Sanctum Secorum

Episode #25

The Fallible Fiend

Compatible With DCC RPG

Sanctum Secorum Podcast
Episode #25 Companion

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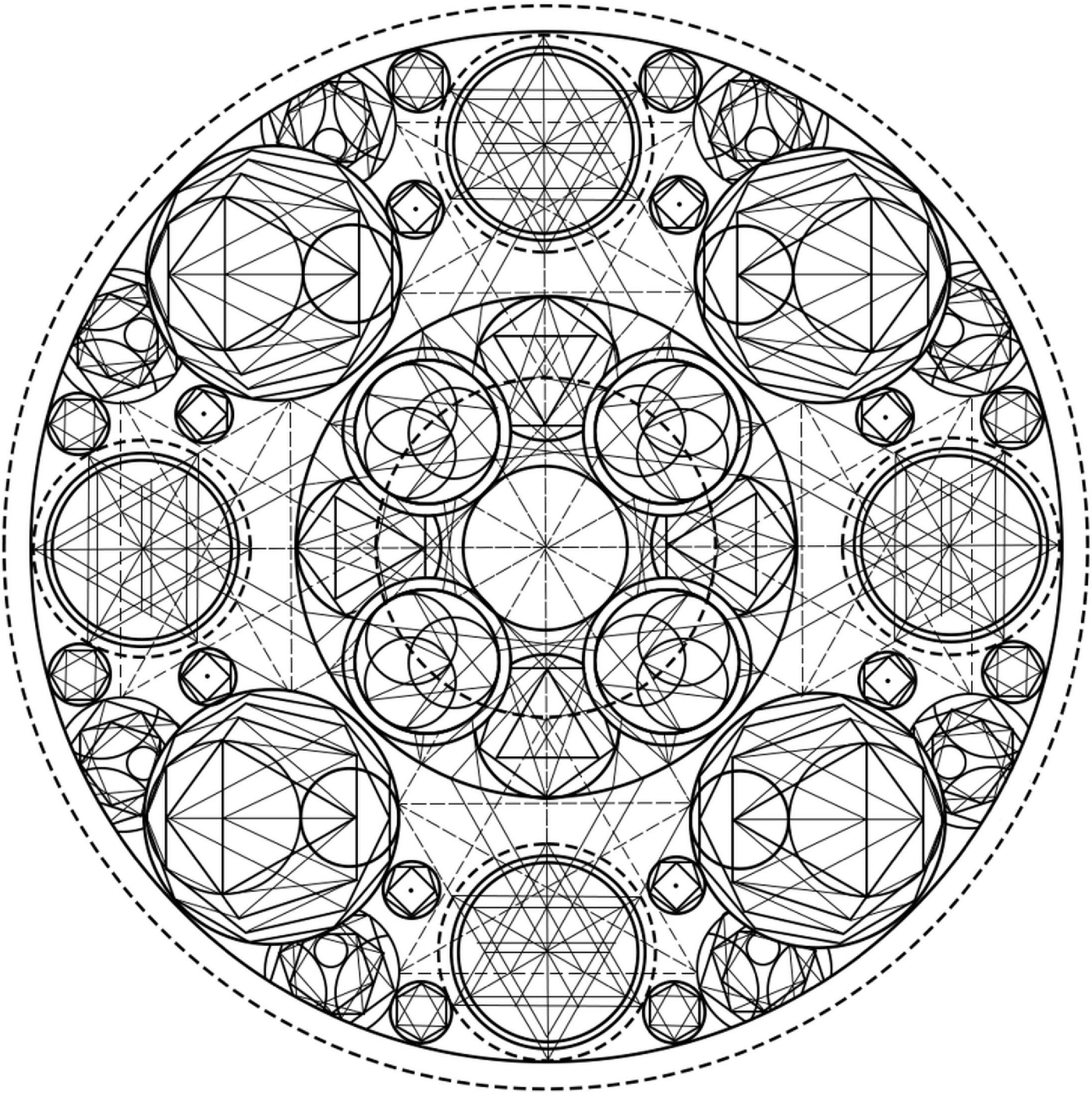


Classes

Subhuman

Dwelling on the outskirts of the civilized realms and into the far reaches, the tribes collectively referred to as “subhuman” are often dismissed as little more than savage beasts – fit only to be controlled by a powerful leader. In the case of the Zaperazh, for instance, this impression is wholly false. These tribesmen, while not as physically evolved as their human brethren, have functioning societies and hierarchies of their own. While their lives may be simple, it is a mistake to underestimate them. Subhumans are capable of selecting any human class, in addition to those that follow.

0-level

All 0-level subhuman characters start with the following:

- 1d5 hit points, modified by Stamina
- 0 XP
- One randomly determined occupation (see Table SH-1)
- One randomly determined piece of equipment (see Table SH-2)
- Based on the occupation:
  - Possession of one weapon and training in its use
  - Possession of some trade goods
- A +0 modifier to attack rolls and all saving throws

Table SH-1: Occupation

Roll	Occupation	Trained Weapon	Trade Goods
01-50	Hunter	Spear	Haunch of meat
51-00	Gatherer	Club	Basket of vegetables

Table SH-2: Equipment

Roll	Item	Roll	Item
1	Flint knife	8	Basket, small
2	Clay bowl	9	Basket, large
3	Torch	10	Animal skin
4	Water skin	11	Antlers
5	Small sack	12	Bone needle and sinew
6	Rations (1 week)	13	Bow drill
7	Quern-stones	14	Feathers

Shaman

Subhuman shamans dedicate themselves to serving their tribes by communicating with the spirits, both ancestral as well as otherworldly. They are revered for their wisdom, but the difficult living conditions of subhuman living leave them surprisingly hardened.

Hit points: A shaman gains 1d8+1 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: A shaman is trained in the use of club, dagger, and staff. The shaman typically wears no armor at all, instead relying on mystic paints and dyes to provide them with additional protections beyond their natural hardiness.

Alignment: The shamans of the subhumans are open to the flows of the universe and will speak to whichever spirits that are called for at the time, leaving them very flexible. In terms of alignment, while naturally neutral, a shaman is treated as being the most advantageous alignment at any given time.

Caster level: Despite their limited selection of available spells, shamans are quite powerful casters. Caster level is a shaman's power in channeling a spell's energy. A shaman's caster level (CL) is usually his level as a shaman +5. For example, a 2nd second level shaman usually has a CL of 7.

Magic: A shaman can call upon the power of the spirits by making special offerings. This form of magic is known as spirit magic. Its successful use allows a shaman to channel spiritual power as a magical spell. A shaman has access to a number of spells as noted on Table SH-3. To cast a spell, a shaman makes a spell check. The spell check is made like any other check: roll 1d20 + Personality modifier + caster level (CL). If the shaman succeeds, the spirits grant his request while failure always results in loss/failure.

Spell list:

- 1st level: a*nimal summoning, blessing, charm person, darkness, detect magic, force manipulation, magic missile, mystic paint*, second sight, sleep.*
- 2nd level: *arcane affinity, banishing, curse, detect evil, detect invisible, levitate, lotus stare, scorching ray, strength.*
- 3rd level: *binding, consult spirit, demon summoning, dispel magic, exorcise, fireball, lightning bolt, remove curse, speak with the dead, water breathing.*

Luck: A shaman can expend Luck to aid his allies. The ally in question must be nearby and visible to the shaman. The shaman may act out of initiative order to burn Luck and apply it to the ally's rolls. The shaman loses the Luck, and the ally receives the benefit. The shaman's Luck modifier can apply to any roll made by an ally: attack rolls, damage rolls, saves, spell checks, thief skills, and so on. The shaman recovers luck at the rate of one point every full and new moon.

Languages: The shaman knows the language of his people and can instinctively understand any spirit. At 3rd level the shaman gains the ability to learn one additional language to a level where, while not fluent, he is able to make himself understood.

Action dice: A shaman can use his first action die for attack rolls or spell checks but may only use his second action die for spell checks.

Table SH-3: Shaman									
Level	**Title**	**Attack**	**Crit Die/ Table**	**Action Dice**	**Known Spells**	**Max Spell Level**	**Ref**	**Fort**	**Will**
1	Medium	+1	1d6/I	1d20	1	1	+1	+0	+1
2	Wise man	+1	1d6/I	1d20	1	1	+1	+0	+1
3	Ghostman	+2	1d8/II	1d20	2	1	+1	+1	+2
4	Gravetender	+2	1d8/II	1d20	2	1	+2	+1	+2
5	Wangateur	+3	1d10/II	1d20	3	2	+2	+1	+3
6	Medicine Man	+3	1d10/II	1d20+1d14	3	2	+2	+2	+4
7	Spirit Talker	+4	1d12/II	1d20+1d16	4	2	+3	+2	+4
8	Shaman	+4	1d12/II	1d20+1d20	4	2	+3	+2	+5
9	Oracle	+5	1d16/II	1d20+1d20	5	3	+3	+3	+5
10	Mundunugu	+5	1d16/II	1d20+1d24	5	3	+4	+3	+6

Warlord, Subhuman

Subhuman warlords represent harmonic perfection between a being and his weapon (most often a spear). Warlords are capable of shrugging off blows that would kill lesser beings, fighting on despite otherwise debilitating injuries. Capable of entering a fighting frenzy, subhuman warlords are among the fiercest of warriors to tread a battlefield.

Hit points: A warlord gains 1d10+1 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: A warlord masters his training in one single weapon beginning with spear. Every second subsequent level, the warlord then selects an additional weapon from the following list: blowgun, club, dagger, hand axe, longbow, short sword, shortbow, sling, and staff. The warlord wears no armor, instead simply shrugging off damage.

Battle fury: In combat, a warlord may burn a point of personality to enter battle fury. While furiously attacking, the warlord may temporarily expend points of his Personality or Intelligence score to enhance his attacks. When expending attribute points the warlord gains a matching number of fury dice which are added to both attack and damage.

Battle hardened: A warlord subtracts his level from the damage of all non-magical incoming attacks, and half of his level (rounded up) from all incoming magical attacks.

Toughened: A warlord adds both his Agility bonus and his level to his armor class.

Alignment: Focused and in tune with their bodies and weapons, warlords are neutral.

Critical hits: In combat, a warlord is more likely to score a critical hit and tends to get the most destructive effects when he does so. In addition, a warlord scores critical hits more often. At 3rd through 6th level, a warrior scores a crit on any natural roll of 19-20. The threat range increases to natural rolls of 18-20 at 7th level and 17-20 at 10th level.

Initiative: A warlord adds his class level to his initiative rolls.

Luck: A warlord may burn a permanent point of Luck to make a Fortitude save (with difficulty equal to the amount of incoming damage) in an attempt to ignore the damage from any non-magical attack.

Luck: A warlord may burn a permanent point of Luck to make a Fortitude save (with difficulty equal to the amount of incoming damage) in an attempt to ignore the damage from any non-magical attack.

Action dice: A warlord always uses his action dice for attacks. At 5th level, a warlord gains a second attack each round with his second action die.

Table SH-4: Warlord

Level	Title	Attack/ Damage	Crit Die/ Table	Threat Range	Action Dice	Fury Die	Ref	Fort	Will
1	Yob	+3/+1	1d8/III	20	1d20	1d3	+1	+1	+0
2	Belligerent	+4/+2	1d10/III	20	1d20	1d3	+1	+1	+0
3	Demon	+4/+2	1d12/III	19-20	1d20	1d3	+1	+2	+1
4	Brute	+5/+3	1d14/III	19-20	1d20	1d4	+2	+2	+1
5	Berserker	+6/+3	1d16/IV	19-20	1d20+1d14	1d4	+2	+3	+1
6	Beast	+6/+4	1d16/IV	19-20	1d20+1d14	1d4	+2	+4	+2
7	Renegade	+7/+4	1d20/IV	18-20	1d20+1d16	1d5	+3	+4	+2
8	Warlord	+8/+5	1d24/IV	18-20	1d20+1d16	1d5	+3	+5	+2
9	Bantam	+8/+5	1d30/V	18-20	1d20+1d20	1d5	+3	+5	+3
10	Fury	+9/+6	2d20/V	17-20	1d20+1d20	1d6	+4	+6	+3

Fiction

The Blood-Drinking Box

Part 1

The wealthy port-city of Kerse, the epicenter of the equally wealthy nation of Druma; was greeted in the early morning with the songs of lark and dawn-thrush that populate the region this time of year.

Captain G. Gault stood surveying the scene of the rich port. The Chelaxian had been to the ports of Kerse several times; after assuming tasks under Master Lune'ef Varan he found himself sailing into Kerse more often. Gault was an old combatant, who had taken to sea many years ago. Among the many occupations he'd had before, Smuggling and piracy were not far from his accomplishments; these days he'd settled for the more secure coin to be made in simple merchant work.

"Captain…ships made ready for cargo." The young woman passed nearby. Jinyisho Zikhotsu was a short, tough little brawler from the Tian-Sing people of the Minata archipelago in Tain-Xia. She was a fun-loving soul and one of Gault's favorite deckhands both on ship and in skirmish.

"Well enough, Z, glad to hear of it; onto our next cargo." Gault replied. He raised his voice in the direction of a sharp-eared, raven-haired elven female. "Elvee! I surely hope you are correct about this wizard," he spat the last with a hint of sarcasm and a smile.

Elviodia Calithrawiel, Captain Gault's second in command had followed him on numerous adventures and trades. He had found her on the last of his piratical ventures. Perhaps the main reason he forgave the life. "Sire, leave it to me. Master Rhalabhast of Many Eyes would be meeting me for some ale in what he termed a 'shanty' called The Rogue Wave this night. He is reputed to have our item." She noted, "You, on the other hand, should be tending our financier, should you not?"

Captain Gault replied with only a nod of his wide-brimmed hat. Though, she spoke the truth, she tends to have a sharp tongue. He added, "Take Midas and Frila. We don't need our deal to go sour."

Elvee nodded affirmation. She stepped below the decks of the keelboat to find her two would-be escorts.

Gault turned to the nearby woman, "Will you join me Z?"

Z replied with a smile.

* * *

Serak grabbed up a piece of hard bread from the table. "Gamma, I'm headed to the docks." Serak was a young man of Chelaxian birth, though when his father and mother escaped slavery with their infant son, they took residency in Druma. He was clean shaven, and kept his head bald as he did not favor his curly brown hair. However, he did wear a single long tail of hair that he had tended since he was little. He was very proud his, now, three-foot 'tail'.

Though she was not in the same room of the small three room dwelling, the older woman still had accurate enough hearing to take proper care of the young man, "No you won't, Serak, you'll eat proper, then you can head to the docks. That ruffian, Dougal, can deal without you until you eat." Gamma Thendl walked proudly into the room with Serak. She was a Drumish woman of proud stature and she gave little regard to her lower status here in Kerse as a servant. She bent over a pot of porridge warming over an open bed of hot coals. Pouring and setting a bowl for Serak at the table she ordered, "Sit, eat."

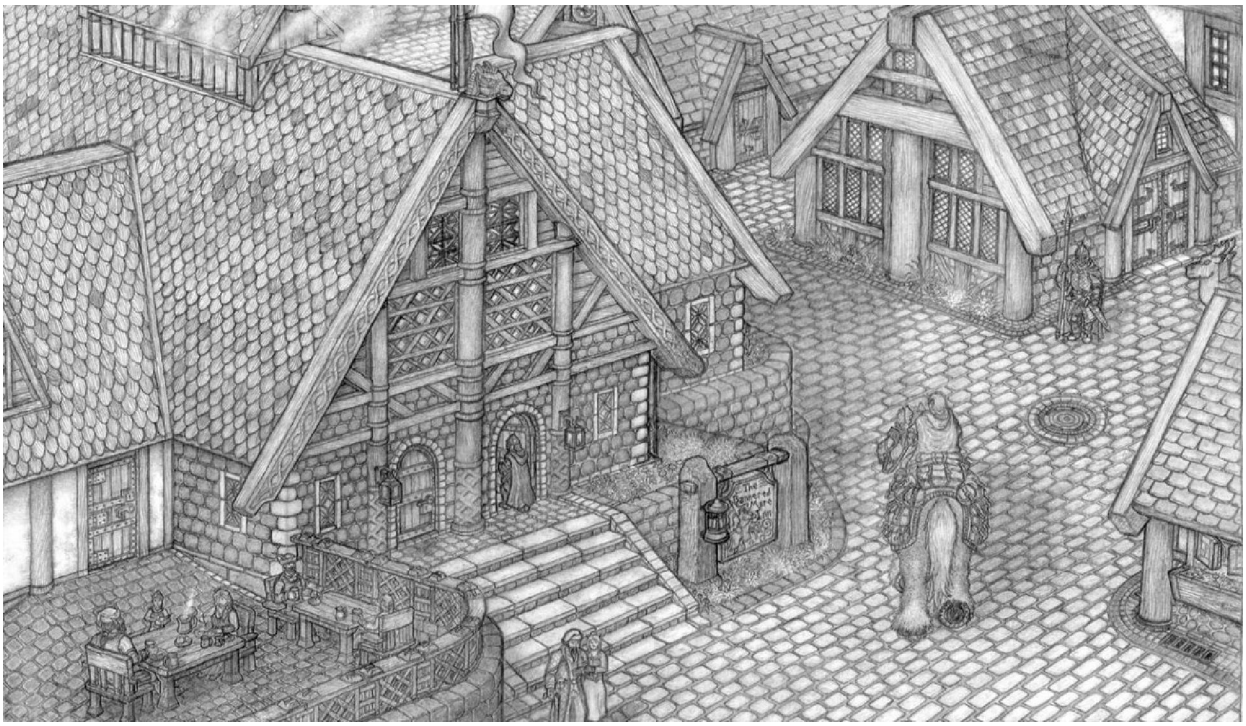
Serak smirked, eyed the bowl and sat at the square table.

Gamma started, "Finish your breakfast boy, I'll be leaving for Varan Manor soon. Today is an important day at the manor and all of the servant folk need be there early."

Serak nodded as he put down his first spoonful of the bland mixture. "K'Gamma, I will." He was no large fan of porridge. They're modest wages were too poor to supply sugar and other spices to help the taste. Serak was determined never to eat porridge again when he left for adventure, like his father, to seek a life of treasure and artifacts then he would feast with prophets and kings.

Gamma kissed her fingers and placed her hand against the back of Serak's head as he ate his second bite. It was her usual way of showing affection before she left his presence. She was old enough to be his grandmother, but she wasn't. Gamma was a trusted friend of Serak's father and she had charge over him in times when Serak's father sailed Lake Encarthan. She departed for her daily toils and the young man pushed the bowl away, grabbed his cloak and left for the docks. He need not worry about the

remaining food in the bowl; the vermin that scavenged about would make sure there was nothing left for Gamma to find.



Serak wove through the crowded roadways headed into the wharf district. He greatly enjoyed working here; the vast numbers of humanoids, cultures, and wonders from the far reaches of the Lake Encarthan and beyond never ceased to perk his curiosity. He wasn't really impressed to be working for Dougal, but since the cruel Drumish took over the dockhands guild he has become more of a taskmaster than ever.

Serak smirked recalling the lack of any humor Guildmaster Dougal had.

A jarring blow landed against his shoulder, pushing him aside. Turning quickly he looked into the light emerald eyes of a large, dark tan, whiskered man. A waterfall of black hair fell from the top of his head, held to his crown with an iron circlet. The man towered over Serak. He grabbed Serak shoulders with quickness belying his size,

"Didn't hurt yah' lil'guy, did I?" He was laden with weaponry of many kinds, among them a falchion, scimitar, and a curved dagger in the design prevalent of the Garundi culture.

Serak was just about to snap back a retort; the size of a person was of little concern here on the docks, and if anything went too far out of control the local constabulary, the ruthless Mercenary League, was quick to respond as a conflict could be tried as interference in free trade. He noticed movement beyond the big man, two women eyed Serak, and they must be part of the large man's entourage as they stood waiting for an answer. "Um, why would you'ave hurt me?" Serak answered meekly in a failed attempt at expressing his masculinity.

The large tan-man smiled and patted Serak on the shoulders, "Good man, perhaps we will drink should I find yah' abouts later."

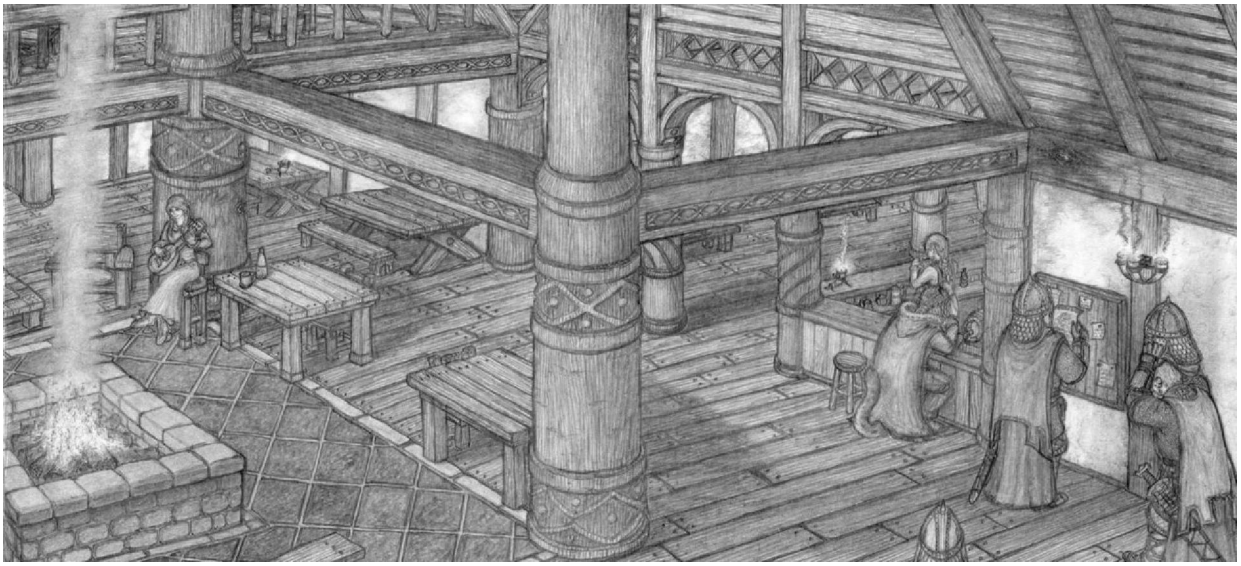
Serak nodded, but the two women stole his concentration. The larger woman, a human, was extreme in her musculature. She had deep brown eyes that seemed to embrace his soul. Her hair was wild and unkempt in long, blonde dreadlocks. The other woman, an elf with raven-hair and golden eyes gave Serak a haughty, slightly annoyed gaze. Her lips formed a fine pink line across her bleached face.

The elven woman ushered, "Madis, let's get going. We have other places to be."

"Aye," Madis gave Serak another pat on the shoulder before the trio walked away. He fought not to grimace under the powerful show of camaraderie.

Serak watched as they disappeared; he walked onward into the docks. He had seen a few elves, often trading from the nation of Kyonin. The two human's with the elf perplexed him. The man appeared to be Garundi, but the woman he was unsure, possibly Ulfen.

“Serak!” Dougal’s shout was unmistakable. “Time is coin boy, get tah’work! There’s a trade ship from Caliphas waitin’ for your grubby self!” Dougal, a rotund fellow that Serak swore was at-least part dwarf had recently assumed the job of the guildmaster of the dockhands. It was rumored the last guildmaster had to suddenly move to Detmer due to debts owed. Dougal was pig-headed, but shrewd and did good business for the Prophets of Kalistrade and Kerse. Without a word Serak tossed off his tattered cloak and went to work on the crates recently pulled from the keelboat from Caliphas.



A mere two hundred paces away, in The Rogue Wave, a bearded human born in Brevoy, stares at the elven woman and her two escorts Serak had briefly met. Rhalabast of Many Eyes’ thin fingers formed a temple before his contemplative gaze. Elviodia, Madis, and Frila sat with him at a corner table of the sagging tavern. A serving wench stepped near and Madis gave a devilish grin while Frila signaled for ale.

Rhalabast spoke after a moment of uncomfortably long silence, “A rival of mine, Nekros the Grotesque, has something that I desire, and I want you to get it for me. Succeed, and I will bestow what you seek.” The wizard regarded the impressions of the Elviodia and her escort.

Elviodia pondered; this wizard claims to have a trapped and unbounded imp, too good of a trade item to over look, provided this new task. Her smile making her beautiful features even more so, “Tell me what it is you seek to have done.”

Rhalabast returned the smile, though something about his possessed the stench of ill-will. “Three day’s travel to the south of Kerse, you will find a waterfall along a mountainous ridge of Boulder Cliff. When the dead look to the sky, an opening in the cliff will appear. Enter, and inside Nekros’ sanctum you’ll find an unmistakable cylindrical box. Bring this, here to me, unopened and I will uphold my part of our bargain.”

Madis chimed in with his husky voice, “So, we walk in, get a box and bring it to you?” Elvee looked over her shoulder to regard the fighter. Elviodia did not like others speaking out of turn when she was in business negotiation.

“There is…a complication.” Rhalabast mumbled.

All three shipmates looked at the wizard expecting the worst.

“You will need to provide the box a significant amount of blood from a lawful creature to keep the contents secure. Under no circumstance should the prisoner of the box be allowed to escape. That would be a fatal mistake.” Rhalabast finished.

“Keep the contents secure…escape?” Elviodia mused. She was used to taking on trades with no questions asked, but if the wizard was going to give out the information, one might as well ask.

Rhalabast added, “I cannot say further, for your own protection.”

Frila mumbled, “Right enough, let’s go.” Madis nodded.

Elviodia asked, “What of this Nekros?”

“He will be away from his sanctum for weeks to come.” Rhalabast countered.

Madis added taking a long swig of ale from a steel tankard, “Oiy, right enough.”

Elviodia could feel the urgency of her shipmates, it sounded too simple. She wondered if her shipmates would have lived this long if she wasn't with them. "What of the dead's regard to the sky in your words?" Her mates were both good combatants in the midst of a fight; however, as a marksman she wanted to know the whole of a battle before wading into one.

"What I have given you encompasses the information I had been given. Your figuring would be as well as my own." was his answer.

Pausing for a moment, Elviodia took a draw from her tankard and nodded. "It can be done. We will expect to see you again in eight days."

Rhalabast lifted his steel goblet of wine to the trio with the same sly grin.

* * *

Exhaling, Serak moved the last pot of wheat into place readying the shipment for the merchant carts that would be trailing through the base of the wharfs. From there, the wheat would find its way to the warehouses then onto the market districts and peddlers throughout the region.

Serak turned to find Dougal's ugly face staring him over. "What in the hells did you do, boy?"

Serak shrugged, "What…nothing?"

"Why is there three Blackjackets in my guild shack waitin'fer you to see'em. You did something an'none of that trouble best find its way here!" Dougal grumbled, "Get your arse to the shack before they come on my docks."

Serak wiped his hands off on a nearby hanging cloth and headed toward the guild shack some fifty feet away. He could already make out the pitch-tinted leather armor from whence the Mercenary League got their name. The Mercenary League were much more than the local law enforcement, they were the arm of the Prophets of Kalistrade. Serak still recalled the words of his father an age ago; he called them the weapons of crime in a crimeless city. Rumors drift through the peasantry of their flawless devotion to the Prophets and the ruthless methods they employ. Serak's thoughts drifted to what he could have done. He had been careful when Gamma and his father had taught him the arts of stealth and combat. It must have been the large Garundi fellow he bumped into. He must have been someone of some importance with two escorts of the caliber which those two harlots appeared. Serak cursed himself and his clumsiness.

As the young Chelaxian walked up to the guild shack he was met by a deeply scarred dwarven male, with a coat of grey stubble for a beard. "Yah'Serak?" he barked.

"Um, yeah..?"

"Yes Sir." A stout woman armed with a broadsword corrected.

Serak looked at the woman and regarded the events he was thinking a few moments before, "Yes sir."

The dwarf continued, "Come wit' us boy. You'ave some one 'at wonts tah' see yah'."

Serak turned to eye Dougal, finding the guildmaster watching them from the ends of the docks. The young man turned back to the dwarf and nodded understanding. 'Great', he thought, 'gonna'end up skinned or thrown in the Lake at night or something.'

Dougal watched as Serak followed the three Blackjackets out of the wharf district.

Serak followed the gnarled dwarf and his fellows to a large manor built on a corner lot of the city proper, within the first few avenues of gemstone-flecked brick buildings. Kerse was a city of opulence. Yes, the incredibly wealthy center of Druma had districts to house the common folk, but the majority of the city housed those who followed the teachings of Kalistrade. The group led into a small courtyard with a set of double-doors at the northern end. A large central statue of a nude nymph carved from a giant, single slab of moonstone decorated the equally giant courtyard. Serak eyed the extreme detail of the figure as they walked past.

A familiar voice called from the double doors leading into the manor foyer. "Serak, it is bittersweet to find you here."

Serak snapped his head around to find Gamma Thendl drapped in dark leather armor; at her side, a short sword shone brightly under the day's sunlight. "Gamma…?"

Gamma Thendl finished, "…there are a few things you should know. Come inside."

To Be Continued

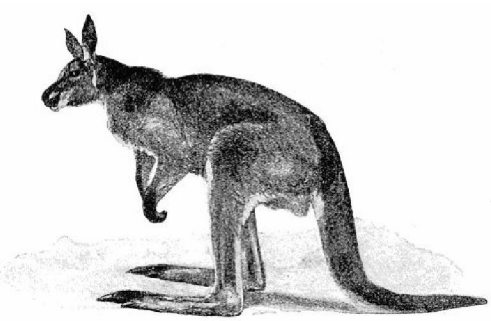
Monsters

Beareagle

A beareagle is a large magical beast resembling a winged bear with the beak of an eagle. Its wingspan often exceeds 20' and it can weigh upwards of 800 pounds. Beareagles live in forested mountains, just beneath the treeline. Beareagles are particularly fond of dwarven flesh, and are known to stake out the hidden byways leading into dwarven mines so as to ambush the unwary.

Beareagle: Init +2; Atk bite +9 melee (2d6) and claw +5 melee (1d6); AC 17; HD 6d10; MV 40', fly 80'; Act 2d20; SP terrifying screech; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +4; AL N.

Terrifying screech: Prior to entering combat the beareagle releases a bloodcurdling screech. The shrieking cry is enough to shake even the most hard-bitten of travelers. All targets within earshot must make a DC 16 Will save or be frozen in terror for 2d3 rounds.



Kangaroo

"Their scouts, mounted on beasts that look like huge, long-tailed rabbits, approach the wall of Ardyman's Tower."
- L. Sprague de Camp, *The Fallible Fiend*

Kangaroo: Init +2; Atk kick +4 melee (2d6); AC 13; HD 3d10; MV 60'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

Kangaroos are used as mounts by the aboriginal Paaluan tribes. The secret of training these creatures as mounts is known only to them and is a closely guarded secret.

Mammoth

"The mammoth is a fell weapon," said one, "but the beasts have a craven mislike of wounds and death. Confront them with some outlandish sight and smell, like these dragons, and they are wont to panic and flee back through their own host. This leaves the host in an untidy state."
- L. Sprague de Camp, *The Fallible Fiend*

Mammoth: Init +1; Atk stomp +4 melee (4d6) or trunk +6 melee (3d4); AC 14; HD 8d10; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP roar; SV Fort +8, Ref +0, Will -4; AL N.

Roar: The trumpeting cry of the mammoth is so loud that it can be heard from several miles away. This roar is used by various militaries as a form of signal communication, to coordinate attacks and troop movements.

Spells

Spell	Mystic Paint
Level	1
Range	Varies
Duration	Varies
Casting Time	1 turn
Save	None
General	With this spell, the shaman is able to mix and use a number of enchanted pigments in order to achieve one of a number of magical effects. The spell check is made to determine which energies the shaman can imbue in his dyes; the caster can choose one affect at or below the result of the check, with the choice made when the paints are created. Only one set of dyes may be painted onto a given target at a time.
Manifestation	The shaman mixes a number of enchanted pigments. Once made, the shaman has up to one week to utilize the pigments before they use potency. Applying the paints to a target requires 1d5 rounds of uninterrupted work unless otherwise noted.
1-11	Lost. Failure.
12-13	The shaman paints his face with a fierce and colorful visage. Foes confronted by the painted shaman must make a DC 12 Will save or flee in fear. The face paint is delicate and lasts only CL turns or until washed off.
14-17	The shaman coats himself in enchanted pigments and clays, allowing them to harden his skin. The treatment grants a 2d3 AC bonus lasting 1d3 hours or until washed off.
18-19	By decorating his own skin with frightful war paints, the shaman gains a warrior's deed die equal to a warrior of equal level. This lasts for 1 turn or until washed off.
20-23	By treating the skin of himself or a chosen ally, the shaman grants invisibility lasting for 1 turn. During this time, the target can perform any action (short of an attack or taking a bath) without becoming visible. If the target performs an attack, all intelligent beings within 50' may make a DC 15 Will save to see through the invisibility.
24-27	The shaman paints lightning along the limbs of himself or 1 chosen ally granting Strength 20 (+4 bonus). The supernatural strength lasts for 1d3 turns or until washed off.
28-29	The shaman bathes himself in powerful pigments. The enchanted dyes soak into the skin granting a bonus equal to caster level on all saving throws versus magical attacks. The dyes remain on the skin for 1d4 hours.
30-31	The shaman creates pigments suitable for the creation of an enchanted cave painting. Such a painting takes 72 hours of uninterrupted work and must represent the location of the tribe and its individual members. Multiple paintings can be made in a single cave system. Possible results include: (1) a hunting scene: the tribe receives +5 to all damage done to game animals; (2) the handprints of all tribe members: grants +2 AC to all when defending their cave; (3) prosperous fields of crops: the tribe's crops are immune to blight; (4) a great spirit: grants the tribe members +5 to all saving throws against magic; (5) a warband: grants +1 to attack and damage rolls for all 0-level tribesmen while within 1 mile.

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