical bows and spears (that in the River of Dream act like BainShigh Weapons) to repay their kindness. The Weaver should be reminded that the Hunter does not normally give such powerful weapons away and that the PCs must perform an unselfish act on their own, with no outside prompting. They should have no idea that a reward of any type will be coming their way as a result of their actions.

An alternate route the PCs may take is to go to Halos (or a similar NPC that the Cell trusts) for suggestions. Halos says that he will do all that he can when the time comes, but until then he can do little but listen and give advice. Halos eventually tells the PCs of a 'certain person' named Paenitere. Paenitere is a master crafter and if the Cell can find him and procure a few of his weapons, they will come in handy during the battle. Halos neglects to inform the PCs that Paenitere is a Hunter, a Z'bri that has turned on its kind and now stalks the Z'bri, like Herne (see above). The Hunter is reclusive and distrustful of the Characters and they must prove themselves worthy to convince him to part with 'his' weapons. Halos himself enchants the weapons when the PCs return, but is unwilling to make his skills known, and will make every attempt to credit someone or something else for the quality of the weaponry.

When the Characters approach Halos he is involved in a ritual, but if the PCs wait a few hours he finishes, catches his breath and talks with them gladly. He tells them that the time for Joan's arrival is approaching quickly. The PCs should have a good idea that the Blades are close to being in place and prepared for Joan's return. It will soon be time for the PCs to act. Halos can do nothing of any worth at this point in time, but does know someone who might be able to help them. An individual, whom Halos implies is a Squat, has the ability to make finely crafted weapons that are capable of affecting the River of Dream as well as this world. The PCs need to find the individual and bring back the weapons so that Halos can verify their worth.

Halos directs the PCs into the Outlands with directions on how to find Paenitere. Interestingly, the directions are more than a map, as they include a list of ritualistic actions that must also be performed before this person will come forward. Paenitere's true identity is kept from the Characters since Halos realizes that the PCs may not be open to the idea of a Z'bri, reformed or not, aiding them in their cause. Though Halos knows that Paenitere's intentions are righteous, the Cell may see the act as making a deal with a devil. Wisely then, Halos keeps the information from the PCs, letting them puzzle out Paenitere's heritage for themselves.

If the PCs encountered Paenitere during an earlier cycle, they will have an idea of what he is and just how effective the Hunter is at killing his brethren. Remember though, the Hunters are rare and enigmatic beings, and they should not become commonplace in a story unless the Weaver has a specific plot in mind. As such, if the Weaver does decide to use either Herne or Paenitere in **Warrior Unbound** then only one or the other should be chosen, not both.



STALKING THE NIGHT FANTASTIC

The PCs venture into the Outlands in search of Paenitere. The Weaver can keep the journey as exciting or placid as she sees appropriate. However, an attack by a roving Squat band is particularly appropriate, accentuating the danger and savagery of the Outlands and the mysterious Paenitere, who lives there. Furthermore, the Squat attack will keep the PCs on their toes and will help reinforce the idea that not all enemies are a product of the Z'bri. The Squats are just hungry and the Cell presents a convenient target. The Outlands are a dangerous place, after all.

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT LOOKS...

The PCs arrive at the location designated on their map. The clearing is quite unassuming and there is no sign of intelligent life anywhere nearby. Until the PCs perform the acts suggested by Halos, Paenitere will not show up. Halos instructs the Cell that one of their group must take another member's weapon and grievously injure herself while at the same time remembering a time when she grievously hurt another person. The PC doing the damage cannot be aided in any way while she is in pain. She must push herself to the point of exhaustion, to the point where her soul is closest to leaving her physical shell. Then, and only then, will Paenitere take notice.

The pain that the PC recalls inflicting does not have to be of the physical type, though that will certainly do. Instead, Paenitere prefers for the petitioner to recall emotional pain and suffering she caused someone else. If the Character accidentally took an innocent life, or hurt a loved one for selfish purposes, then she can use such an act to create the pain required. The Character needs to explain, in detail, the pain they caused and their realization of the hurt they created. The PC must be sorrowful for the pain and understand that she is using her self-inflicted wounds to absolve her sins. The Character's grief and fear must drive her to perform acts above and beyond what would normally be expected. If a PC is brave enough to inflict damage to herself (physically and emotionally) to the point that she passes out then the Hunter will arrive. If at any time another Cell member aids their falling friend, Paenitere will laugh audibly and derisively, and then promptly leave before the Cell ever sees him.

If the PCs are able to get an audience with Paenitere, then he patiently listens to their plight. He knows he is under no obligation to aid the Cell, and will take threats or pleas that imply he must help with barely concealed impatience. Paenitere knows he holds all the power in this meeting and wishes for the PCs to know it as well. He will only listen to and be persuaded by logical arguments and sincere pleas for help. The Hunter needs to see that the PCs are capable of handling such weapons and will not waste his fine craftsmanship. If the Cell convinces him, he gives each member the choice of a bow or two spears and then silently walks off into the forest.

Before the PCs make their way back to Vimary they hear the words of Paenitere erupt from out of nowhere. His parting words say only this: "These gifts are power, power unlike anything you have encountered before. Their power is locked deep within the physical forms of these weapons; bring them to Halos and he will unlock their potential. Treat them well and they will return the favor."

THE EVALUATION

The PCs return through the Outlands to meet with Halos. Halos' face and body are covered in dried bloodstains. He tells any inquisitive PCs that he has been working very hard and his body is beginning to revolt from the pressure.

When presented the weapons, Halos looks them over and asks for a few hours alone to evaluate them. He tells the Characters that their presence, while appreciated, will not be conducive to completing the task and asks them to leave. He will not accept any objections.

The weapons are not special in any way, besides highly skilled craftsmanship, until Halos blesses them. The PCs must bring the weapons back to Halos as he requested so that he can enchant the weapons. The time alone offers Halos the chance to enchant the weapons while still maintaining the ruse that the power was that of Paenitere.

Once he has enchanted the weapons (a process that takes four hours) Halos asks for the PCs to return, saying that he has satisfied his curiosity and that the weapons are useful. Along with the BainShigh, he also re-gifts the Characters with the amulets they used previously to dive into the River of Dream. He tells the PCs that the amulets are nearly useless as anything but amulets, but that they will grant the wearer the ability to see into the River of Dream for a little while before their energy is completely drained. The Guide believes the PCs will be lucky to get even one more opportunity to use the amulets, their Synthesis almost depleted, but hopes the Cell will find them useful.

Of course, if Halos is not associated with the PCs, then he can be removed from the scenes altogether and the PCs will have to find Paenitere by another route. If this is the case, then the weapons the Cell earns from Paenitere will be magical in nature, without the need for Halos' intervention. The enchantment will only last a finite amount of time though, three full moons, one for each Z'bri in the Blades. When three full moons pass then the weapons will no longer be effective in the River of Dream, though they will always be marvelously crafted.

TIPS AND RESOURCES

Nearly any mystical being can serve as the creator for the magical weapons. However, if the Weaver changes the creator, then they should probably also change the price to gain access to those weapons. Magos the Wise-Eyed and Herne the Cloven-Hoofed can both serve as excellent replacements.

3. Id, ego and superego

To gain Herne's help the PCs must perform a selfless act with no prompting (see above). Herne will never ask the PCs to perform such an act, for asking them to do such a thing with the implication of a reward takes away the very nature of 'selfless.'

Magos is probably the most powerful Hunter in existence and possibly more alien than the Z'bri themselves. Magos asks the PCs to perform some seemingly incomprehensible task, or one that he cannot complete himself. Most likely, Magos will send the Characters after a Gek'roh, once a significant Melanis leader that is now chained to the form of an emu. Magos wants the Melanis destroyed for good, but has never got around to finishing the act himself. Magos gives the PCs the weapons with the understanding that they will hunt and slay the Gek'roh in payment.

When describing a being like a Hunter, the Weaver must take care not to simply make them weird or disgusting, like some of the Z'bri. The Hunters are all driven by emotions all too familiar to humans: love, hate, loneliness and vengeance, but for them, emotions are not simply something they feel — these emotions compose almost their entire being. Humans in close proximity to the Hunters will not only be disturbed by their odd appearance, but will fight a flood of emotions and feelings not their own. The Hunters may share some emotions with humanity, but they are a far cry from being human.

It is also possible for powerful PCs to prepare magical weapons on their own. A PC should have a minimum Synthesis Skill of 2 and should have at least one of the Eminences of Conflict, Fate, Fury, or Shadows. The Aspects of Battle, Dream Travel or Wonder can also be used creatively to create a Dream Weapon. However, unless the PCs are spectacularly innovative and successful in their rolls, the weapon will only have the necessary Synthesis imbued within it for a limited amount of time.

To create a Dream Weapon from an existing weapon a series of tests must be accomplished. The first test comes with the Character looking over the gathered weapons and seeing if they

are crafted well enough to hold the powers of Synthesis. (PER vs. Threshold 4) If the Character has any skills involving weapon appraisal or crafting, then she may apply those skills to the roll, otherwise, the roll must be performed without the benefit of skill dice. Each roll that is successful indicates that one more weapon from the pile is structurally sound enough to receive the enchantment. If the Player gets an MoS of +1 or better then they can apply that bonus on a one-for-one basis to upcoming rolls. For example, if a detection roll yields a MoS of +3, then not only is the weapon worthy, but the Player may then allocate three +1 modifiers to subsequent rolls for attempts to enchant the weapon.

The next test involves imbuing the weapon with Synthesis so that it can affect the River of Dream. A roll using CRE and the Ritual Skill (vs. a Threshold of 5) opens the weapon to Synthesis. Following that, the Player must roll the appropriate Eminence or Aspect to enchant the weapon (using the most applicable Threshold) and to determine the length of enchantment (see *Rulebook*, p. 165). If all three steps are successful (MoS 1 or better) then the Character has created a Dream Weapon. The Weapon may now be used in both the River of Dream and the Physical Realm.

If the PCs do manage to find (or create) the weapons, then the Weaver should treat the magical weapons as having +1 ACC in the Physical World. In addition to this, the weapons travel with a Dreamer's manifestation into the River of Dream, allowing the PC to use the weapon's damage multiplier while Dreaming. If the weapon is used against a being entirely present in the River of Dream (i.e. spirit, or the Blooded Blades) and does enough damage to instantly kill the opponent, the target is forced out of the River of Dream and into the Physical World (instead of 'awakening' it as suggested in the *Rulebook*, p. 162).

The Squats are armed with a variety of wooden weapons, clubs and spears most prevalently. Use the Squat archetype statistics listed on page 96.



ACT TWO: TURNING THE KEEPERS

Yes, I am Isaac, who loves you as no mortal ever could, and my love will lead you to your destiny. The journey will be hard, but the rewards will be sweeter than anything humanity has ever tasted. You have waited your entire, short lives for this moment. Always remember that this moment comes only because of me. I am your world and without my attention you will fade into dust like your ancestors. My love sustains you. Return that love with unquestioned devotion and you will be rewarded for eternity.

- Isaac the Seer, 'Fatima of the Keepers'

WEAVER'S SYNOPSIS

The PCs may have discovered that Issooc, the Sangis member of the Blades, masquerades as a Fatima to a group of deluded Keepers. If the PCs follow up on this information and pull in a few favors, they can track down the group and confront them. The Keepers, if left unapproached, will participate in the final battle on the side of the Blades. However, if the Cell moves decisively they can neutralize the group before the return of Joan and possibly convince the Keepers to join their cause.

FINDING MOTIVATION

The Weaver should plan a bit ahead of this Act to make sure the PCs have all the information they will need. The PCs need to find the Keeper group, but moreover, the PCs should have enough information to get them interested in tracking down the Keepers, a group of fanatics known as Isaac's Chosen.

A number of clues are in the Capal laboratory for the Cell to uncover and piece together, such as the armor and the dictionary. Even if the PCs do not realize the full extent to which Issooc has ingratiated himself with the Keepers, they can at least uncover that a group of Keepers is somehow associated with the Blades. If the Characters have a Keeper ally or contact, then the Weaver may encourage the group to approach the Keeper with the evidence they've collected. The Keeper may then have a good idea of where to go or who is responsible and can act as a guide through the Rust Wastes.

If the Characters' Cell missed the clues all together, or are unable to make sense of the clues they do have, then the Weaver may wish to take a more active role. Remember, this Act is completely optional and should not be forced onto the PCs. If they missed the clues then they will miss the opportunity.

- while the PCs are in Capal or the Skyrealm, they may find more artifacts leading them to believe the Keepers are involved in some way. A number of rusted pieces of metal, broken and useless electronics pieces from the World Before, or more books written by the Ancients with Keeper glyphs on them, may be added to the available clues.
- if the Weaver has enough time to prepare before running **Warrior Unbound**, she can have the PCs make a foray into the Rust Wastes (possibly at the behest of a Keeper ally) and encounter a group of Keepers claiming that they are Tribals, with their own Fatima. This group is of course, Isaac's Chosen and may be remembered by the PCs while involved in **Warrior Unbound**, especially if they see a picture of Issooc in his Fatima costume in both the Rust Wastes and the laboratory.
- the Blades can become particularly angry at the Characters and actually send some of Isaac's Chosen after the PCs. If the PCs capture the Keepers, or slay them, then the PCs may recover enough information to lead them to the Chosen's stronghold in the Rust Wastes. Should the Weaver choose this option she should probably not use the *Assassin* hook from the previous chapter, since the motivations and encounter are somewhat alike.

GETTING THERE

The PCs travel to the Rust Wastes where the Keeper group calling themselves Isaac's Chosen reside. The journey to the Rust Wastes should probably be less dangerous than the mission to find Paenitere in the Outlands. Instead, the PCs encounter a few more role-playing opportunities. Specifically, a Dahlian Caravan just outside of the Rust Wastes is traveling in the opposite direction, towards Tribal lands, having been recalled to Bazaar by Dahlia. The PCs can stop and rest with the Caravan, trade stories and possibly get a little more information on Isaac's Chosen.

The Caravan is led by a Little Trickster named Womack. He is quite excited about the Caravan's journey, the first he is in charge of. His boundless enthusiasm almost masks the fact that he has very little control over the Caravan itself, even for a Dahlian. Womack is cordial, though, and is very knowledgeable about all the environs of Vimary, including the Rust Wastes, the Duskfall Forest and even portions of the Outlands.

Eventually, the PCs move on, freshly supplied by the Caravan, to find the ramshackle building Isaac's Chosen use for a stronghold. Issooc/Isaac is not there, but most of the Keeper group makes their home at this base camp.

REMOVING THE CAUL

The PCs encounter Isaac's Chosen. The base camp is fairly well defended by a considerable number of passive booby-traps. Much of the active defenses are currently down, since most of the members are preparing to leave. (for suggestions on Keeper traps the Weaver may want to refer to *Vimary*, p. 66) As the PCs approach they are spotted by the few lookouts posted, unless they take extensive measures to approach clandestinely. If the Cell decides to approach with caution, then they may well penetrate into the area immediately surrounding the stronghold without raising the alarm should they pass their Stealth rolls.

Isaac has told the Keepers that the time has come to finally reveal themselves to their Tribal brothers and sisters, and the group is preparing to infiltrate into Bazaar. This is the moment that much of the group has waited for. Isaac's Chosen is very much a cult of personality, built around Issooc himself, and augmented with mental and mild nutritional deprivation, indoctrination and ongoing positive reinforcement. It is very much a devoted and unified group, but the members have lost a great deal of their sense of individuality. When Issooc is away, High Priest Jest keeps the group in line with promises of greatness and destiny as long as they remain loyal to the Chosen. Those promises seem to be finally coming to fruition, and the Keepers do not try to hide their excitement. Incidentally, with the Chosen seemingly on their way to acceptance by the Tribes (in their eyes, anyway), High Priest Jest is quite worried about his position. Supposedly, Isaac will lead as any of the other Fatimas and Jest's control will slowly decline.

The PCs may attack Isaac's Chosen to either kill or delay them, however, they may want to note that the Chosen have a large number of firearms. There are almost twenty-five members and just shy of half of them are armed with the powerful weapons. They are also carrying a considerable amount of equipment in sacks and bags and any number of nasty make-shift surprises from the World Before may be hidden in there.

If the Characters decide to converse with the Keepers, they discover that the Chosen are all quite convinced that Isaac really is a Fatima. However, a small minority of the Chosen, including the leader, the so-called High Priest Jest, are beginning to have second doubts about presenting themselves to the Nation. High Priest Jest is particularly concerned with the future, and the security of his leadership position. The PCs can play off this fear and possibly convince the Jest and the Keepers to delay their preparations and, depending on how convincing the PCs are, to question their Fatima. A number of rolls based on Leadership, Human Perception and Interrogation against high Thresholds (5s or 6s) are appropriate.

If the PCs role-play well and make a decent number of successful rolls, then they will sway the group into starting to doubt who Isaac really is. The Chosen are too brainwashed and reliant on Isaac to reject him outright, but logical arguments will start the group along the right path. It will take some work and a good deal of evidence (such as the armor and book from the laboratory) to bring some of the Keepers to leave Isaac. Jest is one such member that will take the opportunity to leave if it is

presented confidently. If Jest does leave he will take ten other members with him, leaving the rest too confused to continue with Issooc's plan.

With any luck some of the PCs will see reflections of themselves in the Keepers. The Keepers are just beginning to question the legitimacy of their 'Fatima,' much as the PCs did before they were banished. It is quite possible for good role-playing to establish a strong bond between the PCs and the Keepers.

TIPS AND RESOURCES

Statistics for High Priest Jest can be found on page 88 of the *Weaver's Resources*. For the other Keepers in Isaac's Chosen, the Weaver should use the template on page 94. There are twenty-four members in Isaac's Chosen. Four are children. Eleven, including Jest, have been long time members of the group (3 years or more). None of Isaac's Chosen have any Technosmithing abilities. The archaic weapons and devices they have, they operate using their minimal skills and knowledge of the science of the World Before.

The general attitude of the members of Isaac's Chosen is excitement and anticipation. Much like what Vimary is experiencing, the Chosen's world recently turned upside down. Many of the members have been a part of the group for years, waiting for just this moment. However, many of those same long-time members have had unanswered questions festering for almost as long, and become increasingly apprehensive about revealing the group to the Nation. At times, Isaac has appeared aloof, quite in contrast to what many members expect, especially in light of his claim that he is Isaac the Seer, the Fatima of learning, knowledge and the Keepers. Some even suspect that accidents that have occurred over the years have actually been at the hand of Isaac, part some sick practical joke and a willing disregard for human life. Simply, there are times that Isaac does not act the part of what the Chosen expect a Fatima to be. They have remained loyal, however, scared to question the motives of their god.

High Priest Jest no longer considers himself the leader he once was, and the PCs may fill this void of authority. Jest is the weakest and most exploitable link in the chain. He is worried about maintaining his position, about the fact that Isaac may be a liar and that his people are foolishly walking into a trap. Should the Cell specifically target High Priest Jest with their arguments and rhetoric, he will sway easily to their side.



ACT THREE: HELPING HANDS

Certainly, life is hard. Yet, it is through that adversity that we find out that we are really alive. To know excitement, one must walk within inches of dying. You want to know happiness? Discover what it is like to lose all that you have, your family, your friends, your Mother. Happiness is easy after that; there is nowhere else to go.

Rejoice well, my friend, for tomorrow we may lose everything... again.

- Dominic of the Bereaved's Tears

WEAVER'S SYNOPSIS

The PCs are approached by a member of the Cell known as The Bereaved's Tears. The group, composed mostly of Children of Lilith and Jackers, recently ran afoul of Dah'am'pir, one of the Melanis from the Blooded Blades. Before the combat was over, Dominic, the leader of The Bereaved's Tears, received a powerful vision. The vision was that of Dah'am'pir standing over the broken body of Joan, and branded behind the Z'bri was a ghost-like symbol of the Eighth Tribe. Shaken by this image, Dominic went on a series of vision quests to find answers to the thousands of questions his experience raised. He and his Cell explored the Skyrealm where the Z'bri once lived, and found the telltale remnants of a battle. Further exploration turned up physical evidence of those who fought with the Blooded Blades. The evidence initially was not enough for the Bereaved's Tears to associate with the PCs, so Dominic continued with the vision quests. He was finally granted an answer and has at long last found the people he seeks.

Dominic and the Bereaved's Tears want to help. They only have a little bit of the picture of what is going on, mostly gathered through the murky waters of visions and the small pieces of evidence they have uncovered, but they know Dah'am'pir is dangerous, more so than any Z'bri they have encountered before.

IN UNLIKELY PLACES

Initially, the Cell leader, Dominic, encounters Dah'am'pir (or any of the Blades, should Dah'am'pir already be dead) near the Skyrealm that they once inhabited. While returning to Hom he caught a glimpse of Dah'am'pir overseeing the insertion of a Were into the Skyrealm to protect the building from further intrusion. Feeling the taint and corruption resonating from the Z'bri, Dominic stalked in and attacked the Z'bri in a one-man ambush. Dominic is an accomplished fighter, but was not capable enough to dispatch Dah'am'pir. After realizing his folly Dominic beat a hasty retreat, leaving the Z'bri to finish her work. Before Dominic escaped, he had a flash of an image enter his mind. Dah'am'pir was unable to reign in the effects of her atmosphere in her distraction, and momentarily shared one of her thoughts with Dominic. It is the memory of that image that drove Dominic and the Bereaved's Tears to find the PCs' Cell.

The meeting between the two Cells can happen in any place that the Weaver finds convenient. After the visions Dominic received, he described the people he was looking for to the Bereaved's Tears and dispatched his Cell to find them. The problem was, of course, that the Bereaved's Tears had little more than a few general personality descriptions, a bit of history (relating to the PCs' altercation with the Blades) and little else.

The Bereaved's Tears knows something major is going on, but has little idea of what it is. They do know that the events have to do with Joan. It falls to the PCs to decide if the Bereaved's Tears are trustworthy and then to include them in on the plan (if they have any). Dominic and his Cell have limited information, but can fill in some gaps if the Weaver finds it appropriate.

Eventually, through discussion between the two Cells, Dominic will suggest that the groups venture into Bazaar to scout out the Trial Hall where Joan will most likely make her return.

Dominic is himself a Black Marian. He has been leading the Bereaved's Tears for a number of years, masquerading as a militant Child of Lilith. Dominic sees the unfolding events as an opportunity to bring Joshua and Joan together once again, and when he discovers the Blades' plot he dedicates himself to helping the PCs stop the Z'bri. Behind the scenes, Dominic was approached by T'Phalus (see *Rulebook* p. 73) and told of the existence of the Blades. T'Phalus has begun to get uncomfortable with the machinations of the Blades and uses Dominic to dispatch this problem. Because T'Phalus approaches Dominic in the form of a friendly Doomsayer, Dominic has no idea that he is doing the dirty work of the Z'bri.

If Dominic finds out that he has been working with T'Phalus all along, he will become quite incensed and immediately participate in a series of grueling cleansing rituals, including acts of masochism, in order to clean his blood and soul. Dominic holds a grudge against the Joh'an, and will seek revenge in the future, possibly asking the PCs for their aid.

The PCs are encouraged to meet with the Dominic and his Cell to discuss the matter at hand. If the Characters are suspicious and question Dominic, he patiently endures their suspicion and answers almost every question truthfully. However, he will mask his association with the Marians, sticking to his story that he is part of the Eighth Tribe and a Child of Lilith. He does his utmost to convince the PCs he is there to aid them, but will not degrade himself nor his Cell in an effort to convince the PCs. If they reject Dominic he will move on his way, trying his best to prepare for the Z'bri attack on Joan by himself.

3. Id, ego and superego

THE TIME AT HAND

The PCs and the Bereaved's Tears make it into Bazaar. While scouting the area, looking for signs of the Blades, the PCs are accosted by a few Serfs disguised as Tribals. The Serfs will tell the PCs not to return, that things are well out of their control, and that they are fools to interfere. The Serfs are well armed and are quite ready for a fight should the Characters decide to start one. Drawing undue attention to themselves will not be in their masters' best interests, however, so they initially try to intimidate the Fallen Cell into capitulation. If their intimidation seems to work, the Serfs meld back into the shadows to follow the PCs and prevent them from entering the Trial Hall.

The Characters can now be sure that the Blades know who they are and are prepared to fight them should the need arise. Moreover, should the PCs repeatedly return to the area around the Trial Hall they are harassed by the forces of the Blades until they leave, effectively preventing them from establishing any part of their plan before Joan returns. The Serfs, and possibly the Keepers, are well dispersed around the Sunken City, but the most powerful fighters are concentrated around the Trial Hall. All of them have seen pictures of the PCs, drawn on living pallets by Isooc. They also know the Characters are a significant danger to the Blades, and will not take an encounter with them lightly.

Efforts by the Blades' servants to thwart the PCs and the Bereaved's Tears include leaving tainted objects on the Characters and then alerting the Watch. If the Watch finds such items then the PCs will have to be very convincing indeed to talk their way out of the predicament. If the items are obviously of Z'bri manufacture, with identifiable symbols or particularly unidentifiable materials, then there is a good chance the Watch commander will have the Cell summarily executed. It is not a time in Vimary to have your loyalty to the Nation in question.

Other tactics by the Blades and their followers may be a little less subtle. The Serfs wait to attack lone PCs in the alleys of

Bazaar, or raise a lynch mob composed of Serfs disguised as Tribals to scare away the Outcasts. Of course, if the lynch mob gains enough momentum from real Tribals, all the better.

TIPS AND RESOURCES

Statistics on the general members of the Bereaved's Tears should be based on the Child of Lilith and Jacker statistics on page 96. Dominic's statistics can be found on page 89 in *Weaver's Resources*.

Generic statistics on the Serfs and Keepers may also be found on page 96. Many of the Serfs are armed with clubs (Parry -1, AD+3), Daggers (Parry -1, AD+3) and chains (ACC -1, Parry -2, AD+6). The twenty or so Keepers in the area around the Trial Hall are armed with a variety of objects. Normally they can be found with short swords of high quality (AAC +1, Parry +1, AD +8). When the crowd begins to gather, the Keepers plunder their cache of weapons and are armed with firearms (mostly jury-rigged rifles and pistols) and a few modified chainsaws (AAC -1, Parry -2, AD+15).

The Serfs by-and-large try to avoid a fight with the PCs. Besides the fear of dying at the hands of the PCs, the Blades will be displeased if the Serfs reveal their presence to the Watch or another Tribal body before Joan returns. The Serfs are instructed to be as inconspicuous as possible and to wait until the time comes to attack Joan, while at the same time dissuading any would-be interlopers — especially and specifically the PCs — from interfering.

The Keepers are a bit more aggressive. They know that their weapons are superior to what the rank-and-file Watch member wields. This knowledge, coupled with the fact that Isaac's Chosen are becoming excited about their coming integration into the Nation, makes them a much more legitimate problem for the PCs.



BETWEEN QUESTS

About two days pass between *Id, Ego and Superego* and *Aegis of the Protector*. The PCs have finally collected the necessary weapons and allies to fight the Z'bri and are ready to go on the offensive. Now, however, the Cell must bide its time. Joan has not been heard from for a long time, and even the dreams and portents that were affecting the people of Vimary at such an alarming rate have subsided. Reluctantly, many in Vimary have begun to give Joan up for lost. By the third day things are looking grim, and the people of Vimary, having been on edge for over a week, fall into a deep and emotional depression.

Though the Joanites assert that She is not dead, since their powers of Synthesis have not evaporated, they do begin to notice that their connection to the River of Dream is beginning to wane. Joan is dying, and with Her the Joanite powers of Synthesis. The Joanites will not reveal this fact, under pain of death, to anyone outside of their Tribe.

The Fatimas retreat into their strongholds, not allowing any but Their closest advisors to see Them. A large crowd begins to collect outside of Mortuary, waiting for Baba Yaga, mistress of death, to pronounce the final rites on Joan. The mass revivals and prayer sessions that grew earlier from spontaneous gatherings now take on a somber tone. Chanting, wailing and weeping ring through the streets of Vimary, while the Fatimas remain eerily silent.

Joanites are stunned as they slowly begin to accept the harsh reality that their Warrior and god may indeed be dead. The unthinkable has happened. There is no anger nor calls for revenge from the Council as there had been with Joshua. There was no honorable fight for the Joanites to take solace in as there was with Her brother. No, instead they find their Fatima seemingly pushed away into obscurity by Tera Sheba and Her Sisters, a dismissal that seems all too similar to what happened with Mary. A mass exodus of Joanites begins to make their way to Hom and Haven. Many of the children of Joan decide it is best to become an Outcast, as their most tenable link to tribal society, their Fatima, is gone.

For their part, the Eighth Tribe does what they can for the confused and lonely Joanites. Newly rebuilt homes and the families that live in them open up to help the Joanites through these hard times. Some Jackers, Lightbringers and Children of Lilith make the journey to Bazaar and the Hunting Grounds to console and aid their tribal brethren. Some find their way temporarily into the Watch, filling in for Joanites too stricken with grief to maintain their posts.

The Herites are torn. One of the Seven Deaths seems to be dead and the Joanites are liberated. However, many of the Herites see this as the worst type of liberation, a freedom born of apathy and inaction. The Joanites are accepted as part of the Eighth Tribe, and the war against the Fatimas is one step closer to its finish.

Everyone still keeps out a sharp ear for any rumors, but for the most part, Vimary gives in to a grieving process that has no end in sight.

The Blades have not given up hope. This is their one, best shot at doing the impossible, of returning home. They have previously managed to open a tiny version of the portal, but another opportunity like the one with Joan will never come back around. The Z'bri stay vigilant, as do their followers. Many of the Keepers loyal to Isaac rotate on and off in their lookout, while the Serfs blend themselves into the shadows of Bazaar. As Vimary falls deeper and deeper into despondency, the Blades grow desperate. On the third day, Dah'am'pir decides to push her way through the River of Dream to look for Joan.

A day's worth of searching yields results for Dah'am'pir. She discovers the broken spirit of Joan in the River of Dream, slowly drifting along the currents. Joan is badly hurt, Her will to continue flagging and Her soul greatly weakened, but She is not dead. Joan floats, semi-conscious, on the boundary between the River of Dream and the vast Sea of the Lost, the Winter Wolf at Her side. Dah'am'pir cannot effect Her directly, blocked by the currents of the River, and she returns to the Blades and tells them to prepare for Joan's return.

On the fourth day the dreams begin again, with a severity unlike what any of those afflicted had experienced before. People all across Vimary fall into trances, muttering incomprehensible phrases, though each one includes the words 'return' and 'home.' Dreams are flooded with images of Joan's broken and splinted arm. Some of the Templars lose the ability to talk, others are unable to remove their armor from their bodies. Spirits from all across the River of Dream flock to the Dream equivalent of Vimary, as if on the cusp of some great wave.

Bloodied, but unbroken, Joan is returning home.



HOOK: SPIRIT BINDING

The PCs may use their dreams in order to gain audience with spirits. If they banter or battle with the spirits and are successful, then they can bind those spirits for a time to an item of theirs or gain a service in repayment for sparing the spirit's life.

SCENES

Wherever the PCs can prepare a large ritual to bind the spirit is appropriate. Incense, candles and chalk drawings are all common aspects of a binding, and the room must be able to accommodate these things. One place that is permanently structured for ritual activity is the basement of the Sanctuary, run by Mari-Anne Melina. (*Book of Legends*, p. 52) Her expertise in the spiritual matters cannot be denied and with a recommendation from Halos or another influential NPC, Mari-Anne will surely see the PCs and aid their summoning. Similarly, the Characters may undertake the binding under the watchful eye of just about any spiritually oriented individual.

The Weaver should familiarize themselves with the rules for Ritual Synthesis on page 174 of the *Rulebook* before beginning a spirit binding. Spirit binding is only be performed through the use of Ritual Synthesis, since Conjunctional Synthesis does not

allow for the needed communication and interaction between the ritualist and the spirit. Because spirit binding is a general form of Synthesis, anyone with a connection to the River of Dream (Synthesis Skill of 1 or above) can perform it, not just those with Eminences specific to the spirit world. Spirit binding still uses the same Synthesis modifiers on page 165 of the *Rulebook*.

To begin, the focus of the ritual must sit in a circle made of chalk, large enough to hold the ritualist and the spirit they wish to bind. The performer then enters a trance and begins weaving the powers of Synthesis around the room. Once everyone in the room is calm and mentally prepared for the ritual, the first major step of the ritual, calling the spirit, begins.

The ritualist must know the name of the spirit they wish to call. There can be no 'general call,' but the person can call for a specific type of spirit (i.e. 'wolf spirit') in lieu of calling for a specific individual. The calling is not an easy task, due to the incredible distances that can often be involved, and this is the point where, if a ritual is going to fail, it will do so. The Player should roll on their Synthesis Skill, on a Threshold of 8 for a general call. If the ritualist knows the specific name of the spirit they wish to call, the Threshold drops to 6. If the individual performing the event has the Spirit Lore skill, they may add half this statistic to the roll.



If the ritual is successful, the ritualist gains the attention of the spirit. If the roll yields an MoS of more than one, then the spirit is intrigued and, unless occupied, travels to see who is calling them. 'Attending,' as it is referred to, is entirely a decision made by the spirit. If it does not want to be bothered, then it does not have to Attend the ritualist and the ritual will consequently fail. If the spirit decides to Attend, then the flows of power will hold strong, letting the individual know that a spirit is coming.

It should be noted that the more powerful a spirit is, the less likely it is to Attend. The Great Owl (see the **Rulebook**, p. 163) is quite unlikely to Attend anyone short of the most trusted advisor to Tera Sheba Herself.

The incense and smoke used during the event allows the ritualist and any nearby Dreamers to see the faint outline of the spirit as it enters the circle. It is not actually present in the physical world, nor can it be affected by physical interactions.

When the spirit arrives, the ritualist, now a supplicant, must convince the spirit that their cause is worthwhile. Depending on the spirit, this can take a number of avenues. Appealing to a wolf-spirit may involve arguments of honor and the hunt while appealing to a mouse spirit may stress the need for safety. During the Binding, the supplicant rolls their INF and Theatrics against the spirit's WIL (or occasionally INS). If the individual gets a MoS of one or more the spirit will agree to the proposition. Beyond just rolling, this part of the ritual should be role-played through, as the Character entreats the spirit for their aid.

The Margins of Success of the ritualist dictate how long and in what capacity the spirit will work with the human. The Weaver, as always, has ultimate say in interpreting the rolls.

If a spirit is asked to enter and enchant an item, then apply a -1 modifier to the MoS for the duration. However, if the spirit agrees, it enters the spiritual equivalent of the item, imbuing it with Synthesis power. The exact nature of this enchantment is left up to the Weaver, but most effects are only useful in the River of Dream. A very powerful spirit may grant +1 ACC or +1 AD to the weapon, or impart some specific ability associated with its powers. Granting one or more low-level powers associated with a specific Eminence is one such way a powerful spirit may enchant an item.

If the ritualist rolls a MoF of 3 or more during any part of the ritual of Binding, then the specific spirit will not Attend, nor will it ever Attend, such an attempt made by the same individual. If it is already Attending, then it will immediately leave. If a MoF of 5 or more occurs, something particularly nasty may occur, such as gaining the attention of a Z'bri or associated malevolent spirit.

CLIMAX

The PCs call forth a spirit of their choice and then bind it to their cause. Bindings are more a *request* for aid, so the Characters must make a pact with the spirit which they will eventually have to pay for in full. Before the spirit makes the final pact, it will request a promise from the supplicant to perform an act to aid the spirit. If the PC ever reneges on the agreement or is suitably sluggish in repaying the debt, then her reputation will spread about the immediate spirit world, making it that much harder for the PC to maintain any future relationships with spirits, and may make Dream Travel and Synthesis more dangerous than normal.

With any luck and a good deal of role-playing, the Cell gains a spiritual ally, one that will allow them to strike at the Blades in the River of Dream.

AFTERMATH

Spirits can be quite fickle to deal with and should never be pushovers for the PCs. The Characters must treat the spirits with respect and attention. If the spirit feels unimportant in the individuals' lives, then the spirit may leave before their contract is up. Spirits are also very flighty and may call for constant attention by the ritualist that bound them. The ritualist may then have a delicate proposition before her, as she must keep the spirit happy without being driven insane.

HOOK: THE PILLARS SHAKEN

The Characters, while in Bazaar, are savagely harassed by a detachment of the Watch. While the PCs take a few moments to gather themselves, another detachment shows up. The second Watch detachment is composed entirely of Joanites who are very sympathetic to the Eighth Tribe. The newly arrived detachment sees what is happening to the PCs and decides to step in on their behalf. In short order, weapons are thrown aside and the two detachments are brawling like schoolboys in the street. The Cell has to make good on an escape before things get out of hand.

SCENES

The major scene should be set in a fairly quiet street in Bazaar so that the first Watch detachment, led by a Sheban, can spot the Fallen markings on the PCs. The street quickly empties once it looks like there may be a showdown with the second detachment of Watch members. Alternatively, the showdown may occur on Hom or Haven, as a considerable number of Joanites travel to the islands and some of the Watch make their rounds through Hom and Haven (at great risk of Herite attack). If the Weaver wants to make the encounter occur on either island, then the bridges connecting them to Vimary are probably the most appropriate places.

3. Id, ego and superego

When the fight begins, weapons are put aside and the fight begins relatively civilly, hand-to-hand. However, the struggle quickly escalates in severity, with many of the opposing detachment specifically seeking out the PCs in order to beat them into a bloody pulp. To compound matters, the hostile detachment has a Terasheban Judge with it at the time of the incident and if the Judge is badly injured the detachment becomes increasingly violent, until weapons are taken and real blood begins to flow.

As the danger escalates, the venue then changes as one of the Joanite Watch members friendly to the Characters gathers the Cell and quickly leads them away from the fighting. The Watch member runs them into a small building and into Playground, out of sight from prying eyes. There, deep underground with the flickering of a torch to illuminate what they see, the groups of Agnites tend to the PCs and take over guiding their Cell as the Watch member returns to the surface and her detachment. When the Cell is refreshed, and after any wounds are dressed, the Agnites lead them to the Abyss to make good on their escape.

If the battle commences on one of the bridges, the Joanite will lead the PCs into Vimary proper in a rush to get them away from danger so that the other members can diffuse the situation. If asked why they are being taken to the Vimary side rather than into Hom, the Watch member simply replies that it is easier for her detachment to calm the other detachment if they think the Characters are being taken to be imprisoned. Unless the PCs decide not to follow, they will be led to Playground.

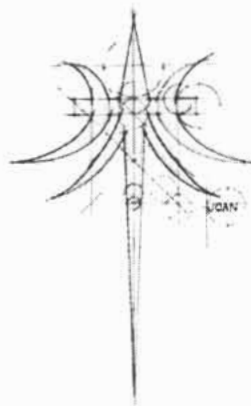
If the Cell has never been to Playground, the Weaver should emphasize how dark and cramped the underground passageways are. The light from torches and skylights (little more than holes in the ground) barely pushes past the shadows that seem to play with the many Agnites. This area of Playground is musty and dank compared to the rest of Vimary, making the environment feel quite old and alien. Guided deeper and deeper by their child guides, the PCs strain muscles they rarely use as they walk bent over and on their knees. The sudden sight of Abyss, with room to stand and stretch, coupled with all the sounds, sights and light is a welcome change.

CLIMAX

The battle between the two Watch detachments starts off as a way for each side to express their frustration and the PCs provide an easy excuse. However, it quickly grows out of hand, to the point that weapons are used. The Characters must retire fairly quickly from the fight before more detachments of the Watch show up to quiet the brawl. Reinforcements, regardless of their feelings towards the Eighth Tribe, do not look favorably on Fallen drawing weapons and fighting members of the Watch. The Cell needs to realize that this is not a fight that they can win. Should they stay and fight, sooner or later the Watch overpowers them and, if more detachments join the fray, the brawl can easily escalate into a full-blown riot.

AFTERMATH

The PCs are directed to a safe haven well underground to get some much-needed rest. If the Characters are grievously injured and have recently allied with Dominic, they will be led through a maze of tunnels into the Marian temple close by, where even the most dangerous wounds find a balm. Beyond healing the Cell, the Agnites show their support and interest in the Fallen by going out of their way to aid the PCs, despite knowing little about them other than their Fallen status. The Eighth Tribe has sympathizers in the Tribes beyond the Joanites, and the Agnites' actions may help raise the Characters' spirits. Spending a little time in the emporiums of the Abyss will also offer the Cell an opportunity to gather supplies for the coming battle with the Z'bri Blades.

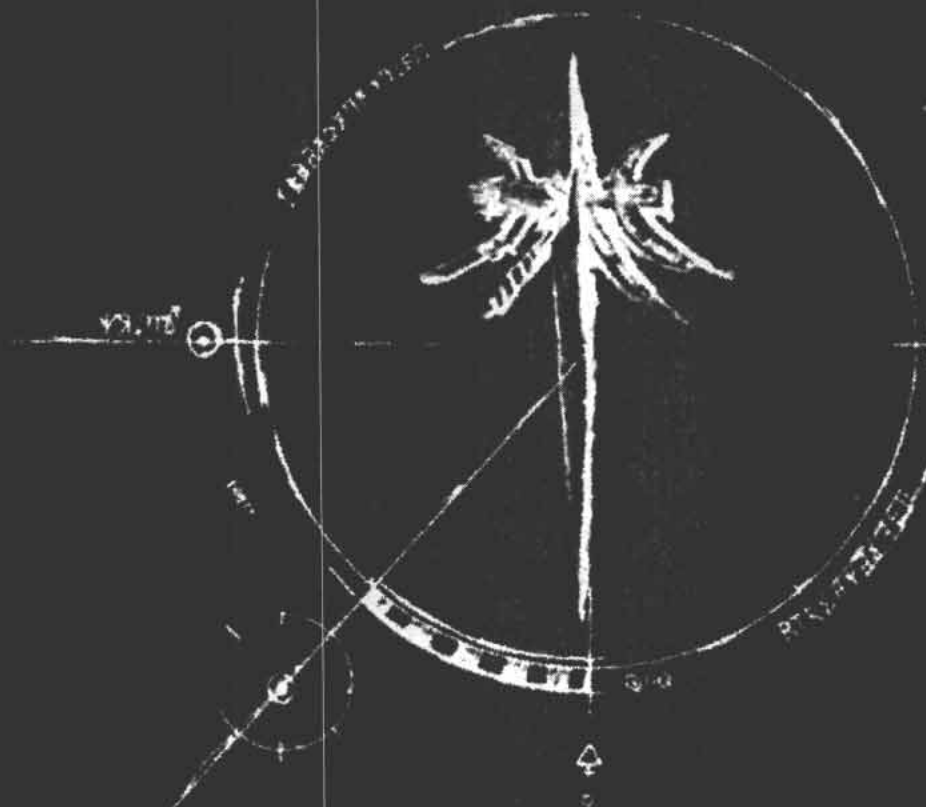




Chapter 4: Aegis of the Protector

The Nation will be so terribly boring without Joan.

- Agnes



QUEST FOUR: AEGIS OF THE PROTECTOR

The final Quest of **Warrior Unbound**, *Aegis of the Protector* is the culmination of the PCs' efforts to defend Joan upon Her return to the physical world. Just the fact that She is returning is reason alone to celebrate. On top of that, many of the rumors that have begun mention Joan's *victorious* return: why would She return if not successful?

THE QUEST PROPER

Should Joan fail, there is little the Goddess of Mercy Mission can do, much less myself. I cannot heal a fractured Nation. Maybe Joshua's prophecy of 'sacrifice' has indeed come and gone, and it is time for us to pay in Blood. May the Goddess protect us should She falter.

- Kymber Reva, the Collected Letters.

WEAVER'S SYNOPSIS

The time has come. Joan is returning and by now, all of Vimary knows this. The dreams, visions and portents all point to Her journey back to Her Children. The six Fatimas solemnly congregate inside the Trial Hall. Their silent gathering proves to the Tribals and Fallen like that Joan is indeed on Her way home. However, not even Baba Yaga knows whether Joan was successful in her exploits or not.

The PCs gather themselves, for their time is at hand. The Blades are in position and prepared to strike. Thousands of Tribals and Fallen follow their leaders to surround the Trial Hall, since no one is allowed inside the Hall besides the Fatimas and a few of Their most trusted followers. There is a special energy in the air. Besides the scene being metaphorically charged with emotional anticipation, the preparations by the Blades have begun warping the River of Dream, creating a slow weakening of the boundary between Dream and Flesh. It seems as if all of Vimary and the power it carries have gathered for this one event.

In a flash of light and a roiling burst of Dream, Joan arrives. She is barely alive, exhausted by Her ordeal, Her arm still in the makeshift sling. Clutched in Her left hand are two soul stones, much like the Z'bri heartstones. Within Her and within the stones are the souls of those She was charged with recovering. As the Fatimas gather around Their Sister to ascertain the results of Her Quest, the Blades launch their attack. Issoc reveals himself and steps into the Trial Hall, while his companions work feverishly in the River of Dream. The Weres erupt from their hiding places and streak towards the wounded Joan, the Serfs and Keepers surge forward and the air positively crackles with the clashing powers of Synthesis and Sundering.

MESSAGES TO HOME

The PCs (or a PC), while asleep, find themselves caught up in a dream-message. In the distance they see the form of a woman, wounded but still on her feet, walking across a barren plain towards the gathered PCs. As the sun rises behind the woman, the Characters see that they are not alone, that a throng of people they have never met flanks them. All eyes of the gathered crowd are anxiously glued to the figure on the horizon.

As the woman draws closer, the people crowding around the Characters surge forward. The crowd scrambles to get closer to the woman while her tattered wings unfurl. With this act, Joan is revealed. The PCs are ripped away from the scene to discover they are caught up in another dream; this time they are alone, darkness around them. They also find themselves gagged and bound. The scene progresses and the PCs realize they are the center of a trial conducted by an unknown Sheban Inquisitor. The Inquisitor is dressed in a flowing crimson robe, with a hood so deep that the features of his face are masked in shadow.

Occasionally, the light from an unseen source penetrates beneath the hood and reveals blue, glowing eyes. The sleeves of the robe normally hide the figure's arms and hands, but when pushed back, the hands grip any number of devices to extract the truth from the PCs. Blades, hammers and vials appear when most appropriate from beneath the heavy robe. Heavy footfalls follow the Inquisitor as she paces around the Cell, sizing each member up. Somewhere, off in the distance, the group hears the sound of water dripping.

What the Inquisitor wants is not exactly clear. The PCs are forced to justify their recent acts, with constant demands for proof of their righteousness emanating from deep within the darkened hood. Their logic is questioned and any foolish or hastily decided plans from their past efforts are thrown back into the PC's faces. Their entire existence is eventually questioned. The Inquisitor seems to already know their most intimate secrets and will drag them painfully out into the light.

If the Inquisitor discovers that a PC is holding back, she will engage them in a duel of wills. The Player must succeed at a simple test using their WIL vs. a Threshold of 5. If they are successful, then they can hold back the piece of information that they are currently being asked for. A MoS of +2 or more ensures that the Inquisitor believes the Character knows nothing about the topic and will immediately move on. If the Character fails the test then they are forced to divulge the information. If the test fails by a MoF of -2 or more then the Inquisitor has broken the Character's will, and can return to that Character at any other time and demand one truthful answer that the PC must reveal. There is a chance for the Characters to alter the scene for their betterment, but at great risk to themselves.

Any other attempts to avoid the Inquisitor are useless.

When the Inquisition finally ends, the PCs are physically beaten while still bound. When they wake, they find themselves on a concrete floor, lying next to the broken husk that was once Joan.

They wake again, this time for good.

4. Aegis of the Protector

PREPARATIONS TO BE MADE

The Characters need to gather themselves and their forces. The Weaver needs to direct the Cell into Bazaar and then to the Trial Hall, near the Sunken City. The general scene around the Trial Hall is that of expectation. The gathered crowd is huge by nearly any standard, with people crammed tightly into the open area and overflowing into nearby alleys.

THE RETURN

The gathered Fatimas prepare a circle to make Joan's return from the spirit world easier. A huge patchwork curtain has been drawn across the open face of the Trial Hall, enclosing the Hall from the outside. The many people who have gathered to see Joan return must wait patiently.

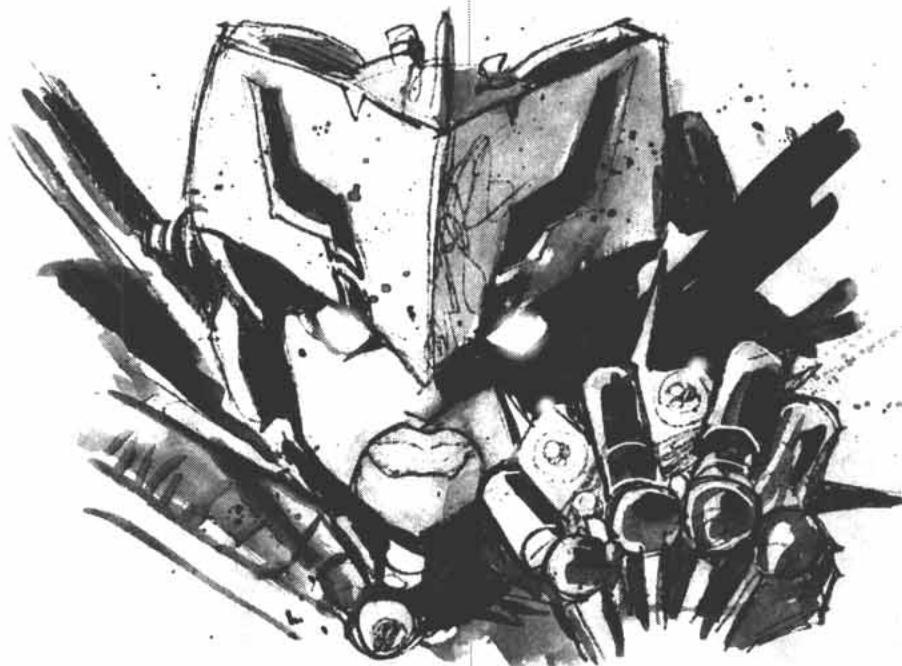
Abruptly, Joan forces Her way into the physical world, with the two soulstones held in Her left hand while Her right hand carries Her massive sword (despite Her arm hanging in a sling). Joan raises both the sword and the stones into the air triumphantly, and the small gathered crowd inside of the Trial Hall, including the Fatimas, move towards Joan, aware that She is badly injured. Just as they reach Joan's side, the Blades launch their attack.

Issooc manifests himself from his hiding place, already in his Fatimal costume/armor and wades into combat, seeming more like a Koleris than a Sangis. The Weres burst through the crowd and into the open Trial Hall. Outside, away from the Fatimas, the Serfs and Keepers perform their duties, attacking the confused and frightened crowd in an effort to keep them away from the Trial Hall. Until they are attacked themselves, the gathered crowd has little idea of what is happening inside the closed building before them.

The Serfs are all too effective at sowing confusion and distraction, as the crowd flees for their lives. The gathered Fatimas, realizing something is horribly wrong, feel the pain and death of Their followers just on the other side of the curtain. The attention of the Fatimas is diverted for a few crucial moments. In the River of Dream, the two Melanis open up with their Sundering, attacking and attempting to bind Joan's spirit into a Z'bri heartstone they had gathered earlier.

The speed and ferocity of the attacks stun the gathered crowd as well as the Fatimas. Agnes and Tera Sheba quickly recover, and begin to defend Their weakened Sister, who is barely holding Herself up. Tera Sheba's ax rises and falls feverishly as She swiftly dispatches one of the Weres attacking Joan, while Agnes faces off with another. Joan tumbles to the ground, and the soulstones drop from Her hand.

With the crowd effectively dispersed, the Keepers surge through the openings into the Hall and jump into the fight, harrying Tera Sheba as She battles with the Were and blasting huge chunks of material from Agnes with their firearms. The other Fatimas, Dahlia and the Fates, are close to the small crowd of gathered humans left inside the Hall, doing Their best to protect Their fragile followers from the onslaught. Unfortunately, in the confusion, they do not realize that Joan is the focus of the attack and concentrate on removing the humans from the fray. The room is thick with the currents of Dream, shimmering and changing, images appearing and vanishing again at unbelievable speeds. The Keepers and Serfs don't seem to notice, but the Distortion warps both Tribal and Fallen use of Synthesis in the room, making it both harder to use but blindingly more effective when anything is accomplished.





4. Aegis of the Protector

Adding to the chaos is a surprise that Vezmal prepared. Days before the return of Joan, Vezmal gathered a number of Scray swarms, calling in a number of favors and past debts. Along with the Weres, he secreted the biomechanical constructs into the area. When the time is right, he releases the Scray from their induced dormancy, and they flood into the Trial Hall. Fatima, human and Z'bri alike are buffeted by the indiscriminate and devastating attacks of the gathered swarms. The added confusion is exactly what Vezmal was looking for, though he knew the other Blooded Blades would disapprove due to the fact that the swarm attacks their 'allies' as well.

The PCs have only a little time to act. The Blades know they cannot last for very long at all against the combined efforts of the Fatimas and their high priests, and grow ever closer to destroying Joan. Issoc fights with desperation guiding his hand, trying to be strong enough to allow Dah'am'pir and Vezmal to finish their ritual. Each blow he lands on Tera Sheba diverts Her for a few precious moments, enough for Issoc to land key blows on Joan's dying body and weaken Her soul for the taking.

Warrior Unbound assumes that the plan of the Blooded Blades is a dismal failure. The Blooded Blades are unsuccessful in destroying Joan, but only just. The PCs need to involve themselves, to intervene on Joan's behalf.

Entering the Trial Hall is a dangerous, but necessary, proposition. The Characters have a few avenues to exploit.

- On their own, the Cell may be able to move Joan's body from the Trial Hall and to safety. Simply removing Her may not be that easy, though. Tera Sheba and Agnes stand near their Sister, fighting Issoc, the Keepers, the Serfs, the Scray and the Weres. If They see a couple of random humans — and Fallen, no less — moving towards Joan, They will try to intercept the Cell. The PCs will have no time to negotiate or argue their benevolent intentions. They must prove their intentions to the Fatimas by directly aiding Them, performing such an act as delivering the killing blow to a weakened Were. Otherwise, the Characters must gain access to Joan's body without the other Fatimas noticing (due to the confusion this is actually possible, albeit extremely difficult: a simple sneak test vs. a Threshold of 8 will allow a PC close enough to touch Joan, and at least two people are necessary to move the Fatima).
- Another way the Cell can aid Joan is by directly engaging Issoc, the Weres and/or the Keepers. Destroying the physical threat to Joan will dramatically increase Her chances, though She is still in danger from Dah'am'pir and Vezmal. Similarly, the Characters may be able to disrupt the Z'bri ritual in the Sundering pocket-realm in the River of Dream. This type of attack can only be accomplished if the PCs are already prepared for such an attack and is the most efficient (and safest) way to ensure Joan's survival.
- The Characters may also have the presence of mind to help bring Dahlia and the Fates to defend Their Sister. Since They do not seem to realize that Joan is the focus of the attack, the Fatimas are currently concentrating on getting their followers

to safety. Their help would surely tip the scales in favor of the Nation, ensuring Issoc's swift death.

- * If the Characters gained the Bereaved's Tears as an ally before the attack, then Dominic can help keep Joan alive long enough for the battle to end and the threat diverted. With the PC Cell's aid, Dominic will rush to Joan's side and using his Synthesis abilities will try to heal Joan, just enough for Her to survive. The healing process is not a quick one, as Joan is a Fatima, after all and Dominic is merely a human. However, after two turns at Her side, giving his life force over to Her, Joan will have enough strength to move away from the melee. The Characters will have to protect Dominic for that time, a tough proposition since that may include protecting him from the other Fatimas if they mistake him for an attacker.
- * A PC with healing skills and some knowledge of Synthesis (Skill 2 or over) can try the same thing, on a Threshold of 5 to create the connection, and a WIL roll every turn against the same Threshold to maintain it. Add a cumulative -1 modifier after every three turns, as the battle rages around them.
- Isaac's Chosen, if previously convinced to aid the PCs, can try to save Joan by using their knowledge of the attack to divert some of the Blooded Blade's resources. The Keepers know that no one outside of the Characters will listen to them, so with the PCs' aid they try to find where the Blades hid the Weres and engage them a few minutes before the attack is to commence. If the Characters are able to bring the Keepers to their side, not only will they not have to worry about fighting them, but the Keepers will also eliminate one of the Weres before the attack even begins.

With the PCs supporting Her Agnes rises to the occasion, takes up Joan's fallen sword and strikes a decisive blow. Issoc begins to topple, his legs cut out from under him, giving any nearby PCs the chance to finish him for good. With Issoc destroyed, the plans of the Blades are dashed.

As the assault winds down, Eva and Magdalen cradle Joan's body in their arms and rush her away from the Trial Hall as the remaining members of the Sisterhoods present attempt to gather and calm the crowd. Baba Yaga alone moves to where Joan dropped the two soulstones and takes them in Her hand. Those who remained at the Trial Hall move to watch, and a wary crowd begins to gather once more. All eyes look through the shattered windows of the Hall, desperately trying to fathom the import of the events taking place. After a few more minutes, Baba Yaga holds up the stones for all to see and in a gravely voice, at once barely loud enough for all to hear and thunderously resonant, announces that Uhanna and Delastes have been brought home.

There is no doubt that Joan was successful. None of the Fatimas say anything, and even Tera Sheba stands silent. Agnes moves to stand beside Baba Yaga and slowly takes the Fate's hand. Magdalen and Eva stand and regard Joan for a moment, then each makes Her respective way back to Her tribal lands. Dahlia moves out into the empty streets to spread the word of the events that just happened and to celebrate with the people of the Nation.

TIPS AND RESOURCES

If the Weaver sees it necessary, either Halos or the Bereaved's Tears can come to the aid of the PCs. Both are ready for the Blades and may aid the PCs in the final moments of the battle. However, both Halos and the Bereaved's Tears will be busy with their own goals during the height of the battle.

As the Blades attack, the Bereaved's Tears focuses on the Serfs and the Keepers as they disperse the crowd. The followers of the Blades attack innocent people at random, trying to create a scene of utter chaos. Dominic's Cell focuses on stopping the Serfs and Keepers and preventing the needless bloodshed of the stunned crowd.

Halos, alone on the roof of a distant building, struggles within a trance. He is desperately wrestling with the forces of Sundering and Synthesis alike to keep the River of Dream safe. The battle he wages is a metaphysical one, and one that takes all of his attention. Only after two of the three Z'bri of the Blades are dispatched can he divert some his attention to the world of Flesh.

During the final battle, when and if the Characters find themselves in the Trial Hall, they will be buffeted by the attacks of the gathered Scray swarm. Use the statistics below for the Scray (note that this swarm is larger than most and the attributes reflect its size):

SCRAY SWARM:

Aggressiveness	4	Damage/turn	6
Damage Threshold	90	Random Horde Size	6D6
Basic Swarm Size	140		

THE RECOVERY

With the Blades' plans thwarted, the Serfs and the Weres destroyed or fled, it is now time for the PCs to recover. The Characters are summoned by Basyl Loren, the vaunted Joanite Cavalry Commander. This request is not one to be taken lightly. After the Night of Crimson Tears, Basyl Loren has been quite distrustful of the Fallen, yet he was instructed by a recovering Joan Herself to meet with those who saved Her life. When they meet with Loren he tells them that Joan noted their efforts on Her behalf and thanks them, and that he thanks them as well. Joan knows of their instrumental role in saving Her life, and their deeds have done a considerable amount of good in quieting Tera Sheba's rhetoric against the Eighth Tribe. As repayment for their selfless actions, Basyl Loren gives the Cell a small footman's shield as a way to show the Joanites' gratitude.

The shield is charged with the Aspect of Wonder and is actually a gift from both Joan and Agnes to repay the Characters' sacrifice and forethought.

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The shield, made from a light metal, can aid the movements of its wielder. As such, it has the following attributes: ACC -1, Parry +3, AD+4 and no minimum strength required to use it. The shield will also manifest in the dreams of someone armed with it, though it can only appear in the River of Dream or the World of Flesh at any one time, and cannot co-locate.

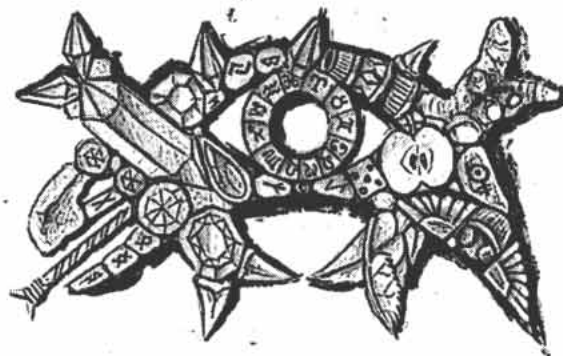
A little bit later, the PCs hear a rumor that the Fisher King has pulled himself away from his isolation in his Tower. He has returned to the Bosom of Tera Sheba when She needed him most. With much of the Watch gutted by Joanite deserters, the Fisher King takes up the arduous task of rebuilding the Watch into a force capable of defending itself and the people of Vimary. The Shebans are no longer just the leaders of the Watch, they become part of it as well (though the Watch is still dominated by the Joanites).

CYCLE RAMIFICATIONS AND OUTCOMES

Throughout it all, the Goddess stood by my side. I remember her face smiling upon me at my darkest hour. I was successful in my Quest not only because of her love, but also because of the love I could feel radiating from the Nation. Confused in the darkness, I lit my path with your love as a beacon. I live today because of the Nation and the Eighth Tribe. The Fallen, my Brother's legacy, are a Tribe once again and they cannot be ignored any longer.

This is my gift to all of you; let us be whole once again.

- Pledge of the Warrior



4. Aegis of the Protector

FALLEN PERSPECTIVES

Joan's success and Her acceptance of the Fallen have greatly boosted the spirits of the Eighth Tribe. They may not be truly part of the Tribes, but, for the first time ever, the Fallen are listened to and speak with one, powerful voice.

The Joanites are now poised to begin accepting a number of 'new' members into their ranks. Joan has formally opened Her Tribe to the Fallen. If a member of the Outcasts can pass a few rigorous examinations, both physical and spiritual, then she will be accepted into the warmth of Joan's love. This prospect, while not taken up on by a large number of the Eighth Tribe, is more than enough to raise morale for the Outcasts to an all-time high. They may not be truly and finally free, but Joan's attention and love seems to be a beginning.

CHILDREN OF LILITH

The Children have had it hard ever since Lilith's Death. The events of **Warrior Unbound** offer an opportunity for the Children of Lilith to renew their devotion to their cause, as well as to redeem themselves in their own eyes. The Children are the first and most adamant to support Joan in Her reconciliation with the Fallen and, this time, are vindicated for their efforts. Many of the Children take the tests to prove they are capable of rejoining the Tribes; about as many pass those tests, but most refuse entry into the Tribe of Joan and remain within the Fallen. Their lot remains firmly with Joshua and His Daughter.

The Bereaved's Tears figure prominently in the rebuilding of the Children's image. Whether the Characters work with the Cell or not, the Bereaved's Tears makes a strong showing at the battle against the Blades. The Cell takes action when almost everyone else is frozen in shock and horror. The little warning they have is enough for them to be on the lookout and respond when needed. Their actions to save many Tribals and Fallen alike during the chaos of Joan's return earns them a number of accolades from the Eighth Tribe and Joanite leaders as well as grudging respect from some elders of the other Tribes.

Beyond **Warrior Unbound**, the Children of Lilith begin as a link between the Joanites and the Fallen. Since their inception, the Children of Lilith have sought a niche in the society of the Eighth Tribe: The Jackers are the warriors. The Lightbringers are the leaders. The Herites are the rebels. The Doomsayers are the prophets. The Children of Lilith are a bit of all of these aspects, but excel at none. With the inclusion of the Fallen into the Joanites and need for both ambassadors and easy communication, the Children gladly fill this new role. Their past with Lilith makes their association with Joan and Her Tribe all that much easier.

Dominic, though not technically a Child of Lilith, becomes one of the more charismatic and dynamic leaders of the outlook, appointing liaisons between the Eighth Tribe and the Children of Joan. He fills the void left by the death of their former leader, Ardatli Maque. (see **Trial by Fire**)

DOOMSAYERS

The Doomsayers lost much when their de-facto leader, Veruka the Wraith, was executed. (see **Trial by Fire**) Her absence was felt across Hom and Haven, but nowhere more than with the Doomsayers. Now, the dark prophets once again have reason to look towards the future. Many embark on Dream-Quests with renewed energy and come back with amazing tales of battle with the Z'bri, of exploration beyond Vimary, of the pride of Joshua and of a future for the Eighth Tribe won with hard work and bloodshed.

The image of a reconciled Joan and Joshua is a powerful metaphor used by many Doomsayers as proof that their visions of destiny are coming to fruition. Since Joan was ready to sacrifice Herself for the Fallen, many Doomsayers believe that the 'sacrifice' aspect of Joshua's prophecy has been fulfilled. The Fallen have not yet found their place in destiny, and the Doomsayers still see a long and hard road before them. In the minds of many truth-seekers, however, the Eighth Tribe has taken a huge and important step along the path towards their ultimate destiny.

HERITES

Many Herites participated in the Night of Crimson Tears and make themselves quite scarce after the general failure of the revolutionary attempt. The Herites are quite uncomfortable with the current situation, especially with one of the Seven Deaths now the marginal leader of the Fallen. Many Herites resolve to do what they can to rip the veil away from the eyes of the Eighth Tribe and show that Joan's actions do nothing more than bring the Outcasts back into a stifling, unbending society. The Herites serve as a valuable 'reality-check' for the Fallen.

Troy Fenys manages to hold on to her Cell and begins gathering their strength again. There will be another opportunity to show the Fatimas for what they really are, especially if the rumors are true and forces are moving towards action.



JACKERS

The Jackers are pleased with the current unfolding of events. Joan, now more animated than She's been in a very long time, seems to imply that the Crusades are finally going to be a reality. Many Jackers take up the challenge of the tests, but contrary to the Children of Lilith, many of those who pass do choose the Tribal life, and enter into the military arm of the Tribe of Joan. The war with the Z'bri is coming, the attacks on Joan and the Fatimas proved that, and the Jackers have longed to be on the forefront. This is their first major chance to prepare for that war, to do more than skirmish with wayward Gek'roh. Almost a full quarter of the Jackers leave the Eighth Tribe to return to the Fatima's love.

Mek never takes the Joanite tests. He is happy where he is. There are still borders to protect for the Fallen and there are still unspoiled lands to explore. The way he sees it, he had been cast out once, and there is no reason to create an opportunity for a second wound. The return of Joan and vindication of the Fallen is certainly a great event in Mek's eyes, but nothing has really changed. Joshua is still gone, the Z'bri still live and the Eighth Tribe's destiny is still unrealized.

LIGHTBRINGERS

Many of the Lightbringers are divided over the events of the last few weeks. Finally it appears the Eighth Tribe has a powerful leader in Joan, but a leader that is only marginally a leader, as well as one that until recently had been considered an enemy. The Lightbringers have not forgotten the destruction rained down upon Hom and Haven by the sieges, and a number of the Lightbringers perform some deep soul-searching in an effort to come to terms with the events at hand. Many also look to the Doomsayers for hints of the future and the role the leadership needs to take, and some hope that the prophesied 'second city' is a place where their leadership will be proved. Very few of the Lightbringers take the Joanite tests, but those that do quickly make their way through the ranks.

Hal Ninva speaks out against allowing Joan any more power in the affairs of the Fallen, and does what he can to draw many of the Herites to his cause. He sees a number of the Eighth Tribe discouraged by Joan's acceptance of the Fallen and works to mold that resentment into something more amenable to his own goals.

Evangel Black also works towards her own ends, though they are more beneficial to the Outcasts as a whole. Evangel sees in the reconciliation a chance to get closer to the Crucible. Her quest to punish the Crucible for their dark deeds is stepped up, as the Crucible no longer can work with impunity against the Fallen. Evangel Black also works with Dominic in order to solidify relations between the Eighth Tribe and the Joanites, to good effect.

TRIBAL PERSPECTIVES

The Tribes and the Fatimas are understandably shaken by the events of **Warrior Unbound**. Tribal society becomes enraptured with the events surrounding Joan and the trial. When the Blades' attack occurs, everyone is caught off guard and the Nation nearly pays for their lack of vigilance with the death of the Warrior, just when they thought She was safe.

The Trial and Quest were a period of anomie for the Nation. Things have irrecoverably changed and the Tribes have the unenviable task of putting the pieces back together and continuing on with their lives. In time, things do return to a semblance of normalcy. The Watch (now made up of an almost equal mixture of Joanites and Shebans) patrols Vimary, Evans work the fields around the island and the Dahlian Caravans wend their way across the landscape.

AGNITES

The Agnites, as always, are infused with an energy of excitement for the future. The events of **Warrior Unbound** seem to support many of their hopes and dreams. Joan's survival and break with Tera Sheba look like an amazing opportunity to instigate some changes of their own.

Many Agnites move into close association with the Joanites, especially those 'new' Joanites of the Eighth Tribe who re-enter the Nation. The newly re-entered Tribals are amazing creatures, with power, independence and a destiny that the Agnites want to feel for themselves. Some Agnites begin to talk of opening their Tribe to the Fallen just as the Joanites have done, though this is little more than idle talk and childish boasting.

More than leading with simple youthful exuberance, Agnes starts taking a more measured approach to the world. She begins to see the responsibilities She has to Her Tribe as more than boring lectures from Her sisters.

Baba Yaga has begun to take on a very influential role in Agnes' development. The Crone's presence is a very calming influence on the Agnites and their growing Fatima. There is still much of a rebellious nature in Agnes, and Her amazement at the wonders of the world has not subsided, nor is it ever likely to. Now, however, Agnes' questions turn as much to the Realm of Spirit as to the World of Flesh.

On the flip side, the Agnites draw away from their more traditional influence, the Evans. Only time will tell exactly how the Evans react to this new development, but for the time being they raise no serious objections.

DAHLIANS

The Dahlians act much like the Magdalites during **Warrior Unbound**. The Dahlians are used to being the center of attention and when they are not part of events, it is usually because they manipulated the situation to bring something interesting about in the first place. This time, however, Dahlia

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and Her Tribe have little to do with the way that the events unfolded. The beginning days of flux are days relished by the Dancers, but as the Quest continued, the Dahlians began to long for a return to 'normal' life so that they could once again send their Caravans out and know that change and chaos was occurring at their behest and under their guiding hand.

Throughout **Warrior Unbound** Dahlia seems to support Tera Sheba's decisions, strangely breaking from Her previous support of Joan. Whether this was because She truly believed in the trial, was angry at Joan for stealing Her spotlight or whether it was just another manipulation for Her own ends remains an unanswered question.

EVANS

The Evans weather Joan's Trial and Quest remarkably stoically. Eva leads with pragmatism and conservatism and, consequently, the Evans are the least affected by the events of the day. They have little time to stop and take notice, beyond idle talk across the dinner table. They have a job and cannot neglect it, no matter how amazing the events around Joan's Quest may seem to be. Certainly, many Evans take some time off from their daily routines, especially on the day of Joan's Return. By-and-large, however, the Evans try to go on with life as it always has been.

Benjamin Aria'on is the exception to the rule. He and much of his clan are enraptured by the events surrounding Joan, and do what they can to stay current on the rumors that filter out to the isolated community of Griffentowne. A number of shadowy figures are seen sneaking into and out of the Aria'on's clan-home, presumably carrying news of the events on Hom and Haven.

Eva Herself is a little more animated than Her Tribe. Eva sees the moves by Joan to accept the Fallen as a threat to Tribal society and consequently supports Tera Sheba through many of Her attempts to punish Joan. Eva refrains from continued objections about the re-inclusion of some of the Fallen into the Tribes after Joan's success, and withdraws once again to the fields of Sanctuary.

JOANITES

The change finally comes. Joan could stay in Tera Sheba's shadow, Her Tribe little more than lackeys, for only so long. The Fatima comes to grips with a number of demons inside Her, and decides it is time for Her to do something She, Herself considers right, rather than what She is told is right.

Her Tribe benefits greatly from this change of events. Joan, already revered, dispels many of the lingering doubts about Her strength and inner reserves. She has approached death in both the Physical Realm and River of Dream and lived to return victorious. It is a time of glory and optimism for the Tribe of Joan.

The infusion of the Fallen, even though in limited numbers, is still enough to swell the ranks of the Joanites. Fighters, leaders and warriors step into the Tribe, ready to fight for a shared destiny. Much of Vimary is watching intently, trying to figure out Joan's next move.

MAGDALITES

The Magdalites are profoundly affected by the split between Joan and Tera Sheba. The Magdalites often look to their sister Tribes for order and support. The division of the Pillars shakes many of the Magdalites, and the leadership starts to take clandestine actions to repair the social damage. The Nation's worldview is turned upside down and the Magdalites take it upon themselves to reconstruct that perception and help return Vimary to a normal state of affairs. As such, the Magdalites take the opportunity created by the chaos to re-invigorate their Tribe and bring themselves closer together.

One of the other after-effects of the Trial and Quest for the Magdalites is that they start to look outside of Vimary. The events of **Warrior Unbound** have shown that the Tribes can grow and change without tearing the Nation apart. The Magdalites begin to seriously look beyond their borders, towards the Outlands and Capal.

SHEBANS

More than any other Tribe, the Shebans have to make some radical readjustments. They no longer have the rock of the Joanites to lean on. In some ways this is a very beneficial thing, since they are able to adjust and become more reliant on themselves. No longer exclusively a Joanite Guild, the Watch is filled by Shebans, reveling in their new-found strengths. Normally, this would stand against Tera Sheba's inclination not to arm Her Tribe, but Joan's break with the Wise One has taught Tera Sheba that She can rely on nobody but Her own Tribe. Seemingly, the return of Uhanna's spirit (a famed Sheban warrior from the Liberation) to Tera Sheba has prompted Her to concede weapons to Her Tribe, though only to those members who join the Watch.

YAGANS

Baba Yaga and Her Tribe grow closer to the Joanites over the course of **Warrior Unbound**. The fanaticism of Tera Sheba and, at times, of Eva, forces Baba Yaga to lead Her Tribe down a more moderate path. Baba Yaga sees Dahlia and Magdalen on one end of the philosophical spectrum, and Tera Sheba and Eva on the other. Baba Yaga, Joan and Agnes become the forces of moderation, tempering the two extremes.

Baba Yaga, like a loving grandmother, takes up the task of helping guide Agnes as She continues to grow and change. It is high time the youngest Tribe learned the most valuable lessons about life and death.

OUTSIDE THE TRIBES AND FALLEN

Warrior Unbound contains events that touch all those involved, not just the Tribes and Fallen on the islands. There are those outside of the formality of the Nation who watch with interest and trepidation.

JOSHUANS

The lost Tribe of Joshua looks on the events regarding Joan with interest, but little more. The Sister of Joshua is Her own person, many Joshuans argue, Her loyalties now forever beyond the love for Her Brother. Her acceptance of the Fallen seems to be a step in the right direction, but Joshua is still gone and She can do nothing to repair that reality.

MARIANS

The Marians take an especially active role in **Warrior Unbound**. The emotional and spiritual healing process that takes place is of special importance to the second of the Lost Tribes. Many Marians have covertly worked with the Fallen to help ease their transition into life without the Fatimas. To some, it now seems that the healing process has taken a valuable step forward after Joan's Quest. Other Marians view the act as a giant step backward, destroying the need for individuality and motivation. Largely though, the Marians see the acceptance of the Outcasts as a positive and important step for the Nation in their emotional growth.

Z'BRI

The Z'bri are worried. A state of balance between the Tribes and the H'l Kar has existed for many years, allowing the Z'bri leadership to solidify its control. Now, with signs of trouble coming, the Z'bri leaders may no longer be able to maintain their half of the status quo. To the Baron and many of his advisors, it appears as though the Tribes have already broken that status quo and may need to be reminded of the consequences of such an act. The Baron believes things are quickly getting out of hand, and steps must be taken to restore the old order.

The major threat to the H'l Kar and the Nation lies with the bloodthirsty Koleris. Agreements be damned, to their minds, it is time to strike. If the Tribes really are starting to mobilize and change, then a preemptive attack is in order. The Koleris Sk'Ksul watches the events in Vimary with alarm. He reasons that the Baron and his precious Pact of the Dome are no longer strong, that the Nation has broken their covenant. If the Baron refuses to support Sk'Ksul, then maybe it is time to remove the Baron and place a more capable leader in his stead.

The warmasters Lothar and Valk have been massing forces to the south of Vimary for some time now, their plans expanding in an ever-widening circle of destruction. It seems Z'bri society will make a decision on the policies of the Baron soon enough.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

A numbers of developments stemming from the story of **Warrior Unbound** are especially important to the continuing **Conquest** story line. The most valuable are summarized below, to aid in integrating the changes into an ongoing cycle.

THE RECONCILIATION

With the Joanites now closer to the Fallen than ever, both sides of the reconciliation prosper. Hom and Haven grow into entities stronger than they could ever have been alone. The Fallen are reborn as, if not full members, at least closer to the Nation than they imagined, something many of the Tribes feared. To some, it is a sign of Joan and Joshua reunited (though the Joshuans would vehemently object to this notion). For their part, the Joanites gain an infusion of vitality and new ideas into a Tribe on the verge of stagnation. Without the Shebans to lead them the Joanites re-learn how to make their own decisions beyond the battlefield. It is time for them to master logistics as well as tactics, and the survival instincts of the Eighth Tribe are a valuable addition to Joan's Tribe.

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JOANITES IN HOM AND HAVEN

The Joanites open a large and well-equipped training ground on Hom and also begin to build new defensive towers on the islands to better repel Squat attacks from the South. Some of the efforts are hampered by terrorist sabotage; archaic bombs placed in buildings and flung through windows, frayed ropes, damaged locks and the like are all assumed to be the acts of some disenfranchised Herites. The saboteurs hamper work on the towers, but the building continues as a testament to the renewed energy of the Eighth Tribe.

The new training ground is established on the West Side of Hom, in the area just past the Sepulcher. A number of buildings that serve as private training halls and armories encircle a wide-open field where most of the training takes place. It is here that the Acceptance Tests are conducted.

JOAN/TERA SHEBA DIVISION

The Pillars no longer stand as one, though they still stand... for now. Joan now speaks for Herself and no longer blindly follows the orders of Tera Sheba. The Warrior is once again the strong, independent leader She was during the Liberation. It is only a matter of time before Joan acts on that independence.

THE WATCH RESTRUCTURED

The Joanites are no longer the lap dogs of the Shebans and many now refuse to work with the Watch. The Watch has long been viewed as a Sheban tool, staffed by Joanites, enacting the will of Tera Sheba in lieu of the will of the Nation. Now, many Joanites refuse to associate themselves with the corrupt guild, and permanently abandon their posts.

A minor crisis of sorts is precipitated as many Watch detachments are unable to field enough members to act effectively. Before Joan orders Her Children back to their posts, Tera Sheba makes a bold move and pulls the Fisher King out of his tower. Under his leadership, the Shebans begin a Watch of their own to fill the gaps left by the Joanites. Now, Joanites and Shebans staff the Watch, though the Shebans have a lot of training to do before they are as effective as their Joanite detachment-mates.

The newly restructured Watch serves as an important connection between the Joanites and the Shebans. Many members of the two Tribes pointedly ignore each other, but work in the Watch fosters reliance and interdependence on one another and keeps communication lines open. If and when Joan and Tera Sheba reconcile Their differences, it will begin with the Watch.





CHAPTER 5: WEAVER'S RESOURCES

This chapter provides resources on people, places, events and groups important to **Warrior Unbound**. Notably, it details the environs of the River of Dream, spirits both common and uncommon and general advice on Weaving the River of Dream. Beyond this information there are NPC statistics and background and some notes on locales found throughout **Warrior Unbound**.

THE RIVER OF DREAM

The River of Dream is quite alien to anything the PCs would normally encounter. It is a combination of the physical realm and the spiritual one, where physicality and flesh actually merge with spirit and soul. It is here that Synthesis is made possible, for it is in the River of Dream that the blending of reality takes place. In order to get the right 'feel' for the PCs who deal with the River of Dream the Weaver needs to know how to describe the area as well as how to use it effectively in her cycle.

It is important to note that the River of Dream is neither physical nor spiritual. The World of Flesh is a realm entirely in and of itself, as is the World of Spirit. The two realms are separate places, one is intimately familiar while the other is so radically different that it can only be reached in death. The River of Dream is the ultimate no-man's-land, a place that is neither realm but composed of parts of both. It is as real as the body of any Dreamer and as ephemeral as a thought. It is both a barrier and a doorway.

Think of the River of Dream as fog and the Worlds of Flesh and Spirit as water and air. Fog is neither water nor air; it is its own thing, created by the combining of its two constituent parts. Like

water and air, the Worlds of Flesh and Spirit are entities of their own right, and the River of Dream requires the presence of both of the other two entities to even exist. The River of Dream is a murky transition, fascinating in its own right.

So, how does the Weaver explain such a place? One key is to make each visit to the River of Dream unique, different in some way each time. Moreover, the experience can be different for each traveler, even if they enter together. There surely will be common events, but the Weaver should encourage individual reactions to those events. As the Characters explore what they think the River of Dream is, they will create a unique view of it that is linked to the other PCs' unique views and to the individuality of the Weaver's cycle. The River of Dream is different for each Dreamer who experiences it.

Moving into the River of Dream is not a physical action of any sort; it is more of a projection of the Dreamer's psyche. Exploring the River of Dream is very similar to an out-of-body experience. Powerful entities like the Fatimas are strong enough to step into the River of Dream in both body and mind, but normal humans are unable to do so. The best a human can hope for is the ability to control the actions of their psyche with a certain degree of skill.

By and large, very little of the River of Dream is understood by the people of Vimary. Most dismiss it as the exclusive province of the Fatimas, or something best left to the priests. The large disparity of knowledge about the River of Dream is especially noticeable when comparing the leaders and elders of the Tribes to the 'common folk' living within the Nation. Many leaders are quite knowledgeable about the River of Dream, a necessary skill for understanding and dealing with the Fatimas. Very few, though, outside of the Yagans have any first hand knowledge of the River of Dream beyond what they experience while dreaming and in their individual dream-realms (see *Dream-Realms*, p. 76).



GENERAL APPEARANCE

The River of Dream is a wondrous place, never the same between visits nor to different viewers. Not only are such things as colors and smells constantly changing and moving, but objects and spirits themselves appear different. It is here that dreams really do come alive. The Weaver should note that what follows is merely a guideline to what most Dreamers see while navigating the River.

The landscape of the River of Dream looks like a copy of the World of Flesh, with the notable absence of many structures that make up the familiar landscape. Because the River is more than a simple, pretty copy of the physical realm, there are a number of objects and structures present that do not exist in the World of Flesh. These 'new' objects are usually reflections of the spiritual realm.

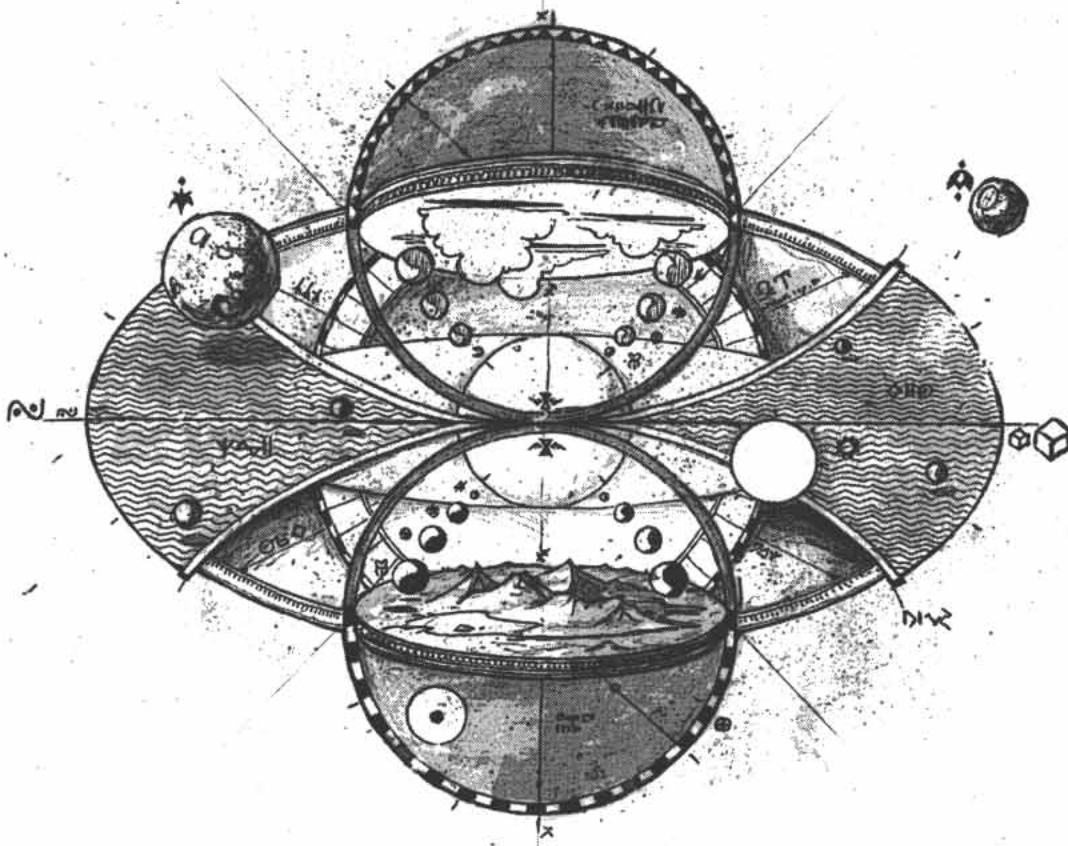
To further complicate things, some objects found in the River of Dream are apparently exclusive to that realm and have no equivalents in the physical nor spiritual worlds. The identity and origin of these objects is the focus of debate for many Yagans and Doomsayers. Even the most knowledgeable Yagans only have vague ideas of what the spiritual realm looks like, so it is

hard to verifiably confirm if something is only part of the River of Dream and not actually a spiritual reflection.

Man-made structures are not present in the River of Dream, with a few powerful exceptions. The River of Dream looks much like the land must have looked in its primeval state.

The River of Dream itself seems quite tangible. The ground is hard, the rain is wet and the air is cool, just like the Physical World. Almost every phenomena found in the World of Flesh is recreated in the River of Dream. There is a physical equivalent of every place in the River of Dream and vice versa (though, as noted before, the work of man does not normally appear in the River). The same mountains, clouds, lakes, rocks, and so on can all be found in the River.

There is always a feeling of movement against the body of a Dreamer. This movement is almost like the feeling of a constant, swirling breeze or the flows of a turbulent river. The sensation is usually not enough to affect the movement of a Dreamer and in some cases can aid movement, but it has been known for the 'breeze' to become powerful enough to sweep a Dreamer up in its flows and deposit her the equivalent of dozens of kliks away. Usually, the only things caught in the currents are the dream realms of sleepers.



APPEARANCES IN THE RIVER

The image a Dreamer projects of themselves is called an 'anima.' Unless the Dreamer is trained in Synthesis, their anima is a bit fuzzy. In fact, a trained Dream Traveler can tell the relative ability of another traveler by how solid the outlines of her anima are. Sharp and crisp lines denote high levels of ability and/or training.

Creatures, plants and untrained humans only appear in the River of Dream while they are asleep and dreaming. People and animals manifest their anima at the River of Dream equivalent of their physical location. Plants, because they are considered always dreaming, are ever-present in both the World of Flesh and the River of Dream (a feat of co-location that intrigues many Yagans). When an animal or a person stops dreaming, waking up or dying, then their anima dissipates.

Ghosts and specters appear much like the active anima of a conscious Dreamer. Sometimes, differences between a Dreamer and a spirit are obvious, such as a spirit without legs or dressed in a very archaic way. However, spirits are a varied and independent lot and appear in all sorts of guises.

DREAM-REALMS

Normally a human's psyche manifests in the River of Dream in the form of a dream-realm. Rather than creating an anima in their own physical image, which takes deliberate mental action, the Dreamer automatically creates a small pocket dimension instinctively (and subconsciously) in the form of a small sphere. The dream-realm uses the energies and powers of the River to manifest images from the thoughts of the dreamer, the sleeping tales and sequences that we consider dreams. As long as the human dreams, the small dream-realm exists to create new images and place those dreams into their mind.

A dream-realm is usually no larger, in representation, than the span of a hand. Dream-realms come in a myriad of colors, usually reflecting the state of emotion the dreamer is experiencing. Because the dream-realms are powered by the unconscious mind and directed through instinct, they only rarely act outside of themselves. Usually, to the dreamer there is nothing that exists other than the dream-realm. Occasionally though, the dreamer can gain some level of control of the dream-realm (and the dream itself) and interact with the energies of the River.

MOVING ABOUT IN THE RIVER OF DREAM

A Dreamer normally moves about in the River of Dream the same way she would in the real world. An anima is still tangible, and so many of the obstacles in the real world are also present in the River of Dream. Occasionally, a Dreamer is powerful enough to remove her form from the physical constraints that are reflected in the River of Dream. In other words, she can fly, swim or even drift through objects and environments that would hold them back in the World of Flesh. More common manipulations would be to mold her anima into different shapes. By solidifying certain aspects of her anima, a Dreamer can mold and manipulate her presence to form tools and weapons from her own spirit.

THE ROLE OF SPIRITS

Spirits are the only permanent denizens of the River of Dream beyond the plants. In a strict sense, spirits can be considered animas that do not manifest (normally) in the World of Flesh.

When the Weaver populates their River of Dream, they should remember that true Dream Travelers are a fairly elite lot. Less than one percent of the Tribal population is accomplished enough to do more than manifest dream-realms. Encountering other Dream Travelers should be a fairly rare occurrence.

Instead of Dream Travelers running to and fro and populating the River, spirits take their place. In this case, the word 'spirit' can be a bit of a misnomer. There is a difference between the River of Dream and the World of Spirit. The beings often encountered in the River are called spirits, even though no one in Vimary is quite sure if the spirits they know actually exist in the World of Spirit as well. Many scholars assume spirits are reflections of entities existing in the World of Spirit and so the name has stuck. However, nothing definite is really known about the relation between the River of Dream and the World of Spirit so the name 'spirit' can apply to both those that live in the River and those that may live in the Spirit Realm.

All that aside, spirits as the Tribes know them are much like the River of Dream that they call home. Spirits are an interesting meld of the physical and spiritual. They are physical in the sense that they exist in a way that allows a Dreamer to interact with the spirit (and occasionally the spirit may enter the World of Flesh as a ghost or vision). They are also spiritual in that they are manifestations of ideals and emotions. They are grounded enough in the physical to allow Tribals to interact with them, but spiritual enough to always be alien and inscrutable.

THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

Ghosts and Specters are a specific type of spirit. Instead of emerging from the melding of two realms, the spirits of the dead originate from the physical realm. Often, they are seen as the manifestation of a person's spiritual reflection, or that part of them that was taken across the Fold by Baba Yaga. At the same time, many believe the spirits of the dead are also reflecting the ideal of the person, the culmination of the thoughts and beliefs of a single mind. It is quite possible that both of these hypotheses are correct, the ghost being a blend of the physical, spiritual and the ideal.

When the soul of a dead human travels through the physical world, it is referred to as a ghost (or, occasionally, a specter). The delineation between a spirit and a ghost is a tricky one, another problem a number of Yagan scholars have been tackling. Ghosts are usually not seen as natural to the River of Dream, whereas most other spirits, including nature and ancestor spirits, are at home in the River. Ghosts, supposedly, are merely using the River of Dream as a bridge to reach the Fold and eventually pass beyond. Those that do not pass through the Fold either wander aimlessly or closely attach themselves to an object or person to help keep the ghost grounded and avoid getting caught up in the Sea of the Lost.

Baba Yaga, in all Her power, is able to instill certain motivations in the ghost of a Tribal and even physically change them on occasion. In this way, She is able to guide ghosts towards final salvation. After a Tribal's death, their soul is taken to its final resting place, crossing through the Fold (see below). However, without a guide to send it to the right place, a ghost may wander aimlessly through the River of Dream never fulfilling its destiny. This wandering may then lead the spirit into the trackless Sea of the Lost, a limbo where ghosts can wander forever, never finding the Spirit World.

Those Ghosts that become lost are usually known as Specters. Specters are often malevolent to the World of Flesh, which they see as a realm of happiness that has rejected them. They are angry and confused and take that anger out on whoever is nearby. Many Specters are able to manifest in the World of Flesh, continually trying to become one with that realm as they were while alive. If dispatched in combat, the Specter merely reforms hours later to continue its miserable existence.

ANCESTOR SPIRITS

An ancestor spirit is a type of spirit made up of the energies and history of a person's lineage, manifesting in the form of a specific ancestor. They are powerful spirits, more akin to totems (see next page) than Ghosts. Most families and clans in Vimary have a connection to at least one ancestor spirit, whom they can call on for advice and aid. Usually, the most powerful and aged of the family communes with the ancestors through dream, repeating what they learn through these dreams to the rest of the Clan. In this way ancestors are looked upon as guardians of the family, protecting individuals from the ills of malevolent spirits and specters.

ANIMAL SPIRITS

Animal spirits are the most abundant of spirits found in the River of Dream. They are the reflections of the denizens of the Physical World, though instead of static reflections like the environment, the animal spirits roam free. Animal spirits are individuals themselves, more akin to the spirit of a group or type of animal, not just mere reflections of specific animals in the World of Flesh. Since they are individuals, they are able to express a freedom of will that, coupled with the amazing power of Dream, has awakened latent intelligence in many of the animal spirits. It is not uncommon to find a Yagan Dream Walker carrying on a lively conversation with the spirit of an otter or auroch.



THE SPIRITS OF PLANTS

The spirits of plants found in the River of Dream are still much of an enigma to those in the know. Plant spirits are a confusing meld of free-willed spirits and simple reflections of the physical world. On one hand many plant spirits are non-intelligent, or at least do not express an intelligence that humans can relate to. In this way plant spirits seem to be more like the reflection of a cloud or a mountain. On the other hand, the spirit reflections of plants correspond directly to plants in the World of Flesh, co-locating and suggesting that the plants are dreaming.

Plants are constantly dreaming, creating a River of Dream equivalent to their physical forms. Obviously this is very different to the way that humans and animals interact with the River of Dream and some even point out that the dual nature of plants is similar to the dual nature of the Fatimas. Describing this kind of relationship between Fatimas and plants borders on heresy to many Tribals, though, so few outside of the Fallen really try to investigate the nature of spirit plants.

Some plants are known to develop rudimentary intelligence. This intelligence becomes reality only when plants congregate in large numbers. There seemingly also must be some kind of history or myth — some great or traumatic event — associated with the plants before any type of intelligence can be detected. Groves consecrated to Evan birthing rites, haunted woods and hedges known for hiding lovers all are good examples of the types of plants that can be communicated with in the River of Dream.

TOTEM SPIRITS

Totem spirits are the manifestation of an ideal or a concept that takes the form of an animal. Many times totem spirits are not directly associated with any species of animal, instead being a variation of a species. Totem spirits, next to the Fatimas, are the great masters of the River of Dream. Their intelligence and power is surpassed by few, and some are said to be more knowledgeable about the River of Dream than the Fatimas.

Totem spirits are more than powerful spirits associating themselves with the Fatimas or other spiritually powerful entities; rather, they are the living manifestation of an ideal. Totem Spirits reflect many of the Eminences in the River of Dream. The Great Owl, associated with Tera Sheba and her Eminences of Truth and Wisdom, is probably the best known of the Totem Spirits (Rulebook, p. 163).

It is not unheard of for many normal animal spirits to associate themselves with a Totem Spirit. Usually, these animals are of a similar type to the Totem Spirit. In the case of the Great Owl, familiar owl spirits of all types follow the Great Owl's lead and will likely do the totem spirit's bidding.

THE FOLD

The Fold is not a tangible thing. Rather, it is an ephemeral division between this world and the Spirit World. The Fold is a divide, immensely long but having no real thickness to it. In effect, the Fold acts like a ceiling or a wall to much of the River of Dream. More importantly, it is the place where the worlds of flesh and spirit finally meet, a fault-line between the two plates. The Fold is a barrier in every sense of the word and as such, no anima may cross it or see beyond it. Only spirits, most specifically ghosts, may traverse the Fold and begin their journey into the Spirit World.

The Fold is the closest any living Dreamer can get to the Spirit World.

THE SEA OF THE LOST

This ghastly and hushed place is the void where any reflection of the physical and spiritual is lost, laying outside of the line where the two realms meet. It is the substance that surrounds the two realms and the River of Dream, much like the void of space encompasses the many planets. The Sea of the Lost is a place that is best avoided by dreaming humans. A vast abyss of pure spiritual matter, with little form or substance, the Sea is an endless wasteland. There are no physical structures for Dreamers to maneuver about with, such as ground and so those unable to control their progress find themselves hopelessly adrift.

The location of the Sea of the Lost is not easy to comprehend. It is beyond the River of Dream's reflection of the World of Flesh, off into the reaches of dreaming void. Many just assume that where the River of Dream's sky ends is where the Sea of the Lost begins. It seems easier for those spirits untethered to bodies and minds, like ghosts, to find the Sea. Some Yagans suggest the Sea of the Lost itself is a spirit, an immense one that consumes the energies of wayward souls. The Sea of the Lost is a huge place, with little floating in its environs, and encounters of any type are extremely rare.

DESCRIBING THE RIVER OF DREAM

The 'sixth sense' is a possibility for the Weaver to exploit while the PCs travel in the River of Dream. The sixth sense is the uncommon ability for a Dreamer to know aspects of a situation they could not know by just using their normal senses.

Using the 'feeling' as it is called, is a very intuitive process and one very few Dreamers are familiar or comfortable with. If the Weaver needs to use a rolling convention to represent the 'feeling' it is best to use PSY in lieu of normal Attributes and Skills. Remember that the ability to use the 'feeling' is usually subject to chance, with the sense becoming especially powerful in an individual only for their duration in the River of Dream. Humans are very visual, and noting how the other senses react to an object — smelling sounds or feeling taste — can be one method for emphasizing just how alien the River of Dream can be.

Poetry is a good source for ideas to explain the River of Dream. Poetry, at least good poetry, should explain a feeling rather than make a flat statement about it. This process of explanation can present an amazingly different way to look at common objects, as well as provide a suitably 'spiritual' vocabulary for describing the River of Dream. In fact, poetry itself is a nice parallel to the River of Dream. Poetry, like the River, is created by combining the static and physical: grammar and word choice, with the creative and spiritual: telling or explaining a story. Having the Players record their Character's dreams by writing poems can serve to place them in the right frame of mind for adventuring in the River of Dream.

SYNTHESIS

All rolls regarding Synthesis while in the River of Dream add +1 to the roll. The power of Dream is, not surprisingly, easy to control while Dreaming.

The flip side to the ease of control over Synthesis while in the River of Dream is that losing one's touch with concrete reality is especially dangerous. While in the River of Dream there is no such thing as Disconnection, since the anima is already separated from the Physical Plane, instead those acts that would cause Disconnection while in the physical realm, here cause Separation. Separation involves the anima and the body losing contact with each other. Once the body and anima experience Separation, the Dreamer falls into a deep coma.

See page 166 of the **Rulebook** for more on Lost Equilibrium and Synthesis.

LOST EQUILIBRIUM

PSY Roll	Result
0-2	Separation
3	Great Distortion; -3 action penalty (1D6 hours)
4	Great Distortion; -3 action penalty (2D6 rounds)
5	Minor Distortion; -2 action penalty (2D6 rounds)
6+	Minor Distortion; -1 action penalty (2D6 rounds)



PLACES IN THE DREAM

These places are significant to the River of Dream, particularly because they are considered bridges in one way or another between the World of Flesh and the River of Dream. Specific, man-made places are rarely found in the River of Dream. There is the occasional exception to this rule, however. Places with many memories, ideals, or stigmas attached to them are the most likely of places to have a reflection in the River of Dream. When a place or structure does have such a spiritual aspect to it that it can manifest in the River of Dream, it is powerful indeed. These places are called by their generic name of Gully or Anchor, though if a place has enough resonance to have a River of Dream reflection then it is sure to have a designated name of its own. Some have a number of names, their power and memory enduring for generations.

GULLIES

Gullies are landmarks where the boundary between the River of Dream and the physical plane is particularly weak. At certain times it may be possible to see directly from the physical realm into the River of Dream and vice versa. Powerful Gullies may in fact pull a human directly into a dream-state and into the River of Dream. It is possible to see spirits in the Gully while still in the Physical World, and the reverse is also true.

While within a Gully anyone or anything that uses Synthesis or similar powers (including spirit abilities) may roll an extra die during any Skill tests.

The Circle of the Chosen is an excellent example of a Gully. It is a place where the Tribes routinely sacrifice some of their own to the beasts that roam near the Seven Fingers. The powerful emotions associated with the Circle allow those who will be sacrificed to see the hungry and voyeuristic spirits that have come to watch the spectacle. It is usually a horrifying experience to spend any time in the Circle, with the spirits of the dead and monstrosities becoming visible and then vanishing again into the mists. Most usually try to dismiss the terrible visions as hallucinations.

See **Vimary** p. 56 for more information on the Circle of the Chosen.

Another Gully is The Sepulcher. The Sepulcher, once the home of Veruka the Wraith, has recently somehow created itself in the River of Dream. The area in and around the Sepulcher carries so much Synthesis power that people have been known to fall unconscious and be sucked directly into the River of Dream.

Those who make pilgrimages to the Sepulcher usually downplay the actual danger of such an occurrence. Instead, they focus on the power of the dreams and visions that they can receive while in such a dream-coma. No one has ever seen Veruka's ghost, not even within the power of the Sepulcher Gully. Most assume that Veruka has, despite her status as a Fallen and beyond Baba Yaga's love, indeed passed on to the Spirit Realm.

ANCHORS

Anchors are places that exist in this world and appear in the River of Dream. They are much more common than Gullies, but much less powerful. An Anchor is identified as such by the presence of a reflection in the River. Anchors are particularly sensitive places to manipulations in Dream. The effect of this is that anyone using the Dreaming Skill gains a +1 to their Skill rolls.

The Skyrealm that T'Phalus calls home is an anchor, and was a place where an inordinate number of people took their own lives during the Fall. The psychic shock of so many deaths has forever marked this towering structure in the River of Dream. The Skyrealm appears just as it does in the World of Flesh, a serene stone structure. Few know of the significance of the Skyrealm, though T'Phalus selected the building as his home specifically because of its status.

The Great Dome and Grave Fields of Mortuary are also anchors. These are the places Baba Yaga calls home, and are powerful and easily recognizable landmarks in the River of Dream as an Anchor. It is arguably the most revered place regarding the process of death and is a very spiritually powerful place. Mortuary is the largest man-made object reflected in the River of Dream.



SPIRITS

Not necessarily Characters that must be used in **Warrior Unbound**, these NPCs are for general use in the River of Dream and to prompt the imagination of the Weaver when making her own spirits.



CHARLES, EVER-WEeping (GHOST)

A man from the Times Before who killed his family and then took his own life in the wake of the Z'bri's arrival, Charles cannot believe he has died. He has wandered the River and the Sea of the Lost for generations now, tagging along with travelers in the hopes that they will help him regain what he has lost.

Charles, Ever Weeping sees his family in almost everyone he meets — though he no longer has any recollection of who or what his family really was.

Highlights: Lonely, sorrowful

Attributes: AGI -1, INF +3, PER +1, PSY -2, STA 40, UD 2, AD 3

Skills: Human Perception 2/-2, Intimidate 1/0, Lore (World Before) 3/0, Melee 1/-1, Theatrics 1/+3

ADRIEL (GHOST)

Adriel believes herself an avatar of some forgotten god. It is her role in the afterlife to create the right circumstances to summon her god, Hakary, back into this world. Her powers as a ghost have convinced her that she is indeed a creature blessed and knowledgeable beyond normal humans. To summon her god back she must convince a large number of men, women and children that she is the only real thing in their lives, that all else is just some ancient memory. Not surprisingly, she has no memory of her life before and is totally convinced of her own righteousness.

Highlights: Driven, faithful, intimidating

Attributes: AGI +1, APP +1, INF +1, PSY +2, WIL +1, STA 30, UD 3, AD 4

Skills: Athletics 1/0, Combat Sense 1/0, Etiquette 2/+1, Healing 1/0, Human Perception 2/+2, Intimidate 2/0, Leadership 2/+1, Melee 1/+1, Mythology 1/0, Ritual 2/0



THE SHADE (SPECTER)

The Shade was once a member of the Blood Silk Circle. While she slept and dreamt one night, she wandered into the Sea of the Lost and has only recently returned. Her body died from lack of nutrition and Shade has decided she likes where she is. She still has her Sundering and Synthesis powers, and is quite insane due to the prolonged amount of time she spent in the Sea. Almost miraculously, she guided herself back through sheer force of will, though her mind was forever shattered by the journey. Shade cannot communicate in any meaningful way, though she does retain a bestial and malevolent intelligence.

Highlights: Horrific, deadly

Atmosphere: Koleris

Eminence: Conflict

Attributes: APP -2, CRE +1, INF +1, KNO +2, PER +1, PSY +3, STR +1, WIL +2, STA 45, UD 5, AD 4

Skills: Athletics 1/0, Dodge 2/0, Hand-to-Hand 3/0, Intimidate 2/0, Navigation (River of Dream) 1/+2, Navigation (Sea of the Lost) 1/+2, Notice 2/+1, Sneak 1/0, Survival 3/+1

5. Weaver's Resources

THREE CLAWS/ONE TOOTH
(FERRET SPIRIT)

Three Claws/One Tooth is a ferret trickster with a certain penchant for the Fallen. The activity that always seems to follow the Outcasts attracts the ferret spirit to the Eighth Tribe. His fascination with the Fallen is a bit dangerous for the little spirit, prompting him to travel into areas where he is not welcome. Three Claws/One Tooth would love to learn more about their society and why they are who they are, and has an uncanny knack for appearing at very inconvenient times.

Highlights: Inquisitive, enjoyable, rambunctious

Attributes: INS +3, PER +2, WIL +3, HEA +1, STA 30, UD 9

Skills: Athletics 3/+3, Hand-to-Hand 4/+3, Lore (Playground) 3/+3, Bite (x10 damage), Claws (x8 damage), Into the Crevice (successfully dodges the first attack directed at Three Claws/One Tooth each round), Speed of the Ferret (Three Claws/One Tooth can act twice a round).



GRAVEL (GRAY BEAR SPIRIT)

Wise and helpful, Gravel was once killed by a Tribal hunter and now seeks to understand why (in an existentialist sense) he was killed. Gravel has helped a number of Tribals and Fallen in trouble while in the River of Dream and has become quite familiar with a number of human conventions (such as kissing and shaking hands). He questions a number of the paradoxes of life (why one must take life to continue living?) and seeks a human to help him work through some of his questions.

Highlights: Knowledgeable, disturbed

Attributes: CRE -1, INF +2, KNO +3, PER +1, PSY +3, WIL +1, STR 10, HEA 7, STA 100, UD 25

Skills: Dodge, 1/-1, Hand-to-Hand 3/-1, Herbalism 2/+3, Intimidate 3/+2, Notice 2/+1, Bite (x7 damage), Bear Hug (x15 damage), Claws (x10 damage), Hibernate (Gravel may create his own dream realm where nothing can affect him), Touch Minds (Gravel can speak to any traveler, spirit or not, in their own language).

WAVES WITH THE WIND (GLADE SPIRIT)

Just barely capable of communicating with humans, the glade as a whole has manifested a unique level of intelligence. It is very wise, despite its limited methods of communication (it can only speak in one-word adjectives) and knows just about every living thing that has passed through it. It does not understand exactly what animals are, thinking of them as evil plants. Waves with the Wind manifests in the World of Flesh as a copse of trees that has long been a secret burial site for a group of Squats that call the Duskfall forest their home. The many memories and emotions over so many years infused the grove with Synthesis and created Waves with the Wind.

Highlights: Intractable, alien

Attributes: INS +1, PER -1, WIL +10, HEA 20, STA n/a

Skills: Lore (Outlands) 4/+1, Mythology 4/+1, Human Perception 1/+1



THE RUST CUR (RUST WOLF TOTEM SPIRIT)

The Rust Cur is a totem spirit that has allied itself with the Keepers and now considers them her children. The totem spirit is quite cunning and resourceful, and collects tidbits of knowledge about the past and future. The Rust Cur is a hunter, though, and will not associate with anyone that she does not believe deserves her respect. Ruthlessness and cutthroat attitudes are the attributes she most looks for in her 'pups'. The Rust Cur is not happy with Issooc's antics with the Keepers, and may well intervene (if properly called upon) to end Issooc's farce.

Highlights: Territorial, Clever

Attributes: APP +3, CRE +10, KNO +3, PER +5, PSY +4, WIL +6, STR 10, HEA 7, STA 100, UD 25

Skills: Dodge 3/+10, Hand-to-Hand 4/+10, Lore (Rust Wastes) 4/+3, Navigation (Rust Wastes) 4/+3, Human Perception 4/+5, Curse of Days (the Rust Cur is unaffected by non-natural weapons), Rust Wave (all those present must roll WIL vs. a Threshold of 5 or be blinded for that turn by flecks of rust flying into their eyes).

NPCs

The major NPCs who appear in the book are listed below. As always, the numbers are not set in stone, and the Weaver should feel free to modify any and all of them to better fit her particular Players and cycle.

THE BLOODED BLADES

Key Members: Dah'am'pir, Vezmal, Issooc

Gathering Place: Skyrealm in Bazaar, laboratory outside of Capal, occasional Sundering pocket realm 'in' the River of Dream

Goal: Gain revenge on the H'I Kar by returning to the Seed alone.

Antagonists: The Baron, T'Phalus, Dominic.

The Blooded Blades were formed by three Joh'an Z'bri all cast out of H'I Kar a short time ago. Eth'ian of Melanis (see *Vimary* p. 123 and *Trial by Fire*) was a close associate of the Blooded Blades while the Blades still resided in the H'I Kar. The Blades were implicated by association when Eth'ian fell from grace, and were forced to leave or take the brunt of the Baron's wrath. As things calmed, the Baron took stock of the state of affairs and declared that Dah'am'pir, Issooc and Vezmal shall never again step foot in the H'I Kar.

In one way or another, each is motivated by a sense of revenge against the Z'bri of H'I Kar. They want to see their ideas and motivations vindicated by doing what no other Z'bri can do: returning to the Seed. By doing so they will have their final revenge, returning to paradise while leaving the Z'bri that so cruelly cast them out stuck in their fleshy forms. Since becoming Joh'an the three Z'bri have dedicated their existence to returning through the Fold, no matter what the cost.

The Blooded Blades are named as such because of the ornate and wicked daggers they use during their experiments and rituals. Each of the Z'bri in the Blooded Blades carries one of their namesake daggers on their person at all times. Sundering powers are infused into each blade, as is their particular Taint.

Relations: The Blooded Blades have acquired a few enemies in their time as Joh'an outcasts. T'Phalus is particularly unhappy with the group, since he considers himself sovereign over Bazaar. The Blades' constant interloping is not taken well by the respected Joh'an and he plans to eliminate the three pests.

The Blades are also on the run from the Baron. The Baron is still displeased by Eth'ian and his plotting and looks for ways to gain vengeance without directly moving against Eth'ian and his powerful new allies in Capal. The Blooded Blades provide a nice, easy target to fulfill the Baron's desires. The Blooded Blades, therefore, do their best to maintain a wide berth between them and any Z'bri loyal to the Baron.

RELATED RITUALS

Much of the power of the Blades has to do with the rituals they can perform, especially their ability to create a sphere devoid of the power of Synthesis within the River of Dream. There, they can use their powers of Sundering while manipulating some of the vast powers of Synthesis and Dream, much like a chemist wearing gloves to protect himself from the caustic acids. An accidental, but not unwelcome side effect to the creation of the pocket realm is that the Sundering and Synthesis powers offset each other and mask the taint of corruption that the Z'bri and their creations usually leave behind. This effect severely reduces the possibility that the Z'bri will be discovered in the Physical World until they reveal themselves (any tests to detect Z'bri or Serfs within a click of the sphere suffers a -3 to the roll).

Another ritual the Blades use is the ability to grant a one-shot Sundering ability to another Z'bri by exchanging blood. The three share their Sundering powers freely through this ritual, so it is not unheard of for Vezmal or Dah'am'pir (both Melanis) to manipulate flesh with Appeasement, or for Issooc to have the ability to Chain.

Yet another ritual used by the Blades is the ability to mask the shape of their Weres so that the beasts look like normal humans. With the use of this ritual, the Were appears to be a very tall and bulky human. The 'skin' of the Were while masquerading as a human is little more than a very responsive covering, and is not the Were's own skin. If the Were gets involved in combat before shedding their skin (they can shed the skin at any time they want, but from then on must receive a new ritual to regain their human guise) then the skin may be ripped to reveal the Were underneath. Any flesh wound will leave a rip in the skin. The normal Threshold is 6 to detect one of these rips and see that something is wrong. Each extra wound beyond the first drops the detection Threshold by 1, to a minimum of 2. Normally, though, for pragmatic purposes, the Were immediately sheds the skin once it enters combat. A Were disguised by the ritual may not use any of its natural attacks, beyond the fists and leg of the human form it is imitating.



THE BLOODED BLADES: ISSOOC

Issooc is the nominal leader of the Blades. He is the only Sangis of the three and often acts more like a Melanis with his interest in the Keeper Texts he recovers. Issooc is deeply interested in the times before the Camps, when apparently the Seed ruled supreme. This is original reason he contacted the Keepers. When they hailed him as a god, it did not take him long to create the Fatima myth around himself, creating a costume and mannerisms to fit the bill. He knows he is not a Fatima and has no delusions as such. Issooc just enjoys manipulating the hopes and dreams of the Keepers under his sway. Isaac's Chosen, the group of Keepers he controls, are little more than a useful plaything.

As time has gone by Issooc has become desperate to leave this world, feeling that he is the only one who really feels the call of the Seed. His ostracism from the H'I Kar was originally a joke to him, but now deep inside, he is terribly lonely and wishes to be part of a greater part of a greater community. The Seed is his hope for salvation from his oppressive loneliness.

Highlights: fleeting, archaic, powerful

ATTRIBUTES:

AGI	+3	APP	+3	BLD	+3	CRE	+3	FIT	+4
INF	+4	KNO	+1	PER	+2	PSY	+2	WIL	+3
STR	3	HEA	3	STA	55	UD	11	AD	11

SKILLS:

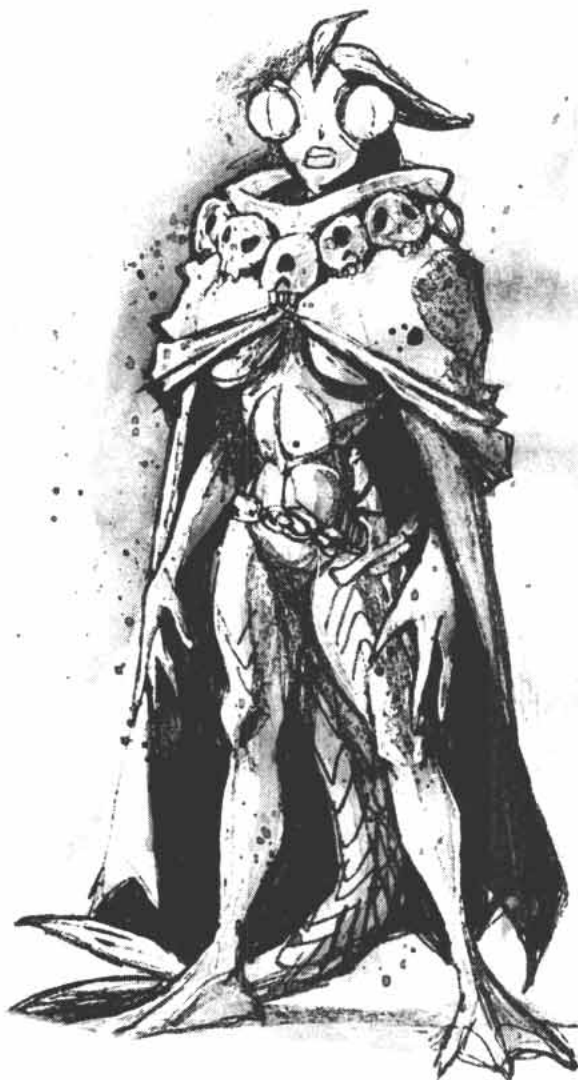
Combat Sense	3	+2	Dodge	2	+3	Hand-to-Hand	3	+3
Intimidate	3	+3	Leadership	4	+4	Lore (Sangis)	2	+1
Lore •	2	+1	Melee	3	+3	Notice	1	+2
Ritual	2	+1	Seduction	3	+3	Speak**	2	+1
Survival	1	+3	• (World Before)			** (Famzay)		

SUNDERING:

Sundering Skill Rating:	3
Atmosphere:	Sangis
Aspects:	Appeasement, The Calling, Perspective

Equipment: Sacrificial Dagger (ACC -1, Parry -1, Damage AD+8. Each blade also manifests in the River of Dream and carries the Taint (see p. 93, **Horrors of the Z'bri**), Fatima-like Armor (AR 15), Huge Sword (Parry +3, AD +20), numerous books on philosophy and spiritualism from the world before.





THE BLOODED BLADES:

DAH'AM'PIR

A Melanis expert in Chaining, Dah'am'pir became so adept at her craft that she began performing the Chaining with wanton abandon. This abandon soon turned into disregard for other living things, even Z'bri. Of all the Blades, Dah'am'pir was the closest associated with Eth'ian. After being thrown out of H'I Kar, she now sees the opportunity to return and gain her revenge against the Baron and all the Z'bri of the H'I Kar.

Dah'am'pir has a limited imagination, and does not often work on new ideas, beyond coming up with new things to Chain living beings to. She is enraptured with the ideas that Issooc and Vezmal generate and is quite emotionally dependent on them. Dah'am'pir is the creator of the scrawled code that the Blooded Blades use to inscribe their research.

Physically, Dah'am'pir is supremely strong and enjoys the look of carving pictograms and the Blades' scrawl on the bodies of her Serfs and in untouched concrete. Dah'am'pir considers both mediums absolutely pure, and goes to great lengths to find suitable 'palettes.'

Highlights: dependent, strong, vicious

ATTRIBUTES:

ACI	+3	APP	+2	BLD	+5	CRE	+2	FIT	+5
INF	+2	KNO	+2	PER	+3	PSY	+1	WIL	+3
STR	5	HEA	3	STA	65	UD	17	AD	16

SKILLS:

Combat Sense	1	0	Craft *	3	+3	Hand-to-Hand	4	+3
Intimidate	2	+5	Melee	3	+3	Read/Write	3	+2
Ritual	3	+2	Speak (Tribal)	1	+2	*(Calligraphy)		

SUNDERING:

Sundering Skill Rating:	4
Atmosphere:	Melanis
Aspects:	Chaining, Shattering

Equipment: Sacrificial Dagger (ACC -1, Parry -1, Damage AD+8. Each blade also manifests in the River of Dream and carries the Taint (see p. 93, *Horrors of the Z'bri*), writing utensils, laboratory equipment.

THE BLOODED BLADES: VEZMAL

Vezmal is an expert in the River of Dream and Sundering rituals. He is responsible for much of the power the Blades have in the River of Dream, as well as the original idea to unbalance the spiritual and physical planes to create the preconditions for their return to the Seed.

Vezmal is fascinated with the concepts of salvation and purity (a topic often discussed with Dah'am'pir) and explores the River of Dream searching for more tangible constructs of the two ideals. He does not quite understand that they do not exist as anything but ideals. His searching has made him quite an expert on the River of Dream as well as on ancient human thought.

Blood and spirit are major components of his many rituals. For Vezmal, the eye of a living thing is the best place to find this fascinating blend of physical and spiritual. He is fascinated by the workings of the eye, and has chained the souls of many of his Serfs to their own eyes, a horrible and painful experience for the Serf.

Much of Vezmal's knowledge comes from reading books that Issoc's Keepers have recovered, as well as questioning Serfs just before he plucks out their eyes to make his foul ichor.

Highlights: Intelligent, domineering, secretive

ATTRIBUTES:

AGI	+2	APP	+3	BLD	+1	CRE	+3	FIT	-0
INF	+2	KNO	+5	PER	+3	PSY	+3	WIL	+3
STR	0	HEA	+2	STA	40	UD	10	AD	10

SKILLS:

Disguise	2	+3	Human Percep.	3	+3	Investigation	2	+3
Lore *	3	+5	Melee	2	+2	Notice	3	+3
Ritual	4	+5	Techlore**	2	+5	Techlore***	2	+5
* (dreaming)			** (life sciences)			*** (physical sciences)		

SUNDERING:

Sundering Skill Rating:	4
Atmosphere:	Melanis
Aspects:	Inspiration

Equipment: Sacrificial Dagger (ACC -1, Parry -1, Damage AD+8. Each blade also manifests in the River of Dream and carries the Taint (see p. 93, *Horrors of the Z'brí*), various preserved body parts of animals and humans, ancient books, various vials of liquid.





HIGH PRIEST JEST

Jest is the leader of the Keepers known as Isaac's Chosen. Jest has recently traveled across much of the Rust Wastes, and due to his travels, he has begun to have second thoughts about his role in Isaac's cult. He wonders if Isaac really is who he claims to be. High Priest Jest no longer considers himself the dynamic leader he once was; he's confused and unsure about himself and his place in the world.

Jest has recently been racked by a number of nightmares about what will happen when his Keeper band reveals themselves to the rest of Vimary. He fears the future, wanting to revel in the certainty of the past. He is normally a very conservative man, but events are quickly spiraling out of his control and he is becoming desperate. Jest is also an old man and remembers many of the tales his mother told him of what the beasts of the World Before were like. He knows them to be cunning and conniving creatures and wonders why his group, recently reintroduced to the world from their hiding place, has not encountered the demons yet. He fervently hopes that the Z'bri are now a thing of the past.

Jest and Isaac's Chosen do not know it, but Jest's prolonged proximity to Issooc has left Jest with a Sangis Taint, so he now manifests an aura not unlike that of the Sangis Z'bri.

Highlights: rational, unsure, morose

ATTRIBUTES:

ACI	0	APP	+1	BLD	0	CRE	-1	FIT	+1
INF	+2	KNO	+1	PER	0	PSY	0	WIL	+1
STR	0	HEA	1	STA	30	UD	3	AD	4

SKILLS:

Combat Sense	1	0	Etiquette	2	+2	Human Percep.	2	0
Investigation	1	0	Law	2	+1	Leadership	2	+2
Melee	1	0	Survival	1	+1	Trade	1	+1
Techlore (all)	1	+1						

TECHNOSMITHING:

Technosmithing Skill Rating:	0
Aspects:	none

Equipment: trinkets, working bullhorn, numerous slightly broken pairs of eyeglasses, Rifle (ACC 0, DM x11, 7/14/28/56), 6 grenades

DOMINIC

Dominic is the leader of the Bereaved's Tears, a fallen Cell composed of Children of Lilith and Jackers. The Cell was originally formed during the height of Lilith's reign over the Eighth Tribe and was devastated to learn the truth about their 'Fatima.' After the Lilith affair, the Cell took time to regroup and Dominic became its leader. His vision and ambition led the Bereaved's Tears to focus their efforts on bringing some sort of reconciliation between Joan and the Fallen and in the process reinvigorated the Cell under Dominic's leadership. Under Dominic, the Bereaved's Tears have started to engage in a number of clandestine operations bringing newly outcast Joanites to the safety of Hom and Haven.

Dominic is an imposing man and one who takes his work very seriously. He masquerades as a Child of Lilith, though in reality he is a Black Marian. A number of years ago his lover, a Marian herself named Ascon, revealed the truth about her tribal affiliation and Dominic knew that it was his calling as well. He has since moved on from his lover, unable to love anyone but Mary Herself.

An active man, happiest when he has a goal before him, Dominic has been looking for a way to reinvigorate the Fallen. The events of **Warrior Unbound** seem to be the first steps in Dominic's overall quest and he jumps at the chance to associate himself and his Cell with any efforts to bring Joan and Joshua together again (at least in the metaphorical sense).

Highlights: driven, sincere, intense, emotionally distant

ATTRIBUTES:

AGI	+2	APP	0	BLD	-1	CRE	+1	FIT	0
INF	+1	KNO	+1	PER	0	PSY	+3	WIL	+1
STR	-1	HEA	0	STA	30	UD	4	AD	4

SKILLS:

Archery	1	+2	Combat Sense	2	0	Disguise	3	+1
Dodge	2	+2	Dreaming	2	+3	Gambling	1	0
Hand-to-Hand	2	+2	Herbalism	2	+1	Melee	2	+2
Notice	1	0	Read/Write*	1	+2	Speak*	2	+2
Streetwise	1	+1	* (Marian)					

SYNTHESIS:

Synthesis Skill Rating:	1
Eminences:	Purity
Aspects:	none

Equipment: Longsword (AD +10), Leather Armor (AR 6), small and well concealed Marian trinkets, a number of Tribal amulets for trade



5. Weaver's Resources

HALOS

A Guide, Halos is master of all that is Dream. He has a mission before him to continue the work of the Nomads and is consequently, almost obsessed with the workings of the River of Dream and the Fold. He is a strong-willed man, so intent on his mission and rituals that he is often hard to relate to.

His mind is constantly on matters outside of the physical realm. Halos is a loner by trade, but can be a very kind and fatherly figure if he makes the effort. With spirits and his fellow Guides he is a very warm man, but usually appears distant to his fellow humans. The problem is, he rarely cares enough about the World of Flesh to make any effort to be likable to other people and is happier concentrating on the River of Dream.

He can see the future but does not have to be happy with his role in it.

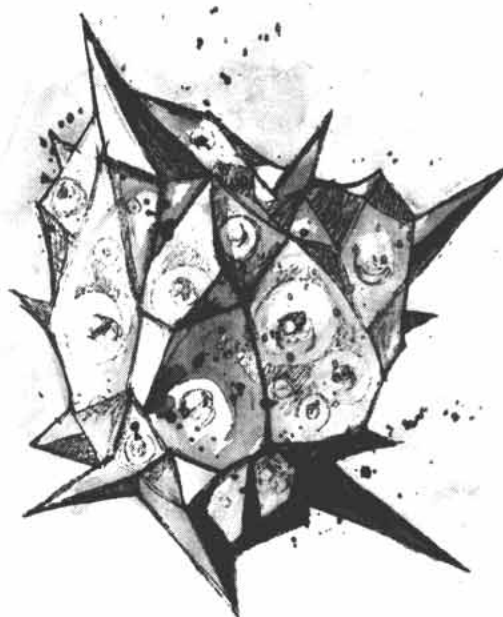
Highlights: inscrutable, imposing, caring

Eminences: Many (most prominently: Recognition and Truth)

Attributes: CRE +1, KNO +2, WIL +3, PSY +2, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3

Skills: Dreaming 3/+2, Human Perception 3/+2, Lore (Joshua) 3/+2, Lore (prophecy) 3/+2, Navigation (Dream) 2/+2, Ritual 3/+2, Survival 2/+1, Synthesis 3

Equipment/Abilities: Walking stick (x3), flowing robes (AR 2), ritual tools, many allies, knows lots of rituals



VIKTANIX

Once a friend of Dah'am'pir in the H'I Kar, Viktanix helped reveal Dah'am'pir's secret obsession with Chaining. In return for his betrayal of Dah'am'pir, he was himself Chained to the dog of a Serf that Dah'am'pir controlled. The chained Viktanix was held within the form of the dog, his intelligence and will to live slipping away year by year. Just as Viktanix was finally about to pass away and leave his servitude, Dah'am'pir re-chained Viktanix into the form of a Serf, allowing the ancient Z'bri to die naturally and create a heartstone in his passing.

Obtaining the heartstone was the first step in the Blades' ritual to return to the Seed. The heartstone was then used to bind the soul of Castor, creating a new device, a soulstone with both Castor and Viktanix held within.

Highlights: vengeful, captured, tortured

Atmosphere: Koleris

Attributes: CRE -2, INF -1, KNO +1, PSY -3, WIL -1

Skills: Etiquette 2/-1, Lore (Z'bri) 1/+1, Mythology 1/+1, Speak (Tribal) 1/+1

Equipment/Abilities: none

THE FISHER KING

Once a great warrior and now the leader of the Watch, the Fisher King is a living legend. He was once the right hand of Tera Sheba Herself and stood as Her blade during the liberation of the camps. He is now a recluse, for reasons only he and Tera Sheba share. The Fisher King is a man as much as a legend, and appreciates many of the finer arts æ his only link to the vitality of the Nation he so misses. The ghosts of those he dispatched at the behest of Tera Sheba still haunt him.

Highlights: insightful, quiet, poised

Eminences: Truth, Wisdom

Attributes: AGI -1, INF +2, KNO +2, PER +2, PSY -2, WIL +1, STA 30, UD 5, AD 6

Skills: Boating 1/+2, Combat Sense 2/+2, Perception 2/0, Interrogation 2/0, Intimidate 3/0, Law 4/+2, Lore (Shebans) 3/+2, Melee 3/-1, Read/Write 2/+2, Teaching 1/0, Synthesis (Tradition) 3

Equipment/Abilities: Halberd (x12), Leather Armor (AR 5), ghosts, memories



THE FISHER KING'S TORMENTOR SPIRITS

A number of ghosts and specters have harassed the Fisher King since he slew them many years ago. It is their final revenge, since Baba Yaga would not lead them across the Fold. They use the Fisher King as an anchor to keep from getting caught in the currents of the Sea of the Lost.

Highlights: angry, playful, scarred

Attributes: AGI +2, CRE +2, INF +1, PER +3, WIL +4, STR +1, HEA +2, STA 50, UD 11, AD 11

Skills: Combat Sense 3/+3, Dodge 2/+2, Hand-to-Hand 2/+2, Lore (Various) 1/0

Equipment/Abilities: can manifest in the physical world



5. Weaver's Resources

JONAS

A Fallen Evan Herite, Jonas has fought his way to become the leader of the Trashman's Bane Cell. Jonas was humiliated after the Lilith affair (he was a Child of Lilith at one time) and sees the current path of the Fallen as pure folly. He is an angry man, angry at the Tribes for banishing him, angry at the Fallen for walking a path he does not approve of, angry at anyone who questions his authority. He is a bully, having failed to grow up in any emotional sense of the word. He remains the leader of his Cell for the simple reason that he is fast and strong. Recently, Jonas has taken a 'survival of the fittest' outlook on the world. He believes might makes right, and that anything one can do and get away with is just fine. He considers this philosophy of his remarkably intellectual, and he is proud of himself for coming up with such a revolutionary idea.

Highlights: self-obsessed, ignorant, bully

Eminences: Inspiration, Recognition

Attributes: BLD +2, INF +1, PER +1, WIL +1, STA 30, UD 4, AD 5

Skills: Combat Sense 2/0, Craft (Carving) 2/0, Dodge 2/0, Hand-to-Hand 2/0, Intimidate 2/+2, Investigation 1/+1, Leadership 2/+1, Notice 2/+1, Streetwise 2/+1

Equipment/Abilities: Axes (x8), Dagger (x3, Parry -1), Leather Armor (AR 5)



MOLLY

Molly, a Magdalite, poisoned her abusive (but socially popular) father, an action which precipitated her coming to Hom. She joined the Trashman's Bane because they were the first to listen to her story and sympathize with her situation, not out of any fundamental agreement with their goals. The Trashman's Bane provides a family that she never had in Tribal society.

She has overlooked their abusive natures towards her, beginning to think that such attitudes and actions are the norm. It is all she has ever known, even after leaving Magdalen's love. After meeting the PCs, she becomes disgusted with the aggregate violence of her Cell and decides to make her own way in life.

Highlights: dark, curmudgeon, needy

Eminences: Sensuality

Attributes: APP +2, INF -1, KNO +1, CRE +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3

Skills: Disguise 2/+1, Healing 2/+1, Human Perception 1/0, Seduction 1/+2, Streetwise 3/0, Survival 1/+1, Theatrics 2/+1

Equipment/Abilities: little but the clothes on her back

PAENITERE, THE SHADOW-CLOAKED

A Hunter, Paenitere hunts the Z'bri. He was once a Z'bri himself but has cast aside their ideals and teachings to instead pursue a life of zealotry and repentance. He is a dangerous creature, an ally of the Fallen more because of their common enemy rather than any genuine goodwill towards the Eighth Tribe. He doesn't hate or loathe humanity and in fact works with them though he is still alien in thought and appearance. He is regretful for some of the things he must put individual humans through, such as taking their forms so that he may continue his fight, but in the end it is the fight that carries him to perform many atrocious acts. There is a greater good Paenitere works for and that goal must be achieved, though he may regret the methods he is 'forced' to use.

Highlights: deadly, cloaked, sorrowful

Atmosphere: Hunter (see *Horrors of the Z'bri* p. 97)

Attributes: AGI +3, APP -2, BLD +3, CRE +3, FIT +3, INF +4, KNO +4, PER +1, PSY +2, WIL +3, STR 3, STA 55, UD 9, AD 9

Skills: Craft (weapons) 5/+4, Dodge 2/+3, Dreaming 3/0, Human Perception 4/0, Lore (Weapons) 2/+4, Notice 3/+1, Speak (All) 2/+4, Teaching 3/+4, Synthesis 3

Equipment/Abilities: highest quality hand carved wooden weapons



INQUISITOR VALED

A minor Inquisitor, Inquisitor Valed is targeted by the Night of Crimson Tears. He is an uncreative man and refuses to look at any points of view beyond those espoused by his superiors and Tera Sheba herself. His only enjoyment is that which he gets through his job and the occasional respect that his position garners.

He is not a physical man and is actually quite subdued in public. In the process of an inquisition, however, he becomes a forceful man, though his force is all engineered well before hand. He is a servant of the public, no more, no less.

Highlights: loyal, dogged, cruel

Eminences: Truth, Wisdom

Attributes: APP +1, CRE -1, INF +1, KNO +2, PER +1, PSY +1, STA 30, UD 4, AD 3

Skills: Dodge 2/0, Hand-to-Hand 1/0, Human Perception 1/+1, Interrogation 1/-1, Law 2/+2, Read/Write (Sheban) 2/+2

Equipment/Abilities: Light staff, cloak, copy of the Sheban Code of Ethics and Law

5. Weaver's Resources

THE NIGHTMARE BEAST

Valerie Ben'on's dream incarnation. The Nightmare Beast is a giant creature, clad in random pieces of armor with her gangly arms ending in vicious claws that resemble swords. She wants nothing more than to converse and be in contact with pure humans, ones untouched by the taint of the Z'bri. However, all she knows while in the nightmare is combat and fighting and must strike out at the PCs in order to establish some sort of rapport with them.

Highlights: Lonely

Eminences: n/a

Attributes: CRE +2, INF +3, KNO +2, PER +1, PSY +1, WIL +2, STA 50, UD 15, AD 10

Skills: Combat Sense 1/+2, Dodge 2/+2, Hand-to-Hand 2/+2, Lore (Capal) 2/+2, Lore (Vimary) 2/+2, Sneak 2/+2

Equipment/Abilities: Note that these are only those attributes and skills reflected in the River of Dream by Valerie and are not an accurate reflection of her physical form.



MEMBER OF ISAAC'S CHOSEN

The members of Isaac's Chosen have only just reentered the world. They cowered within a series of bunkers below the Rust Wastes during the Fall until their food supply became critical. When they emerged the first being they encountered was Issooc. Amazed at his powers they hailed him as an angel, and he took the initiative and acted as a messiah to the reclusive and ignorant Keepers. Since their initial time with Isaac/Issooc, the Keepers have gained a high level of knowledge on the spirituality of the World Before. They have spent many of their foraging trips to gain food and texts specific to religion and spirits and have come across a number of ancient philosophy and religious texts at the behest of Issooc/Isaac.

Highlights: quiescent, reclusive

Technosmithing: none

Attributes: BLD -1, CRE +1, FIT +1, KNO +2, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3

Skills: Craft 2/0, Firearms 1/0, Human Perception 1/0, Mythology 1/+2, Read/Write (local script) 2/+2, Ritual 1/+2, Survival 2/+1, Techlore (any 2) 2/+2

Equipment/Abilities: Various guns and explosives (mostly jury rigged), piecemeal armor (AR 5), trinkets and books from the World Before.

WERE

These creatures are a particularly nasty combination of base human intellect and the warped form of an animal. The Weres created by Dah'am'pir and the Blooded Blades are noted for their size and savagery when they enter combat. To make matters worse, these Weres are normally subjected to the rituals of the Blades, which can mask them in human guises allowing them to safely infiltrate those places normally believed to be safe from Z'bri attack.

Highlights: disgusting, savage, dangerous

Attributes: AGI +3, BLD +4, FIT +4, INS +2, PER +1, WIL +3, STR 4, HEA 2, STA 55, UD 14.

Skills: Combat Sense 3/+1, Dodge 2/+3, Hand-to-Hand 3/+3, Intimidate 2/+4, Notice 1/+1

Equipment/Abilities: Bite (x9), Claws (x10), Spines/Quills (x3)



WEAVER'S RESOURCES

WEAVER'S AID: GENERIC GAME STATISTICS

The following table provide a quick-and-dirty summary of major game statistics for standard character types. Much more complete generic archetypes appear on pages 40-47 of the *Weaver's Assistant*. The table below summarizes those, some types from the *Tribe 8 Rulebook*, and some other types that might prove useful. Note that these statistics are intentionally on the low end of the spectrum of ability and meant to represent somewhat everyday people. Talented NPCs will have higher stats.

GENERIC ARCHEIYPE REFERENCE TABLE

Name	Attributes	Skills	Notes	Page
TRIBALS				
Agnite Barrer	AGI +1, FIT +1, PSY -1, WIL +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 4	Hum Per 1/1, Melee 1/1, Nav. 1/1, Survival 1/1	dagger (AD+3)	WSA, p. 40
Dahlian Dancer	AGI +2, APP +2, FIT +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Acrobatics 1/2, Dance 2/2, Seduction 2/2	medicinal herbs	WSA, p. 40
Evan Nurse	INF +1, KNO +2, PSY +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Healing 1/2, Herb. 1/2, Mythology 2/2	sword (AD+8), armor (AR 10)	WSA, p. 41
Joanite Warrior	BLD +2, FIT +2, PER +1, STA 30, UD 7, AD 7	Com. Sense 2/1, Dodge 1/0, HTH 2/0, Melee 2/0		
Magdalite Concubine	AGI +1, APP +2, INF +1, WIL +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Grooming 2/2, Seduction 2/2, Streetwise 1/1	dagger (AD+3)	WSA, p. 44
Magdalite Diplomat	CRE +2, INF +2, PER +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Disguise 1/2, Etiquette 2/0, Hum Per 2/0, Notice 2/1	skinning knife (Acc 1, AD+3)	WSA, p. 45
Pellis Artisan	CRE +1, KNO +2, PSY +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 5	Craft (skin) 2/1, Melee 2/0, Ritual 2/2		WSA, p. 46
Sheban Advocate	INF +1, KNO +1, WIL +2, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Interrogation 1/1, Law 2/1	any weapon	WSA, p. 43
Weaponslayer	AGI +1, BLD +2, KNO +1, PER +1, STA 35, UD 6, AD 7	Craft (weapons) 3/0, Lore (weapons) 2/1, Melee 1/1	ritual implements	
Yagan Mordred	KNO +2, INF +1, PSY +1, WIL +2, STA 30, UD 3, AD 3	Dreaming 2/1, Ritual 2/2, Synthesis (Curse) 2		
FALLEN				
Child of Lilith	INF +1, PSY +1, WIL +2, STA 25, UD 3, AD 4	Lore (Lilith) 2/0, Melee 1/0	Sword of Lilith (Acc +1, AD +13)	
Doomsayer	KNO +1, PER +2, PSY +2, STA 30, UD 3, AD 3	Dreaming 2/2, Lore (Joshua) 1/1, Ritual 2/1	Sword (AD +8)	
Herite	AGI +1, BLD +1, FIT +2, STA 25, UD 3, AD 5	Com Sense 1/0, Dodge 1/1, Melee 2/1, Sneak 2/1	Sword (AD +8), Armor (AR 10)	
Jacker	AGI +1, FIT +1, WIL +1, STA 25, UD 4, AD 5	Com Sense 2/0, Dodge 1/1, HTH 1/1, Lore (Z'br) 1/0, Melee 2/1		
Lightbringer	INF +2, WIL +1, PSY +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Etiquette 1/0, Leadership 2/2, Theatrics 1/0		
Z'BRi				
Flemis Iv'chet	BLD +5, WIL +3, STA 50, UD 9, AD 9	Speak (tribal) 2/0, Lore (Ancient Z'br) 1/0, Sundering (One Thought) 2	Hide (AR 5)	T8, p. 178
Koleris Iv'chet	AGI +3, BLD +3, FIT +3, WIL +2, STA 50, UD 10, AD 10	Com Sense 2/0, Dodge 2/3, HTH 3/3, Melee 3/3, Sundering (Shattering) 2	Bone blades (AD +10), Hide (AR 15)	T8, p. 178
Melanis Iv'chet	KNO +3, PER +2, WIL +2, STA 30, UD 3, AD 3	Dreaming 2/0, Lore (spirit) 2/3, Ritual 3/3, Sundering (Animation) 2	books	T8, p. 178
Sangis Iv'chet	APP +3, CRE +1, WIL +2, STA 30, UD 3, AD 4	Leadership 1/0, Melee 1/0, Seduction 3/3	bone rapier (AD+8)	WSA, p. 47
Serf	FIT +1, PSY +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	various mental skills		
Cek'roh (Chained)	AGI +2, BLD +2, INS +2, PER +2, STA 40, UD 6	Com. Sense 2/1, HTH 3/3, Sneak 2/2	Claws (UD +10), hide (AR 10)	WSA, p. 41
Monstrosity	BLD +4, PSY +2, STA 30, UD 8, AD 7	Com Sense 2/0, HTH 2/0, Melee 1/0	Claws (UD+5), hide (AR 5)	WSA, p. 47
OTHERS				
Keeper	FIT +1, KNO +2, WIL +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Firearms 2/0, T-smithing (any) 2/2, Tinker 2/0	handgun (DM x15)	WSA, p. 44
Merchant	APP +1, INF +1, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Haggling 2/1, Streetwise 1/1, Trade 2/0	Short bow (DM x7)	WSA, p. 45
Squat	FIT +1, STA 25, UD 5, AD 4	Archery 2/0, Com Sense 1/0, HTH 2/0, Melee 1/0, Survival 2/0		WSA, p. 46
Thief	AGI +2, PER +2, STA 25, UD 3, AD 3	Dodge 2/1, Sleight-of-hand 2/2, Streetwise 2/0		