



Blood Brothers

The Mageborn Saga: Part One

By Catie Straiton

A One-Round Adventure for the *Legends of the Shining Jewel* Campaign

No sooner does one adventure end than another presents itself, but is this really a matter for heroes like yourselves? An overdue ship and a personal memento are hardly proof of secret missions or conspiracy plots. Are they the fanciful claims of a delusional man, part of some grand scheme by smugglers and pirates, or perhaps something bigger that will rewrite the history of Amthydor? For heroes of levels 1-11.

Note: *Lupaari and tabreen race PCs may not play in this scenario, as these races are unknown in Amthydor prior to the events presented here.*

(Updated January 2007)

W W W . T H E S H I N I N G J E W E L . C O M / L S J

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons, Third Edition Core Books, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. This product utilizes updated material from the v.3.5 revision. 'd20 System' and the 'd20 System' logo are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and are used according to the terms of the d20 System License version 6.0. A copy of this License can be found at www.wizards.com/d20.



Legal Text

Wizards of the Coast is a trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. in the United States and other countries and is used with permission. THE SHINING JEWEL, LLC; TSJ, LLC; TSJ, LLC LOGO; LEGENDS OF THE SHINING JEWEL; LSJ; LSJ LOGO; and RAIA are trademarks of The Shining Jewel, LLC. Tournament detail copyright 2007 by The Shining Jewel, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without approval of THE SHINING JEWEL, LLC.

LSJ is a member of the North American Gaming Alliance (NAGA). NAGA is ©2005 NAGAgames LLC and is used with permission. All rights reserved. For more information go to http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/naga_members/.

Welcome to LSJ!

This is a *Legends of the Shining Jewel* campaign adventure. It is written to be played in a standard four-hour convention time slot.

It is a good idea to have the players and judge place some sort of name tag in front of them, so everyone can easily identify each other and the names of the characters they are playing.

Some of the text in this adventure is in *bold italics*. This text is for the players to hear, although you are certainly free to paraphrase or summarize the text if you feel it is necessary.

LSJ GM Empowerment Clause

The coordinators of the campaign empower GMs to make changes to the module as necessary to accommodate any unforeseen actions taken by the PCs. If the players find another way to deal with the module, they should be successful and appropriately rewarded. The GM may also invent new NPCs as needed to populate the city of Amthydor, which is not completely detailed due to practical limitations.

If the party is having trouble dealing with say, undead encounters, the GM can always have a

patrol of priests or the like come along to finish the combat and save the PCs. Full XP awards should not be given for the encounter if this is necessary. Do NOT save the PCs if their failure is a result of their own ill-advised actions or lack of forethought. Softening the blow from a bad set of rolls or simple bad luck is one thing, but stupid actions deserve what they get.

Calculating ATL (Average Table Level)

Add up the levels of all characters at the table (plus ECL adjustments) and any animals that will take part in combat that are not granted by class features (such as familiars, animal companions, or bonded mounts). Divide this total by 6, regardless of how many player characters are at the table. This gives you the Average Table Level (ATL) for running combats.

A Note About ATLs and the Power of PCs

Not all parties are created equal. Some level 1 parties can handle anything the GM can throw at them, and some level 3 parties are relatively weak for their levels. If the GM finds that the party at the table is really not up to the challenge of the tier, he should adjust the encounters DOWN for that party. This is particularly important if the party has a broad mix of experience levels, is lacking clerics and paladins who can heal, or is a “role-playing” rather than “battle-ready” party. The encounters should be a worthy challenge, not an impossible task or a slaughter fest. Regardless of what the instructions say, the GM should let common sense rule the day (and the module).

Adventure Background

The events in the “Mageborn” series are not necessarily related plots, but each scenario involves one or more of these races, their history and their renewed contact and interactions with the people of Amthydor.

This scenario is part one of an open-ended series introducing the ‘mageborn’ races of Raia, five races of humanoid/animal hybrids created eons ago through magical experimentation. Having fled the distant Chaldean Empire during its fall nearly two thousand years ago, these races have been hiding

in secret in remote lands. They have remained in contact with each other, but have had only limited contact with the outside world.

Recently the shamans of two of these races, the lupaari and the tabreen, have been receiving messages from their gods that the time has come to renew ties with the rest of Raia in general, and their distant Amthydor mageborn brethren in particular. Ambassadors were chosen, and the long journey to Amthydor began. An advance scout, Tariq Assan, was sent to Amthydor, carefully disguised as a human, to assess the political situation and gauge the city's attitude towards non-humans. He has been sending regular reports to the ship via *animal messengers*, and eagerly anticipates the arrival of the ambassadors and their entourage.

The Pride's Quest, the ship bearing the Lupaari and Tabreen ambassadors, has failed to arrive in Amthydor as planned. Damaged in a storm, the ship's crew made port in Jadenspur for repairs. Although the obvious non-human members of the crew were careful to remain below decks, they were seen by a dockworker who knew that a local collector of 'oddities' would be interested in adding such unusual creatures to his collection. When the Pride's Quest left to continue its journey it was followed and attacked. The human members of the crew, as well as those lupaari and tabreen that had been disguised through magic to appear human, were thrown overboard, while the obviously non-human ambassadors and their closest aides were taken prisoner.

Meanwhile, when Tariq saw jewelry and other relics belonging to the vessel's passengers offered for sale by a traveling merchant in Amthydor, an accusation of theft was made, and the search is now on for the missing ship.

Future dealings between these races and Amthydor will depend in part upon the willingness of the PCs to help, their attitude towards the envoys, and how they suggest city officials deal with them.

Note to GMs – Some PCs may receive a foreshadowing of the importance of upcoming

events. Ask each player what deity his or her PC worships. If any PC worships **Ardra, Ayla, Brianna, Destine, Peliron** or **Sorena** provide that player with a copy of **Player Handout #1** before presenting the Introduction.

This event allows for multiple paths for the PCs' journey to Jadenspur. The party may only take one of these paths, presented in Encounters Two through Four, and may only receive XP and treasure for the path chosen. PCs taking Encounter Five (Instant) for a portion of the journey but switching to Encounter Three (Land) or Four (Air) receive XP and treasure for the encounter for which they actually perform the sub-encounter.

Keep in mind that the Lupaari and Tabreen are not lycanthropes or shapechangers. These are fixed-form races that were magically created two thousand years ago. Lycanthrope related items such as the *Book of Lycanthropes* or the *Chameleon Bane* dagger provide no benefit when dealing with them.

Introduction – Returning to the city following a brief and successful mission, the PCs witness a brief confrontation between a traveling merchant and a seemingly disgruntled customer. The Diamond Legion quickly calms the situation and removes the arguing parties, but not before watching eyes note the presence of the PCs. As the PCs finish making their report to their last employer and step out into the street they are approached by the angry man from the market, who asks for their help.

Encounter 1 – The PCs may question the merchant about the source of his product, and learn that the missing ambassadors may have been in Jadenspur.

Encounter 1a – The PCs may seek out other sources of information on the source of the goods and the missing ambassadors

Encounter 2 – The PCs may go by ship to Jadenspur, booking passage on the *Sea Lion* if they do not have a ship of their own. While en route to Jadenspur the heroes encounter a pair of young sea

elves and learn of possible survivors from the Pride's Quest.

Encounter 2a – The PCs may recover some of the crew that was thrown overboard from the Pride's Quest.

Encounter 3 – The PCs may go overland to Jadenpur, encountering a group of angry farmers intent on seeking out whatever creature is killing their livestock.

Encounter 3a – While helping the villagers the PCs locate some unusual refugees from the capture of the Pride's Quest.

Encounter 4 – The PCs may travel by air to Jadenpur, encountering a griffon in need.

Encounter 4a – Assisting the griffons, the PCs may also rescue the Lupaari ambassador's missing messenger bird.

Encounter 5 – The PCs seek information in Jadenpur, where anything can be found, for the right price, and learn the probable fate of the ambassadors.

Encounter 6 – The PCs may locate the missing Pride's Quest as it is being refurbished in the Jadenpur harbor, and make their way aboard to discover a witness to the missing crew's fate.

Encounter 7 – The PCs can locate and question the fence Lorne Tarkan, and learn who may have the missing ambassadors.

Encounter 8 – The PCs explore other information sources in their search for the missing ambassadors.

Encounter 9 – The PCs attempt to rescue the ambassadors and their staffs.

Encounter 10 – The PCs bring the ambassadors to Amthydor, and how they present the story of recent events to city officials will determine future relations with the Lupaari and Tabreen.

Epilogue A – The PCs return to Amthydor with the Lupaari and Tabreen ambassadors, urging the Lord Monarch and city officials to welcome the opportunity to renew ties with their lost 'brothers'.

Epilogue B – The PCs urge the Lord Monarch and city officials to reject the overtures of the Lupaari and Tabreen.

Epilogue C – In spite of their best efforts, the PCs have failed to rescue the ambassadors, and return to Amthydor empty handed.

Epilogue D – If none of the PCs agree to undertake the mission, events in the following days will hint that perhaps things did not turn out as well as they could have, had the PCs been involved.

Introduction – Stranger In A Strange Land

Ask each player what deity his or her PC worships. If any PC worships **Ardra, Ayla, Brianna, Destine, Peliron** or **Sorena** provide that player with a copy of **Player Handout #1 (Page 56-57)**.

Have these players describe their characters before beginning the Introduction, as they are assumed to have just been adventuring together on a brief escort mission prior to the start of this event.

Escort duty is certainly less hazardous than most of your recent activities, and while it may not provide the basis for any new stories, the coins that will soon fill your pouch are fair compensation for your work of the past few days. Passing by the imposing bulk of the newly opened Wayfarer's Rest Inn, you at last catch sight of the distinctive colored roofs of Amthydor's various districts, the sure sign that your journey is nearing its end. The sooner you make your report to your employer that his daughter is safely delivered to the small village of Freereign, the sooner you can collect your pay and enjoy a hot meal and a well-deserved rest.

Each PC receives 50 gp for escorting Renata Nightingale, the only daughter of a successful local merchant, and delivering her safely to the small village of Freereign and her apprenticeship with a famed elven bard currently visiting among the gypsies there. The bard, Larak Mythsinger, is known as a recluse. He did not have time to meet with the PCs and will not accept additional apprentices at this time.

For All PCs:

Dozens of wagons fill the caravan staging area outside the city's South gate, forcing you to weave among lowing draft animals, burdened porters and merchants hawking their wares from the backs of brightly painted carts. A smartly dressed hawker in a brightly embroidered vest and trousers dispenses elixirs, balms and powders to treat a variety of ills and conditions. Across the road, two merchants call out to passing travelers, drawing them to examine bolts of silk, vials of exotic perfumes and spices from distant lands.

The various merchants have a variety of goods that may be purchased for reasonable prices, if the PCs insist on taking the time to stop, but there are no items of note, and nothing is certified.

Buyers and sellers bargain in earnest, some in whispers and others in hearty voices that draw crowds of spectators. One enterprising businessman with a display of jewelry and other personal accessories is involved in a lively confrontation with a robed traveler, and as you pass the pair the customer's declaration of "THIEF!" quickly draws the attention of a Diamond Legion patrol.

There is no reason for the PCs to become involved just yet. The Legion has things well under control and there will be plenty of time to draw the heroes in soon. If the PCs make overtures to assist, the Legion will conduct a brief interview, asking what they saw and heard. As the PCs did not actually see or hear anything important, the patrol will thank them, politely suggest that they continue on their way and bid them good day.

Heedless of the merchant's protests that he must attend to his goods and customers, the Watch hustles both parties away to take their statements in the quiet of the district command post, clearing the way for you to continue on to your destination in the Merchants' District unobstructed.

The patrol leaves a single Legionnaire behind to look after the merchant's merchandise to prevent looting until he returns. The young patrolman does not have any information for the PCs.

The PCs will encounter Tariq Assan again once the initial investigation concludes:

Emerging a short time later from the offices of your now previous employer, a robed figure hurrying out of the nearby Legion post collides blindly with _____ (random PC).

If there is a player that seems to be overshadowed by the others, select that person to help draw them into the game and encourage them to participate. Otherwise, choose a player at random.

The stranger is garbed in the robes of a desert tribesman, and he speaks with the thick accent of a distant traveler, pausing occasionally as if searching for just the right word in an unfamiliar tongue.

PCs that are worshipers of **Ardra**, **Ayla**, **Brianna**, **Destine**, **Peliron** or **Sorena** will immediately recognize the man as the figure from the dream described in **Player Handout #1**.

"Your pardon, I beg you." As he bows his apology his black eyes widen slightly in recognition. "You were in the...the market this morning, were you not? You are mer...mercenaries?"

No doubt some PCs, particularly aristocrats or nobles, will take offense at being called common mercenaries. Common is clearly not the man's native tongue, though he speaks it better than he is willing to admit. He is not trying to offend or antagonize the heroes, though he **is** testing them

for their reactions. The mission he would hire them for is a serious one, and he wants to know what types of people he is dealing with in this strange new land.

Once one or more of the PCs answer in something resembling the affirmative:

“I am Tariq Assan, and if you are honorable people, I would hire your services.”

ALL ATLS

Tariq Assan, male lupaari (polymorphed to human form) Ftr5: CR 5; medium humanoid (lupaari); HD 5d10+5; hp 48; Init +2; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 16 (+3 studded leather armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural) touch 12, flatfooted 14; BAB/Grapple +5/+8; Atk/Full Atk falchion +8 melee (2d4+3, 18-20/x2) or composite shortbow +6 ranged (1d6, x3); SQ Low-light vision, scent, vulnerability to sonic attacks (+ 50% damage); AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Diplomacy +2, Disguise +10 (due to *amulet of polymorph*), Gather Information +3, Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +2, Listen +3, Ride +4, Sense Motive +5, Spot +3, Survival +3; Combat Reflexes, Diehard, Endurance, Hold the Line, Improved Initiative.

Languages: Lupaari, Elven, Sylvan, Common

Possessions: *Amulet of polymorph*, falchion, daggers (4), desert clothing.

Tariq wears an *amulet of polymorph* to alter his appearance and pass as human. The amulet will always produce the same appearance, that of a male human desert tribesman, regardless of who wears it.

At this point the heroes are likely to be full of questions. Tariq is more fluent in the Common language than he will admit to the PCs, and he will maintain that ruse as long as possible to preserve the impression that he is not a threat to the people

of Amthydor (and to test the PCs' patience). In order to make their questions understood, and to get clear answers, the PCs must speak one the languages in which Tariq is fluent, hire an interpreter (2 gp) or use magic. A few moments of puzzled looks, half gibberish answers and obvious searching for just the right word should get this point across fairly quickly. If any of the PCs outwardly appear likely to speak a language that he knows (an elven PC may speak Sylvan, for example), he will try that language. As the Lupaari are unknown prior to this event, the Lupaari language is not available to PCs or non-Lupaari NPCs during the scenario. Once the language barrier is overcome he will answer the heroes as best he can, while maintaining his ruse and without giving away the true nature of his missing companions.

➤ What do you want to hire us for?

“The ship carrying my lord and his companions is overdue to arrive in your city. I was sent ahead to gauge the political situation and to be sure that it was safe for my lord to come to Amthydor, and to welcome him when he arrived. I must know what has happened to the ship and to my lord. The ways of this city and its people are strange to me, and I wish your help in discovering what has happened.”

➤ Have you asked the Diamond Legion for help?

“My lord never reached Amthydor, and your Diamond Legion says that they have no jurisdiction beyond the distance that a ship may sail in a day.”

Amthydor's territorial limit, and therefore the jurisdiction of the Diamond Legion, extends 48 miles beyond the city's walls. This represents the distance a ship may sail or a horse may walk in one day, and that a creature with a base speed of 30' may walk in two days.

➤ Who is your lord?

“A foreign ambassador, on a secret visit to initiate diplomatic relations with your city. His name is Ebram Bashar. My task was to precede

him, and ensure that it would be safe for him to approach the city.”

➤ **When was the ambassador supposed to arrive?**

“Three weeks ago. At first I was not concerned. It was possible that foul weather or a lack of wind had delayed them, but when there was no message I began to grow worried. Then in the market this morning I knew that something was wrong.”

➤ **Where are you / the ambassadors from?**

“My lord was traveling from the Cerrid, a great desert kingdom beyond your Tasman Sea and south of this land mass. It is a journey of nearly a full turning of the sun just to reach this city. The second ambassador comes from a neighboring nation. I am certain that you can understand that any further explanations are best left to my ambassador and your city’s leaders.”

PCs succeeding at a bardic knowledge check (DC 15) or a Knowledge (geography) skill check (DC 15) to recall that the desert kingdoms of the Cerrid, located on the small continent of Naefar in the southern sea, are home to tribal desert nomads who have little contact with outsiders and trade only with a few trusted foreigners.

Tariq makes every effort to avoid going into greater detail on the exact location of his peoples’ homeland in the Cerrid. He will NOT mention the Tabreen on the continent of Hur’Resa. Hur’Resa, once the home of Amthydor’s parent empire and the ancestral home of the Tabreen, is over 11,000 miles away by sea, almost a year’s sail. The ship has taken the longer and less direct route eastward from the Tabreen homeland in order to pick up the Lupaari representatives and to avoid dangerous ocean regions. The Lupaari and Tabreen set sail from Hur’Resa on the Pride’s Quest nearly 300 days ago. The diameter of Raia is 24,375 miles. If a ship could circle the world at the equator, with a movement rate of 48 miles per day it would take 508 days to complete the journey.

If the PCs push for additional information regarding race, location or origin of the ambassadors and their delegations as a condition of their assistance, and if they have not penetrated Tariq’s disguise, then he will reply only that “The gods forbid it” and accept that he has chosen poorly. Like members of the Pride’s Quest crew, he has been *geased* to prevent him from revealing the true races of the two ambassadors. If the PCs will absolutely not accept no for an answer **GO TO Epilogue D (Page 53)**.

➤ **What type of ship is it? / Can you describe the ship?**

“The Pride’s Quest required a nation three years to complete, and it was built solely for this momentous journey. It is a three-masted deep ocean sailing ship, one hundred and eighty feet long, and forty feet wide. The sails are purest blue, made of a fabric like your silk but extremely strong. The vessel’s flag is marked with the emblem of two heads, a mastiff and a lioness, back to back in profile, over a length of broken chain. The figurehead is carved to resemble a large serpentine dragon, with huge opals for eyes. The ship has a crew of forty and fourteen passengers.”

➤ **Who else was on the ship?**

“The ship has a crew of forty, including the captain. There are fourteen passengers. They include Ambassador Bashar, Ambassador Khar’Ri, and their personal guards, retainers and assistants.”

➤ **What about the captain of the ship?**

“Captain Nasir al-Sybar was chosen over eight other captains for this mission, and even personally oversaw the construction of the ship. He is extremely loyal, and above suspicion.”

➤ **Where is Ambassador Khar’Ri from?**

“She is from an allied tribe. Her people also seek to establish ties with Amthydor.”

Ambassador Khar’Ri is a leonar Tabreen, and the eldest daughter and heir of Queen Mir’rana.

➤ **What route were the ambassadors taking?**

“Their ship was to have come west across the Tasman Sea. They would have put in to shore as needed for supplies. The last message gave their position as the city of Perralin. Any ill that befell them did so after they left that place.”

The Guild City of Perralin is located on the northern coast of the Tasman Sea. It is famed as a center of commerce, trade and manufacturing. It is approximately four weeks’ sail from Amthydor.

➤ **When did you last hear from the ship?**

“It has been seven weeks since the last messenger. They were to have been reporting every three weeks.”

➤ **Can you describe Ambassador Bashar?**

“He is as tall as I, though less strongly built, with black hair and dark eyes. He wears no beard, and his bearing is kingly, no matter his garments. You will know him when you see him.”

Tariq is 6’ 2”, the same height as Ambassador Bashar, and very muscular. Tariq will avoid mentioning the ambassador’s race unless the PCs specifically ask, at which point he will say that the ambassador is *“As human as I.”* (Technically not a true lie, as neither is human.) Otherwise, the description that he gives applies to both the ambassador’s normal Lupaari form and his human disguise. PCs actively attempting to Sense Motive (DC 15) will be aware that Tariq is hiding something. If confronted about the deception he can only say that *“The gods have commanded my silence, for the good of all.”* He will be unable to reveal the true nature of the ambassadors due to the *geas*, and will suffer obvious physical discomfort should the PCs attempt to force him to do so. Angry red welts appear on his body, and he takes 3d6 hp of damage.

➤ **Does the ambassador of your country have any enemies?**

“The ambassador is well regarded, and highly respected among our people. We have had no dealings with outsiders, to make enemies of them.”

➤ **If your people have no enemies, then why is the mission such a secret?**

“We were unwilling to take the risk that your city had enemies, either within or without, who would attempt to prevent an alliance, and we had no guarantee that you would welcome strangers. It was possible that your navy would sail out to attack the ambassadors’ ship, rather than receive our petition. We could not take the risk that your ruler would ignore the will of the gods and refuse to meet with the delegation. If the ambassadors were to simply present themselves and seek an audience, it was believed that your leaders would not just turn them away unheard after so long a journey.”

➤ **When did you arrive in the city?**

“I arrived here seven moons ago. I came by a different route, overland from the west, to learn more of your city and to prepare a place for the ambassador.”

➤ **What was the incident in the market about?**

“The merchant has goods that do not belong to him, goods which belong to my lord, who would not have sold them for any price. The merchant will not say where he obtained the items, and he will not sell them to me or give them back, that I may return them to my lord. I must know where he got them, and what has befallen my lord and the others traveling with him.”

➤ **What goods did the merchant have? / Can you describe the goods that belong to the ambassadors?**

“He had three items that I immediately recognized, though there may be others. The first was a carved stone statuette, two hands high (eight inches), portraying al-Prial, the Lawgiver. It is carved from a rare milky white stone that is mined only in our land. There was also a dagger with a claw-shaped pommel holding a large ruby. The blade is etched with the tenets of the Lawgiver. The third item is a gold ring bearing the images of a lioness and a jackal, with emeralds for eyes.”

“I could not prove that he did not obtain them legitimately, so your Diamond Legion would not help me.”

PCs with ranks in *Knowledge (Religion)* may make a skill check *DC 10* to realize that the figure he calls al-Prial is better known in Amthydor as Peliron, the god of Justice. PCs without ranks in *Knowledge (Religion)* may make a *DC 15 Intelligence* check to realize this information.

➤ **Why Amthydor?**

“My people do not Question divine will. There has been no contact between our peoples since the sundering. The gods have declared that our time of isolation must end.”

➤ **What sundering?**

“Our peoples share, if not a common birth, a kinship. We are brothers of the spirit, if not of the blood. Our paths diverged when your ancestors came to this place, but our struggles have been the same. The time for reunion has come.”

Tariq will politely decline to elaborate further, noting that additional explanations are the job of the ambassador, not his advance security.

PCs with the *Bardic Knowledge* ability or *Knowledge (history)* skill may make a skill check (*DC 20*) to recall the details of Amthydor’s founding over 2,000 years ago, as a colony of an ancient empire that was later shattered by open rebellion, both at home and among the colonies (including Amthydor). Provide successful players with **Player Handout #2 - Ancient History (Page 58)**.

➤ **Who would want to harm these ambassadors?**

“No outsiders knew of the journey, and none among our people would stand in the way of divine will.”

➤ **What do you mean by ‘divine will’/the will of the gods?**

“Our shamans, our...priests, yes priests is what you call them, they have received visions from the gods that now is the time to ally with Amthydor.”

➤ **Can you describe these visions from the gods?**

“There have been several visions, but all have certain images in common – This city, the roofs of its buildings laid out like a great mosaic, a red haired man upon a stately seat, and two rivers of blood joining to become one.”

➤ **What gods do your people worship?**

“Faith is a matter of personal choice, but as a people our greatest ties are to al-Prial the Lawgiver, Raiasa the Mother, Ayalia of the Leaves, Anabri the Huntress, Desira the Wise and Sarya the Lady of Light.

Though they call the gods by different names, the Lupaari and Tabreen primarily worship Peliron, Ardra, Ayla, Brianna, Destine and Sorena.

➤ **How have you been exchanging messages with the ship?**

“We use specially bred and trained messenger birds. My bird returned here when it was unable to locate the ship.”

The bird, a desert hawk, is in Tariq’s room at the Silver Fox Inn & Tavern, located in the Port District.

Each bird is bonded to its handler in a ritual similar to the spell used by wizards to call their familiars, so their inability to home in on the ship is cause for serious concern. While Tariq will not share the details of this ritual or the exact nature of the bond, he will permit PCs able to *speak with animals* to converse with his avian companion. The bird is extremely intelligent for its kind, but it is still a bird and the PCs will have to ask it the right questions. If the PCs cannot speak with animals and do not think to ask, Tariq will tell them that he has done so already.

- The last time Tariq's bird saw the ship near land was at the 'large city nest' by the sea, when it was sent to report. Additional questions can verify the description of the city of Perralin.
- A storm came up at sea, while Tariq's bird was attempting to deliver a message, preventing it from locating the ship. Tired and suffering minor injuries from the storm, and unable to locate the ship, the bird made its way back to Amthydor and reported to Tariq.
- Like any animal, the bird does not have a concept of 'race' other than 'men', 'animals', 'hunters' and 'prey'. They cannot tell the PCs what the Lupaari and Tabreen are.

➤ **How do the birds find their handlers?**

"They are able to sense their bond mates within the range of a day's travel. For one of our birds to not sense its companion, the person would have to be dead, unconscious or magically hidden."

➤ **Will you come with us?**

"I will remain here, in case the ship does arrive."

➤ **Once we find the Ambassador how can we prove to him that you sent us?**

He removes a small bundle of brilliant blue silken fabric from within his robes, unfolding it to expose an intricate silver and gold embroidered design and an ornate white stone amulet on a leather thong.

The embroidered cloth and the amulet both bear the same image, that of two heads, a mastiff and a lioness, back to back in profile, over a length of broken chain. The amulet is made of the same unusual stone as the statuette, and the image is the same as the banner of the missing Pride's Quest.

"Take these with you. The Ambassadors and those traveling with them will recognize them and know that you come to help."

Make note of which PCs are carrying the cloth and the amulet, and if they are displaying the items openly (i.e. wearing the amulet), as some NPCs will recognize the design and/or the scent on the objects.

➤ **Can we take your bird with us?**

"She is exhausted from flying, searching for the ship, and will require several days of rest before she is fit for flying any noteworthy distance. I may be able to convince her to accompany you, but it would not be safe for her to fly for at least three days."

➤ **How much do we get paid?**

While he will be somewhat disappointed at this request, he understands that mercenaries work for money, and he is prepared to offer compensation.

"Bring my lord and his party safely to this place and you will be well paid indeed, in precious gems and in gold the color of the sun."

If the PCs insist on seeing the promised payment, he will agree to show them a sample. PCs succeeding at an *Appraise* skill check *DC 12* can estimate the value of the gems and fine yellow gold that he is willing to pay each PC at 200 gp.

➤ **What else can you tell us that might help?**

He produces two small vials carved from milky white stone. "My people have a way with many animals, not just our birds. I must remain here, but if you find the ambassador's bird, or perhaps another creature that may have seen them, these may help you to communicate with them."

Each vial contains a potion of *Speak with Animals*, 5th level caster. When the potions are expended each empty vial has a value of 25 gp.

It is natural for the PCs to be somewhat suspicious of Tariq at first. He is being as honest as he can be without endangering the ambassadors or their mission, and means no harm to the PCs. If the heroes attempt to *detect magic* it will quickly become apparent that he wears a magical amulet (*amulet of polymorph*). The effect of the amulet is

continuous, and works as per the spell of the same name.

Tariq will not deactivate or remove the amulet willingly, but if the PCs target it with a successful *dispel magic* dispel check (DC 16), its properties will be suppressed for 1d4 rounds, revealing Tariq to be a member of the canine-humanoid Lupaari race. He will be upset about losing his disguise (even for a brief time), but will still apologize for the deception, but explain that it is necessary for the protection of his people and those of Amthydor. His concern is that there might be enemies that would seek to prevent or disrupt peaceful contact between their people. Note that Tariq is still bound by the *geas* and cannot explain more without invoking the negative effects of that spell.

If no PCs agree to help then Tariq Assan will learn the source of the merchant's goods on his own, and attempt a rescue alone, with limited success. PCs that do not volunteer are out of the event and gain no XP or additional reward.

If none of the PCs volunteer to help **GO TO Epilogue D (Page 53).**

If the PCs agree to help and wish to speak with the merchant **GO TO Encounter 1 (Page 11).**

If the PCs want to seek information elsewhere **GO TO Encounter 1a (Page 13).**

If the PCs intend to find a ship and reach Jadenpur by sea **GO TO Encounter 2 (Page 14).**

If the PCs plan to go overland to Jadenpur **GO TO Encounter 3 (Page 21).**

If the PCs use some means of reaching Jadenpur by air **GO TO Encounter 4 (Page 27).**

If the PCs use *teleport* or another instantaneous magical means to reach Jadenpur **GO TO Encounter 5 (Page 34).**

Encounter One – Finders Keepers

If the PCs do not suggest it, Tariq will offer to wait a short distance away while they talk to the merchant, to avoid another confrontation with the man.

A brightly painted cloth banner proclaims the stall to be that of Fajo's Fine Goods, Oranus Fajo - Proprietor.

A trio of cloth-draped tables displays a broad selection of jewelry, ornamental weapons and small art objects.

The merchant, a lean dark-skinned man clothed in the bright fabrics that are the current fashion in the west, offers a smile as you approach the stall.

The wealthier the PCs appear to be, the broader Merchant Fajo will smile, particularly if there are PC nobles in the party.

"Welcome, friends. What do you desire, that Fajo can provide? Ceremonial weapons? Personal adornments? Jewelry? Artistic treasures? You will find no finer selection in the Free Lands."

If the PCs have a description from Tariq of the items allegedly stolen from the ambassador then they will see them among the goods on display. The heroes are free to question the merchant, either obviously or under the guise of interested customers. The items belonging to the missing ambassador are for sale at the following prices:

- Masterwork dagger 750 gp (500 gp with a DC 15 Diplomacy check)
- Ring 750 gp (500 gp with a DC 15 Diplomacy check)
- Statuette 350 gp (250 gp with a DC 15 Diplomacy check)

Fajo has raised the prices on these items following the confrontation with Tariq. He will not agree to any prices lower than those listed above. While

Tariq resents having to purchase what he believes rightfully belongs to his ambassador, he has the funds necessary to purchase the three items.

➤ **What happened? / Why was that man upset with you?**

“At first he was just looking at my merchandise, just like every other customer, asking about prices and such. I was dealing with another customer when that lunatic snatched up a ring that I had on display and started demanding to know where I got it! He said that I had no right to be selling it!”

“When I suggested that he pay me a fair price for the items he wanted, he accused me of being a thief! Me, of all people! I’m no thief! I buy my goods legitimately, and I pay fair money for them! I have a right to make a living by receiving a fair price in return. He’s the thief, if you ask me, demanding that I give him valuable merchandise that he couldn’t even prove was his!”

The PCs may attempt *Sense Motive* skill checks if they suspect that Fajo is being deceptive. While he does have a modifier of +6 to his *Bluff* skill, in this case he is being honest with the PCs and he believes what he is saying.

➤ **Where did you get the items that he was looking at?**

“I bought them in Jadenpur, along with several other items. It is part of my normal route. The place is a haven for adventurers and would-be heroes who are always finding treasure hordes in old ruins or in the lair of some creature or other.”

The Free City of Jadenpur, located on the coast north of Amthydor, is built over an ancient ruin of unknown origin, and is a popular base for mercenaries that feel that any risk is worth the potential rewards, and for adventurers seeking to make a name for themselves.

➤ **Can you get more pieces like these?**

“Possibly. I don’t know if my source has acquired any additional pieces since I bought

these, but I can send an inquiry, if you are looking for something in particular. If he doesn’t have what you are looking for he may know who to go to.”

➤ **Who is your usual supplier?**

“I have several in each of the cities that I regularly visit. Naturally I cannot provide you with their names, lest you make your own arrangements with them, cutting me out of my reasonable and fair share.”

Fajo will not provide the names of his contacts without some form of assurance that the PCs are not attempting to cut out the middleman and deal with the suppliers directly. The simplest guarantee that the PCs can provide is to purchase other items, in addition to the three pointed out by Tariq, worth at least 10 gp/ATL. They may also make a direct monetary donation – 25 gp at ATLs 1 & 3, 50 gp at ATLs 5 & 7 and 100 gp at ATLs 9 & 11. Tariq will not be willing or able to provide these funds. A successful Diplomacy or Intimidate skill check (DC 15) will reduce the amount by one half. If the PCs attempt to Intimidate Fajo but fail on the check, he will call for the Diamond Legion patrol currently strolling through the area, and the PCs will be escorted away for an hour of polite questioning before they can convince the authorities that they pose no threat. If the Diamond Legion is called then the PCs will not be able to purchase any of the items.

➤ **Once the PCs get Fajo to open up, by whatever means, he will provide the following:**

“Lorne Tarkan is my main source in Jadenpur. He buys primarily from adventurers like yourselves who are willing to brave the many lairs and old ruins in the area in search of fame and fortune.”

PCs that succeed at a *Sense Motive* skill check (DC 16) are aware that he has some misgivings about revealing his source to them. What Fajo is not saying is that he is aware of rumors that Lorne Tarkan is suspected of being a fence, dealing in goods from questionable sources, and that what passes for law enforcement in Jadenpur may be

closing in on his operation (if only to take their cut). An additional Intimidate check (DC 16+ATL) will get him to reveal this information.

➤ **If the PCs question the legality of his sources Fajo will be offended and somewhat defensive.**

“I have been assured that all of these items were obtained legally, from legitimate sources, and I will not deal in baseless accusations.”

➤ **Can we see the rest of the items that you purchased in Jadenapur?**

“Of course! Was there something in particular that you had in mind?”

Fajo has a wide variety of items including several rings, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, brooches and small art objects and antiques. His prices are fair, and the items are of good quality, though none are as remarkable or exotic as the ones mentioned by Tariq. The PCs may buy non-magical jewelry, though it should not take away from game time. All such items are uncerterd.

If the PCs want to seek information elsewhere **GO TO Encounter 1a (Page 13).**

If the PCs intend to find a ship and reach Jadenapur by sea **GO TO Encounter 2 (Page 14).**

If the PCs plan to go overland to Jadenapur **GO TO Encounter 3 (Page 21).**

If the PCs use some means of reaching Jadenapur by air **GO TO Encounter 4 (Page 27).**

If the PCs use *teleport* or other instantaneous magical means to reach Jadenapur **GO TO Encounter 5 (Page 34).**

Encounter One A– The Rumor Mill

The PCs may wish to pursue other sources of information before making the obvious journey north to Jadenapur.

Diamond Legion:

➤ The Diamond Legion has no authority beyond the 48-mile Amthydor territorial limit. A search ship was sent out a week ago, following Tariq’s original report that the Pride’s Quest was missing, but nothing was found. The Legion would like to help more, but because the vessel never entered their jurisdiction there is nothing they can do.

➤ While the Diamond Legion feels that Tariq is not telling as much as he knows, they have questioned him at length and are satisfied with his explanation that he is concerned that some people in Amthydor may wish to block the potential alliance. The Legion does not believe that anyone connected with Amthydor is responsible for the disappearance of the ship.

➤ Pirates - There have been no reports of recent pirate activity within the 48-mile territorial limit. No recently arrived ships have reported pirate contact on the western portion of the Tasman Sea.

➤ The Diamond Legion has no information on Lorne Tarkan or suspected fences in Jadenapur.

Harbormaster:

➤ Tariq filed an inquiry five days ago regarding a ship named the Pride’s Quest that was three weeks overdue. No wreckage has been spotted and no other ships have reported contact with the missing vessel.

➤ The Pride’s Quest and/or Captain al-Sybar – The Harbor Master (or anyone else in Amthydor) has never heard of either the Pride’s Quest or her captain Nasir al-Sybar.

➤ Weather – It is currently not the season for serious storms, and there have been no storms strong enough to sink a ship the size of the Pride’s Quest reported in the western area of the Tasman Sea for the past month.

➤ Pirates – There have been no reports of recent

pirate activity within the 48-mile territorial limit. No recently arrived ships have reported pirate contact on the western portion of the Tasman Sea.

Temples:

- If the PCs obtain divinations from the faiths of Ardra, Ayla, Brianna, Destine, Peliron and Sorena, either by purchasing spells or by casting the spell themselves, the answer comes in the form of the visions from **Player Handout # 1**
- If the PCs obtain divinations from any of the other faiths present in Amthydor:

“The key to the future is to be found in the past.”

If the PCs agree to help and wish to speak with the merchant **GO TO Encounter 1 (Page 11).**

If the PCs intend to find a ship and reach Jadenpur by sea **GO TO Encounter 2 (Page 14).**

If the PCs plan to go overland to Jadenpur **GO TO Encounter 3 (Page 21).**

If the PCs use some means of reaching Jadenpur by air **GO TO Encounter 4 (Page 27).**

If the PCs use *teleport* or another instantaneous magical means to reach Jadenpur **GO TO Encounter 5 (Page 34).**

Encounter Two – As the Tide Turns

The sea route from Amthydor to Jadenpur requires six days to cover a distance of 311 miles. If the PCs do not have their own vessel, they will need to locate one in the Harbor district.

If the PCs already have a ship of their own, modify the descriptive box text as necessary.

Dozens of ships, topped by a small forest of towering masts and tightly furled sails, crowd the busy piers of Amthydor’s great harbor. Porters and teamsters hurry to unload newly arrived vessels as quickly as their cargos are cleared by the Harbormaster. Other dockworkers bring crates and barrels from nearby export warehouses to fill the holds of ships making ready to depart on the outgoing tide.

The ships currently preparing to depart Amthydor are bound for several different locations. Only one, the *Sea Lion*, will be both ready to leave on the next tide and headed in the right direction. The ship’s captain, Arvid Relson, is willing to take on passengers, provided that the PCs do not interfere with the duties of the crew. There are four guest cabins available, and the cost of passage is 25 gp per PC. If asked, Tariq considers the vessel’s name a ‘good omen’, and will pay the cost the party’s passage on the ship. Captain Relson will inform the PCs that the ship will depart in two hours, giving the PCs just enough time to gather their equipment, ask a few final questions, and get aboard the ship.

*Beyond the safety of Amthydor’s protective harbor wall, seas are calm and a steady breeze fills the *Sea Lion*’s brilliant green and white sails. The crew quickly settles into a familiar routine, leaving little to watch but the lazy dance of seabirds among the rigging and the sporting of dolphins as they playfully race the ship.*

The seas are gentle and there is no sign of foul weather ahead. The winds are steady, hurrying the ship on its northerly course unhindered. Only the weakest stomachs suffer discomfort on the six-day journey. PCs succeeding at a DC 5 Fortitude save each day are unaffected by the motion of the ship. Those PCs that fail a day’s saving throw are mildly ill, suffering a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks that day.

Call for Spot checks each morning. Regardless of the DC achieved, there is little to see for the first few days. Possible sightings include sporting dolphins, diving sea birds, schools of brightly colored fish, distant fishing boats (too small to be

the Pride's Quest) or a distant dragon turtle. There is no threat to the ship.

The first three days of the journey are uneventful, leaving the PCs ample opportunity to cast spells, perform divinations, or engage in what leisure pursuits the confines of the ship permit.

Dawn on your fourth day brings pristine blue sky, steady winds and gentle seas. A few members of the Sea Lion's crew mend sails and rope, while others scrape barnacles from the vessel's small dinghy or trail fishing lines over the side of the ship.

Call for Spot checks (DC 10) from all PCs on deck. The sea elves are trying to be seen, but they are also twenty feet below the level of the main deck of the ship. If none of the PCs succeed at the Spot check, a member of the crew will notice the new arrivals and call out.

Two silvery-haired figures bob lightly on the waves, waving green-skinned arms energetically and calling to you in high musical voices.

Ideally the PCs will toss down a rope or ladder for the visitors to climb up onto the deck. If the heroes do not do so, the captain will direct a member of the crew to lower a rope ladder over the side.

No sooner are the new arrivals safely aboard than they begin speaking rapidly, and gesturing emphatically at some unseen point in the ocean.

The two adolescent male sea elves, barely the equivalent of human ten year olds, do not speak Common. Ships that regularly traverse the Tasman Sea customarily include a crewmember designated as the 'water-speaker', to facilitate communication with intelligent aquatic species that the ship may encounter. This crewmember is often a sea elf, half-elf of sea elf origin, or other surface dwelling humanoid that is both a strong swimmer and fluent in aquan. The *Sea Lion's* water-speaker, a sea elf named Edron Waverider, is not on board, having been called away on family business. No other member of the ship's complement speaks either

elven or aquan. It will be up to the PCs to communicate with the sea elves, either in a shared language (elven or aquan) or via gestures or drawings (and a Bluff check or Sense Motive check to either say or understand a message, respectively; DC 15 for either).

If no PCs speak elven or aquan, play up the need for pantomime or drawings to convey what the sea elves have to say. Their message is simple, and urgent.

"Three land men need help.

"They are trapped on a tiny islet less than an hour swim away, with no food or water, and are in danger from hungry predators.

"A pride of sea cats lives in the area, and food has been scarce. The creatures have ventured up onto the islet to try to catch the land men."

The sea elves will not accompany the PCs. They fear parental displeasure if it is learned that they were playing where they should not have been or dealing with surface dwellers. Once they have delivered their message and the PCs indicate that they will help, the sea elves drop back over the side and disappear into the depths.

If the PCs go to the aid of the stranded survivors **GO TO Encounter 2a (Page 15).**

If the PCs leave the survivors to their fate and continue on to Jadenpur **GO TO Encounter 2b (Page 20).**

Encounter Two A –A Catfish Out of Water

Crewmen swarm among the ropes and rigging to shift the billowing sails and turn. Too small to appear on the Sea Lion's ocean charts, a string of tiny coral islets trails away from the well traveled shipping lanes of the Tasman Sea.

Due to the jagged coral reefs lying just below the surface, the *Sea Lion* cannot get closer than 360 feet from the islet where the survivors are gathered. The PCs will have to take the ship's dinghy or swim (a dangerous prospect, considering the presence of the sea cats). The dinghy holds a maximum of 6 medium creatures, meaning that the PCs will have to row themselves, making it impossible to take any sizable animals that the PCs may have brought to the islet. Pets, animal companions and mounts will have to be left on the ship.

Captain Relson deftly maneuvers his vessel among the multitude of sharp coral outcroppings while his First Mate takes detailed measurements and quickly sketches a new chart of the area. With so many small islets to search, it may be difficult to locate the stranded men reported by the sea elves.

A cry from the lookout stationed in the crow's nest quickly draws the attention of the crew to a landmass barely half the size of the Sea Lion's main deck. At this distance the figures of three men are vague, and the low, lumbering shapes of unknown creatures emerging from the sea to stalk them are indistinct.

With a small lurch the Sea Lion abruptly halts as anchors take hold on the submerged reef. The Captain shouts an order for the small dinghy to be made ready and turns to you.

"Any closer and we'll run aground on the submerged reef. You'll have to take the small boat the rest of the way. Whatever those beasties are, those men may not last long against them."

The crew will quickly assist the PCs into the rowboat and lower it into the water. It will take the PCs 24 rounds (the dinghy can be rowed at the rate of 15 feet per round) to reach the islet, during which time the sea cats will be playing a deadly game of cat and mouse with the stranded sailors. In spite of their slow movement on land, the small size of the islet makes the sea cats a very real threat to the weakened, exhausted and unarmed men.

The three men on the tiny coral outcropping have little attention to spare for your approach as they move to evade the flashing jaws and claws of their approaching pursuers.

Once the PCs reach the islet one person will need to spend at least one full round tying the dinghy to the coral outcropping and succeed at a *Use Rope* skill check *DC 10* to keep it from floating away. If the boat is not securely tied, it will float away at the rate of 5 feet per round.

The tiny coral island is only 30 feet wide and 45 feet long, meaning that the sea cats can attack a creature almost anywhere on the island and still be within their 10 feet land movement of the water. The surface is rough and uneven, making a charge impossible due to the difficult terrain. Due to the rough coral that composes the landmass, PCs not wearing suitable footwear (shoes or boots, not slippers or sandals) suffer 1 hit point of non-lethal damage for each 5 feet that they move on the islet and have their speed reduced by 5 feet.

The hungry sea cats lunge out of the water, drawing thick porpoise-like bodies forward on clawed forepaws. Bright black eyes regard you, gauging threat against the opportunity for prey. The leonine head filled with glistening teeth turns in your direction.

The sea cats intend to deal with the PCs first, and dine on the sailors at their leisure.

Sea cats attack on sight, either for food or to defend their territory, and use both claws and teeth to grab and rend their prey. They display tremendous courage, always fighting to the death, even against creatures many times their size. Pairs and prides of sea cats attack in concert, trying to wear the opponent down until one beast can dispatch it.

The sailors are malnourished, injured and exhausted, and will not be much help in this combat. If the PCs are losing badly, particularly at the lower ATLS, they will do what they can. Temporary stats are listed in ().

All ATLs

⚔ **Sailors (3), Com 2:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d4; hp 8 (4 current); Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 25 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex), touch AC 12, flatfooted 10; BAB/Grapple +1/+3; Atk/Full Atk: Rock +0 melee (1d2-1); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14 (8), Dex 14 (8), Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5 (+2), Profession (Sailor) +7, Spot +2, Swim +6 (+3), Use Rope +6 (+3); Dodge, Sea Dog.

Equipment: Rocks, torn breeches.

ATL 1

⚔ **Sea Cat, Juvenile (1):** CR 2; medium magical beast; HD 3d10+9; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 10 ft. (2 squares), swim 40 ft.; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +6 natural) touch 11, flatfooted 16; BAB/Grapple +3/+5; Atk Claw +5 melee (1d4+2); Full Atk 2 claws +5 melee (1d4+2) and bite +0 melee (1d6+1); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., hold breath, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +10; Alertness, Endurance.

Hold Breath (Ex): A sea cat can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 6 x its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skills: A sea cat has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

ATL 3: 1 Sea Cat**ATL 5: 3 Sea Cats**

⚔ **Sea Cat (# varies):** CR 4; large magical beast; HD 6d10+18; hp 51; Init +1; Spd 10 ft. (2 squares), swim 40 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural) touch 10, flatfooted 17; BAB/Grapple +6/+14; Atk Claw +9 melee (1d6+4); Full Atk 2 claws +9 melee (1d6+4) and bite +4 melee (1d8+2); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Rend +2d6+6; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., hold breath, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +8, Spot +7, Swim +12; Alertness, Endurance, Iron Will.

Hold Breath (Ex): A sea cat can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 6 x its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Rend (Ex): A sea cat that hits with both claw attacks latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This automatically deals an extra 2d6+6 points of damage.

Skills: A sea cat has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

ATL 7: 3 Advanced Sea Cats**ATL 5: 5 Advanced Sea Cats**

⚔ **Advanced Sea Cat (# varies):** CR 5; large magical beast; HD 9d10+27; hp 77; Init +1; Spd 10 ft. (2 squares), swim 40 ft.; AC 19 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +9 natural) touch 10, flatfooted 18; BAB/Grapple +9/+18; Atk Claw +13 melee (1d6+5); Full Atk 2 claws +13 melee (1d6+5) and bite +8 melee (1d8+3); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Rend +2d6+7; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., hold breath, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 20, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +9, Spot +9, Swim +12; Alertness, Endurance, Improved Natural Armor, Iron Will.

Hold Breath (Ex): A sea cat can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 6 × its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Rend (Ex): A sea cat that hits with both claw attacks latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This automatically deals an extra 2d6+6 points of damage.

Skills: A sea cat has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

ATL 11

⚔ **Very Advanced Sea Cat (5):** CR 7; huge magical beast; HD 12d10+36; hp 102; Init +1; Spd 10 ft. (2 squares), swim 40 ft.; AC 19 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural) touch 10, flatfooted 18; BAB/Grapple +11/+24; Atk Claw +15 melee (1d8+5); Full Atk 2 claws +15 melee (1d8+5) and bite +10 melee (2d6+3); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Rend +2d8+7; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., hold breath, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 20, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +10, Spot +9, Swim +14; Alertness, Endurance, Improved Natural Armor (x2), Iron Will.

Sea cats attack on sight, either for food or to defend their territory, and use both claws and teeth to grab and rend their prey. They display tremendous courage, always fighting to the death, even against creatures many times their size. Pairs and prides of sea cats attack in concert, trying to wear the opponent down until one beast can dispatch it.

Hold Breath (Ex): A sea cat can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 6 × its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Rend (Ex): A sea cat that hits with both claw attacks latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This automatically deals an extra 2d6+6 points of damage.

Skills: A sea cat has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Once the Sea Cats are killed or driven off:

Whatever ancient magic created the bizarre blending of fish and feline that attacked the sailors, the creatures no longer pose a threat, and the men hurry forward as quickly as the rough coral outcroppings allow.

The men are tall and muscular, their already lean bodies made more so by their recent ordeal. Even without the weathering caused by a life at sea, their complexions are a dark mahogany not found on natives of the Free Lands. All are marked with scrapes, scratches and other small injuries. Their relief at being rescued is obvious, and they quickly begin speaking, thanking you for your courage, asking where you are from, and requesting fresh water.

Any PCs getting close enough to the men to offer them water or tend to their small injuries will notice that each also has a tattoo encircling his left bicep. All of the tattoos are the same, each depicting a length of broken chain. The broken chain tattoos are taken from the emblem of the diplomatic mission, and signify the sailors' dedication to the cause. The men are typical natives of the desert kingdoms of the Cerrid, with mahogany skin, black hair and black eyes. All speak basic Common, though they do so with their notable native desert accents. They will identify themselves as Amon, the ship's third mate and leader of the group, Yasir, and Achem.

If the PCs have not yet revealed that they were hired by Tariq to rescue the ambassadors and if one of the PCs is openly wearing the amulet or displaying the silk provided by Tariq:

The piercing black gaze of the trio's leader turns abruptly to _____ (PC openly wearing the amulet or displaying the silk). With the fingertips of his right hand he touches his forehead, lips and chest, then bows slightly. "Surely the gods have guided you here, for we too serve the brethren. Pray let us discharge our duty, and aid you in their rescue."

Like the captain, the crew of the Pride's Quest was carefully selected for the mission, and each of the

sailors considers it a matter of personal and spiritual honor to see that the ambassadors safely reach Amthydor and that the diplomatic mission succeeds. Each man is under the effect of a *geas*, preventing him from revealing the true race of the ambassadors before the treaty with Amthydor is complete.

The PCs are certain to have questions for the rescued sailors.

➤ **What ship are you from?**

"Our vessel is the Pride's Quest, bound for Amthydor."

➤ **What happened to your ship?**

"The ship's rudder was damaged during a storm. The prevailing currents carried the Pride's Quest inland, along the coast. The captain put in to port in Jadenapur to make the necessary repairs. We were there for four days. Everything was routine. The passengers stayed on board, in their cabins, and the Captain and First Mate dealt with the authorities and arranged for supplies and assistance with repairs."

"We left at sunrise on the fifth day, and returned to our course. Late on the second day out from Jadenapur we were overtaken by a heavily armed ship and boarded. The attackers killed a third of the crew in the fighting. While they were rounding up the survivors we heard splashes, like some crewmen might have jumped overboard to escape. The passengers were held in their cabins under guard, while the crew was held in a cargo hold. After a couple of hours they herded half of us up onto the deck and pushed us overboard in groups as they sailed both ships back in the direction of Jadenapur."

"They threw seven of us overboard together. We floated and swam for days. Four of us made it here, but we were too exhausted to post a guard. The sea cats caught Ezor on the first night and dragged him screaming into the water. We saw them later pulling his body up onto another island to feed."

➤ **How long have you been here?**

“We’ve been on this islet for eight days, living on seaweed and mussels, and whatever fresh water gets trapped in pockets in the rock during the rains.”

➤ **What else can you tell us?**

“Some of the attackers looked familiar from the docks in Jadenpur.”

“One of the boarders referred to ‘additions to a collection’.”

“Two of the prisoners are children. One is Captain al-Sybar’s daughter. The other is the son of Ambassador Bashar.”

Isolated as they were from the passengers, and having been thrown overboard, they have no further information on what took place on board the Pride’s Quest.

Scattered on the tiny islets, among the bones of the sea cat’s previous victims, are gems worth a total of 50 gp per ATL. It is unlikely the PCs can take the time now to scrounge for treasure while innocent lives are at stake. If they try to do so (and the GM should not give hints that there might be treasure), it will take three full days of sailing. The captain of the Sea Lion will ask for a 10% bounty of all gems scavenged in this manner to make up for the time spent away from his paying jobs.

Once the PCs are ready to continue on to Jadenpur **GO TO Encounter 2b (Page 20).**

Encounter Two B – Fair Winds

Clear skies and steady winds are your companions as you continue on to Jadenpur. The remaining days pass quickly, and soon the flat horizon of the seemingly endless ocean is broken by the dark up thrust of land reaching skyward. No harbor patrol bars your entry to the city’s port, the first sign that this city will be nothing like orderly Amthydor.

With a minimum of formality the Sea Lion is cleared to dock, and your search for the missing ambassadors begins in earnest.

If the PCs look around the harbor for signs of the Pride’s Quest **GO TO Encounter 6 (Page 33).**

If the PCs go in search of suspected fence Lorne Tarkan **GO TO Encounter 7 (Page 39).**

If the PCs go in search of other sources of information **GO TO Encounter 8 (Page 41).**

Encounter Three – Over Hill, Over Dale

The overland journey to Jadenpur will take 10 days for a mounted party, making it the longest of the possible ways of reaching the city.

By your third day on the road there is little to break the monotony of the journey northward. Leaving behind the relative safety of Amthydor’s territorial limit, you find that other travelers become more infrequent, and towns and villages more remote. The hostels and barns that provided shelter for the first two nights of your journey are now absent, replaced by the roadside campsites often used by caravans making the journey between the great cities of the Free Lands.

The few foot travelers, lone mounted messengers and slow moving caravans also making use of the road have no news of interest to the PCs.

A dreary rain starting at dawn on the fourth day makes the Merry Manticore Inn and the small village of Brexton a welcome sight as the weak sun sets behind the mountains.

Continuing northward the next morning under cloudy skies, you encounter few travelers, and fewer signs of habitation. The roadside caravan rest stops provide little in the way of shelter, but firewood and fresh water are plentiful. After two more nights on the road, and a full day since you

have seen another traveler, the smell of wood smoke and the angry raised voices of several men call your attention to a small side trail and the group gathered in the middle of a circle of half a dozen small cottages.

It is midday on the PCs' 7th day of travel. The hamlet is 200 yards off the main road, requiring the PCs to detour slightly if they want to learn what is happening there. If the PCs look more closely, they can see that the men are armed with pitchforks, rakes and other simple farm implements as weapons. If the PCs do not stop to see what all of the excitement is about, allow them to continue on their journey and **GO TO Encounter 3b (Page 27).**

If the PCs go to investigate the hamlet:

No group of beginning adventurers could be as motley or ill prepared as the gathering at the center of the tiny hamlet. From the youngest lad of but ten summers to the gnarled grandfather with a wooden leg, they wear wooden slats strapped to their chests and legs in a feeble imitation of armor, and brandish wooden farm implements as weapons. They are so absorbed in whatever has drawn their anger that they show no interest in your approach, venting their ire and indignation in strident tones. Women and children peek out from the houses, flinching back at the words being spoken.

“How long before the beasts are no longer satisfied with our livestock? Will our children be next?”

“Will we starve this winter or next? Will we give up our homes, our livelihoods, all that we have built for ourselves, and turn to the cities?”

“They are too far away to protect us. We must protect ourselves!”

It is almost as if the men are trying to convince themselves that they are up to the challenge of taking on a superior foe and are trying to work themselves up for the charge (Sense Motive check, DC 10). Once the PCs enter the center of the village or take some obvious action to announce

their presence, the men will break off their heated discussion and turn to the newcomers. While not unfriendly, they do not exactly welcome the PCs with open arms.

If the PCs try to determine what all of the excitement is about, the farmers will answer their questions as briefly as possible, clearly not expecting ‘foreigners’ to be genuinely interested in helping. Their attitude will change radically if the PCs offer to help vanquish the beasts that are killing the livestock, particularly if the PCs point out that there will be no one to care for the men’s families if they are killed.

➤ What happened?

“Critters killing our stock. We need those animals to feed our families, so we’re going to get rid of those monsters!”

➤ How many animals have been killed?

“Four ewes, two goats, two kids and three lambs.”

The stock had a market value of 18 gp, if the PCs are interested in helping the farmers to replace the dead animals. :-D

➤ How long have the attacks been taking place?

“Ten days.”

➤ What do you think is killing your livestock?

“Griffons! Great big flying beasties with no respect for what good people have worked to build. We’ve seen them flying about in the direction of the mountains.”

There really are griffons in the area, but they are not responsible for the dead livestock. The direction indicated by the farmers indeed leads to the nearby mountains, where both the griffons and the real culprits make their lairs.

➤ Where did the attacks happen?

“Most occurred while the stock were in the fields. Last night three lambs were killed in the barn.”

Shepherds watching over the stock in the fields saw and heard nothing.

➤ **Can we see where the animals were killed?**

“Yes.”

The farmers will give the PCs clear directions to the small pasture where the first three attacks took place, and will show them the small communal barn where the lambs were killed the previous night. In both locations PCs that succeed at a Survival skill check (DC 10) will note the presence of multiple sets of catlike paw prints and be able to follow them. If they follow the tracks, the heroes will learn that the prints are actually those of young adult cheetahs, not the much larger griffons that the farmers suspect of killing the stock.

If the PCs go to the aid of the villagers and investigate the livestock attacks **GO TO Encounter 3a (Page 22).**

If the PCs ignore the villagers’ request for assistance and continue on to Jadenspur **GO TO Encounter 3b (Page 27).**

Encounter Three A – On the Wings of Eagles

The PCs should be badly outmatched at most ATLs, and while stats are provided below if necessary, actual combat should not occur in this encounter. The gynosphinx are traveling south from their home in the desert commonly called the Sea of Fire, drawn to the area around Amthydor by persistent visions similar to those experienced by the PCs. They paused here to rest four days ago, and encountered the young cheetahs that were the pets of the Tabreen ambassador. The cheetahs escaped when the Pride’s Quest was returned to port after the attack. Each of the six cats wears a gold collar with the same two-headed emblem as the diplomatic delegation. The gynosphinx have no interest in fighting or harming the PCs unless the heroes force the issue. They are just looking out for the six young cheetahs that smell of ‘not-men’ and bear the symbol from their visions.

The sparse tracks of the creatures responsible for the livestock killings lead into the forested and rocky foothills of the nearby mountains. From tracks and bits of fur to the scrape of claws on trees the signs of local predators are everywhere, but none match the tracks found in and around the barn and pasture.

Bears, wolves, fox and lynx all hunt and make their dens in the area, but they will avoid both the PCs and the rocky valley where the gynosphinx have taken a break on their journey towards Amthydor.

After nearly two hours of tracking the elusive hunters, the object of your search is abruptly in front of you. Or is it? The bizarre creature reclining on an outcropping of sun-warmed rock at the far end of the glade resembles a great winged lion, a lion with the head of a human woman.

The creature is a gynosphinx. Additional gynosphinx are present per ATL, resting at varying distances beyond the primary creature. PCs that played LSJ 19: The Ties That Bind will recognize the creature without a Knowledge (arcana) check.

Be aware of which PC has the amulet and cloth provided by Tariq, and if the PC is displaying the items openly during this encounter.

The tracks you have been following lead directly into the clearing and towards the resting creature, though she is clearly too large to have made them herself.

Nonchalantly inspecting the claws of one large leonine paw, she surveys you from her lofty perch.

“You have the look of men, but your scent is of another. What manner of creatures are you?”

She uses the term ‘men’ only in the basic sense, and refers to the scent of the Lupaari that is on the items given to the PCs by Tariq, though it is doubtful that they realize this. If they do not

answer right away, or claim to be exactly what they are (human, dwarf, elf, etc) she will continue.

“Is it the custom of all children of men to intrude upon another’s rest uninvited?”

She is not really angry, just mildly annoyed, and slightly curious why a group of armed travelers would intrude on this isolated glade. She will wait for the PCs to explain themselves before taking any further actions.

Most likely the PCs will start with an explanation that they are looking for who or what killed the farmers’ stock. If none of the PCs are openly wearing the amulet and if they make no mention of their search for the ambassadors, have each PC make a Bluff skill check opposed by her Sense Motive skill. Once the heroes have given some excuse for their presence she will consider for a moment before responding.

“What exactly do you plan to do with the guilty party when you find him...or her?”

The worst thing that the PCs can say here is that they intend to kill the guilty creature. If they are foolish enough to declare such as their intention:

“Clearly some animals walk upon two legs, for they know only the mindless spilling of blood. You will find no answers here and no aid in your Quest.”

If the PCs refuse to deal politely with the gynosphinx, the creatures will not permit them to pass through the clearing and will not reveal the presence of the cheetahs, forcing the heroes to return to the village without having solved the farmers’ problem and without having gained any assistance in the search for the missing ambassadors. If the PCs initiate violence, the gynosphinx will reply in kind.

If the PCs claim to seek a more peaceful resolution to the problem of the slaughtered livestock:

She seems to ponder for a moment before speaking. “Before you continue on your Quest there is the small matter of reparations for your unwelcome intrusion here. Answer a single Question of my choosing, to my satisfaction, and you may leave here unharmed. If your answer pleases me I may even aid in your search. Do you agree?”

She has no intention of harming the PCs, regardless of whether or not they answer her riddle, unless they make an effort to harm her first, but they do not know that yet.

Once the PCs agree to answer her question:

She rises to her feet, slowly fanning her wings and stretching before circling on her rocky perch and settling once again to recline in the sun.

Provide the players with **Player Handout #3 – Riddle Me This (Page 59)** after reading the following:

“Ambrose VI, a king known by all to be learned and wise, had but one daughter, Princess Andrina, to bequeath his rich kingdom to upon his death. The land had lived in peace for many years, and the king was on good terms with the four neighboring kingdoms. Each of his neighboring monarchs had a son, four strong and handsome princes raised to rule. Each of the four had sought the fair Andrina’s hand. Wanting to be certain that his lands were wisely governed after his death, yet not wanting to offend three of his neighbors by choosing one above the others, King Ambrose VI considered for many days. All had been trained to rule wisely and well, but which one was the best choice, and how to choose from among them?”

“Summoning his beloved Andrina to his side, he questioned her at length regarding her opinion and feelings for each of the princes. All were fair of face, strong of arm and benevolent of heart. All had known each other since they were small children, playing under the watchful eye of governesses and nurses while their fathers conducted diplomatic meetings and negotiated

trade agreements. She favored one no more or less than the others, and believed that she could accept any of them as her husband and co-ruler.

“Still uncertain of how to proceed, King Ambrose called for his favorite stallion and rode out from his castle in the hope that the sight of his demesne would inspire a solution. As he rode through the villages, farms and fields, visiting with his subjects and pondering his decision, King Ambrose at last knew what he must do to secure the future of his kingdom and good relations with his neighbors.

“Returning to his palace, King Ambrose declared a horse race to be held on midsummer’s day, to determine which of the four suitors would claim Andrina’s hand, and the kingdom, following the king’s death. As the contenders arrived, each with the prize mounts of their kingdoms’ stables; King Ambrose announced the official conditions of the race. The contenders would begin five miles from the palace, in the center of a stone bridge spanning a deep river. They would follow the main road through the riverside town, past fields and farms, through the capital city and end at the palace gates. The winning suitor would be the man whose horse was the last to cross the finish line.

“The four princes considered this as they rode together to the starting line. Prince Dennon spoke first, seated high upon his bay stallion. ‘If the winner is to be the man whose horse arrives last, this race will never end. None of us will ever leave the starting line.’

Considering this argument as his chestnut mare pranced beneath him, Prince Eamon replied. ‘Each of us wishes to marry Princess Andrina, and unite this kingdom with our own. None of us will ride ahead and concede in favor of the others.’

Prince Marc, astride his pale grey steed, agreed. ‘To win, we must lose. King Ambrose seeks to test us still.’

Prince Rhys quietly weighs the words of his

fellows, deftly controlling his night-black mount. ‘Here is what I think we should do...’

“Leaving their mounts in the hands of their squires, the four gathered to speak for several moments in hushed tones, watched from a short distance away by the king’s now-confused herald and the gathered spectators. Hearing the plan, the contenders quickly agreed. Returning to the starting line, each again climbed into the saddle and, positioning themselves at the center of the bridge, they waited for the king’s herald to signal the beginning of the race. With a rippling fanfare the signal was given and the race was on, with each young man urging his mount forward with hand, leg and voice!

“All along the course King Ambrose’s subjects cheered on their personal favorites. Each man rode as if his very life depended upon the race’s outcome. First one then another took the lead, jockeying for position in the knot of racers. The cheering grew louder as the suitors flashed through the open gates of the city and surged through the streets bound for the palace. In a blur of flashing hooves and flying manes and tails they hurtled across the finish line – Grey, chestnut, bay and black. The engagement was immediately announced, and the wedding planned for the first glorious day of spring, as the victorious prince triumphantly embraced his future bride.

“What was Prince Rhys’ suggestion?”

Prince Rhys suggested that the four change horses, each riding the mount belonging to one of his rivals. Each rider would then try to win, in the hopes that his own horse would come in last. Not only did he win the hand of Princess Andrina, he proved to King Ambrose that he was the wisest and cleverest of the four.

If the PCs fail to answer the riddle, they may instead offer a payment of 100 gp per ATL for the sphinx’ assistance.

Call for a DC 15 Diplomacy check from the party as a whole, with the following modifiers:

The PCs correctly answered the riddle +5

The PCs made an offering of gold or other valuables instead of answering the riddle: +1

One or more PCs lied unsuccessfully about why they were in the clearing: -2

The PCs mention that they intend to harm or kill the creature responsible for killing the livestock: -5

The PCs mention that they are looking for the missing ambassadors: +2

A PC is openly wearing the amulet or displaying the cloth: +5

The PCs mention their visions or Divinations: +2

If the PCs fail the Diplomacy check they may retry after 10 minutes, though the DC increases by 2.

Once the PCs succeed at the *Diplomacy* check:

The sphinx glances briefly over her shoulder, then settles her wings primly along her back and flexes her clawed forepaws.

“I believe that I may know of the creatures that you are tracking, though I cannot permit you to offer them any harm. One does not punish an animal for doing what it was designed to do.”

As she speaks, several long-bodied feline forms creep forward and crouch down around her. With deep chests and long, graceful legs, the cats seem built for running, and their tawny spotted coats are the perfect color for hiding in tall grass. A golden collar encircles each cat’s neck, a collar bearing the same symbol you have seen so many times already.

“Like any hunter, these must hunt. It is what they do, and they must not be punished for it. But these are young, and ill-prepared for life in the

wild.”

“You are adventurers. It is what you do. You also carry the same scent of not-men as the young hunters, but the scent is not your own. Return these safely to their companions, and you will have the rewards that you crave.”

“I know not where to find those who these hunters call master, but you are far more suited than we to take them in your charge and find their keepers.”

The sphinx cannot explain ‘not-men’ other than to say that it is not the PCs. The sphinx will offer the party a reward in fine gems worth 50 gp per ATL for returning the six young cheetahs safely to where they belong...which in this case means either the ambassadors or Tariq.

The sphinx cannot communicate directly with the young cheetahs, and knows only that they were already in the glade when the sphinx arrived four days ago. If the PCs use one of the *potions of speak with animals* provided by Tariq they can learn the following information directly from the young cheetahs.

- They had been traveling on a ship. The ship was attacked and many people were captured or killed, but the attackers did not eat the dead like real hunters.
- When the ship came to land again they escaped and tried to find the scent of their people, but the rains had washed away all sign of them.
- They traveled for two days, seeking food and their people, before they came to this place where they found the stupid animals (sheep and goats) that did not run away.
- Like any animal, the cheetahs do not have a concept of ‘race’ other than ‘men’, ‘animals’, ‘hunters’ and ‘prey’. They cannot tell the PCs what the Lupaari and Tabreen are.

The cheetahs will agree to accompany the PCs in search of the missing ambassadors, though they

will not engage in any combat. Controlling the cheetahs requires a Handle Animal skill check (DC 10). They are natural hunters, but are not trained for combat against humanoids and will avoid any fighting. The cheetahs have been trained to perform the commands *attack*, *down*, *fetch*, *heel* and *seek*. Stats for the animals are provided for PC reference in **Player Handout #4 (Page 60)**.

Should the PCs force a combat with the gynosphinx, the creatures are well prepared to engage the upstart heroes. Each gynosphinx has prepared a *symbol* scribed onto an amulet. Each *symbol* is triggered if looked at by a humanoid creature within 60 ft. If seriously threatened, the gynosphinx will display the amulet, resulting in the *symbol* being triggered as soon as any PC within 60 ft looks at it. The *symbol* cast varies by ATL.

If the PCs fail three Diplomacy checks the creatures will not permit them to pass through the clearing and will not reveal the presence of the cheetahs, forcing the heroes to return to the village without having solved the farmers' problem and without having gained any assistance in the search for the missing ambassadors.

In close combat, gynosphinxes use their powerful claws to flay the flesh from their enemies. Despite their deadly nature, they prefer to avoid combat whenever possible.

ATL 1

† **Gynosphinx (1)**: CR 8; large magical beast; HD 8d10+8; hp 52; Init +5; Spd 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 21 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +11 natural) touch 10, flatfooted 20; BAB/Grapple +8/+16; Atk Claw +11 melee (1d6+4); Full Atk 2 claws +11 melee (1d6+4); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Pounce, rake 1d6+2, spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 19.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +15, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Intimidate +13, Listen +17, Sense Motive +15, Spot +17; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

Pounce (Ex): If a sphinx charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): A sphinx that pounces onto a creature can make two rake attacks with its hind legs. Attack bonus +11 melee, damage 1d6+2.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day: *clairaudience/clairvoyance, detect magic, read magic, see invisibility*; 1/day: *comprehend languages, locate object, dispel magic, remove curse* (DC 18), *legend lore*. Caster level 14th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Once per week a gynosphinx can create a *symbol of death*, a *symbol of fear*, a *symbol of insanity*, a *symbol of pain*, a *symbol of persuasion*, a *symbol of sleep*, and a *symbol of stunning* as the spells (caster level 18th), except that all save DCs are 22 and each symbol remains a maximum of one week once scribed. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Symbol of Sleep

ATL 3

† **Gynosphinx (2), Symbol of Fear**

ATL 5

† **Gynosphinx (3), Symbol of Fear**

ATL 7

† **Gynosphinx (4), Symbol of Weakness**

ATL 9

† **Gynosphinx (5), Symbol of Weakness**

ATL 11

† **Gynosphinx (6), Symbol of Death**

If the PCs are defeated in combat, the gynosphinx will not raid the bodies, but will leave them and their equipment to be found and returned to Amthydor. Consider the mission a failure and **GO TO Epilogue C (page 52)**.

Otherwise the PCs are ready to continue on to Jadenspur. **GO TO Encounter 3b (Page 27)**.

Encounter Three B – On the Road Again

Blue skies and firm roads are your companions as you continue on to Jadenpur. The remaining days pass quickly, and soon the walls of Jadenpur rise above the surrounding farms and fields. The city watch gives you only the most cursory inspection as you pass through the gates; the first sign that this city will be nothing like orderly Amthydor.

There is no familiar order to the architecture, no rhyme or reason to the streets and districts, but here your search for the missing ambassadors begins in earnest.

If the PCs investigate the harbor for signs of the Pride's Quest **GO TO Encounter 6 (Page 33).**

If the PCs go in search of suspected fence Lorne Tarkan **GO TO Encounter 7 (Page 39).**

If the PCs go in search of other sources of information **GO TO Encounter 8 (Page 41).**

Encounter Four – Winds of Change

The amount of time needed to travel the 300 miles to Jadenpur by air will vary according to flying speed: 5 days at base speed 60', 4 days at base speed 80', 3½ days at base speed 100', 3 days at base speed 120', etc. Speed in feet equates approximately to miles per 8-hour travel day. In most cases the PCs will need to fly close to or over land, in order to be able to stop and rest at night.

PCs unable to fly the entire distance may need to complete the trip via a land route (Encounter Three), but will only experience the events of that Encounter if they have traveled less than 25% of the distance via air and have not yet encountered the griffons.

The orderly lines of Amthydor's streets fall away behind you as rise into the skies. The land below

rages past, with few travelers taking note of your passage high above.

Miles and hours pass as you cross the invisible boundary of Amthydor's territorial limit and continue over the unaffiliated regions of the Free Lands.

There is little to break the monotony of your journey except for a few curious birds winging close, swooping in then soaring away.

The PCs will encounter the griffons approximately 25% of the way to Jadenpur. Depending upon the speed at which they are flying, this could occur late on the first day or sometime on the second day.

One flock of birds seems intent not on you, but on a larger winged form. They circle it, darting in close then shooting away. Abruptly the smaller creatures rush together, mobbing their larger victim and driving it from the sky. The wounded flyer staggers in the air, falling ground-ward in an awkward crippled spiral as its attackers arrow away into the distance.

The harpies have attacked the griffon at such a distance that to the PCs they appear at first to be little more than large birds. Only if the PCs follow the wounded griffon to ground will they be able to learn the truth of the attack.

If the PCs follow the wounded griffon:

Following the rapidly descending form, you rush ground-ward towards the rocky hillside where the creature set down. As you descend and the rocks and trees beneath you grow larger, so does the wounded bird, resolving into the form something much larger and more dangerous.

Sorely wounded and trailing one mangled wing, the griffon glares balefully at you, challenging you to approach it even in this weakened state.

The griffon is seriously wounded and is in no condition to take on even an ATL 1 party. It has only 5 of its original 59 hit points. One wing is broken, there are two arrows embedded in her right

hindquarter, she has a deep wound to the chest and a severe cut to the left foreleg. While the griffon cannot speak the language, she does understand Common. Approaching the griffon and convincing it that the PCs mean no harm requires a successful Diplomacy skill check (DC 15).

Once the PCs have befriended the griffon they can attempt to tend to its wounds. PCs examining the arrows used on the griffon and succeeding at a Knowledge (arcana or nature) skill check (DC 17) reveals that the dark, ragged arrow is of the type commonly used by harpies.

The PCs may use one a tongues spell to speak with the griffon (since it is a magical beast, the *potions of speak with animals* will not work on it), or they can depend upon simple ‘yes’ and ‘no’ questions to learn what happened to the griffon.

While her mate left to hunt, the female griffon remained behind with their nest of 3 eggs. While one group of harpies staged an attack to draw her away from the nest, another group raided the nest and removed one of the precious eggs. The group that attacked her consisted of at least twelve of the creatures. She is now too badly injured to fly, and even if healed by the PCs will not leave her remaining eggs. The eggs are nearly ready to hatch, and she is afraid of what will happen to her stolen baby at the hands of the foul harpies.

If the PCs are willing to attempt to rescue her egg she will point them in the direction of the harpies’ nest.

At ATLs 1 & 3 she will also provide the PCs with a waxy substance to put in their ears to protect them from the harpies’ song. PCs using the substance suffer the effect of being *deafened* until the wax is removed. PCs who are *deafened* suffer a –4 penalty to Initiative checks, automatically fail Listen checks, and suffer a 20% chance of spell failure on spells with a verbal component.

If the PCs attempt to help the griffons **GO TO Encounter 4a (Page 28).**

If the PCs ignore the griffons’ request for help and continue on to Jadenspur **GO TO Encounter 4b (Page 34).**

Encounter Four A– Not-So-Fine Feathered Friends

Following the trail pointed out by the female griffon, you make your way in the direction of the coast. The odor of stagnant marsh begins to intrude on the fresh scent of the sea breeze.

The path quickly fades to little more than a faint trace that squelches beneath your feet as you wind between gnarled trees and hummocks of coarse marsh grasses.

Wise PCs will send a scout ahead to check out the area where the harpies nest. Many of the harpies are out looking for food for the soon-to-be-hatched griffon, which the harpies plan to raise for their own twisted purposes, leaving on a number of harpies per ATL to guard the nest and the egg. The PCs should defeat the guards and recover the egg quickly, as hatching is imminent and the harpies will soon return.

The small sounds of the marsh grow silent, stilled by another, more malevolent, presence.

Roll opposed Listen and Spot checks if the PCs are attempting to sneak up on the harpies.

Once the PCs approach:

The creatures have made their nests among the twisted trees of the marsh and cairns of piled rocks decorated with the stark white bones of previous victims.

The cairn where one of the harpies is sitting on the egg is located at the center of the group (See **GM Aid # 5** for the map). Other harpies as present per ATL will start on the cairns between the egg and the PCs.

The ground is swampy and uneven, making it impossible to charge and reducing the PCs' movement by 25%.

Harpies like to entrance hapless travelers with their magical songs and lead them to unspeakable torments. Only when a harpy has finished playing with its new "toys" will it release them from suffering by killing and consuming them.

When a harpy engages in battle, it prefers to use Flyby Attack and strike with a melee weapon.

| |
|-------------------------|
| ATL 1: 1 Harpy |
| ATL 3: 2 Harpies |
| ATL 5: 5 Harpies |

⚔ Harpy: CR 4; medium monstrous humanoid; HD 7d8; hp 31; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 80 ft. (average); AC 13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural) touch 12, flatfooted 11; BAB/Grapple +7/+7; Atk Club +7 melee (1d6); Full Atk Club +7/+2 melee (1d6) and 2 claws +2 melee (1d3); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Captivating song; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Intimidate +7, Listen +7, Perform (oratory) +5, Spot +3; Dodge, Flyby Attack, Persuasive.

Captivating Song (Su): The most insidious ability of the harpy is its song. When a harpy sings, all creatures (other than harpies) within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or become captivated. This is a sonic mind-affecting charm effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same harpy's song for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A captivated victim walks toward the harpy, taking the most direct route available. If the path leads into a dangerous area (through flame, off a cliff, or the like), that creature gets a second saving throw. Captivated creatures can take no actions other than to defend themselves. (Thus, a fighter cannot run away or attack but takes no defensive penalties.) A victim within 5 feet of the harpy stands there and offers no resistance to the monster's attacks. The effect continues for as long as the harpy sings and for 1 round thereafter. A bard's countersong ability allows the captivated creature to attempt a new Will save.

Skills: Harpies have a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Listen checks.

ATL 7

⚔ **Harpy Archers, 3rd-level Fighters (5):** CR 7; medium monstrous humanoid; HD 7d8+3d10+10; hp 58; Init +4; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 80 ft. (average); AC 18 (+4 Dex, +1 natural, +3 studded leather) touch 14, flatfooted 14; BAB/Grapple +10/+11; Atk Composite longbow (+1 Str bonus) +15 ranged (1d8+1/×3) or claw +11 melee (1d3+1); Full Atk: Composite longbow (+1 Str bonus) +15/+10 ranged (1d8+1/×3) or rapid shot composite longbow (+1 Str bonus) +13/+13/+8 ranged (1d8+1/×3) or 2 claws +11 melee (1d3+1); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Captivating song; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Intimidate +10, Listen +8, Perform (oratory) +5, Spot +4; Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (composite longbow).

Captivating Song (Su): The most insidious ability of the harpy is its song. When a harpy sings, all creatures (other than harpies) within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or become captivated. This is a sonic mind-affecting charm effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same harpy's song for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A captivated victim walks toward the harpy, taking the most direct route available. If the path leads into a dangerous area (through flame, off a cliff, or the like), that creature gets a second saving throw. Captivated creatures can take no actions other than to defend themselves. (Thus, a fighter cannot run away or attack but takes no defensive penalties.) A victim within 5 feet of the harpy stands there and offers no resistance to the monster's attacks. The effect continues for as long as the harpy sings and for 1 round thereafter. A bard's countersong ability allows the captivated creature to attempt a new Will save.

Skills: Harpies have a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Listen checks.

ATL 9

⚔ **Harpy Archers, 5th-level Fighters (6):** CR 9; medium monstrous humanoid; HD 7d8+5d10+15; hp 74; Init +4; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 80 ft. (average); AC 18 (+4 Dex, +1 natural, +3 studded leather) touch 14, flatfooted 14; BAB/Grapple +12/+13; Atk Composite longbow (+1 Str bonus) +17 ranged (1d8+3/×3) or claw +13 melee (1d3+1); Full Atk: Composite longbow (+1 Str bonus) +17/+12/+7 ranged (1d8+3/×3) or rapid shot composite longbow (+1 Str bonus) +15//+15/+10/+5 ranged (1d8+3/×3) or 2 claws +13 melee (1d3+1); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Captivating song; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Intimidate +12, Listen +8, Perform (oratory) +6, Spot +4; Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Specialization (composite longbow).

Captivating Song (Su): The most insidious ability of the harpy is its song. When a harpy sings, all creatures (other than harpies) within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 20 Will save or become captivated. This is a sonic mind-affecting charm effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same harpy's song for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A captivated victim walks toward the harpy, taking the most direct route available. If the path leads into a dangerous area (through flame, off a cliff, or the like), that creature gets a second saving throw. Captivated creatures can take no actions other than to defend themselves. (Thus, a fighter cannot run away or attack but takes no defensive penalties.) A victim within 5 feet of the harpy stands there and offers no resistance to the monster's attacks. The effect continues for as long as the harpy sings and for 1 round thereafter. A bard's countersong ability allows the captivated creature to attempt a new Will save.

Skills: Harpies have a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Listen checks.

ATL 11

⚔ Harpy Archers, 8th-level Fighters (6): CR 12; medium monstrous humanoid; HD 7d8+8d10+18; hp 93; Init +4; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 80 ft. (average); AC 18 (+4 Dex, +1 natural, +3 studded leather) touch 14, flatfooted 14; BAB/Grapple +15/+16; Atk Composite longbow (+1 Str bonus) +20 ranged (1d8+3/×3) or manyshot composite longbow (+1 Str bonus) +14 ranged (3d8+9/×3) or claw +16 melee (1d3+1); Full Atk: Composite longbow (+1 Str bonus) +20/+15/+10 ranged (1d8+3/×3) or rapid shot composite longbow (+1 Str bonus) +18/+18/+13/+8 ranged (1d8+3/×3) or 2 claws +16 melee (1d3+1); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Captivating song; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 18.

Skills: Harpies have a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Listen checks.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Intimidate +13, Listen +8, Perform (oratory) +6, Spot +5; Dodge, Far Shot, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Specialization (composite longbow).

Captivating Song (Su): The most insidious ability of the harpy is its song. When a harpy sings, all creatures (other than harpies) within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 21 Will save or become captivated. This is a sonic mind-affecting charm effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same harpy's song for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A captivated victim walks toward the harpy, taking the most direct route available. If the path leads into a dangerous area (through flame, off a cliff, or the like), that creature gets a second saving throw. Captivated creatures can take no actions other than to defend themselves. (Thus, a fighter cannot run away or attack but takes no defensive penalties.) A victim within 5 feet of the harpy stands there and offers no resistance to the monster's attacks. The effect continues for as long as the harpy sings and for 1 round thereafter. A bard's countersong ability allows the captivated creature to attempt a new Will save.

With the defeat of the harpies, new sounds reach your ears...not just the faint tapping of a small beak working to escape its shell, but the cries of a raptor and the battering of its wings against the bars of a crude wooden cage.

Once the harpies are defeated the PCs can easily reach the egg. It is nearly ready to hatch, and a faint tapping can be heard coming from inside as the hatchling begins to work its way out.

The bird is a desert hawk, nearly identical to Tariq's companion. The bird wears a tiny gold band on its right leg. The band is engraved with the now familiar emblem of two heads back to back in profile.

If the PCs are able to *speak with animals*, either through their own means or using the potion provided by Tariq, the bird can convey the following information.

- It was flying above the ship it was traveling with when the vessel was attacked. It continued to follow the ship as it returned to the large city-nest where they had been before (Jadenspur).
- Its chosen person left the ship with others and entered a large stone nest (building). The bird waited for many days, but its person did not come out.
- After several days it could not sense its person within the stone nest anymore. It waited two more days, then flew in search of a trusted one (Tariq). It was traveling south when the harpies captured it. It has been in the cage for four days.

When you return to the griffons, the mother carefully takes the egg from you and places it back in the nest. She fixes you with a piercing gaze, drops a small leather bundle at your feet, and with a nod of her head returns to the nest, where all three eggs are rocking violently as the young griffons struggle to enter the world.

The griffons are done with the PCs, not out of rudeness, but because there is nothing more important to them than their hatching young. The small leather pouch contains gems worth a total of 50 gp per ATL.

When the PCs are ready to continue on to Jadenspur **GO TO Encounter 4b (Page 32).**

Encounter Four B – A Wing and a Prayer

Blue skies and gentle breezes are your companions as you continue on to Jadenspur. The remaining miles pass quickly beneath you, and soon the walls of Jadenspur rise above the surrounding farms and fields, reaching skyward. Roofs of every color spread out across the city, a random and mismatched tapestry; the first sign that this city will be nothing like orderly Amthydor.

There is no familiar order to the architecture, no rhyme or reason to the streets and districts, but here your search for the missing ambassadors begins in earnest.

If the PCs investigate the harbor for signs of the Pride's Quest **GO TO Encounter 6 (Page 33).**

If the PCs go in search of suspected fence Lorne Tarkan **GO TO Encounter 7 (Page 39).**

If the PCs go in search of other sources of information **GO TO Encounter 8 (Page 41).**

Encounter Five – Through the Looking Glass

Higher level adventuring parties may have the means to transport themselves instantaneously between Amthydor and Jadenspur, or purchase a spell for that purpose from an NPC caster. Such parties may make their way to the port or other location of interest once they arrive. Parties able to traverse only part of the distance in this manner

will have to continue on another way, most likely over land (**Encounter 3, Page 21**) or by air (**Encounter 4, Page 27**). Modify the boxed text for these encounters as necessary.

Presumably PCs traveling in this manner will attempt to arrive discreetly, rather than popping out of thin air in the middle of a busy marketplace.

The League of Thaumaturgical Study maintains detailed and accurate full color paintings of Raia's major cities. For a fee of 100 gp the PCs may view the paintings of Jadenspur to establish their destination for spells such as *teleport*. These paintings are of sufficient quality and accuracy to allow the PCs to arrive in the location desired. The PCs may choose from three destinations – Just outside the main gate, an exclusive park in a wealthy section of town, or the roof of a popular inn and tavern.

The faces crowding the streets of Jadenspur are not unlike those in Amthydor, though they seem perhaps less purposeful and more hectic. The architecture is as varied as the faces, with no rhyme or reason to the buildings or streets. Clearly this city will be nothing like orderly Amthydor, but here your search for the missing ambassadors begins in earnest.

If the PCs look around the harbor for signs of the Pride's Quest **GO TO Encounter 6 (Page 33).**

If the PCs go in search of suspected fence Lorne Tarkan **GO TO Encounter 7 (Page 39).**

If the PCs go in search of other sources of information **GO TO Encounter 8 (Page 41).**

Encounter Six – A Ship By Any Other Name

This encounter should be fairly brief provided that the PCs have taken advantage of opportunities presented in earlier encounters.

Dozens of ships are tied securely to Jadenspur's many piers, while more ride gently on the waters of the harbor. None display the flag of the diplomatic mission: the two heads, a mastiff and a lioness, back to back in profile, over a length of broken chain. There are large ships, ships with three masts, and ships with figureheads, but none bear the name Pride's Quest.

The refit of the Pride's Quest has already begun. The name has been painted over and covered with a blank board and the figurehead has been removed, though paler wood at the bow of the ship shows where it once was.

If the PCs have rescued the sailors (Encounter 2a), the cheetahs (Encounter 3a) or the ambassador's hawk (Encounter 4a) then these NPCs can easily point out the Pride's Quest, in spite of the modifications that have already been made. The sailors will simply tell the heroes, the bird will circle the masts and the cheetahs will stare pointedly at the ship, and act as if they want to jump off the end of the dock and swim out to it.

If the PCs ignored the opportunity presented in the sub-encounter for their track and did not rescue the sailors (Encounter 2a), the cheetahs (Encounter 3a) or the ambassador's hawk (Encounter 4a), then they can determine which vessel is the Pride's Quest through a process of elimination and some careful deduction.

If the PCs do not have a way of immediately identifying the Pride's Quest:

Of all the many ships bobbing gently on the waters of the harbor, only eight are large enough to be the missing diplomatic vessel. Three of those sport four towering masts, narrowing your search to five, if the ship is here at all.

The five ships that the PCs can investigate are detailed below and in **Player Handout #5 (Page 61)**. None of the captains or crews will have much time to spare for the PCs, not because they have anything to hide (except one), but because they are each busy getting their ships ready to sail.

Vessel # 1, Pier 1 Slip 4

An engraved wooden plank across the stern proclaims the name of the ship to be the Wind Dancer. Crewmen work to remove the largest of a trio of pale blue sails from the central mast, a large tear apparent in the fabric.

The name plank is weathered the same faded brownish grey as the rest of the ship, and the sail is a lighter blue than that of the missing vessel. The PCs will be permitted to board the ship and speak with the captain, but they will not be permitted to search it. The captain can produce logs showing that the ship has traveled between Jadenspur and the Sianmar continent for the past eight years, and that it was more than ten days travel away from Jadenspur when the Pride's Quest was attacked. This is not the Pride's Quest.

Vessel # 2, Pier 3, Slip 3

Fresh paint and pristine white sails adorn the ship whose stern proclaims her name to be the Calypso and a bright green dragon with polished pearlescent eyes graces the prow. Crewmen and workers delivering supplies form a constant stream of people and materials making their way up the gangplank.

This ship has just been completely refurbished, from the figurehead to the lanterns along the rail. The PCs will be allowed on board as far as the top of the gangplank, where the captain will speak with them. Unknown to the captain and crew of the Calypso, the figurehead is from the Pride's Quest. The captain purchased it from the Venturers' Supply & Exchange (a front for fence Lorne Tarkan) to replace a mermaid figurehead damaged in a pirate attack. The captain has no knowledge of any illegal activity. The ship was in dry dock at the time of the attack on the Pride's Quest. This is not the Pride's Quest.

Vessel # 3, Pier 6 Slip 1

Bright blue sails are carefully furled on the masts of the Gerald Fitzedmund. A newly carved and painted sign across the stern proclaims the vessel's name, and the newly polished wood of her deck gleams in the sun. A crewman sits

carefully balanced on a plank, suspended from the railing above, humming to himself as he paints the ship's name along the bow.

The captain will speak to the PCs on the dock, as he arrives from the Harbor Master's office at the same time the PCs are requesting permission to board. The ship's sails were purchased from the Venturers' Supply & Exchange (a front for fence Lorne Tarkan) after the sails originally ordered failed to arrive. The captain has no knowledge of any illegal activity. The ship was still under construction when the Pride's Quest was attacked. This is not the Pride's Quest.

Vessel # 4, Pier 8 Slip 2

Stern faced uniformed crewmen walk the decks of the Tamar Maru. Her figurehead is a larger version of the ship's flag, a rearing nightmare with fiery red eyes. Everything about the vessel speaks of military precision, and encourages passersby not to linger.

There are no non-humans among the crew of the Tamar Maru. The ship is part of an official delegation from the Thyrgol Confederacy, a nation that staunchly believes in the superiority of humans over demihumans. The PCs will not be able to board the ship, and the captain will not waste his time speaking with them. The ship has been in port for three days. It was en route from Thyrgol to Jadenspur when the Pride's Quest was attacked. This is not the Pride's Quest.

Vessel # 5, At Anchor

No name adorns the stern, though Whydah has been carefully painted in bold letters along the bow. The vessel bobs lightly at anchor in the harbor, unable to find room among the crowded piers. Two crewmen hang suspended by ropes from above, working to affix a figurehead of a seahorse being held in place by several other crewmen on the main deck.

The only way to reach the Whydah is to swim or procure a rowboat from the docks. If the PCs did not think to keep the dinghy from the Sea Lion then rowboats can be rented for 5 gp each for the

trip out into the middle of the harbor. The rowboat holds eight medium humanoids. If the players ask, paler areas of wood around where the new figurehead is attached indicate that something else was previously there. The PCs can either approach the ship openly in daylight, requesting to board, or they can attempt to sneak aboard after dark. Particularly daring or well-equipped parties may be able to gain daylight access unnoticed by swimming to the ship and sending an *invisible* PC aboard.

If the PCs approach openly in daylight and request to board, the crew will lower a rope ladder and the captain will meet the PCs as they climb up. He has little time to spare, but will take a few brief moments to speak with the heroes. He is a privateer in service to Jadenspur, hunting pirates. His own ship, the *Venger*, was sunk in a battle with the *Whydah*, which his crew seized during the fighting and has now claimed as prize. He will not allow a search of the ship, as his crew is busy re-outfitting the vessel for its new anti-piracy duties and the PCs would be in the way. The heroes have no authority to demand to search, and the captain will not be intimidated. If the PCs attempt to force a search then combat will begin. The ship is fully crewed at this time, resulting in triple the number of privateers per ATL below. Because the ship is at anchor, no additional reinforcements will arrive once combat begins. The captain will only be present for combat if the PCs force a fight in daylight. Even then, at ATLs 1-5 he will not fight, preferring to slip away to pirate another day.

All ATLs

While he is present at all ATLs during the day, the privateer captain will only engage the PCs in combat at ATLs 5+, preferring at lower ATLs to leave and report this little complication to his companions, perhaps in the PCs own rowboat.

⚔ Privateer Captain, Rog4/Ftr3: CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6+3d10; hp 43; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 masterwork studded leather armor, +3 Dex), touch AC 13, flatfooted 16; BAB/Grapple +6/+8; Atk: Masterwork rapier +9 melee (1d6+2/18-20/x2); Full Atk: Rapier +9/+4 melee (1d6+2/18-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +2d6, SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Bluff +7, Climb +7, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Intimidate +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Profession (Sailor) +8, Search +6, Spot +5, Swim +6, Tumble +9, Use Rope +5; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Weapon Finesse.

Equipment: Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork rapier.

Once the PCs have established that the ship now called the *Whydah* is the missing *Pride's Quest* and attempt to board and search the vessel:

If the PCs are detected attempting to board at night this should be a very minor combat, as the ship is only minimally guarded. There is only a faint sliver of moonlight to provide illumination.

If the PCs have openly approached the ship and have made the crew suspicious, then return at night, double the number of guards present at each ATL. Because the ship is at anchor, no additional reinforcements will arrive once combat begins.

If the PCs are seen or heard by the guards then combat will begin immediately.

ATL 1

⚔ **Privateers (2), Rog 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6; hp 6; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex), touch AC 12, flatfooted 12; BAB/Grapple +0/+1; Atk/Full Atk: Rapier +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Sneak attack +1d6, SQ Trapfinding; AL CN; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +4, Bluff +5, Climb +3, Escape Artist +6, Hide +6, Listen + 4, Move Silently +6, Profession (Sailor) +4, Spot +4, Swim +3, Tumble +6, Use Rope +4; Dodge, Mobility.

Equipment: Leather armor, rapier.

ATL 5

⚔ **Privateers (3), Rog 5:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d6; hp 25; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+3 studded leather armor, +1 buckler, +2 Dex), touch AC 12, flatfooted 14; BAB/Grapple +3/+4; Atk/Full Atk: Masterwork rapier +6 melee (1d6+1/18-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Sneak attack +3d6, SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Bluff +8, Climb +4, Escape Artist +10, Hide +10, Intimidate +5, Listen + 8, Move Silently +10, Profession (Sailor) +5, Spot +8, Swim +5, Tumble +10, Use Rope +5; Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Finesse.

Equipment: Studded leather armor, buckler, masterwork rapier.

ATL 3

⚔ **Privateers (2), Rog 3:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6; hp 16; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 studded leather armor, +2 Dex), touch AC 12, flatfooted 13; BAB/Grapple +2/+3; Atk/Full Atk: Masterwork rapier +5 melee (1d6+1/18-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +2d6, SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Bluff +6, Climb +4, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Listen + 6, Move Silently +8, Profession (Sailor) +5, Spot +6, Swim +5, Tumble +8, Use Rope +5; Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Finesse.

Equipment: Studded leather armor, masterwork rapier.

ATL 7

⚔ **Privateers (4), Rog 6:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d6; hp 29; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 masterwork studded leather armor, +1 buckler, +2 Dex), touch AC 12, flatfooted 14; BAB/Grapple +4/+5; Atk/Full Atk: Masterwork rapier +7 melee (1d6+1/18-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +3d6, SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Bluff +8, Climb +4, Escape Artist +10, Hide +10, Intimidate +7, Listen + 9, Move Silently +10, Profession (Sailor) +5, Sense Motive + 5, Spot +9, Swim +5, Tumble +11, Use Rope +5; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse.

Equipment: Masterwork studded leather armor, buckler, masterwork rapier.

ATL 9

\ Privateers (5), Rog 8: CR 6; Medium humanoid (human); HD 8d6; hp 40; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 masterwork studded leather armor, +1 masterwork buckler, +2 Dex), touch AC 12, flatfooted 15; BAB/Grapple +6/+7; Atk: Masterwork rapier +9 melee (1d6+1/18-20/x2); Full Atk: Masterwork rapier +9/+4 melee (1d6+1/18-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Sneak attack +4d6, SQ Evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, traps sense +2; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Bluff +10, Climb +5, Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Intimidate +9, Listen + 11, Move Silently +13, Profession (Sailor) +5, Sense Motive + 7, Spot +11, Swim +5, Tumble +14, Use Rope +7; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse.

Equipment: Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork buckler, masterwork rapier.

ATL 11

\ Privateers (6), Rog 10: CR 8; Medium humanoid (human); HD 10d6; hp 49; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 leather armor, +3 Dex), touch AC 13, flatfooted 15; BAB/Grapple +7/+8; Atk: Rapier +10 melee (1d6+1/18-20/x2); Full Atk: Rapier +10/+5 melee (1d6+1/18-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Sneak attack +5d6, SQ Defensive roll, evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trap sense +3; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Bluff +10, Climb +5, Escape Artist +15, Hide +15, Intimidate +11, Listen + 13, Move Silently +15, Profession (Sailor) +7, Sense Motive + 9, Spot +13, Swim +6, Tumble +16, Use Rope +8; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse.

Equipment: Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork buckler, masterwork rapier.

Defensive Roll (Ex): The rogue can roll with a potentially lethal blow to take less damage from it than she otherwise would. Once per day, when she would be reduced to 0 or fewer hit points by damage in combat (from a weapon or other blow, not a spell or special ability), the rogue can attempt to roll with the damage. To use this ability, the rogue must attempt a Reflex saving throw (DC = damage dealt). If the save succeeds, she takes only half damage from the blow; if it fails, she takes full damage. She must be aware of the attack and able to react to it in order to execute her defensive roll—if she is denied her Dexterity bonus to AC, she can't use this ability. Since this effect would not normally allow a character to make a Reflex save for half damage, the rogue's evasion ability does not apply to the defensive roll.

The defeated crew can provide the following information. Allow players to make Intimidate skill checks if they want, but the NPCs will spill the beans anyhow.

Captain

- This vessel is really the Pride's Quest. His ship was hired to follow the Quest out to sea and capture the passengers and crew.
- He was hired by Lorne Tarkan, paid to include several fighters in his crew, and to help sail the captured vessel back to Jadenspur. Lorne Tarken is a secret owner of a supply business called the Venturers' Supply & Exchange.
- The Pride's Quest was part of his payment. His own ship, Venger, is now hidden in a secluded cove up the coast being repainted and renamed.
- His own men did not board the ship until after the passengers were locked in their cabins. He did not get a good look at any of the prisoners, but some of the passengers of the Pride's Quest looked...different. He cannot say for certain exactly what was different about them.
- If asked to describe Lorne Tarkan he will identify the man as being of middle height, with brown hair, green eyes, a thin build and narrow features.

Crew

- This vessel is really the Pride's Quest. Their original ship, the Venger, was hired to follow the Quest out to sea and capture the passengers and crew. The Venger is hidden in a small cove up the coast being repainted and renamed.
- Several fighters joined the crew for the attack. They do not know the name of the person who hired their ship, but they think that he runs a local supply business called the Venturers' Supply & Exchange.
- The privateers did not board the Pride's Quest until after the hired mercenaries had secured

the passengers and crew. Once the prisoners were locked away they went over to help sail the ship back to Jadenspur.

Once the guards are defeated, or if the PCs are able to search the ship without being detected:

The lower decks of the ship are eerily silent, the guards keeping to the main deck.

There are no lanterns lit below decks, so the PCs will need to find another way to see where they are going.

The central deck holds a double row of well-appointed cabins. Fine fabrics and expensive yet discreet furnishing still grace several of the rooms.

Brilliantly colored and intricately detailed charts and maps cover the walls of a large cabin in the bow end of the ship. At first glance the maps match other depictions of Raia, but a second look draws the eye to continents not seen on any map in Amthydor.

PCs succeeding at a Listen check (DC 10) will hear a soft sobbing coming from behind a panel in the wall. The panel conceals a small closet. The latch can be found with a successful Search check (DC 20).

The sounds coming from behind the panel cease abruptly with the movement of the latch. The door opens smoothly under your hand, revealing a closet containing a single high shelf and several hooks with hanging clothing. A small foot draws farther back into the closet, disappearing behind the fall of fabric.

The shelf holds the log of the Pride's Quest, written completely in the Phaerish language of the Cerrid. The foot belongs to Felice, the seven-year old daughter of Captain al-Sybar. The PCs can easily gain her trust with a successful Diplomacy skill check DC 10 (DC 5 if they are openly wearing or show her the amulet, or if they have the rescued sailors, bird or cheetah with them).

Felice has been hiding here ever since the attacks, sneaking into the lower hold at night to get food. She cannot swim, is too small to lower the dinghy, and had no way to leave the ship unseen. She was playing a game of hide and seek with Ambassador Bashar's young son Kaden when the attack came, and so was not noticed by the attackers. Hearing the screams, she stayed hidden in the closet.

She cannot add any information to what the PCs already know about the attack, though she is the only human on board who was not subjected to the *geas* preventing them from identifying the true races of the diplomatic party. If the PCs think to ask about the ambassador's race she will tell them that he is a 'Paari', though if they ask what a 'Paari' is she will only say "You know, Paari". She will only describe her friend as a little taller than she is, and more brown. It does not occur to her that the PCs do not know what a Lupaari might be. She is a poor artist, and if asked to draw what the Lupaari look like she will sketch a childish stick figure with a squarish head and pointed ears. If pressed for additional information she adds that they wear robes like everyone else and ride horses, but not camels (too humpy).

The lower deck contains a large cargo hold still filled with the voyage's remaining provisions. The rest of the deck is partitioned off into dormitory areas with hammock bunks for the crew. A thorough search of the rest of the ship reveals no other stowaways.

If the PCs go in search of suspected fence Lorne Tarkan **GO TO Encounter 7 (Page 39).**

If the PCs go in search of other sources of information **GO TO Encounter 8 (Page 41).**

If the PCs attempt to free the ambassadors **GO TO Encounter 9 (Page 43).**

Encounter Seven – Everything Has a Price

The moniker Venturers' Supply & Exchange is emblazoned over the door of a freshly whitewashed storefront in Jadenpur's portside neighborhood. A wooden sign depicting a ship balanced over a stack of crates and casks hangs over the sidewalk.

If the PCs attempt to peer through the windows or listen before entering the shop they will be able to observe two men negotiating over the price of some unidentified object. The customer is portly, with a thinning fringe of dark blonde hair. The man behind the counter is tall and aristocratic, just over six feet, with black hair and dark eyes. In other words, he looks just like Tariq's description of Ambassador Bashar. A closer look will reveal that he is also wearing an amulet very similar to the one worn by Tariq and the one which he loaned the PCs. The amulet is an *amulet of polymorph* and detects as magical (transmutation). If the PCs are able to remove the amulet from around the man's neck, his form and appearance will immediately change to that of a middle height, thin man with brown hair and green eyes (Lorne Tarkan). The PCs will not be able to keep the amulet after this adventure, though they might try using it to fool other NPCs later on.

In addition to the front door, the business has a rear entrance that passes through a large storage area before leading to a narrow hallway that ends at a curtained opening behind the front counter. The two men will exchange goods for gold, shake hands and the visitor will depart with his newly acquired package. If the PCs storm in before the transaction is completed, the customer will be shocked at the sudden intrusion and will not react except to attempt to run away, leaving his merchandise on the counter.

All ATLS

Lorne Tarkan, Exp 6: CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d6; hp 30; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+4 armor, +2 Dex), touch AC 12, flatfooted 14; BAB/Grapple +4/+4; Atk/Full Atk: Dagger +4 melee (1d4) or light crossbow +5 ranged (1d8); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +13, Bluff +12, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +16, Forgery +11, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (local) +6, Profession (fence) +10, Search +5, Sense Motive +12, Sleight of Hand +9; Diligent, Investigator, Negotiator, Persuasive.

Equipment: Masterwork mithral chain shirt, light crossbow, 10 bolts, dagger.

If the PCs wait their turn before interrupting, read the following:

His business with his customer completed, the proprietor greets you jovially.

“Welcome, welcome. You’re not your typical sort but no worry. I am Ezor Ramal, humble proprietor of this shop. What can I interest you in today?”

If asked, “Ezor Ramal” will immediately deny either being Lorne Tarkan or knowing where to find him. He will also deny any illegal dealings, claiming to have come by all of his goods honestly. PCs should make Sense Motive checks in opposition to his Bluff skill. PCs presenting him with obvious evidence of his duplicity, such as pointing out the origin of his amulet, gain a +5 bonus to their initial check.

While Lorne is a formidable negotiator and an excellent fence, he is also something of a coward who depends upon others to fight his battles for him. He becomes quite squeamish at the sight of blood, particularly his own. The heroes can successfully ‘encourage’ him to surrender with a

successful Intimidate check (DC 1d20+7). PCs presenting him with obvious irrefutable evidence of his duplicity, such as pointing out the true origin of his amulet, gain a +5 bonus to their initial check. If he is unable to escape then he will surrender immediately once he is reduced to 10 hit points. Tarkan is not afraid of the Jadenspur City Watch. The PCs are another matter entirely.

If the PCs question Lorne Tarkan:

➤ **Where did you get _____? (items from the Pride’s Quest)**

“A ship that stopped in Jadenspur for repairs.”

A description of the ship will match that of the Pride’s Quest.

➤ **What happened to the Pride’s Quest?**

“Its crew and passengers were taken prisoner and the ship was brought back to Jadenspur under another name.”

The ship was brought back to Jadenspur as the Whydah. The passengers and crew were secretly taken off the ship as prisoners.

➤ **Why did you attack the Pride’s Quest?**

“My employer was interested in the...cargo.”

His employer was interested in the passengers, as additions to his collection of exotic creatures.

➤ **Who hired you to attack the Pride’s Quest?**

“Horace Xarmont.”

Horace Xarmont is a wealthy and influential figure in Jadenspur, and it is said that nothing happens in the city without his knowledge or approval.

➤ **Why did he want the passengers?**

“He collects rare and exotic creatures and one-of-a-kind items. He has quite an extensive collection. It is the largest of its kind in the Free Lands. He lets almost no one see it.”

His collection of exotic creatures and rare relics is legendary among those who seek such oddities.

It is rumored to contain some of the most elusive and sought after items on Raia.

➤ **What was so rare or exotic about the passengers?**

“They were about as far from being human as you can get and still walk on two legs. Like big dogs and cats, wearing clothes and acting just like people. Never seen their like before, even in picture books. Just the sort of thing to catch Xarmont’s interest.”

Tarkan will describe the lupaari and tabreen as walking, talking humanoid dogs and cats.

➤ **How did he know about the passengers?**

“Some dockworkers saw one of the passengers, and thought he looked rather stranger. I overheard them talking about it in a tavern, and I knew someone who would be interested. He collects ‘curiosities’ and he pays me very well for information like that. I simply mentioned what I had heard.”

Xarmont pays a number of informants to be on the lookout for items of interest.

➤ **Where are the passengers from the Pride’s Quest?**

“He keeps his collection at his manor house outside the city. If he added them to his collection then they would be there.”

Tarkan can provide the PCs with the location of the country estate, though not the layout of the building or the number of guards.

If Lorne Tarkan is killed or escapes:

PCs searching the ship and succeeding at a Search check (DC 20) can locate a series of letters exchanged between Lorne Tarkan and someone signing the letters ‘H. X.’. The letters detail delivery and payment arrangements for fourteen ‘items’, plus a dozen new servants (the surviving crew).

Also among the papers is a letter of credit, authorizing payment of 10,000 gp from the account of Horace Xarmont to Lorne Tarkan.

Among the older documents, PCs can also find an old sale invoice for a black dragon egg, noting that it was sold to Katharza in Amthydor for 5,000 gp. Players of LSJ06: Under the Streets might find this to be of interest. ☺

There is nothing else of interest in the shop.

If the PCs look around the harbor for signs of the Pride’s Quest **GO TO Encounter 6 (Page 33).**

If the PCs go in search of other sources of information **GO TO Encounter 8 (Page 41).**

If the PCs attempt to free the ambassadors **GO TO Encounter 9 (Page 43).**

Encounter Eight – Do You Know What I Know?

The PCs can attempt to gather information from a variety of sources.

➤ **The City Watch**

The PCs can obtain information from the City Watch with a successful Diplomacy check (DC 15).

Lorne Tarkan

Tarkan is a suspected fence and a dealer in antiquities from questionable sources. He maintains a cover business, His premises have been raided on multiple occasions, but no illegal goods have ever been found.

Horace Xarmont

Wealthy and politically powerful, Horace Xarmont is said to possess secret and sensitive information about every city official and important personage in Jadenspur. He is also known as a collector of rare and unique items. Some say that his collection even includes living creatures. He lives just outside the city, on an

exclusive estate, and does not welcome visitors. We have been unable to prove that he is involved in any illegal activity. Investigation into his affairs is...strongly discouraged.

➤ **The Harbor Master**

By visiting the Harbor Master and making a successful Diplomacy or Gather Information skill check (DC 15) the PCs can learn about the original visit of the Pride's Quest, as well as the five similar ships currently in the port.

The Pride's Quest

Harbor records show that the Pride's Quest arrived under her own power, though with a damaged rudder. The ship was in port for four days, while the rudder was repaired. All labor was performed by the ship's crew, and the captain and first officer made all arrangements for materials and supplies. It was the first and only time that the ship put into port in Jadenspur.

The Wind Dancer

According to the harbormaster's records, the Wind Dancer has made Jadenspur its homeport for eight years. Logs show that the ship makes two trips per year between Jadenspur and the ports of the Sianmar continent. The ship has been in port for six days. Before that it was last in port five months ago.

The Calypso

Just returned from nearly six months in dry dock for repairs following a pirate attack, the Calypso is preparing to go back out to sea for the first time since being towed back to port by a rescue vessel. The Calypso's current captain is her former first mate, the highest-ranking survivor of the dozen members of the crew who survived the pirate attack that nearly sank the ship.

The Gerald Fitzedmund

The ship was built by a local merchant cartel anxious to expand its business on the lucrative Amthydor-Jadenspur-Perralin run. It completed its builders' trials just over a week ago and is preparing to leave on its maiden voyage to Amthydor.

The Tamar Maru

The ship is part of an official delegation from the Thyrgol Confederacy. It arrived three days ago to conduct trade negotiations with Jadenspur.

The Whydah

The Whydah is a new arrival. She was brought into port just over two weeks ago. She is a captured pirate ship and is replacing her new captain's previous vessel, the Venger, which was sunk in battle with her. According to reports, the two ships were in close combat. The pirate rammed the Venger, and while their own vessel was sinking the Venger's crew was able to board and seize the Whydah.

➤ **General**

The PCs can seek out rumors and other information from less official sources. Each attempt to gather information requires the PCs to spend 1 gp per ATL and succeed on a *Gather Information* skill check at the listed DC.

Strangers in town : (DC 10)

"You mean like you? There's those folks on the ship in port that don't seem to like anyone but themselves."

The delegation from the Thyrgol Confederacy avoids all contact with non-humans, and limits contact with local humans.

"There was another ship, a few weeks ago. They never came ashore either, keeping to themselves."

This was the Pride's Quest.

Lorne Tarkan (DC 15)

"You didn't hear it from me but if you need it, he can get it, and he's the man to go to if you need to sell something in a hurry. He's in tight with Venturers' Supply and Exchange. They handle all of his transactions."

Horace Xarmont (DC 15)

"That is one man that you do not want to be on the wrong side of. The last guy that tried to get elected mayor without talking to him first ended

up on the rocks. He knows things about people that they don't even know about themselves."

"People say he has a chimera, a griffon and a manticore in his menagerie."

While the PCs cannot find anyone who has actually seen the menagerie, 'everyone' knows about it.

The Pride's Quest (DC 20)

"Odd ship, that one, like they didn't want to be seen. We get those desert types from the Sea of Fire a couple of times a year. It's not like we haven't seen their sort before. There was something funny about them. A guy I know said that they didn't look quite right, that they weren't really human at all, like some kind of animals. Said he'd been hired to follow the ship out to sea and see where it was going, but he never came back."

The PCs will not be able to find anyone other than Lorne Tarkan who has actually seen the lupaari or tabreen first hand.

If the PCs look around the harbor for signs of the Pride's Quest **GO TO Encounter 6 (Page 33).**

If the PCs go in search of suspected fence Lorne Tarkan **GO TO Encounter 7 (Page 39).**

If the PCs attempt to free the ambassadors **GO TO Encounter 9 (Page 43).**

Encounter Nine – Let Freedom Ring!

A low stone wall surrounds elegantly manicured gardens dotted with serene fountains and gracefully curving paths. At the center of the pastoral setting is an imposing stone mansion.

The three-story mansion is at the center of the estate, 300 feet from the wall on each side. The space between the wall and the house is dotted with fountains, ponds of exotic fish, small fruit

trees, topiary shrubs and beds of rare flowers. A map of the exterior is provided in **GM Aid # 6.**

If the PCs attempt a clandestine approach to the mansion they may take advantage of the cover and concealment offered by statuary, fountains, trees and shrubs throughout the grounds. Ponds and flowerbeds offer no cover or concealment. If the PCs approach openly then Horace Xarmont will take the opportunity to precast spells, beginning with *stoneskin*. If they avoid detection and do not confront the guards then he will not have this opportunity.

If the PCs knock on the front or rear door then it will be answered by Horace's 'butler'. The man is actually a rogue who has already notified his fellow guards of the PCs' presence before opening the door, in the event that the PCs will not take 'no' for an answer. No one comes here without an appointment. It simply is not done, and all the locals know it.

If the PCs attempt to enter unnoticed via the rear door and begin to explore they will run the chance of being seen by the guards. As soon as they are seen, that guard will immediately sound the alarm, summoning all of the others.

The main floor is arranged as follows:

- 1 Front Entry
- 2 Gathering Room/Parlor
- 3 Library
- 4 Private Stair Up
- 5 Guard Quarters
- 6 Private Stair Down
- 7 Misc. Room
- 8 Dining Room
- 9 Kitchen
- 10 Main Stair Up

Unless the PCs have already fought the guards outside, they will be located as follows when the PCs enter:

One rogue in the front entry (Area 1), one fighter at the top of the stairs to the second floor, out of sight from the bottom (above Area 10), one fighter

in the Menagerie downstairs. Any remaining guards will be located in the Guard Quarters (Area 5). All guards except the one in the Menagerie are within 30 feet of the Front Entry (Area 1). Each guard has a *potion of expeditious retreat*, and will use it if necessary to reach an obvious combat occurring on another floor if it would take them longer than one round to get there.

The guard in the Menagerie can reach the Front Entry on the second round, and the main floor guards can reach the Menagerie in the same length of time.

Horace Xarmont, if present, will be in the Library (Area 3) prior to combat breaking out. At lower ATLS Horace will return to his estate later to find his prized collection disbanded by the PCs.

Make regular Spot and Listen checks for all NPCs in each room for PCs attempting to move through the mansion undetected. Remember distance penalties for those checks (-1 per 10 feet of distance) when doing opposed checks.

ATL 1

⚔ **Estate Guards (3), Ftr 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d10+2; hp 12; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+4 chain shirt, +1 Dex), touch AC 11, flatfooted 14; BAB/Grapple +1/+3; Atk/Full Atk: +4 shortsword (1d6+2, 19-20/x2) or +2 heavy crossbow (1d10, 19-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Intimidate +4, Jump +2, Listen +3, Spot +3, Tumble +3; Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

Equipment: Chain shirt, shortsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat*. One guard has a large iron ring of keys.

⚔ **Rogue Guard, Rog 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex), touch AC 12, flatfooted 12; BAB/Grapple +0/+1; Atk/Full Atk: +0 shortsword (1d6, 19-20/x2) or +2 light crossbow (1d8, 19-20/x3); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +1d6, SQ trapfinding; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +6, Bluff +6, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5, Tumble +6; Dodge, Point Blank Shot.

Equipment: Leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat*.

ATL 3

⚔ Estate Guards (4), Ftr 3: CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d10+6; hp 34; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+4 chain shirt, +1 Dex), touch AC 11, flatfooted 14; BAB/Grapple +3/+5; Atk/Full Atk: +6 shortsword (1d6+2, 19-20/x2) or +4 heavy crossbow (1d10, 19-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Intimidate +6, Jump +2, Listen +4, Spot +4, Tumble +4; Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

Equipment: Chain shirt, shortsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat*. One guard has a large iron ring of keys.

⚔ Rogue Guard, Rog 3: CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6+3; hp 20; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 studded leather armor, +2 Dex), touch AC 12, flatfooted 13; BAB/Grapple +2/+3; Atk/Full Atk: +2 shortsword (1d6, 19-20/x2) or +4 light crossbow (1d8, 19-20/x3); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +2d6, SQ trapfinding, evasion, trap sense +1; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +8, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +8, Hide +8, Intimidate +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +8, Search +4, Sense Motive +5, Spot +7, Tumble +8; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot.

Equipment: Studded leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat*.

ATL 5

⚔ Estate Guards (4), Ftr 5: CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d10+10; hp 53; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+4 chain shirt, +1 shield, +1 Dex), touch AC 11, flatfooted 16; BAB/Grapple +5/+8; Atk/Full Atk: +9 shortsword (1d6+3, 19-20/x2) or +6 heavy crossbow (1d10, 19-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Intimidate +8, Jump +2, Listen +5, Spot +5, Tumble +5; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (shortsword).

Equipment: Chain shirt, light steel shield, shortsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat*. One guard has a large iron ring of keys.

⚔ Rogue Guards (2), Rog 5: CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d6+5; hp 31; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 studded leather armor, +3 Dex), touch AC 13, flatfooted 13; BAB/Grapple +3/+4; Atk/Full Atk: +3 shortsword (1d6, 19-20/x2) or +6 light crossbow (1d8, 19-20/x3); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +3d6, SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +10, Escape Artist +11, Gather Information +8, Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +11, Search +8, Sense Motive +7, Spot +9, Tumble +11; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot.

Equipment: Studded leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat*.

ATL 7

⚔ **Horace Xarmont, Sor 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (desert elf); HD 8d4+8; hp 34; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+4 *mage armor*, +2 Dex, +2 *ring of protection*), touch AC 14, flatfooted 16; BAB/Grapple +4/+5; Atk/Full Atk: +5 scimitar (1d6+1, 18-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ low light vision; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 18 (20).

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +8, Search +8, Spellcraft +14, Tumble +3; Combat Casting, Dodge, Enlarge Spell.

Spells Available (6/6/7/6/3; save DC 15 + spell level):

0-level: *acid splash, detect magic, light, mage hand, message, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue;*

1st-level: *Comprehend languages, identify, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement;*

2nd-level: *Acid arrow, locate object, mirror image, scorching ray;*

3rd-level: *Dispel magic, fireball;*

4th-level: *Stoneskin.*

Precast spells: *Mage armor.* He will also cast *stoneskin* once the presence of the PCs is detected.

Equipment: *Ring of protection +2, pink and green spherical ioun stone (+2 Charisma), Scimitar.*

Desert Elf Traits (Ex): Low-light vision; weapon proficiency (scimitar, rapier and shortbow, including composite shortbow); +2 racial bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks; immune to magical sleep effects; +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects.

⚔ **Estate Guards (4), Ftr 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+14; hp 69; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+5 chainmail, +1 shield, +1 Dex), touch AC 11, flatfooted 16; BAB/Grapple +7/+9; Atk: +11 shortsword (1d6+5, 19-20/x2) or +8 heavy crossbow (1d10, 19-20/x2); Full Atk: +11/+6 shortsword (1d6+5, 19-20/x2) or +8 heavy crossbow (1d10, 19-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +10, Jump +2, Listen +6, Spot +6; Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (shortsword), Weapon Specialization (shortsword).

Equipment: Chainmail, light steel shield, shortsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat.* One guard has a large iron ring of keys.

⚔ **Rogue Guards (2), Rog 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d6+7; hp 39; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 studded leather armor, +3 Dex), touch AC 13, flatfooted 16; BAB/Grapple +5/+6; Atk/Full Atk: +5 shortsword (1d6, 19-20/x2) or +8 light crossbow (1d8, 19-20/x3); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +4d6, SQ Evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +12, Escape Artist +13, Gather Information +8, Hide +13, Intimidate +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Search +10, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11, Tumble +13; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Point Blank Shot.

Equipment: Studded leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat.*

ATL 9

✂ **Horace Xarmont, Sor 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (desert elf); HD 10d4+20; hp 56; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+4 *mage armor*, +2 Dex, +3 *ring of protection*), touch AC 15, flatfooted 17; BAB/Grapple +5/+6; Atk/Full Atk: +6 scimitar (1d6+1, 18-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ low light vision; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 18 (20).

Skills and Feats: Concentration +15, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (history) +8, Search +8, Spellcraft +16, Tumble +5; Combat Casting, Dodge, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell.

Spells Available (6/7/7/7/5/4; save DC 15 + spell level):

0-level: *acid splash, detect magic, flare, light, mage hand, message, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue;*

1st-level: *comprehend languages, identify, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement;*

2nd-level: *acid arrow, locate object, mirror image, scorching ray, touch of idiocy;*

3rd-level: *dispel magic, fireball, lightning bolt;*

4th-level: *phantasmal killer, stonewood;*

5th-level: *cone of cold.*

Precast spells: *Mage armor*. He will also cast *stonewood* once the presence of the PCs is detected.

Equipment: *Ring of protection* +3, *pink and green spherical ioun stone* (+2 Charisma), scimitar.

Desert Elf Traits (Ex): Low-light vision; weapon proficiency (scimitar, rapier and shortbow, including composite shortbow); +2 racial bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks; immune to magical sleep effects; +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects.

✂ **Estate Guards (4), Ftr 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 9d10+18; hp 87; Init +5 (+4 Improved Initiative, +1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (+7 half-plate armor, +1 shield), touch AC 10, flatfooted 18; BAB/Grapple +9/+12; Atk: +13 shortsword (1d6+5, 19-20/x2) or +10 heavy

crossbow (1d10, 19-20/x2); Full Atk: +13/+8 shortsword (1d6+5, 19-20/x2) or +10 heavy crossbow (1d10, 19-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CN; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +12, Jump +3, Listen +7, Spot +7; Combat Reflexes, Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (shortsword), Weapon Specialization (shortsword).

Equipment: Half-plate armor, light steel shield, shortsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat*. One guard has a large iron ring of keys.

✂ **Rogue Guards (2), Rog 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 9d6+9; hp 49; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 studded leather armor, +3 Dex), touch AC 13, flatfooted 16; BAB/Grapple +6/+7; Atk: +6 shortsword (1d6, 19-20/x2) or +9 light crossbow (1d8, 19-20/x3); Full Atk: +6/+1 shortsword (1d6, 19-20/x2) or +9 light crossbow (1d8, 19-20/x3); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA sneak attack +5d6, SQ Evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trap sense +3; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +14, Escape Artist +15, Gather Information +10, Hide +15, Intimidate +14, Listen +13, Move Silently +15, Search +12, Sense Motive +13, Spot +13, Tumble +15; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Spring Attack.

Equipment: Studded leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat*.

ATL 11

⚔ **Horace Xarmont, Sor 12:** CR 12; Medium humanoid (desert elf); HD 12d4+24; hp 62; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+4 *mage armor*, +2 Dex, +3 *ring of protection*), touch AC 14, flatfooted 17; BAB/Grapple +6/+7; Atk: +7 scimitar (1d6+1, 18-20/x2); Full Atk: +7/+2 scimitar (1d6+1, 18-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ low light vision; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 21.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +15, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (history) +8, Search +8, Spellcraft +18, Tumble +7; Combat Casting, Dodge, Empower Spell, Increased Spell Knowledge, Maximize Spell.

Spells Available (6/7/7/7/6/5/3; save DC 15 + spell level):

0-level: *Acid splash, detect magic, flare, light, mage hand, message, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue;*

1st-level: *Comprehend languages, identify, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement;*

2nd-level: *Acid arrow, eagle's splendor, locate object, mirror image, scorching ray, touch of idiocy;*

3rd-level: *Dispel magic, fireball, lightning bolt, slow;*

4th-level: *Black tentacles, phantasmal killer, stonesskin;*

5th-level: *Cone of cold, dominate person, feeblemind, teleport;*

6th-level: *Disintegrate.*

Precast spells: *Mage armor, stonesskin.*

Equipment: *Ring of protection +3, pink and green spherical ioun stone, scimitar.*

Desert Elf Traits (Ex): Low-light vision; weapon proficiency (scimitar, rapier and shortbow, including composite shortbow); +2 racial bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks; immune to magical sleep effects; +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects.

⚔ **Estate Guards (4), Ftr 11:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (human); HD 11d10+22; hp 110; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (+7 half-plate armor, +1 shield), touch AC 10, flatfooted 18; BAB/Grapple +11/+13; Atk: +15 shortsword (1d6+5, 19-20/x2) or +12 heavy crossbow (1d10, 19-20/x2); Full Atk: +15/+10/+5 shortsword (1d6+5, 19-20/x2) or +12 heavy crossbow (1d10, 19-20/x2); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CN; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +14, Jump +5, Listen +9, Spot +9; Combat Reflexes, Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (shortsword), Weapon Specialization (shortsword).

Equipment: Half-plate armor, light steel shield, shortsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat.* One guard has a large iron ring of keys.

⚔ **Rogue Guards (2), Rog 11:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (human); HD 11d6+11; hp 59; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 studded leather armor, +3 Dex), touch AC 13, flatfooted 16; BAB/Grapple +8/+9; Atk: +8 shortsword (1d6, 19-20/x2) or +11 light crossbow (1d8, 19-20/x3); Full Atk: +8/+3 shortsword (1d6, 19-20/x2) or +11 light crossbow (1d8, 19-20/x3); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Sneak attack +6d6, SQ Evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trap sense +3; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Bluff +16, Escape Artist +17, Gather Information +12, Hide +17, Intimidate +16, Listen +15, Move Silently +17, Search +14, Sense Motive +15, Spot +15, Tumble +17; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Spring Attack.

Equipment: Studded leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of expeditious retreat.*

Other than the equipment carried by the guards, the only items of interest to the PCs that they would be able to carry away and keep can be found in the library (or on Horace's body, if he was killed by the heroes). A successful Search check DC 15 will reveal a small hidden panel in the bookcase which opens to uncover a compartment containing two scrolls of *stone to flesh*, a *ring of protection*, a *pink and green spherical ioun stone* and a large iron ring of keys. These are the keys to the menagerie downstairs. A second set of keys can be found on the guard from downstairs.

The second floor of the mansion contains luxuriously appointed bedrooms and fine bathing rooms. There is also a small library filled with dozens of slim volumes of drawings, descriptions, research and speculation on the possible origins of what the author calls 'blended creatures' – centaurs, merfolk, griffons and others that some may believe were created rather than naturally occurring. There are also several journals filled with rambling notes on means to create new blended creatures, though none contain any information that is actually usable for the purpose.

The third floor is a virtual museum filled with rare art objects and ancient relics. Many of these items are either stolen or obtained under questionable circumstances, and will be considered evidence by the City Watch. PCs attempting to claim them are guilty of theft.

The basement contains the bestiary, Horace Xarmont's collection of living oddities.

Once the PCs have defeated the guards and enter the bestiary **GO TO Encounter 10 (Page 49).**

Encounter Ten – What Manner of Man Or Beast?

Rows of cages line the walls and another doubled row of exhibits occupies the center of the room. Magical light shines from the ceiling, mimicking the light outside.

Several of the cages are empty, but many more contain a bizarre living collection or strange and exotic creatures. Some species that are natural enemies are caged side by side, and all are kept in a faint imitation of their natural wild homes with little thought to their dignity or needs.

All of the exhibits are locked in cages made from either heavy iron bars or *walls of force*, depending upon the nature of the creature imprisoned within.

Cages 1 – 4 (Iron bars)

Lush potted plants stand in the corners of each of the four cages at the far end of the right wall. Brightly colored rugs and soft pillows cover the floor. An untouched tray of food sits on the floor of each cage, ignored by the creatures within. The two figures in each of the closest cages (3 and 4) are clearly male, and just as clearly not human, though they walk on two legs and their eyes show an obvious intelligence. Each muscular form is clothed in a loincloth and covered in soft fur, and long tails twitch in agitated unison.

These are the cat-like tabreen, the male guards charged with protecting Ambassador Khar'Ri. Each of the four represents a different sub-race/clan, indicated by the color of his fur.

Two more cages hold another trio, all female, and all with the same pale golden fur. The two imprisoned together move towards the bars of their confinement, almost as if in a vain effort to block your path to their lone sister. Each wears a carefully wrapped collection of silken scarves, somewhat in disarray from their capture and imprisonment.

The lone female is Ambassador Khar'Ri. The others are her personal attendants.

Cage 13 (Wall of force)

Heavy black curtains cover the outside of the cell, concealing the contents from view.

PCs who approach the cell may attempt a DC 10 Listen check to hear a faint hissing coming from within the cage.

Cages 20 – 22 (Iron bars)

Rugs and pillows cover the floor, but the comfort they offer is clearly being ignored by six figures confined in the three cages. Most stand the height of an average man, though they are clearly not human. Clad only in breeches and boots, they are covered in short dark fur. Pointed ears swivel forward slightly to catch the smallest sound, and muzzles filled with sharp teeth twitch as your scent drifts forward.

As you approach, a seventh, smaller figure peers out from behind the one ‘man’ caged alone. He gazes up at his elder, his dark eyes full of questions. “Father, have they come to take us back to the ship? Will we see the city of eagles now?”

These are the lupaari. Ambassador Bashar and his son have been caged together, with their guards and attendants in the other two cages. The city of eagles referred to by the boy is Amthydor.

Cages 29 – 31 (Iron bars)

A dozen men crowd into the three small cages. Battered and disheveled, many display minor injuries that have been poorly tended.

The men are Captain al-Sybar and his surviving crew from the Pride’s Quest, and they will identify themselves as such. Their injuries range from minor scrapes and cuts to a broken arm and a broken leg. If the PCs have not already figured out that the missing ambassadors are something other than human and they ask the captain where they are, he will only look significantly in the direction of the appropriate cages. He will watch the PCs carefully for any reaction, and if they do nothing to free the prisoners will ask for a tool to permit him to do so himself. If the PCs offer nothing to help, he and his men will begin searching for keys or tools themselves.

Once the PCs identify themselves as being sent by Tariq, or if they bring in the rescued sailors, bird or

cheetahs, or if one of them is openly wearing the amulet:

An invisible shroud of dignity and authority immediately settles over the two leaders. “The gods have blessed their children, and delivered us to complete our holy quest. The Sundering shall be ended, and we shall rejoin our brothers.”

Once freed, the ambassadors and the captain can tell the PCs what happened following the attack, but they will politely decline to discuss diplomatic matters or details of their homelands, preferring to save such talks for those in real authority in Amthydor.

The PCs may also free the other creatures on display in the bestiary. Whether or not they do so will be noted by the ambassadors, and may impact their opinion of the people of Amthydor. The ambassadors will also be paying close attention to the reactions of the PCs to their appearance.

- 1* Tabreen Ambassador Khar’Ri
- 2* Tabreen (2 females)
- 3-4* Tabreen (2 males)
- 5-7* Empty
- 8** Harpy
- 9** Centaur
- 10** Griffon
- 11** Chimera
- 12** Manticore
- 13** Medusa
- 14-18* Empty
- 19* Hippogriff
- 20* Lupaari (3)
- 21* Lupaari (2)
- 22* Lupaari Ambassador Bashar and his son
- 23** Mermaid
- 24* Androsphinx (Stone)
- 25* Criosphinx
- 26-28* Empty
- 29-31* Captain and surviving sailors from the Pride’s Quest
- 32* Hieracosphinx
- 33* Gynosphinx (Stone)

* iron bars

** wall of force

Horace has used the medusa on the androsphinx and gynosphinx, turning them to stone in order to keep them from using their spell casting abilities to escape or release the other exhibits. If the PCs are able to restore either of these two creatures then they will successfully dispel the *walls of force* holding some of the other prisoners. Restoring either of the two sphinxes to their original living flesh state requires a successful *break enchantment* caster check DC 22. The PCs can also inform authorities in Jadenpur about the fate of these creatures.

Their mission complete, the PCs can travel back to Amthydor overland or by sea on the Sea Lion and, if they were successful, the reclaimed Pride's Quest.

If the PCs succeeded in rescuing the ambassadors and dealt positively with them **GO TO Epilogue A (Page 51).**

If the PCs succeeded in rescuing the ambassadors but dealt negatively with them **GO TO Epilogue B (Page 51).**

If the PCs failed to rescue the ambassadors **GO TO Epilogue C (Page 52).**

Epilogue A – Reunion

The journey back to Amthydor goes smoothly, with your new friends full of questions about the people and customs of Amthydor.

Tariq waits to greet you, bowing reverently to his rescued lord. He spares a glance that speaks of your promised reward, and of his gratitude for your assistance. The diplomats decline his offer of rest and refreshment before seeking an audience with the Lord Monarch, and the entire party begins making its way among the gathering throng of curious bystanders en route to the royal palace.

The PCs will not be invited to the audience and negotiations.

Protocol is cast into the wind with the sudden arrival of high-ranking personages in the Castle District, and the Diamond Legion hastily closes the gates to keep out the trailing crowd, yourselves included. A light hand on your shoulder reminds you of the presence of Tariq.

“Let us share a meal while you tell me all that has happened, and we shall both be rewarded.”

Hours later a last glass is raised in the Dauntless Dolphin and a silent servant presents a heavy package to Tariq. Rising, he slides it across the table.

“You have done a great service to both our peoples. May you always find what you seek, and may the gods bless your endeavors.”

TIME UNITS EXPENDED – 20

THUS ENDS “BLOOD BROTHERS”

Epilogue B – Separate Ways

The journey back to Amthydor is filled with tension. The Lupaari and Tabreen keep to themselves, speaking together in languages foreign to Amthydoran ears.

Tariq waits to greet you, bowing reverently to his rescued lord. He spares a glance that speaks of your promised reward, and of his gratitude for your assistance. The diplomats decline his offer of rest and refreshment before seeking an audience with the Lord Monarch, and the entire party begins making its way among the gathering throng of curious bystanders en route to the royal palace.

The PCs will not be invited to the audience and negotiations.

Days later the delegation departs without fanfare or ceremony. A plain package is delivered to your

rooms, the promised reward for your rescue efforts.

TIME UNITS EXPENDED – 20

THUS ENDS “BLOOD BROTHERS”

Epilogue C – Long Journey Home

The journey back to Amthydor is bittersweet. Tariq greets you solemnly on your return, anxious for word on the fate of his lord.

“I thank you for your efforts. I must continue the search, for the good of both our peoples.”

Silently he offers a heavy pouch, the promised reward for your attempt, then leaves you to await your next adventure.

TIME UNITS EXPENDED – 20

THUS ENDS “BLOOD BROTHERS”

Epilogue D – Persona Non Grata

The Sea Lion, sent out to sea following reports of stranded sailors, returns to port after days of searching. The tale of what they found is quickly told throughout the Port District, and a crowd gathers in the Dauntless Dolphin to hear the story from the Sea Lion’s crew.

A lone survivor was found clinging to a small coral islet. He was nearly dead from the attack which captured his ship, and died soon after he was rescued. Before he perished he was able to reveal that a foreign ship, the Pride’s Quest, had been bringing a pair of ambassadors to Amthydor from two distant nations when it was attacked by pirates. The ambassadors and their parties were captured, the crew killed or left for dead and the ship seized as prize.

The man died before he could provide any additional information, but a scrap of a flag recovered from the area where the ship sank bore the emblem of two heads, a mastiff and a lioness, back to back in profile, over a length of broken chain.

As the sailors finish their tale and are treated to a round of drinks from their listeners, a robed figure leaves behind the warm welcome of the common room and steps out into the darkness and the last remnant of a gently falling rain.

TIME UNITS EXPENDED – 5

THUS ENDS “BLOOD BROTHERS”

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

Total the XP earned from the following:

| | ATL 1 | ATL 3 | ATL 5 | ATL 7 | ATL 9 | ATL 11 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Encounter 1 | | | | | | |
| Recovering the items belonging to the missing ambassadors | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| Questioning the merchant about his sources | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| | | | | | | |
| Encounter 2a, 3a, or 4a | | | | | | |
| Successfully rescuing the NPC(s) (NOTE: PCs can only collect experience from these encounters once) | 50 | 100 | 150 | 200 | 250 | 300 |
| | | | | | | |
| Encounter 6 | | | | | | |
| Defeating the privateers | 50 | 100 | 150 | 200 | 250 | 300 |
| Rescuing the daughter | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| | | | | | | |
| Encounter 7 | | | | | | |
| Defeating or capturing Lorne Tarkan | 25 | 50 | 75 | 100 | 125 | 150 |
| Learning of Horace Xarmont's menagerie | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| | | | | | | |
| Encounter 8 | | | | | | |
| Seeking information on Horace or the other ships in port | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| | | | | | | |
| Encounter 9 | | | | | | |
| Defeating Horace and/or his guards | 75 | 150 | 225 | 300 | 375 | 450 |
| | | | | | | |
| Encounter 10 | | | | | | |
| Treating the Lupaari and Tabreen politely and with respect | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| Freeing other imprisoned creatures (or arranging their release) | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| | | | | | | |
| Discretionary Role Playing Award | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Maximum Possible XP | 500 | 700 | 900 | 1,100 | 1,300 | 1,500 |

TREASURE SUMMARY

If it's not on this list, the PCs cannot keep it.

Introduction

- 50 gp for each PC.

Encounter 1

- Potion of *Speak With Animals*, (2 available) sale value 37.5 gp each. When the potion is expended the empty vial has a value of 25 gp. (Value: 75 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, 1st level caster, Legality: Legal).

Encounter 2a

- 50 gp gold and gems per ATL

Encounter 3a

- 50 gp gold and gems per ATL

Encounter 4a

- 50 gp gold and gems per ATL

Encounter 6

- Sale value of mundane equipment
247.5 gp Captain
- Sale value of mundane equipment
ATL 1 15 gp per privateer
ATL 3 172.5 gp per privateer
ATL 5 180 gp per privateer
ATL 7 255 gp per privateer
ATL 9 330 gp per privateer
ATL 11 330 gp per privateer

Encounter 7

- Masterwork Mithral Chain Shirt (1 available) Sale value 550 gp (Value: 1,100 gp, Size: Small, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Uncommon, Legality: Legal).
- Sale value of mundane equipment 18 gp

Encounter 9

- *Potion of Expeditious Retreat* (up to 6 available), sale value 75 gp (Value: 150

gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, 3rd level caster, Legality: Legal).

- *Ring of Protection* (1 available)
 - ❑ ATL 1 & 3: *Ring of protection +1* (sale value 1,000 gp, value 2,000 gp)
 - ❑ ATL 5& 7: *Ring of protection +2* (sale value 4,000 gp, value 8,000 gp)
 - ❑ ATL 9 & 11: *Ring of protection +3* (sale value 9,000 gp, value 18,000 gp)

(Value: varies, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, 12th level caster, Legality: Legal).

- *Pink and green spherical ioun stone*, (1 available) sale value 4,000 gp (Value: 8,000 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Uncommon, 12th level caster, Legality: Legal).

- Sale value of mundane equipment
ATL 1 55 gp per fighter, 10 gp per rogue
ATL 3 55 gp per fighter, 17.5 gp per rogue
ATL 5 59.5 gp per fighter, 17.5 gp per rogue
ATL 7 84.5 gp per fighter, 17.5 gp per rogue, 17.5 gp scimitar (Horace)
ATL 9 309.5 gp per fighter, 17.5 gp per rogue, 17.5 gp scimitar (Horace)
ATL 11 309.5 gp per fighter, 17.5 gp per rogue, 17.5 gp scimitar (Horace)

- *Arcane scroll of stone to flesh* (2 available), sale value 825 gp each (Value: 1,650 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, 11th level caster, Legality: Legal).

Epilogue A

- *Rose Compass* (1 available), sale value 1,600 gp.
Once per day this ornate silver pocket compass may be activated to produce the effects of either a *locate creature* or *locate object* spell as if cast by a 10th level

wizard. This item functions in all other ways as a normal traveler's compass.

(Value: 3,200 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Rare, 10th level caster, Legality: Legal).

- *Adamantine Bar* (1 available), sale value 1,500 gp.

This bar of adamantite is sufficient to allow a skilled weapon smith to produce one single melee weapon or fifty arrows/bolts.

(Value: 3,000 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, Legality: Legal).

- 200 gp per PC in gems and gold

Epilogue B

- *Adamantine Bar* (1 available), sale value 1,500 gp

This bar of adamantite is sufficient to allow a skilled weapon smith to produce one melee weapon or fifty arrows/bolts.

(Value: 3,000 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, Legality: Legal).

- 200 gp per PC in gems and gold

Epilogue C

- 200 gp per PC in gems and gold

**Player Handout #1: For PC Worshipers of Ardra, Ayla,
Brianna, Destine, Peliron and Sorena**

For three nights your dreams have been filled with curious images, images that remain vividly in your memory even in the light of day:

A gleaming white city rises above a lush jungle, then vanishes behind a curtain of flame.

A line of footprints along a sandy beach, at first human, then animal, then human again.

Two hands, one clearly human and the other taloned and paw-like, pull at the two ends of a length of chain, breaking it.

The waves of a great ocean passing quickly beneath you, the shadow of your wings dipping and rising with the foamy crests; ships and islands fall away behind you as you fly onward, your sharp eyes spying at last the multicolored roofs of your destination...

**Player Handout #1: for PC Worshipers of Ardra, Ayla,
Brianna, Destine, Peliron and Sorena**

For three nights your dreams have been filled with curious images, images that remain vividly in your memory even in the light of day:

A gleaming white city rises above a lush jungle, then vanishes behind a curtain of flame.

A line of footprints along a sandy beach, at first human, then animal, then human again.

Two hands, one clearly human and the other taloned and paw-like, pull at the two ends of a length of chain, breaking it.

The waves of a great ocean passing quickly beneath you, the shadow of your wings dipping and rising with the foamy crests; ships and islands fall away behind you as you fly onward, your sharp eyes spying at last the multicolored roofs of your destination...

**Player Handout #1: for PC Worshipers of Ardra, Ayla,
Brianna, Destine, Peliron and Sorena**

For three nights your dreams have been filled with curious images, images that remain vividly in your memory even in the light of day:

A gleaming white city rises above a lush jungle, then vanishes behind a curtain of flame.

A line of footprints along a sandy beach, at first human, then animal, then human again.

Two hands, one clearly human and the other taloned and paw-like, pull at the two ends of a length of chain, breaking it.

The waves of a great ocean passing quickly beneath you, the shadow of your wings dipping and rising with the foamy crests; ships and islands fall away behind you as you fly onward, your sharp eyes spying at last the multicolored roofs of your destination...

**Player Handout #1: for PC Worshipers of Ardra, Ayla,
Brianna, Destine, Peliron and Sorena**

For three nights your dreams have been filled with curious images, images that remain vividly in your memory even in the light of day:

A gleaming white city rises above a lush jungle, then vanishes behind a curtain of flame.

A line of footprints along a sandy beach, at first human, then animal, then human again.

Two hands, one clearly human and the other taloned and paw-like, pull at the two ends of a length of chain, breaking it.

The waves of a great ocean passing quickly beneath you, the shadow of your wings dipping and rising with the foamy crests; ships and islands fall away behind you as you fly onward, your sharp eyes spying at last the multicolored roofs of your destination...

Player Handout #2: Ancient History of Amthydor

In the early days of man a great human empire called Chaldea spanned the globe. Colonies were established across Raia, spreading law and enlightenment to the far ends of the land. Craftsmen, artisans and scholars all found welcome within the empire. Its cities were architectural wonders of graceful arches, elegant gardens and sky-reaching towers.

Chaldea's early emperors were enlightened and well-intentioned, beloved by their subjects. Social awareness and a sense of purpose marked each of the empire's citizens, from the emperor to the lowest servant. Education and basic health care were the guaranteed rights of all citizens, regardless of rank or station, and slavery was not permitted.

In 13744 ER the empire expanded again with the creation of its most remote colony, called Amthydor. The new city was the empire in miniature. The highest ideals of Chaldea became the foundation for the latest jewel in the imperial crown.

Within two centuries, fueled by ever-increasing demands for greater tribute and taxes, all contact with the empire was severed and Amthydor declared itself to be a sovereign state. A final attempt by the imperial fleet to bring Amthydor to heel in 192 AF left a portion of the city in flames and three imperial warships sunk in the harbor.

Maps showing the location of the empire and its other colonies were hidden away or destroyed, and all reference to the empire and its rulers was buried deep within the library vaults of Amthydor's rulers, only to be forgotten as the centuries passed.

Player Handout# 3: Riddle Me This

Ambrose VI, a king known by all to be learned and wise, had but one daughter, Princess Andrina, to bequeath his rich kingdom to upon his death. The land had lived in peace for many years, and the king was on good terms with the four neighboring kingdoms. Each of his neighboring monarchs had a son, four strong and handsome princes raised to rule. Each of the four had sought the fair Andrina's hand. Wanting to be certain that his lands were wisely governed after his death, yet not wanting to offend three of his neighbors by choosing one above the others, King Ambrose VI considered for many days. All had been trained to rule wisely and well, but which one was the best choice, and how to choose from among them?

Summoning his beloved Andrina to his side, he questioned her at length regarding her opinion and feelings for each of the princes. All were fair of face, strong of arm and benevolent of heart. All had known each other since they were small children, playing under the watchful eye of governesses and nurses while their fathers conducted diplomatic meetings and negotiated trade agreements. She favored one no more or less than the others, and believed that she could accept any of them as her husband and co-ruler.

Still uncertain of how to proceed, King Ambrose called for his favorite stallion and rode out from his castle in the hope that the sight of his demesne would inspire a solution. As he rode through the villages, farms and fields, visiting with his subjects and pondering his decision, King Ambrose at last knew what he must do to secure the future of his kingdom and good relations with his neighbors.

Returning to his palace, King Ambrose declared a horse race to be held on midsummer's day, to determine which of the four suitors would claim Andrina's hand, and the kingdom, following the king's death. As the contenders arrived, each with the prize mounts of their kingdoms' stables, King Ambrose announced the official conditions of the race. The contenders would begin five miles from the palace, in the center of a stone bridge spanning a deep river. They would follow the main road through a small riverside town, past fields and farms, through the capital city and end at the palace gates. Unwilling to leave the future of his daughter and his kingdom to pure chance, the winning suitor would be the man whose horse was the last to cross the finish line.

The four princes considered this as they rode together to the starting line. Prince Dennon spoke first, seated high upon his bay stallion. "If the winner is to be the man whose horse arrives last, this race will never end. None of us will ever leave the starting line."

Considering this argument as his chestnut mare pranced beneath him, Prince Eamon replied. "Each of us wishes to marry Princess Andrina, and unite this kingdom with our own. None of us will ride ahead and concede in favor of the others."

Prince Marc, astride his pale grey steed, agreed. "To win, we must lose. King Ambrose seeks to test us still."

Prince Rhys quietly weighs the words of his fellows, deftly controlling his night-black mount. "Here is what I think we should do..."

Leaving their mounts in the hands of their squires, the four gathered to speak for several moments in hushed tones, watched from a short distance away by the king's now-confused herald and the gathered spectators. Hearing the plan, the contenders quickly agreed. Returning to the starting line, each again climbed into the saddle and, positioning themselves at the center of the bridge, they waited for the king's herald to signal the beginning of the race. With a rippling fanfare the signal was given and the race was on, with each young man urging his mount forward with hand, leg and voice!

All along the course King Ambrose's subjects cheered on their personal favorites. Each man rode as if his very life depended upon the race's outcome. First one then another took the lead, jockeying for position in the knot of racers. The cheering grew louder as the suitors flashed through the open gates of the city and surged through the streets bound for the palace. In a blur of flashing hooves and flying manes and tails they hurtled across the finish line – grey, chestnut, bay and black. The engagement was immediately announced, and the wedding planned for the first glorious day of spring, as the victorious prince triumphantly embraced his future bride.

What was Prince Rhys' suggestion?

Player Handout# 4: Cheetah Stats

⚔ **Cheetah:** CR 2; medium animal; HD 3d8+6, HP 19; Init +4; Spd 50 ft. (10 squares); AC 15 (+4 Dex, +1 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 11; BAB/Grapple: +2/+5; Atk: Bite +6 melee (1d6+3); Full Atk: Bite +6 melee (1d6+3) and 2 claws +1 melee (1d2+1); Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Trip; SQ Low-light vision, scent, sprint; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Cheetahs are swift feline predators of the plains. A cheetah is 3 to 5 feet long and weighs 110 to 130 pounds. Cheetahs make sudden sprints to bring down prey.

Trip (Ex): A cheetah that hits with a claw or bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+3 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the cheetah.

Sprint (Ex): Once per hour, a cheetah can move ten times its normal speed (500 feet) when it makes a charge.

Player Handout# 5

Ship Shape

Vessel # 1, Pier 1 Slip 4

An engraved wooden plank across the stern proclaims the name of the ship to be the Wind Dancer. Crewmen work to remove the largest of a trio of pale blue sails from the central mast, a large tear apparent in the fabric.

Vessel # 2, Pier 3, Slip 3

Fresh paint and pristine white sails adorn the ship whose stern proclaims her name to be the Calypso, and a bright green dragon with polished pearlescent eyes graces the prow. Crewmen and workers delivering supplies form a constant stream of people and materials making their way up the gangplank.

Vessel # 3, Pier 6 Slip 1

Bright blue sails are carefully furled on the masts of the Gerald Fitzedmund. A newly carved and painted sign across the stern proclaims the vessel's name, and the newly polished wood of her deck gleams in the sun. A crewman sits carefully balanced on a plank, suspended from the railing above, humming to himself as he paints the ship's name along the bow.

Vessel # 4, Pier 8 Slip 2

Stern faced uniformed crewmen walk the decks of the Tamar Maru. Her figurehead is a larger version of the ship's flag, a rearing nightmare with fiery red eyes. Everything about the vessel speaks of military precision, and encourages passersby not to linger.

Vessel # 5, At Anchor

No name adorns the stern, though Whydah has been carefully painted in bold letters along the bow. The vessel bobs lightly at anchor in the harbor, unable to find room among the crowded piers. Two crewmen hang suspended by ropes from above, working to affix a figurehead of a water horse being held in place by several other crewmen on the main deck.

GM Aid # 1: Chaldean Empire History

Founded in 11245 ER, the empire of Chaldea covered the entirety of a continent. A wealthy empire, rich in natural resources, Chaldea attracted master craftsmen, skilled artisans, powerful mages and learned scholars from around the world. Its cities were architectural wonders of graceful arches, elegant gardens and sky-reaching towers.

Agrin, the first emperor, was a wise and charismatic man who brought life to his vision of a land where all of the people served the community and their empire, and were served in return. What benefited one benefited all. In 11245, Agrin I united the petty and warring people of Hur'Resa into a unified empire, bringing an end to almost a century of struggle over land, crops, livestock and natural resources. Enlightened in concept and intention, the early days of the empire were marked by social awareness and a sense of purpose that all citizens should aspire to improve themselves to the benefit of their families, their community and the empire. Education and basic health care were provided to all citizens, regardless of rank or station. Poverty was minimal, with the basic necessities of life provided to those in true need. The reign of Agrin I, called 'Agrin the Just', was long and prosperous, marked by the construction of 4 great cities and peace across the continent. A citizen of Chaldea could travel in safety across the continent, without fear or concern, for the full force of imperial justice would fall upon any who harmed a single hair upon his head.

The reign of his son, Beragil I, was no less bright. From the moment of his coronation in 11312, Beragil I continued to pursue the goals laid down by his father. The Imperial University and Library in Ylsidra were completed in 11319 and made available to all citizens. In 11322 the Imperial Menagerie and Preserve was created, to study, understand and preserve the exotic creatures of the world in a semblance of their natural habitat. Over 3000 species of bird, beast, insect and fish, and countless species of plants, were gathered and lovingly cared for in

elaborate exhibits. Beragil's reign as emperor saw the expansion of his domain, first to the neighboring continents then around the globe. Like his father, Beragil I was loved and respected by his people, and they thrived under his rule. Even the poorest citizens of the empire do not lack for food, shelter and the opportunity to work for an honest and reasonable wage.

For over 2000 years there would be peace and prosperity for the empire and her colonies. A fleet of imperial ships brought trade to every corner of the realm. While not every ruler was a paragon of virtue, those truly unfit to rule were few and far between. Each generation was raised to understand the heavy weight of tradition and duty, and most accepted the burden with a sincere desire to live up to the example of their ancestors. In 13744 the empire expanded to the east, with the establishment of the city of Amthydor. Nestled at the western end of the Tasman Sea, Amthydor was Chaldea on a small scale. The highest ideals of her parent empire were represented in the new city. Though distant from the main holdings of the Empire, Amthydor was a shining jewel in the Imperial crown.

In 13889 a suspicious fire killed the reigning emperor and most of his family, leaving only a young son to claim the throne. Within five years the boy was dead and the son of his late Regent was the new emperor. The long era of the empire's benevolent rulers was over.

The people who had flourished under the leadership of Agrin and his heirs became little more than prisoners and slaves of their new emperor, Maldren I, who claimed the throne in 13894. Maldren quickly bankrupted the treasury in the pursuit of an extravagant and wasteful lifestyle, ignoring the needs of his subjects in favor of his own pleasures. Demands placed upon Chaldea's colonies increased, as the government sought additional funds to maintain the rapidly dwindling treasury.

Where Maldren's reign was corrupt, his descendents were even more so. Taxes that had been reasonable in the past were raised to prohibitive levels, and those who could not pay were stripped of all possessions to pay their 'debt'. The poor who had once been offered education and the chance of employment became slaves, sold into servitude when they were unable to provide for themselves. Education, previously encouraged for all citizens, was restricted only to the wealthy. Religion, previously encouraged as a path to self-improvement through spiritual development, became suppressed. Troubled by reports of events at home, colonies began to withdraw from under the Imperial 'wing', and contact between the capital city of Ylsidra and the more distant colonies became sporadic at best. In 13926, Maldren's son Crayden claimed the imperial throne. Faced with empty coffers and fewer ships bringing tithe from the colonies, Crayden sent messengers in 13931 to command obedience from the increasingly independent colonies. It took nearly two years for the last of the emissaries to return. From nearby islands to distant Amthydor, all of the messengers came bearing the same reply -- 'We do not recognize the sovereignty of Chaldea'. Furious with this show of insubordination, Crayden commanded the Army and Navy to enforce his will and bring the colonies back under imperial control. While distance and lack of imperial funds spared Amthydor from the worst of the sieges, a concerted attack in 13934 (192 AF) left three imperial ships sunk at the mouth of the harbor and parts of the city in flames. The fall of the empire had begun.

The Imperial Menagerie, begun as a means of studying and protecting rare exotic creatures, became nothing more than a collection of living trophies. Originally filled only with plants and animals, during the reign of Maldren's grandson Xavras it was expanded to include demihuman

racess as well. No longer content with what could be captured, the now decadent and cruel emperors turned to Thyrasan wizards to create new 'exhibits' through magical experimentation and selective breeding. Humanoid-animal crossbreeds were bred and displayed as curiosities or used as slaves and soldiers.

Any who dared to speak out against the regime were silenced, often brutally. In time, none dared oppose the power of the emperor, at least not openly. Small pockets of clandestine resistance persisted, seeking to lessen the influence a corrupt government upon the people. Thousands fled imperial oppression, risking death on a stormy sea rather than endure further suffering. Diplomatic relations were broken off, as other nations came to see Chaldea as too dangerous and unpredictable. Foreign nations welcomed refugees who were able to escape what had become a brutal police state. Slaves rebelled, murdering their cruel owners.

The creations of the Thyrasan mages, the strange 'mageborn' races of the Tabreen, Lupaari, Osper, Kobarr and others escaped their captors and fled into the jungles or across the seas, to begin lives as free people. In 14016 (274 AF) Abreis IV, the last Emperor of Chaldea, was assassinated.

Broken and divided, unable to sustain itself, the once glorious Chaldean Empire crumbled, to be swallowed by the jungles from which it had arisen. Those who could do so fled to other lands. Those who could not either adapted to life in small tribes and villages along the continent's southern coast or died.

Of all the imperial colonies, only Amthydor remains as it was at the height of the empire, the others having been divided, conquered or lost to time.

GM Aid # 2: Appendix B: Foreign Locations - Cerrid and Jaderspur

Desert Kingdoms of the Cerrid (Cerrid)

Ruler: Tribal leaders (Bedouin tribes); various (cities)

Government: Tribal (Bedouin); various (cities)

Capital: None

Resources: Gold, copper, opals, emeralds, horses

Population: 1,280,150 (humans 78%, desert elves 9%, half-elves 4%)

Alignment: NG, N, LN

Language: Common, Phaerish

Deities: Ardra, Aurelian, Brianna, Destine, Galvandt, Glissande, Meneon, Peliron

Description: The exotic desert land of Cerrid, though known to most Raians in the casual sense, is in truth a mystery. It is a land of vast deserts and fertile oasis. The pride of these desert tribes is their spirited horses, said to be the finest on all of Raia. The best of the horses are never sold, and seldom gifted to outsiders. Especially among the nomadic Bedouin tribes, the culture is complex and filled with ritual and superstition. Women are relegated to a secondary role in society, and have no rights except those granted by the male leader of their family. Women trained in the healing arts are the exception, and are revered among the tribes. It is often difficult to tell men from women, as both genders wear flowing desert robes and head coverings.

The nomads of the Cerrid are tall and aristocratic, with chiseled, angular features, mahogany complexions, black hair and black, dark brown or bark blue eyes.

Free City of Jaderspur

Ruler: Mayor Ehgert Bosori, Chair of the Advisory Council

Government: Theoretically, authority lies with the Mayor and the Advisory Council (see below)

Resources: Magic, mercenaries, antiques, curios

Population: 21,000 (humans 81%, half-elves 5%, dwarves 4%, gnomes 3%, half-orcs 3%, halflings 2%, forest elves 1%)

Alignment: CG, CN, N

Language: Common

Deities: All

Description: The ruined city of Jaderspur rises up to a mound five hundred feet high, on the shores of the Tasman Sea. Very much like Eiosia, it was a well-known fact that buildings could not be constructed without collapsing or even vanishing.

Twenty-five years ago, Ehgert Bosori shipwrecked in Jaderspur's ruined harbor. He was first the to discover that whatever effect prevented construction had vanished. After building a hut to claim Jaderspur for his own, he picked up what relics he could find and sold them throughout the Free Lands.

Two more short, lucrative trips from Jaderspur, and news spread. Throwing caution to the wind, treasure-hunters and magic-seekers descended upon Jaderspur's ruins en masse. They found some vaults containing powerful magics and piles of gold. Several groups went missing, presumed lost somewhere in the crumbling remains of the city or fallen prey to the powerful creatures and curses also present in the ruins. Yet the treasure was as good to keep a steady flow coming to find their fortune.

Today, Jaderspur is a chaotic boomtown whose residents are largely out of control. Self-important warriors, mages, priests, mercenaries, and others constantly challenge the authority of Bosori's timid City Guard's enforcement of the laws with impunity. Lucky folks, instantly powerful through their finds, built elaborate inns, mansions, or do whatever they fancy, until their luck or fortunes run out. Hangers on, merchants to serve them, and other elements followed.

Ehgert Bosori has attempted to maintain control by appointing some of the most prominent of these as Advisors to Jaderspur. A difficult proposition, as even these are not immune from having their fortunes made and gone in weeks. He has attempted to create some streets and attempted to form a more normal city of its size. The attitude of high-ranking visitors to Amthydor hasn't created a positive impression. Additionally, Jaderspur has a habit of ignoring previously arranged agreements and understandings whenever it feels like it.

The saving grace of Jaderspur is a spirit of civic pride – there is a sense that the great freedom enjoyed by everyone should not be abused. Folk who wish Jaderspur well think of this. Others wait expectantly for the city to self-destruct, either by action or accident.

GM Aid # 3: New Races – Lupaari & Tabreen

Lupaari

Lupaari, 1st level Warrior

Medium Monstrous Humanoid (Lupaari)

Hit Dice: 1d8 (5 hp)

Size: Medium

Type: Monstrous Humanoid

Initiative: +0

Speed and Movement type: 30 ft (6 squares)

Armor Class: 14 (+3 studded leather, +1 natural)

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+1

Attack: Falchion +1 melee (2d4, 18-20/x2)

Full Attack: Falchion +1 melee (2d4, 18-20/x2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft/5 ft

Special Attacks: Nil

Special Qualities: Low-Light vision, scent (+4 racial bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent), vulnerability to sonic attacks (+ 50% damage), +2 racial bonus to Listen, Spot, and Search checks

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +1

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8

Skills: Listen +3, Search +2, Sense Motive +1, Spot +3, Survival +3.

Feats: Track

Environment: Temperate forests and plains, desert

Organization: Hunting party (2-5), patrol (3-6 plus 1 leader of 3rd-5th level) or clan (30-100 plus 25% non-combatants plus 1 3rd level sergeant per 10 adults, 5 5th level lieutenants, 3 7th level captains and a 10th level leader)

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually Lawful Neutral

Advancement: By Character Class

Level Adjustment: +0

Background: One of the Mageborn races, the Lupaari are a race of tall muscular humanoids with the heads and facial features of mastiff-like or jackal-like canines. They are covered in short body fur that varies in color from pale gold to dark brown, red, black or brindle. Male Lupaari average between 5 ½ and 6 ½ feet tall, with females being slightly shorter. While they are seldom seen outside of their native lands, many of those who travel serve as 'bounty hunters', working to bring fugitives to justice. In that capacity they are not concerned with proof of guilt or innocence, but that the subject is brought before the law to be properly judged. The Lupaari make their homes in the deserts of the Cerrid, often trading with the nomadic Bedouin tribes of the region. They are consummate hunters and relentless trackers.

Lupaari society consists of semi-nomadic clans, each governed by a leader who is both militant and spiritual guide. Lupaari clans keep livestock such as goats and practice farming in lush hidden oasis in the deep desert. While the Lupaari prefer to deal only with others of their own race, the clans conduct limited trade with trusted human desert clans, mostly for weapons and other metal items that they cannot create for themselves.

Lupaari cannot interbreed with other humanoids.

Lupaari speak their own language and Common.

Combat: Lupaari are skilled hunters and relentless trackers. They are masters of strategy and tactics, and plan for multiple contingencies. They prefer manufactured weapons over their natural slam or bite attack, but will use whichever is most appropriate to the situation.

Lupaari as characters

Lupaari characters possess the following racial traits.

- +1 Natural Armor bonus
- +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma
- Medium size
- Base land speed 30'
- Attack: By weapon type
- Low-light vision
- +2 Racial bonus to Listen, Spot, and Search
- Lupaari are particularly sensitive to sound and suffer an increased vulnerability to sonic attacks (+ 50% damage)
- Racial Feats – A Lupaari gains feats according to its class levels
- Automatic Languages: Common and Lupaari.
- Favored Class: Ranger
- Level Adjustment— +0

Tabreen

Tabreen, 1st level Warrior

Medium Monstrous Humanoid (Tabreen)

Hit Dice: 1d8 (5 hp)

Size: Medium

Type: Monstrous Humanoid

Initiative: +1

Speed and Movement type: 40 ft (8 squares)

Armor Class: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 natural)

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+2

Attack: Dagger +2 melee (1d4+1/19-20x2) or short spear +0 melee (1d6+1/x2) or composite shortbow +2 ranged (1d6/x3)

Full Attack: Dagger +2 melee (1d4+1/19-20x2) or short spear +0 melee (1d6+1/x2) or composite shortbow +2 ranged (1d6/x3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft/5 ft

Special Attacks: Nil

Special Qualities: Darkvision, +2 racial bonus to Listen, Spot, and Search checks

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10

Skills: Jump +3, Listen +2, Search +2, Spot +2, Tumble +3

Feats: Weapon Finesse

Environment: Warm jungles and hills

Organization: Hunting party (2-5), patrol (3-6 plus 1 leader of 3rd-5th level) or pride (30-100 plus 25% non-combatants plus 1 3rd level sergeant per 10 adults, 5 5th level lieutenants, 3 7th level captains and a 10th level matriarch)

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually Chaotic Good

Advancement: By Character Class

Level Adjustment: +0

Background: One of the Mageborn races, the Tabreen are a race of slender and lithe cat-like humanoids, slightly shorter than the average human (4 ½ - 5 ½ feet tall), with short body fur, feline tails, retractable claws and feline facial features, including ears. The fur color varies by subtype. They make their homes in the rich jungles and verdant hills of central Hur'Resa, isolated from much of the outside world. They are consummate hunters and trackers, and skilled craftsmen.

It is only in the last year that the Tabreen have begun trading openly with other races, allowing limited contact with explorers and traders within their jungle homes and visiting the outside world themselves. In spite of their isolation, the Tabreen are not 'ignorant natives'. They are intelligent and highly perceptive, with a complex and highly developed society. They are exceedingly careful in their dealings with other races, and are difficult to take advantage of. They permit visitors only on limited terms, and do not allow the careless pillaging of their land's resources. They tend to be more receptive to demihumans than humans, but deal with each culture based upon its own merits.

Within their own communities most Tabreen wear only loincloths (all) and halter tops (females), but those traveling among other races generally prefer to adopt the regional clothing, to better fit in. Often when first traveling among strangers Tabreen will cloak themselves to disguise their unusual features. Thus garbed, they can be difficult to distinguish from other slender humanoids.

Tabreen society consists of matriarchal prides, with all of the prides overseen by a single Leonar Queen. Each pride consists primarily of a single sub-race, though individuals of other sub-races may be found. The sub-races are not capable of inter-breeding, nor can they interbreed with other humanoids.

Tabreen speak their own language and Sylvan. Many also speak Common.

Sub-Races:

Tagari—Tagari Tabreen have tanned skin, gold eyes, reddish or blonde hair and orange-brown fur with black stripes.

Jagaeru—Jagaeru Tabreen have lightly tanned skin, brown eyes, and tawny fur patterned with black spots

Leonar—Leonar Tabreen have lightly tanned skin, amber eyes, and tawny fur. Females have blonde or light brown hair. Males tend to have darker hair, which they wear long.

Panteran—Panteran Tabreen are dark skinned, with rich black or very dark brown fur and hair and green eyes.

Combat: Tabreen are skilled and tireless hunters who take time to analyze their opponents, preferring to fight on their own terms, and using ambush and camouflage to their advantage.

Tabreen as Characters

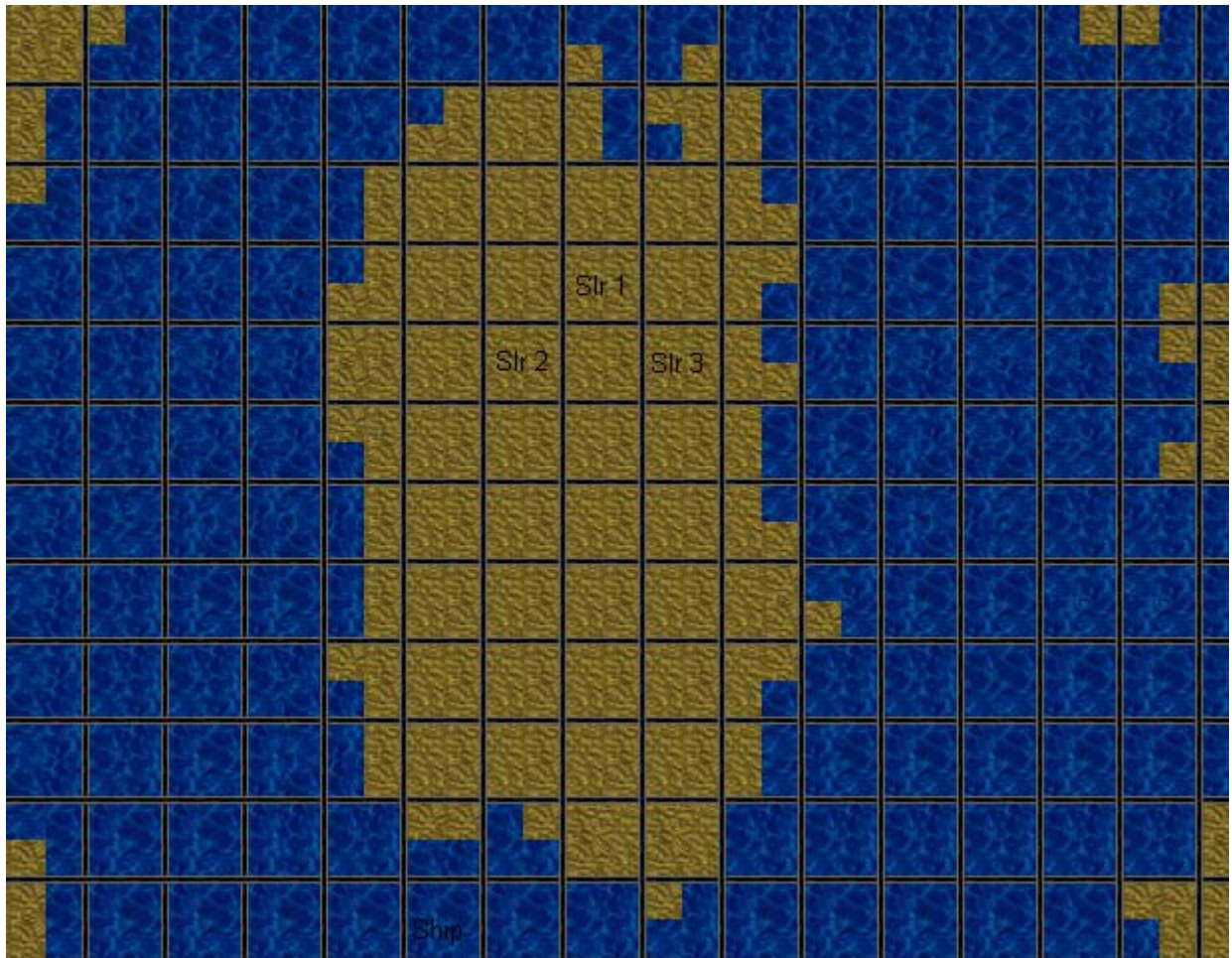
Tabreen characters possess the following racial traits.

- +1 Natural Armor bonus
- +2 Dex, -2 Strength
- Medium size
- Base land speed 40'. A Tabreen can only maintain this speed while wearing light or no armor. Speed is reduced to 30' when wearing medium armor.
- Attacks: by weapon type
- Darkvision
- +2 Racial bonus to Listen, Search, and Spot checks
- Tabreen are particularly sensitive to sound and suffer an increased vulnerability to sonic attacks (+ 50% damage)
- Racial Feats – A Tabreen gains feats according to its class levels
- Automatic Languages: Common and Tabreen
- Favored Class: Ranger or Druid (chosen at character creation)
- Level Adjustment— +0

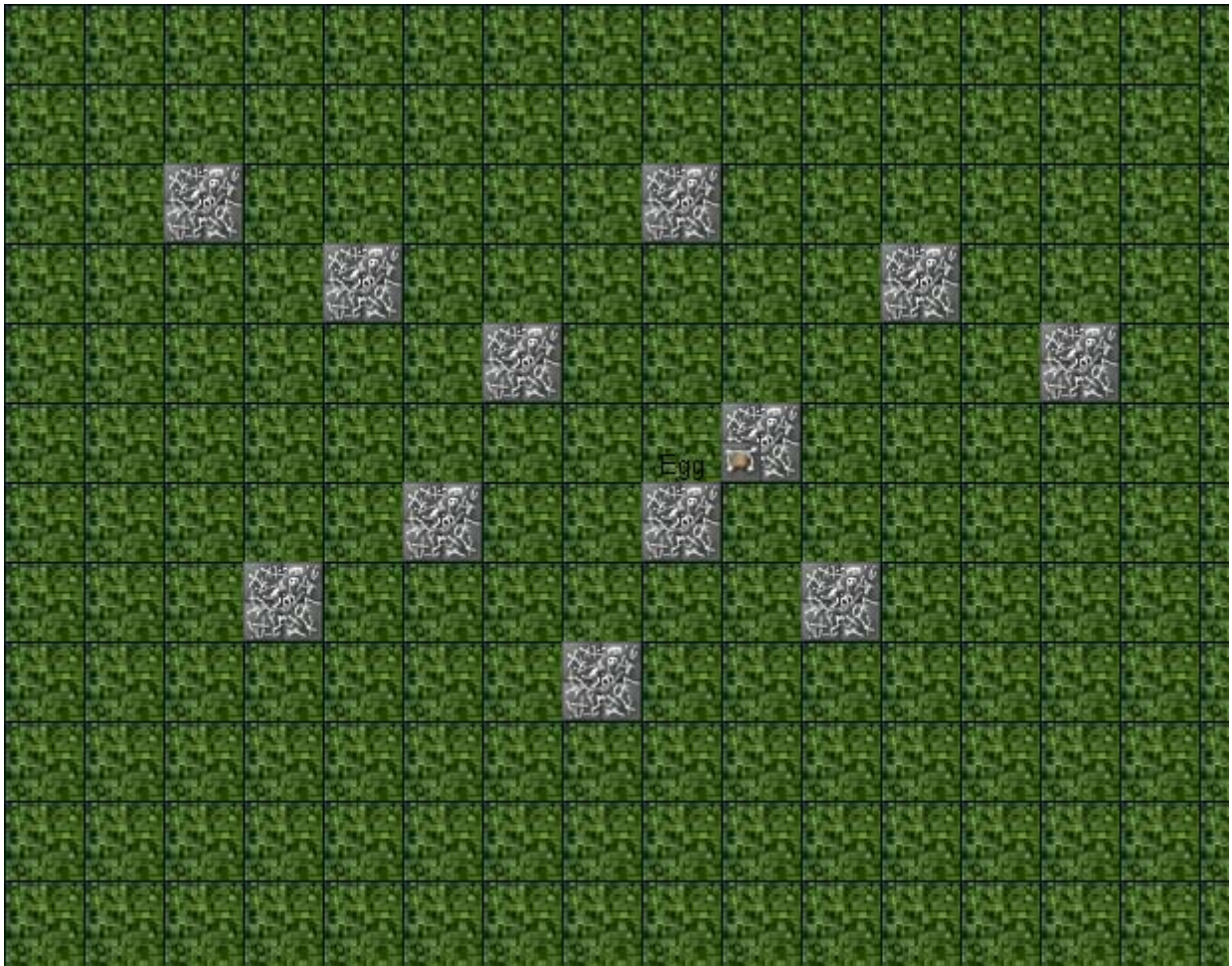
Tabreen Female, artwork by Jason Wu



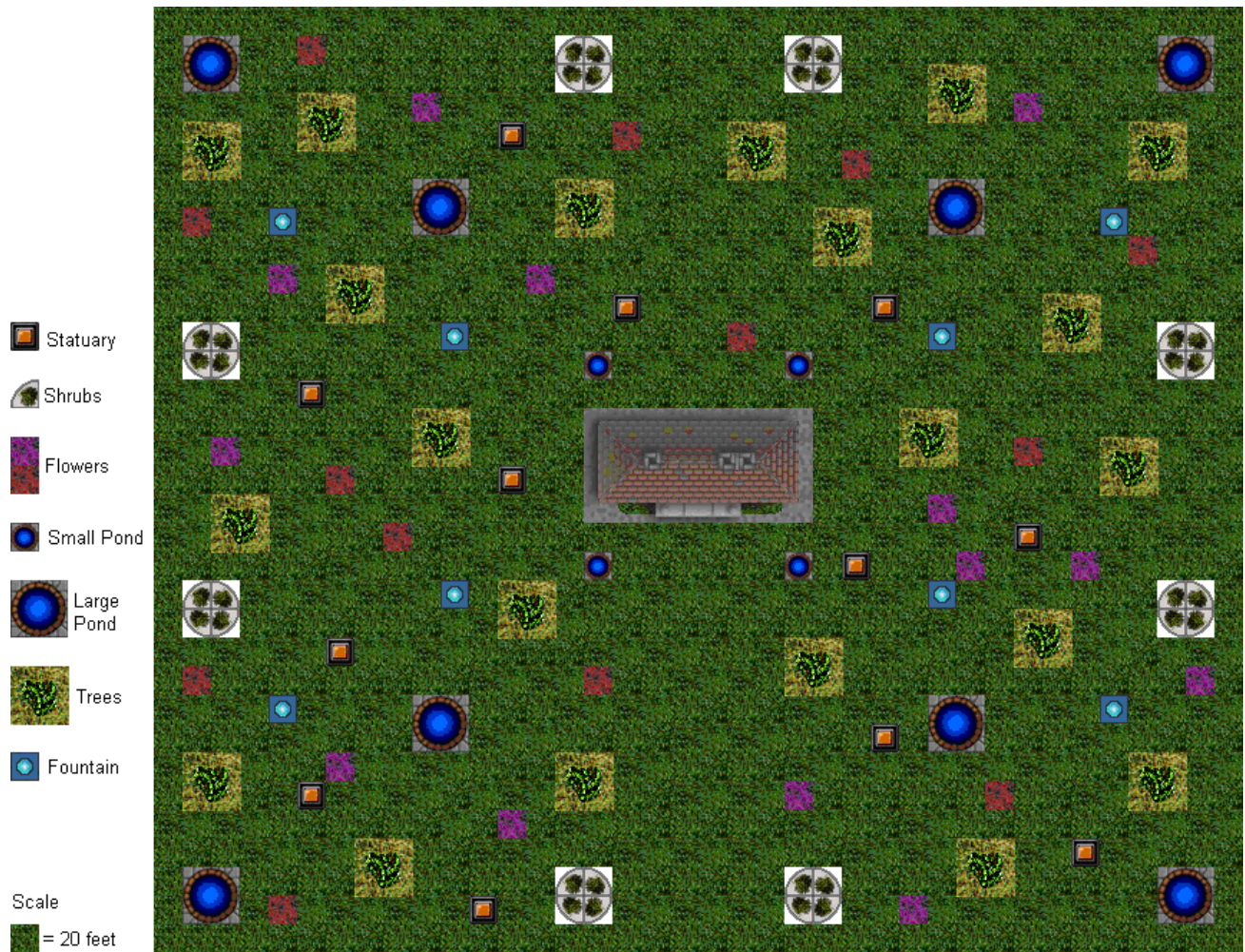
GM Aid # 4: Encounter 2a Map



GM Aid # 5: Encounter 4a Map



GM Aid # 6: Encounter 9 Exterior Map



GM Aid # 7: Encounter 9 Interior Map

Ground Floor



Menagerie



Critical Event Summary: Blood Brothers

1. Did the PCs penetrate Tariq Assan's disguise? Yes No
2. Did the PCs purchase the items from the merchant? Yes No
3. How did the PCs travel to Jadenpur?
 Sea [Encounter 2] Land [Encounter 3]
 Air [Encounter 4] Instantly [Encounter 5]
4. If the PCs traveled to Jadenpur by sea [Encounter 2] did they successfully rescue the stranded sailors? Yes No
5. If the PCs traveled to Jadenpur by land [Encounter 3] did they answer the riddle of the sphinx? Yes No
6. If the PCs traveled to Jadenpur by air [Encounter 4] did they rescue the griffons' egg?
 Yes No
7. Did the heroes recover the Pride's Quest in Jadenpur harbor? Yes No
8. Did the PCs treat the Lupaari and Tabreen with courtesy and respect? Yes No
9. Did the PCs free any of the other creatures in the bestiary? Yes No
10. Note any other important information on the back of this form (PC arrests, etc.).

Return this form to: David Santana, 736 East 9th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11230, or by e-mail to lsj-plots@theshiningjewel.com

Please send completed form to:
 David Santana, 736 East 9th
 Street, Brooklyn, NY 11230, or
 email to
 lsj-
 roster@theshiningjewel.com.



Roster of Heroes: Blood Brothers

Judge Name: _____

Convention: _____

Date: _____

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____

Email address: _____ (optional)

Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____

Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____

Special items or comments: _____

Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____

Email address: _____ (optional)

Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____

Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____

Special items or comments: _____

Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____

Email address: _____ (optional)

Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____

Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____

Special items or comments: _____

Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____

Email address: _____ (optional)

Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____

Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____

Special items or comments: _____

Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____

Email address: _____ (optional)

Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____

Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____

Special items or comments: _____

Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____

Email address: _____ (optional)

Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____

Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____

Special items or comments: _____

Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0 Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document, Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, Andy Collins, David Noonan, Rich Redman, Bruce R. Cordell; based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

The Raian Pantheon Primer, Copyright 2006, The Shining Jewel LLC; Authors Jay Fisher, Andrew Hauptman, and Cynthia Wood, with additional deity name contributions from Linda Baldwin, James Francis, Michael Sitts, and Catie Straiton.

The Raian City Primer, Copyright 2006, The Shining Jewel LLC; Authors Dan Cooper and Jay Fisher.

The Raian World Primer, Copyright 2006, The Shining Jewel LLC; Authors Catie Straiton and Gaylord Tang.

Blood Brothers, Copyright 2007, The Shining Jewel LLC, Author Catie Straiton.