

# ~Scions of Adartu~

## ~Swords and Secrets in Dipur~

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### **Overview**

The characters are caught up in a plot to oust the Khazistani rulers from the city of Dipur. The plotters are the 'Scions of Adartu', a clandestine group who work towards the return of an exiled a Royal family. First, the characters must enter the deserted tower of a Sorcerer and then infiltrate the catacombs of the long abandoned temple of Baal Khardah to retrieve an ancient scroll. The situation becomes somewhat more complicated when the 'Kardeslik', agents of the Khazistani rulers, become involved. There are several characters and locations referred to in the adventure whose descriptions and statistics can be found in the PDFs for Dipur - Gateway to the East and Shadow of the Ragged King. Each of these is hosted by Morten/Thulsa on [xoth.net](http://xoth.net) publishing.

- *A Glossary can be found on the final pages of this adventure giving the names of all persons in the adventure, accompanied by a very brief description.*

### **THE BLOOD QUEEN OF ADARTU**

Lakarsha first reigned in Dipur some six hundred years ago, when it was still known as Adartu. The wife of King Jalmesh, she was a vain woman of middling years who desperately wished to regain the beauty she had been renowned for in her youth.

Her servants journeyed far and wide in search of an answer to this most pressing of issues and finally, one returned bearing some musty scrolls from a hidden temple on the mountain plateau of Ong.

These parchments, The Elder Scrolls of Xarozh, described a ritual that would grant her both eternal youth and beauty. She quite happily murdered the virgin girls that the ritual required, both bathing in and consuming their lifeblood to attain immortality. In doing so, she achieved what she sought but became something less than human in the process, a blood drinking demon who would go on to murder her own husband and steal the crown of Adartu for herself.

She was feared and worshipped as a Goddess of Blood and Death, to the consternation of the Cult of Baal Khardah who found that their power was greatly diminished in Adartu.

The monstrous sacrifices of young virgins continued, fuelling the Dark Queen's undying beauty and the folk of Adartu became notorious as slave raiders, desperately trying to appease their undying ruler. The victims of her unnatural thirst were doomed to return from beyond the grave as flesh eating revenants, destined to serve their mistress in perpetuity and the palace, on it's rocky perch, became a place of blood soaked nightmare.

Lakarsha had ruled for almost three hundred years when the priests of Baal Khardah finally ended her reign as Blood Queen. Her place in the crypt of her murdered husband had lain vacant for centuries and the Priests of the Sun God had secretly excavated a further chamber behind it. They stormed the Royal Palace and put her mortal followers to the sword before dealing with such ghoulish spawn as she had created. Finally, they imprisoned the Queen herself within a stone sarcophagus, a slim skewer of silver hammered through her heart to keep her pinned in place while they worked potent sorceries to imprison her. Finally the casket was sealed with molten silver and a fake sarcophagus and body placed in the outer part of the tomb. The fake sarcophagus was likewise sealed with silver and etched with fake copies of the sorcerous wards that held the undead Queen captive.

Scions of the Line of Tamnesh since the Sack of Adartu

King Nahaburam(Died at the Battle of the Oxartus), Queen Naramuti(Fled with children)

King Nabaram. The First Exile King married Princess Golamar of Belthaar

King Golkaram. The Second Exile King married Princess Belteshi of Hamgatana

King Golkaresh. The Third and 'current' Exile King is unmarried and with no successor.

### ***THE EXILE KING***

A hundred years have passed since the Battle of the Oxartus River and the death of King Nahaburam of Adartu. Queen Naramuti fled with her infant child Naharam, over the Kharjah Pass, to the city of Belthaar and the protection of her brother, King Golshattar. She assumed for her son, the title of Exile King and until the day she died, she sponsored revolts and plots against the Khazistanis who had dared to rename her City of Adartu as Dipur.

Three generations have passed and the Khazistanis yet rule in Adartu. Golkaresh, the great grandson of Queen Naramuti and as yet unmarried, holds the title of the current Exile King. His cousin, King Simashattar is becoming increasingly agitated by the presence of Golkaresh in his city. He is currently involved in a war with the cities of Zhaol and Ghezath and rumours of an impending invasion by the Khazistanis are rife. Golkaresh fears that his royal cousin 'might' just sell him to the Khazistanis in order to avert, or at least delay, such an event. He has already made an approach for sanctuary to another cousin, King Baalturam of Hamgatana. Baalturam, however, has his own problems with the threat of expansionist Taraam and does not wish to invite the enmity of Khazistan as well. Thus Golkaresh's plea has been refused and the Exile King faces the very real prospect of being left without sanctuary.

Twenty years have passed since his father, Golkaram, planned and executed the successful assassination of the Khazistani Satrap of Dipur through his agents, the Scions of Adartu. The popular uprising that was supposed to accompany this action was poorly supported and sporadic. The Black Guard and Khazistani Lancers swept through the city streets, leaving that rising in tattered bloody ruins. Now Golkaram, like his grandfather before him, has gone to the afterlife and every plot contrived since then has been an abject failure, the plotters meeting a grisly fate in the Square of the Grand Souk, torn asunder by wild horses.

The recent arrival of Narek Ghul at the court in Belthaar has given the Exile King new hope. Even if this newcomer's plans seem tinged with madness, Golkaresh has reached the point of desperation and is willing to throw in his lot with the Sorcerer.

## ***THE NECROMANCER***

Many years before our tale begins, a youth named Valni was made apprentice to a sorcerer of Dipur named Xantalos. This sorcerer, a Lamuran, made his home in a high tower of green stone, surrounded by a walled garden that lay on the edge of the Square of the Grand Souk. He was greatly feared by the folk of the city and they avoided the tower and his garden as much as was humanly possible.

An orphan and street urchin, desperation had led Valni to attempt to plunder the wealth of the Sorcerer's tower. He had been captured by the demonic guardians of the tower and only the misanthropic Sorcerer's need for a servant had given the boy's life some worth.

For more than a decade Valni served Xantalos as an errand boy and cook, gleaned some little knowledge and skill from merely observing his master. Finally, the old man noticed Valni's aptitude for the dark arts and his, decades long, training as an apprentice began.

Xantalos had long been researching the legend of Lakarsha, the Blood Queen of Adartu, when one day he suddenly packed a satchel and departed the city with his apprentice in tow. The Sorcerer had finally deduced the whereabouts of the fragments of the Elder Scrolls of Xarozh and was setting off to obtain the first of them from the Great Temple of Baal Khardah in Hamgatana.

The Lamuran perished in his attempt to obtain the fragment, slain by the warrior priests of that temple, but the devious Valni managed to evade a similar fate to his master and escaped with the ancient manuscript still intact.

A second fragment of the ancient manuscript was known to have been passed down through the generations of the Royal Line of Tamnesh Adartu and thus it was that Valni journeyed to Belthaar to seek an audience with Golkareh. He assumed the name Narek Ghul and convinced the Exile King that he should part with the scroll, claiming that he had no desire for temporal power and wished only to study the secrets therein. In return for the use of his fragment, Narek Ghul claimed that he would use the Blood Queen as a weapon to oust the Khazistani invaders and return Golkareh to his rightful place upon the throne of Adartu. Golkareh knew full well the legend of his ancestor and secretly dreaded what might happen upon her return, but Narek Ghul was persuasive and managed to convince him that as a master of the Necromantic arts, he possessed the power and ability to bend Lakarsha to his will.

## ***PROPOSED ADVENTURE PATH***

### *Scene 1)*

The adventure will commence in the Square of the Grand Souk in the city of Dipur. It is Market day and the square is thronged with people. The PCs are taking in the sights and sounds of the square and they are likely to encounter Farozh the Madman (see his description in Dipur- Gateway to the East).

They are hailed by Rostam Baros, the barber surgeon. He is looking for men to help out an associate of his to carry out a rather delicate and somewhat dangerous job and they (The PCs) look like exactly the fellows he needs.

As they are talking, a group of masked men burst into his tent. There is one for each of the player characters and another for Rostam Baros.

After the fight, Rostam compliments them on their skill and tells them that they should meet with a man named Jarku at the Inn of the Gilded Palm that evening. Then he tells them to make themselves scarce. The Black Guard will be along promptly and he can most likely get himself, but not necessarily them, out of trouble.

The attackers are hired thugs, sent by Arbeletu, to kill Rostam for selling information to Lady Miru of the Kardeslik. (Use Jahwar's Thugs stat block from 'The Necromancer's Knife' in SGB). It should be noted that Rostam has no idea who the Kardeslik are, or even of their existence. He simply sells tidbits of information to a courtesan named 'Lady Miru' and believes that she requires it for purposes of blackmail. Why else would a wealthy courtesan require such knowledge? Arbeletu does not believe that the Barber is not involved with the Kardeslik and is hell bent on his demise.

## *Scene 2)*

At the inn of the Gilded Palm the characters find themselves fawned over by a pretty, plump and rather buxom serving wench named Arbeletu. Observant characters will notice that they are being glared at by a 'down at heel' looking Susrahnite in faded merchant garb. The fellow is Dalram Baal, brother of a wealthy local merchant, but who has fallen upon hard times.

If they sit in the taproom, they will witness a slightly overweight Susrahnite remonstrating with several villainous looking Zorabis about their presence. While nothing to do with this adventure, this little tableau might serve to introduce the proprietor, Aram Anshal, to the characters and lead to a potential introduction to Haram Baal(The Shadow of the Ragged King) or Borak Cham(Dipur:Gateway to the East)

If they find themselves in the dining room they are likely to observe a beautiful, dark haired, woman dining alone. A stocky Nabastissean looms in the background. (These are Lady Miru and Dolthas, her bodyguard and occasional lover.) Observant characters may notice that the woman seems more interested in the goings on around her than in her meal and that she, in turn is being watched closely by the rather buxom serving wench. As soon as she realises that Arbeletu is watching her, Lady Miru rises and throws several silver coins onto the table before departing hastily.(Lady Miru is an agent of the Satrap's Mother and actively working against the Scions of Adartu. Although she has no further role to play in this adventure, her stats and those of her bodyguard are provided.)

A man in tatty brown robes and a wide brimmed straw hat sits alone in a dark corner of the Taproom, curiously avoided by all others. This is Narek Ghul, the Necromancer. He will not make contact with the characters before Jarku has met with them and assessed their suitability for the task at hand.

It is at this point that Jarku will arrive. He has been briefed by Rostam as to whom he is to meet. He tells the characters that he is acting as a procurer of services for a wealthy patron and they have been highly recommended to him by Rostam Baros. His patron needs to hire men to enter the Garden of Xantalos and break into the Sorcerer's tower to remove any guardians that remain within. Narek Ghul wishes to claim the tower for his own, but the previous resident was rumoured to be a Necromancer of great power. If they prove up to the task, further employment awaits them for the same patron with a pouch containing 50 gold coins each as their payment.

If the characters can enter the tower, search it thoroughly and survive encounters with the remaining guardians, they will find Narek Ghul waiting outside for them with their payment. This is to provide a test of their capabilities and to leave the Tower suitable for habitation by it's new master.

## *Scene 3)*

After leaving the tower, the characters follow Narek Ghul back to the Gilded Palm where they are taken into the cellars to attend a secret meeting of the Scions of Adartu. It is at this point that they find that they are to be initiated into the group. Fate however has a further hand to play.

The roles played by the main NPCs will become readily apparent as Arbeletu leads the group to reaffirm their vows of loyalty to the Exile King and secrecy. Jarku glares at Dalram malevolently and he, in turn, glares at any PC who may have taken Arbeletu's fancy. There are roughly a score of young men gathered in the cellar to hear the latest commands of the Exile King, as delivered to them by his messenger, the sorcerer Narek Ghul.

The characters may well be very unhappy about having to join this organisation, they know nothing about it after all. They need not fear though, because the 'cavalry'(of sorts) is about to arrive.

Just as the characters are informed that they too will have to be initiated as members of the Scions and take the 'Oath of the Bloody Red Hand', the meeting is interrupted by the news that the Black Guard have surrounded the Gilded Palm.

Most of the Scions charge up the stairs into the inn and a bloody fight ensues as the Black Guard attempt to force their way inside. Arbeletu, Dalram, Jarku, Narek Ghul, the characters and several others depart the cellar by means of the secret passage that leads into Jamukha's Ostlery.

However, it soon becomes clear that there are Watchmen stationed all around and any escape will probably involve having to fight a number of them.

A patrol of five guardsmen will intervene as the group exits Jamukha's Stables and they will have to be dealt with quickly, before they can raise the alarm and alert a further two patrols who rush to their aid from nearby.

The characters should be urged not to become embroiled in a stand up fight at this point. They are horribly outnumbered by the watchmen and are likely be killed or captured as further patrols arrive to support their fellows. The statistics for the Black Guard can be found in the PDF for Dipur - Gateway to the East.

#### *Scene 4)*

In the shadowy alleys of the Dives, the small group of fugitives huddle and wait for the hue and cry to abate. It is the dead of night and Narek Ghul has convinced the remnant of the Scions that they must carry out the Exile King's plans this very night. By morning, the Khazistanis will have tortured their identities out of any prisoners from the Gilded Palm and if the characters want to be paid, then they too will have to comply. Much to his annoyance, Arbeletu insists that Dalram and she will also enter the Temple of Baal Khardah. Jarku will return to watch the Gilded Palm and seek to contact any others who might have avoided capture. Although jealous that Arbeletu has chosen Dalram to accompany her into the temple, his sense of self preservation makes him amenable to the plan.

There are five Back Guards (a standard watch patrol from Dipur - Gateway to the East), guarding the main entrance to the Temple. They are not particularly observant and a couple of them are dozing on the steps of the great pyramid. Attempts to sneak up on them are quite Simple(+20%).

Fights between the various gangs of the city are commonplace in the Square of the Grand Souk. Even the great plaza before the Temple of Baal Khardah has seen it's fair share of nocturnal strife. Any struggle that involves the characters will not attract any more than momentary notice from others in the immediate vicinity, before they decide that it is none of their business. Although the characters will not be aware of this, it will be dawn before a relief patrol discovers the bodies(or lack thereof) at the Temple entrance and raises the alarm.

## **WHAT COMES AFTER...**

Depending on the needs and wishes of the Gamesmaster for his Adventure or Campaign, entering the Temple of Baal Khardah and its crypts could produce all manner of dire consequences for the player characters.

Releasing the Blood Queen from her torpor is the endgame for the Scions of Adartu and despite the obvious madness of such a course of action, everything they do will be aimed towards advancing this cause. Killing Lakarsha at this point will be difficult, but not impossible and will certainly be easier to do than if and when she eventually recovers her sanity.

Narek Ghul cares not whether the quest to resurrect the Blood Queen succeeds or fails. Should she be slain, he will be delighted as long as he can get his gnarled hands on the last fragment of the Elder Scrolls of Xarozh. If she survives he truly believes that he can control her, for a time, so long as his hirelings can keep her occupied long enough for him to employ his magicks.

Should he be successful in both raising and controlling the Blood Queen, he returns to the Tower of Xantalos and sets about duplicating the ritual from the Elder Scrolls of Xarozh.

The characters will then be tasked with delivering the news of Lakarsha's resurrection to Golkareh. King Simashattar III will be overjoyed to learn that his cousin will be leaving Belthaar and will reward them handsomely for delivering the happy tidings.

They may well now have to escort the now somewhat reticent King Golkareh back to Adartu/Dipur and an unknown fate at the hands of his risen ancestor.

The Vizier, Wo Peng, has consecrated his own place of power in the abandoned temple. Anyone who touches the Jade Dragon statuette will release the guardian and will have a serious problem their hands.

If they somehow defeat the guardian, the statuette will reappear. If picked up again, it will collapse into a mound of green dust that stains the thief's hands indelibly. This will alert Wo Peng and Ku Kao Chou to the fact that their temple is compromised. They will most likely blame the treacherous Azam (see the Shadow of the Ragged King) and will immediately set out to have the Khazrajite murdered. Balchak's Black Guard will be ordered to scour the city to locate and detain a man with green hands.

Should the characters be foolish enough to linger within the temple or crypts after the sun rises, the dead, or missing, guards will have been discovered. The characters will have to face down scores of Khazistani soldiers as the Kardeslik, under the Lady Ekrimala, swarm into the temple to deal with the remaining Scions of Adartu. Fortunately, there is a second, as yet, undiscovered secret passage leading from the catacombs to a small cave near the banks of the Oxartus river. This was the escape route used by the Priesthood and the Royal family when they abandoned Adartu to go into exile a century earlier.

Following the night's events, surviving members of the Scions of Adartu are rounded up and incarcerated beneath the Black Kasbah to await their eventual execution. Jarku will keep a low profile for a time before resuming his business as a lotus peddler. He seems to have avoided the attentions of the Kardeslik for the time being, or has he possibly cut a deal to keep his freedom?

## ***The Sign of the Gilded Palm***

The Street of the Desert Gate is the main thoroughfare from the Desert Gate to the Square of the Grand Souk. In the daylight hours it is thronged with travellers, traders and farmers, making their way to the Square from villages of the Oxartus valley.

The Gilded Palm, located on the Street of the Desert Gate, was once renowned as the finest establishment in all of Dipur. The owner and head cook is Aram Anshal, a Susrahnite and a close personal friend of Haram Baal(see *The Shadow of a Ragged King*). Such is its reputation that wealthy travellers are, or at least were, happy to pay over the odds to sample the culinary delights on offer here.

The truth is that the inn's fortunes are now very much in decline. The frescoes upon the interior walls are old and faded and it has been several years since the outer walls have seen a coat of whitewash. The whole place has an air of faded splendour about it, even the bronze fixtures have greened with age and the gold leaf has been picked off. The staff has been reduced to four employees and these have not seen pay in months.

The inn can cater for up to a dozen guests at any time, though these days Aram is lucky to have a half that number at any given time. The quality of the food has declined as Aram uses cheaper sources, lesser cuts of meat and skimps on portions. To make matters worse, there are always several Zorabi rogues sitting in the Taproom, looking suspicious and making the clientele ill at ease.

Aram has an agreement with Jamukha the Ostler, whose stables lie directly behind the inn. A night's stay at the Gilded Palm thus includes stabling and fodder for a single steed or camel. A number of young Susrahmites have taken to holding meetings in the cellar of the Gilded Palm. They are the sons of local merchants and Aram has been led to believe that they are forming a Mercantile Cartel. He does not know that they are, in fact, seditious rebels. He is unaware that Arbeletu, his maid, is their leader and that the handful of staff who have remained are actually loyal to her and not him. Still, they pay in silver and Aram does not question their need for secrecy. A secret tunnel has been excavated, without Aram Anshal's knowledge. It leads from the cellar and surfaces in one of the horse stalls of Jamukha's Ostlery. Jamukha, a native of Sarnad, has been paid well, in Susrahnite gold, for his silence.

## ***The Tower of Xantalos***

Narek Ghul has no interest whatsoever in the aspirations of the Scions but believes that these loyal servants of the Exile King may prove useful to his schemes at a later time.

His scheme is to recruit a motley assortment of adventurers to help him gain access to the Tower of Xantalos. He is aware that the tower is trapped and that its guardians, if they are yet bound there, are likely to be ravenous. This test is merely to check the suitability of the characters for the main part of his plot, which is to gain access to the Catacombs beneath the Temple of Baal Khardah and locate the lost crypt of Lakarsha.

Once Narek Ghul has assessed the abilities of the characters, he will make further plans with the Scions. Their leader, Arbeletu, will make arrangements for her followers to distract the Black Guards on watch at the Temple of Baal Khardah to allow the characters and the Necromancer to gain entrance.

Narek Ghul never reveals that he once resided in the tower but, instead, pretends that he has merely heard that it was once the abode of a powerful magician, but is now long abandoned. He tells the Player Characters of great wealth and knowledge that is rumoured to lie within, waiting for those with the wit and courage to enter the tower and obtain it.

The tower itself looms over the southern edge of the Plaza of Baal Khardaah. It is over a hundred and fifty feet tall and constructed of green stone. Local legends have it that the sorcerer who dwelt within was a demonologist and necromancer of great power, who summoned forth the Ifreeti of the mountains to build the tower in the space of a single night. There are none left alive in Dipur who are aged enough to confirm or deny this local legend.

The high wall that surrounds both tower and garden is, likewise, constructed of the same green stone. The wall is some twelve feet high, its parapet three feet wide. Those attempting to scale the wall will find its surface to be glassy and lacking in toe or hand holds. It would be a difficult Athletics Test (-20%) to scale it without the aid of an accomplice or appropriate climbing gear.

Ne'er do wells dare not even approach the walls since the disappearance of Útesh the Silvertongued, a master thief who had bragged of how he would enter the tower to obtain both its secrets and its treasures.

People tend to walk on the other side of the street as they pass the garden wall. There are whispers that the garden itself hungers and that it sends vines like ropey tendrils over the wall, in the dead of night, to snatch up any unwitting drunk that strays too close. Many folk know of someone who has witnessed this very occurrence. Actually finding someone who has witnessed this first hand is a different matter entirely.

A) The gardens behind the wall are overgrown, the trees choked with vines and creepers, its pathways blocked by thorny briars. Although these may present some minor obstacle to intruders, they are of no danger beyond the scratches of a few thorns and the fear of possible poisoning. The skeletal remains of a man lies amidst the brambles on the path to the tower, its clothing ragged and rotting. The bony fingers are festooned with rings of silver and gold and a curved dagger is clutched in the right hand.

These are the remains of Útesh, a thief who attempted to enter the Tower and was bitten by a Jadebacked Cobra, a perfectly natural but deadly denizen of the Garden of Xantalos.

The truth of the matter is that the stories regarding the garden are without foundation. There are neither supernatural entities nor man eating plants among the horticultural denizens of the garden. The tales of snaking tendrils snatching drunks from benighted streets are wildly imaginative but completely untrue. Even the scratching thorns that the characters may have some concerns about are merely a harmless nuisance.

## **JADEBACKED COBRA**

- ***The Jadebacked Cobra is a standard Venomous Snake as found in the Monsters of Legend publication.***

### **THE LOWER LEVEL OF THE TOWER**

The lower part of the tower is squat and copper domed, about twenty yards high and of a similar diameter. The walls of the keep are of the same green stone as the wall that surrounds the garden. Two rows of narrow, night black, window slits at roughly thirty and forty feet above the ground circle the building. The lower windows open into the cavernous lower hall and the upper windows, into the living quarters. An open topped and crenellated bastion extends a further five yards from the eastern wall, overlooking the Square of the Grand Souk. Reaching the windows or the bastion will be no mean feat without the appropriate climbing gear and will require a Formidable Athletics Test(-80%) to scale the tower's smoothed and polished surface.

Attempting to gain access to the tower through the window slits will not be easy. They are extremely narrow and only unarmoured characters of size 14 or less will be able to squeeze through to the interior.

Above the dome, the tower extends another thirty yards to the pointed tip of a copper spired minaret. The same blackened window slits dot the walls of the tower and surround the minaret.

At the base of the tower, at its southern face, lies the main entrance. A door of imported hardwood, carved with the leering faces of demons, blocks the portal. There is a keyhole and a heavy door ornament, cast in bronze to appear as the many eyed head of a spider acts as the knocker.

(The keyhole may be picked. The door is not magically sealed but it does require a successful Mechanisms roll(Hard -40%) to pick the lock.)

Depending on whether the attempt to enter the Tower of Xantalos is made during daylight hours or in the dead of night will determine the visibility within.

Little light enters through the window slits, even in daylight(-40%) and it is pitch black within during the hours of darkness(-60%).

The adventure assumes a night time entrance and the characters will most likely require a light source in order to function with any degree of competence, once within. Brass lanterns are hung upon the walls but the oil is long since degraded to the point of being useless.

Immediately beyond the door is a 10ft square flagstone platform. To the west of the platform, a flight of stone steps descends as it follows the curve of the wall to the packed earth floor of a pit some fifteen feet below. The floor is littered with old bones, picked clean of any and all meat. Although some of these are the skeletal remains of vermin, they are mostly the remains of adult human beings. In the days before Xantalos abandoned his tower, these remains could have been animated to create up to a score of skeletal guardians. The walls of the pit have several weapons racks attached. These are hung with bronze swords, greened with verdigris.

Assuming that the characters have a source of light, they can see quite easily that a second platform juts out from the eastern wall of the tower. It is reached by a flight of stone steps on its northern side. A wooden door is set into the wall near the base of the steps. Beyond this door, a switchback flight of steps leads down to the cellars and dungeons.

It is here, in the main chamber of the lower tower, that the guardian is to be found.

## **SPIDER FIEND**

As well as studying necromancy, Xantalos was also a devotee of the cult of Yot Kammoth and a demonologist of some ability. Before leaving to search for the fragments of the Scrolls of Xarozh, he bound a spider demon as guardian of his tower. This spider fiend remains there to this day, feeding on vermin and the rare intruder that dares to enter.

The creature has spun a massive web that fills the vaulted upper spaces of the main entrance hall and spends most of its time lurking there.

The creature has a torso as big as a horse and each of its eight legs is longer than a man is tall. It is jet black in colour with multiple eyes that glitter green when light hits them.

The creature will leap down from the darkness to strike from ambush if given the opportunity.

- ***Stats for the Spider Fiend are those of the Medium Giant Spider from Monsters of Legend except that it should have an additional 2 pts of armour on each location to reflect its demonic heritage.***

## **THE UPPER LEVELS OF THE TOWER**

The upper levels of the tower are accessed by a flight of carved steps of green stone. These steps spiral up to a wide landing with a broad central pillar. A door leads into the interior of the pillar and a final flight of steps that spirals up to the summoning room and the shrine to Yot Kammoth that lies in the minaret, far above the city streets. All internal doors are constructed of green stained hardwood and furnished in bronze. They are all locked and will require a success on a Routine Mechanisms Test to open them.

Both the stairs to the lower and upper levels of the tower are trapped with mundane traps. The first trap is on the thirteenth step from the top of the lower flight of stairs. It can be spotted with a Difficult(-20%) Perception Test and then disarmed with a Routine Mechanisms Test. This trap looses a flight of 4 small darts at the person who sets it off. Once these darts were poisoned but time has rendered the venom impotent. This trap is little more than an irritant. Each dart does D2 damage to a random location.

The second and much more dangerous trap is on the landing of the floor where Cantalos' living quarters were located. The 5ft square area marked with a C) in the middle of the landing is actually a pit where the floor will fall away to deposit any unwary trespassers into the web of the Spider Fiend, some 10 feet below. A bronze winch upon the wall of the central column is the only obvious clue. Winding this winch using a Routine Athletics Test will return the floor to its previous position. If the winch is somehow jammed, it will prevent the trap from being sprung.

A Hard(-40%) Perception Test is needed to spot the pit trap. If noticed and avoided, a Very Easy(+60%) Mechanisms Test can be used to disarm it.

The fall into the spiders web will cause no damage but will mean that an Athletics Test must be succeeded at each round as one of the trapped Character's Combat Actions to enable that character to act with his other actions. Thus is a major problem if the characters have not already dealt with the Spider Fiend.

Area D) An ornate, high backed, chair and a polished wooden lectern are the only contents of this room. Further investigation will reveal that there is a circular hole in the seat of the chair and that a small brass bucket is placed beneath it. No one has lived in the tower for years and the bucket is empty.

Area E) Dusty wooden shelves line the walls of this room. Leather bound books and scroll cases are crammed onto the shelves. None of these are mystical tomes. There are the history books and treatises that Xantalos studied in his efforts to locate the Elder Scrolls of Xarozh. The books here are worth 5000 Gold Coins, a Prince's Ransom, if they can be removed and a suitable purchaser located.

A heavy wooden desk and chair sit in the middle of the room atop an old and threadbare rug that is of Taraamite origin.

Area F) A door leads from the library into a room wherein sits a wooden bed and a chest of drawers with an ornate, silver framed, mirror atop it. There is little of any interest in this room.

Area G) the door to this chamber is locked with a far superior lock than those on the other doors of this level. It will require a successful Hard(-40%) Mechanisms Test to gain entrance to this room. This is the treasure chamber of Xantalos. A fortune in green gems, gold and silver is strewn about the floor of this room. The characters are likely to try grab a handful of gems and coins for their trouble. Narek Ghul will have little concern about this and fully expects the characters to do so. A secret door allows exit to the central landing. It can be spotted with a Hard(-40%) Perception Test. The secret door cannot be accessed from the landing.

Area H) An empty room.

Area I) This was once the sleeping quarters and study for Xantalos' young apprentice. It is empty save for a small wooden table, a three legged stool and a rickety cot bed. The interior walls are covered in scratch marks, mystical formulae and symbols, etched there in years past by Narek Ghul himself.

Area J) This small room contains a wooden plank with a hole in it. The bench sits upon two stone blocks and a small brass bucket is placed beneath the hole. No one has lived in the tower for years and the bucket is empty.

### ***The Dungeon Level***

Accessible through a wooden door and switchback stair, the dungeons of the tower are a further twenty feet below street level. The central area of the dungeon level contains a well. The entrance to the well is covered by a hinged bronze grate and locked with a deadbolt and padlock. The key to the padlock hangs upon a brass peg near the door of a small storeroom. The well itself drops a further ten feet down to a small stream that feeds the wells of the Square of the Grand Souk. There are also several cells. These contain nothing save for mouldering bones and bronze manacles attached to the walls. These poor fellows were bought by Xantalos from the Black Kasbah for sacrificial offerings to Yot Kammoth and simply left to starve to death when he departed to look for the Elder Scrolls of Xarozh.

### ***The Summoning Chamber***

Atop the tower, high above the city, is the copper domed minaret that was once the ritual summoning chamber of Xantalos and his shrine to Yot Kammoth. This chamber is accessed by a stairwell in the centre of the floor and is 30 feet across and a similar height to the highest point of the dome. Arched windows with copper lattices surround the chamber, their bases at a height of four feet from the floor. The floor is marked with mystical signs and symbols, a summoning circle to the west, a protective circle to the east. A green stone altar with a copper bowl and serrated knife sit to the north and a green stone post, topped by a large disc of jade, surmounted by a black spider symbol sits to the south.

## ***The Temple of Baal Khardah***

On the northern edge of a grand plaza, where the Street of the Desert Gate meets the Square of the Grand Souk, stands the abandoned Ziggurat of Baal Khardah. Following the slaughter of King Nahaburam and his army on the banks of the Oxartus, the cult fell into disfavour with such few nobles as remained in the city. The Sun God's few remaining followers retreated through secret ways and fled over the Kharjah Pass, accompanied by Queen Naramutu and the remnants of the Royal Family.

For almost a hundred years this temple has lain vacant, frequented only by pigeons and other vermin, its upper levels gathering dust, the frescoes cracked by the passage of time and defaced by occasional intruders. A patrol of the Black Guard maintain a vigil over the barricaded Temple entrance, by order of the Vizier. Invariably these are men of Captain Balchak's command. Their orders are that no one may enter, on pain of death.

There are boys from 'the Dives' who regard spending a night in the 'haunted temple' as a rite of passage and there remains yet the occasional thief who dreams of finding a forgotten cache of hidden treasure but, it is generally accepted that such treasures as were not carried off into exile by the priesthood were looted by the Khazistanis many years ago.

Access to the temple is via the ascension of a flight of steps up the side of the terraced pyramid. At the summit of the steps, the entrance to the temple has been barricaded with a wall of mud bricks (AP8, HP50). Beyond this wall, an aged brick walled tunnel leads into the darkness of the temple's interior.

The tunnel ends, after a short distance at a pair of Bronze portals. The portals are secured with a heavy iron chain and a large iron padlock. Beyond these lies the temple itself. The green coated remnant of a bronze chain and padlock lies discarded upon the floor of the main hallway. There are several side rooms, including a small shrine before a further doorway leads to a carved stone stair that curves down into the darkness.

At the foot of the stair, some 50 feet below the earth, a further pair of tall bronze portals hang askance upon broken hinges. These are greened with a patina of age and beyond them lies a long, pillared, chamber, 80 feet long by 30 feet wide. At the far end of the room are a second set of identical bronze portals. The pillars are of red sandstone from the Al Khazi desert and the floor is a mosaic of tiles depicting the Sun God in all his glory. Many of the small tiles that make up the mosaic are missing or broken. Similar frescoes adorn the walls of this great hall, faded by time or defaced by the invaders. A layer of dust coats the floor, disturbed by the passing of several sets of feet.

Beyond the second set of bronze portals is the shrine of Baal Khardah, where the old Kings of Adartu once came to make sacrifice. The great golden statue which sat proudly behind the stone altar was dragged off and melted down to pay the looters of the Khazistani horde. The marble plinth it sat upon is cracked and damaged. It is currently covered by a cloth of green silk, marked with strange sigils and inscriptions in some mystical language. A large pentagram, inside a circle, surrounded by a triangle has been painstakingly painted onto the flagstones. Strange mystical symbols are inscribed in regular patterns within the larger shapes.

A Jade Statuette of a Taikangese Dragon sits on the plinth, surrounded by silver candlesticks and assorted magical apparatus. The altar has channels carved into it which are stained brown with the blood of sacrificial victims.

The flooring of the shrine is of red sandstone flags, many of which are cracked or broken and the wall paintings are faded with age. The pillars that support the ceiling are of the same red sandstone as the flags.

- *Two archways, on opposite sides of the main chamber lead to a corridor that surrounds the the central chambers on three sides. The floors are red sandstone flags and the walls are of packed earth. More than a score of burial chambers are accessible by 5ft wide arched doorways. Each of the chambers contains the shattered remnants of stone sarcophagi that were smashed open by Khazistani looters. Bleached skulls, desiccated bones and mouldering cloth are strewn across the various floors but anything of worth is long since gone.*

One chamber contains a pair of smashed sarcophagi, but only the mouldering bones of a single corpse. One of the sarcophagi is the fake that was created to create a veil for Lakarsha's tomb. The other is empty, the remains of Lakarsha's husband, King Jalmesh having long since become dust. The chamber has a secret door built into the rear wall. It leads to the, as yet, undiscovered burial chamber of Lakarsha. Finding the secret door requires a Hard(-20%) Perception roll if a character is actively seeking it or a Formidable(-80%) to 'notice' something that leads to the doorway's discovery.

## **Lakarsha - Blood Queen of Adartu**

For almost three hundred years Lakarsha has lain in torpor, imprisoned in the pitch black of the crypts under the Temple of Baal Khardah. At first her mind was filled with nothing but hatred and thoughts of revenge but now the loneliness and incessant, maddening hunger, have all but shattered her sanity. If released, she will be a wild and feral thing, gaunt and emaciated, her urge to feed making her all but incapable of rational thought and only the employment of mighty sorceries might possibly restrain her.

The following stats reflect her in her newly awakened state. It is likely that if she is not dealt with immediately that she will eventually become a serious threat in the region, a beautiful, vampiric, witch queen. The Statistics for Int and Cha reflect Lakarsha when first awakened and after she has come to her senses.

Strength)	21	Combat actions.	3/4	1-3	Right leg	4/6
Constitution)	14	Strength Adj	+D4.	4-6	Left Leg	4/6
Size)	12	Improvement Adj	-1/+1	7-9	Abdomen	4/7
Intelligence)	6/20	Magic Points.	6/20	10-12	Chest	4/8
Power)	16	Movement	10m	13-15	Right Arm	4/5
Dexterity)	23	Strike Rank	15/22	16-18	Left Arm	4/5
Charisma).	6/18			19-20	Head	4/6

### **Common Skills.**

Athletics 75%, Brawn 73%, Evade 69%, Perception 80%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 70%, Stealth 80%, Unarmed 80%

### **Advanced Skills**

Survival 65%, Track 60%

### **Equipment - None**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Damage</b>	<b>AP/HP</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Special</b>
Bite	T	S	D4+D4	As Head.	Na	Na
Claw	M	M	D6+D4.	As Arm	Na	Na

**Tactics** - Wild and Feral, incapable of tactical decisions beyond ripping out throats and hungrily feeding. Will generally, therefore, go for 'Choose Location' and select Head with her bite attack.

**Combat Style** - Frenzied Attack (tooth and claw). 90%  
Shriek (as per Ghoul Howl in Monsters of Legend). 100%

Traits - Demonic Aura - 4AP No effect on Encumbrance or Strike Rank, negated by Fire. or Silver.  
Drain Blood - See Vampire description in Monsters of Legend  
Sense Life - See Vampire description in Monsters of Legend  
Wall Walking - See description in Monsters of Legend

### **Special Ability - Create Spawn of Lakarsha**

Any victim slain by the bite of the Vampire Queen, whose corpse is not completely destroyed, rises from the grave as a ghoulish revenant three days after their death. These are similar to standard ghouls as per Monsters of Legend. They are effectively immortal, drawn to their mistress' side like moths to a flame and will guard her throughout eternity unless their bodies are destroyed.

### **Special Ability - Unholy Speed**

In the first round of any combat, Lakarsha gains a bonus of +2 to her initiative test.

### **Special Ability - Terrifying Countenance**

Such is the frightful appearance of Lakarsha that even heroes can be unmanned by the very sight of her. In the first round of any encounter, characters must make a Hard(-40%) Persistence test to take any action, apart from immediate flight, until the following round.

## ***Narek Ghul - Susrahnite Necromancer (Moderate Taint)***

Narek Ghul is growing older and becoming infirm, his body corrupted by the sorcerous power he wields. He fears that death will soon take him and whether, or not, the Exile King ever attains power in Dipur is an irrelevance to him. Narek Ghul seeks only the means to regain and retain his youth.

He has taken up residence at the Gilded Palm and revealed himself, but not his plans, to Arbeletu of the Scions of Adartu. Twisted of limb and gaunt of appearance, Narek Ghul hobbles along with the use of a staff as a crutch. Sorcery has corrupted his body as well as his soul. His eyes are black ringed and he has skin the colour of faded parchment. His greasy grey hair is thinning and his torso is covered with tattoos, a ritual spell of some sort. His teeth are blackened and his breath is foul, but he uses cosmetics, loose clothing, a broad brimmed hat, herbal pomanders and perfumed potions to disguise these defects and deformities.

He is aware that Lakarsha was some manner of blood drinking fiend and he believes that she is likely to be ravenous if awoken from her torpor. The third and final fragment of the manuscript that he requires is believed to be located in the sarcophagus alongside the imprisoned Vampire Queen. It is not his intention to revive her unless absolutely necessary to the completion of his own plans. However, should it become a necessity, he will have need of several dupes to fend off her rage and sate her hunger, while he attempts to dominate her with his sorcerous powers.

Str) 8	Combat actions.	3	1-3 Right Leg	0/6
Con) 16	Damage Mod	Na.	4-6 Left Leg	0/3
Siz) 13	Improvement Mod	Na	7-9 Abdomen	0/7
Int). 18	Magic Points	18	10-12 Chest	0/8
Pow) 18	Movement	4m	13-15 Right Arm	0/5
Dex) 8	Strike Rank	13	16-18 Left Arm	0/3
Cha) 9			19-20 Head	0/6

### **Common Skills**

Athletics 46%, Culture(Adartani) 66%, Evade 36%, First Aid 68%, Influence 57%, Insight 56%, Language(Susrahnite) 93%, Lore(Dipur) 76%, Perception 55%, Persistence 84%, Resilience 73%, Sleight 48%, Stealth 63%

### **Magical Skills**

Grimoire(Tattoos of Oloth Dai) 57%, Grimoire(Book of Xantalos Zul) 75%, Grimoire (Elder Scrolls of Xarozh) 46%, Grimoire(Staff of Xantalos) 61%, Summoning 44%

### **Advanced Skills**

Courtesy 37%, Craft(Potions) 47%, Healing 44%, Language(Demonic) 62%, Language(Khazi) 65%, Language(Taikangian) 49%, Language(Taraam) 43%, Lore(Atropopaics)53%, Lore(Philosophy) 63%, Lore(Theology) 71%, Lore(Undearth) 65%, Mechanisms 52%, Meditation 53%, Oratory 33%, Streetwise 46%

**Equipment** - musty brown cloak and robes, broad brimmed straw hat, the Staff of Xantalos, curved dagger and lock picks, sling bag containing assorted magical paraphernalia, two fragments of the Elder Scrolls of Xarozh, the Book of Xantalos and the Tattoos of Oloth Dai. A pouch containing gems to the value of 50 gold coins and sixteen silver coins.

**Tactics** - Feigned Incompetence and treacherous backstabbing.

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Reach</b>	<b>Damage</b>	<b>Ap/Hp</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Special</b>
Long staff	M	L	D6	4/9	na	Stun Location
Curved Dagger	S	S	D4+1	6/8	na	Bleed

### **Weapon Styles**

Competent Traveller (Longstaff, Dagger) 66%

### **Special Item - The Staff of Xantalos**

This is an enchanted item, created by the Sorcerer Xantalos in the days before he began to obsess about eternal life. It functions as a Longstaff in combat and has a small black crystal, the size and shape of a man's thumbnail, embedded beneath the leather of its handgrips. This functions as a Magic Point Store, capable of retaining 5 Magic Points

### **Special Item - The Book of Xantalos**

(Abjure Food, Abjure Water, Damage Resistance, Demon's Gate, Regenerate, Tap(Pow), Wrack)

**Special Item - The Elder Scrolls of Xarozh** \* (Dominate(Undead),The Blood is the Life)

**Special Item - Tattoos of Oloth Dai**\*(Bone Dance)

\* The Spells contained within these Grimoires are from the 'Blood Magic' expansion for Legend, from SGB, or have been created specifically for this adventure.

## ***Arbeletu - Susrahnite Leader of the Scions of Adartu***

Arbeletu is a Susrahnite maidservant at the Inn of the Gilded Palm. She is plump with a pretty face, a winning smile and a pleasant demeanour that disguises the fact that she is an accomplished schemer and merciless killer. She is the leader of a group of Susrahnite rebels who gather infrequently at the Inn of the Gilded Palm to plot the downfall of their Khazistani overlords. She is currently involved in a clandestine relationship with Dalram Baal, brother of the popular and wealthy merchant, Haram Baal. She does not love him, of course, but sees in him an opportunity to gain the possible support of his sibling. This has caused no little jealousy among her followers, most notably in Jarku who was previously her lover and trusted right hand. Arbeletu's major weakness is in her absolute confidence that she can wrap men around her little finger. She is seemingly oblivious to the danger posed by alienating Jarku and revels in his jealousy.

Str). 10	Combat actions.	3	1-3. Right Leg.	0/5
Con). 14	Damage Mod.	Na	4-6. Left Leg.	0/5
Siz). 11	Improvement Mod.	+1	7-9. Abdomen.	0/6
Int). 15	Magic Points.	14	10-12. Chest.	0/7
Pow). 14	Movement.	8m	13-15. Right Arm.	0/4
Dex). 12	Strike Rank.	14	16-18. Left Arm.	0/4
Cha). 15			19-20. Head.	0/5

### **Common Skills**

Athletics 45%, Brawn 37%, Culture(Susrahnite) 87%, Dance 55%, Evade 53%, Evaluate 44%, First Aid 36%, Influence 51%, Insight 62%, Lore(Dipur) 57%, Perception 49%, Persistence 49%, Resilience 53%, Sing 47% , Sleight 77% , Stealth 54%

### **Advanced Skills**

Acrobatics 34%, Commerce 57%, Courtesy 66%, Culture(Khazistani) 47%, Disguise 39%, Healing 31%, Lang(Khazi) 50%, Lore(Carnal Arts) 69%, Lore(Scions of Adartu) 49%, Lore(Poisons) 43%, Lore(Kardeslik) 37%, Mechanisms 55%, Oratory 48%, Seduction 58%, Streetwise 67%.

**Equipment** - Winning smile, a buxom physique and somewhat revealing apparel. Assorted daggers and Alchemical compounds from SGB as required. A score of other remaining members of the Scions of Adartu, including Dalram Baal and Jarku. Several hundred silver coins and several dozen gold coins are secreted beneath a floorboard in her quarters.

**Tactics** - Despite her outwardly pleasant and flirtatious demeanour, Arbeletu is vindictive and murderous. She prefers to strike from surprise, although she is a capable enough opponent in a stand up fight. Arbeletu uses poisons and sleeping draughts to great effect in her role as a servant at the inn.

<b>Weapon.</b>	<b>Size.</b>	<b>Reach.</b>	<b>Damage.</b>	<b>Ap/Hp.</b>	<b>Range.</b>	<b>Special</b>
Curved Dagger.	S.	S.	D4+1.	6/8.	na.	Bleed

### **Weapon Style**

Death's Sweet Embrace (Dagger, Thrown Dagger) 75%

## ***Dalram Baal - Susrahnite Agent of the Scions of Adartu***

Dalram is the elder brother of the wealthy merchant, Haram Baal(see Shadow of the Ragged King for stats). He has recently made several poor decisions regarding his own investments and finds himself near destitute. He is sour faced and resentful of his brother's business acumen and easy charm, but currently resides at his brother's villa and is wise enough to realise that dutiful Haram has provided him with a home. He hopes that upon Haram's return from Zul Bazzir, he might discuss a loan to finance a further mercantile venture to redeem his recent losses.

While there is an obvious family resemblance between Haram and Dalram, it has been lessened somewhat by Dalram's growing addiction to Lotus. His face is pinched and drawn with dark rings around the eyes and his build is spare. His is from a respected family and he would not be caught dead in any of the Lotus Dens of the city and thus it was that he met with his supplier, a weasel faced rogue named Jarku, at the Inn of the Gilded Palm.

It was here that he found himself seduced by Arbeletu and embarked upon a torrid affair that has seen him drawn into the machinations of the Scions of Adartu. Arbeletu has convinced him that he will be high in the favour of the Exile King upon his return and the lotus addled mind of Dalram has failed to truly comprehend the risks of getting involved with this group, or that his dalliance with Arbeletu has earned him the enmity of Jarku.

Str). 11	Combat actions.	2	1-3. Right Leg.	0/5
Con). 11	Damage Mod.	Na	4-6. Left Leg.	0/5
Siz). 12	Improvement Mod.	+1	7-9. Abdomen.	0/6
Int). 12	Magic Points.	13.	10-12. Chest.	0/7
Pow). 13	Movement.	8m	13-15. Right Arm.	0/4
Dex). 12	Strike Rank.	12	16-18. Left Arm.	0/4
Cha). 14			19-20. Head.	0/5

### **Common Skills**

Athletics 36%, Brawn 33%, Culture(Susrahnite) 69%, Drive 42%, Evade 37%, Evaluate 41%, Influence 32%, Insight 35%, Lore(Dipur) 54%, Perception 49%, Persistence 53%, Resilience 44%

### **Advanced Skills**

Commerce 35%, Courtesy 56%, Culture(Khazistani) 44%, Gambling 32%, Lang(Khazi) 51%, Oratory 37%, Streetwise 36%, Survival 33%

### **Equipment**

Slightly threadbare clothing that was once of excellent quality. A notched scimitar hangs, in a scabbard, from his belt. He has sixteen silver coins in his belt pouch, representing the pitiful remains of his wealth.

**Tactics** - Dalram is a much better fighter than his younger sibling and is certainly no coward. He is defensively minded though and will tend to favour parrying incoming blows rather than making attacks of his own. If Arbeletu is endangered he will fly into a murderous rage and launch a furious assault upon her attacker.

<b>Weapon.</b>	<b>S.</b>	<b>R.</b>	<b>Damage.</b>	<b>Ap/Hp.</b>	<b>Range.</b>	<b>Special</b>
Scimitar.	M.	M.	D8.	6/10.	Na.	Bleed

### **Weapon Style**

Competent Swordsman (1H Sword) 85%

## ***Typical Scion of Adartu (Rebels with a Cause)***

The members of the Scions of Adartu are a mixed group of young and ambitious Susrahnite merchants. Some are misty eyed romantics, fighting to return their rightful liege lord to his throne. Others are highly pragmatic individuals who hope to benefit in wealth and influence from the return of the Exile King to the throne of their city state.

Str). 11	Combat actions.	2	1-3. Right Leg.	0/5
Con). 11	Damage Mod.	Na	4-6. Left Leg.	0/5
Siz). 12	Improvement Mod.	+1	7-9. Abdomen.	0/6
Int). 12	Magic Points.	13	10-12. Chest.	0/7
Pow). 13	Movement.	8m	13-15. Right Arm.	0/4
Dex). 12	Strike Rank.	12	16-18. Left Arm.	0/4
Cha). 14			19-20. Head.	0/5

### **Common Skills**

Athletics 34%, Brawn 30%, Culture(Susrahnite) 64%, Drive 42%, Evade 27%, Evaluate 44%, Influence 35%, Insight 29%, Lore(Dipur) 51%, Perception 46%, Persistence 41%, Resilience 37%

### **Advanced Skills**

Commerce 44%, Courtesy 58%, Culture(Khazistani) 41%, Gambling 28%, Lang(Khazi) 51%, Oratory 33%, Streetwise 38%, Survival 29%

### **Equipment**

**Tactics** - For the most part, the Scions of Adartu are not overly accomplished warriors and though they fight bravely, they do so without any really skill or tactical nous. Many of them are fanatical and will fight to their inevitable death, but there are others who will break and flee at the first opportunity.

<b>Weapon.</b>	<b>S.</b>	<b>R.</b>	<b>Damage.</b>	<b>Ap/Hp.</b>	<b>Range.</b>	<b>Special</b>
Scimitar.	M.	M.	D8.	6/10.	Na.	Bleed

**Weapon Style** - Scimitar 50%

## Rostam Baros - Barber Surgeon and Vendor of Information

Rostam Baros is a squat, rotund, fellow with a bald head and a bushy red beard. He operates his business from a large striped tent on the Square of the Grand Souk. Although he is a Khazistani by birth, the colour of his beard suggests that he may also have some Tharagian ancestry.

He is a loud and boisterous fellow, likeable and with a bellowing laugh. He has an immense capacity for food and drink.

As well as cutting the hair and shaving the beards of his customers, Rostam Baros can pull rotten teeth, stitch wounds and set broken bones. He learned his trade in the mercenary camps of the Padishah's army.

Rostam Baros overhears many conversations among his patrons and is a gatherer of important information. He sells suitable tidbits to the Lady Miru, but he does not know her to be an agent of the Kardeslik. Likewise, he is held as a valuable source of information by both Captain Balchak of the Black Guard and Jarku of the Scions of Adartu.

Str). 13	Combat actions.	3	1-3.	Right Leg.	0/6
Con). 16	Damage Mod.	+D2	4-6.	Left Leg.	0/6
Siz). 14	Improvement Mod.	+1	7-9.	Abdomen.	0/7
Int). 13	Magic Points.	12	10-12.	Chest.	0/8
Pow). 12	Movement.	8m	13-15.	Right Arm.	0/5
Dex). 12	Strike Rank.	13	16-18.	Left Arm	0/5
Cha). 13			19-20.	Head.	0/6

### Common Skills

Athletics 45%, Brawn 47%, Culture(Khazistani) 67%, Evade 44%, Evaluate 45%, First Aid 67%, Influence 56%, Insight 52%, Lang(Khazi) 85%, Lore(Dipur) 66%, Perception 65%, Persistence 44%, Resilience 54%, Sing 37%, Sleight 42%, Stealth 41%

### Advanced Skills

Courtesy 51%, Craft(Barber Surgeon) 62%, Culture(Susrahnite) 39%, Culture(Zorabi) 31%, Gambling 44%, Healing 55%, Lang(Susrahnite) 51%, Lang(Zorabi) 53%, Lore(Kharjah Pass) 44%, Lore(Khazistan) 49%, Lore(Susrah) 38%, Mechanisms 37%, Seduction 35%, Streetwise 52%, Survival 41%

**Equipment** - Pavilion tent(8 person tent), merchant quality clothing in garish colours. Leather Hauberk, Yataghan and curved 'Jambiya' dagger. Healers kit, First Aid Kit, Folding Razor, soap, towels and cloths. 6 gold coins in a money belt and 14 silver coins in a belt pouch.

**Tactics** - Rostam Baros is not as young as he once was and attempts to avoid combat where possible. He is, however, a very competent warrior who fights in the aggressive style that is typical of his people.

Weapon.	S.	R.	Damage.	Ap/Hp.	Range.	Special
Yataghan	M.	M.	D6+2	6/10.	Na.	Bleed
Curved Dagger.	S.	S.	D4+1.	6/8.	Na.	Bleed

### Weapon Style

Khazistani Bravo (1H Sword and dagger) 75%

## Jarku - Adartani Petty Criminal and Scion of Adartu.

Jarku is a darkly handsome Adartani rogue with a silver tongue and a black heart. His long dark hair is held back from his face by a strip of red silk tied at the nape of his neck and his eyes flit from side to side, as if he is constantly nervous. Of course, given Jarku's chosen profession it is hardly surprising that he is constantly wary of his company and surroundings.

Jarku is a confidence trickster and a lotus dealer in that order. His customers often believe that they are buying lotus powder from him, but in reality they are most likely buying something that merely looks like lotus powder.

Until lately, Jarku was the lover of Arbeletu and the second most powerful voice among the Scions of Adartu. Jarku cannot accept that Arbeletu is only using Dalram Baal as a means to an end and his hate for the Merchant who has taken his place in his woman's bed is all consuming, to the extent that he might very well betray the Scions to take his revenge upon the Susrahnite dog.

Str).	14	Combat actions.	3	1-3. Right Leg.	0/6
Con).	12	Damage Mod.	+D3	4-6. Left Leg.	0/6
Siz).	15	Improvement Mod.	+1	7-9. Abdomen.	1/7
Int).	14	Magic Points.	13	10-12. Chest.	1/8
Pow).	13	Movement.	8m	13-15. Right Arm.	0/5
Dex).	15	Strike Rank.	15(14)	16-18. Left Arm.	0/5
Cha).	13			19-20. Head.	0/6

### Common Skills

Athletics 45%, Brawn 46%, Culture(Susrahnite) 79%, Evade 63%, Evaluate 42%, Influence 50%, Insight 33%, Lore(Dipur) 58%, Perception 47%, Persistence 50%, Resilience 55%, Sleight 80% , Stealth 53%

### Advanced Skills

Commerce 37%, Courtesy 43%, Culture(Khazistani) 47%, Lang(Khazi) 50%, Lore(Carnal Arts) 69%, Lore(Scions of Adartu) 38%, Lore(Poisons) 43%, Lore(Kardeslik) 29%, Mechanisms 57%, Seduction 51%, Streetwise 69%.

**Equipment** - Leather Corselet, a Curved Dagger and a pair of Shortswords, 1 Dose of Blinding Powder(SGB), 2 Doses of Dreaming Powder(SGB), 3 Doses of Red Lotus/Ghoma Weed(SGB), several hired thugs.

**Tactics** - Jarku talks a good fight but is a coward who will abandon anyone and anything to save his own skin. He is competent with his twinned blades and prefers to strike from behind. He will generally interpose one of his hired minions between himself and any danger.

Weapon.	Size.	Reach.	Damage.	Ap/Hp.	Range.	Special
Curved Dagger.	S.	S.	D4+1+D2.	6/8.	Na	Bleed
Shortsword	M.	S	D6+D2.	6/8	Na.	Bleed/Impale

### Weapon Styles

Twin Blades - 77% (Shortsword in either hand)

Dagger - 67%

# Lady Miru - Adartani Courtesan and Agent of the Kardeslik

An extremely attractive Adartani woman, Miru was raised as a slave in the household of a wealthy Susrahnite merchant. The dreadful abuses she endured at the hands of the despicable swine taught her to hate men and drove her to seek solace among the 'Six Armed Sisters' of Nakhramat. It was in the Temple upon the Rock that she was befriended and mentored by Lady Ekrimala. She was taught how to use her womanly wiles for both her own advantage and that of the 'Six Armed Sisters' and then initiated into a shadowy group known as the 'Kardeslik', spies for both Ekrimala and the Khazistani authorities.

She now affects the role of the Lady Miru, an expensive courtesan who is independently wealthy and lives in a villa in the richest part of the city.

Her clothing is extremely well made and never too revealing, her jewellery discreet and tasteful. Her jet black hair is always coiffured in the latest styles and she wears just the right amount of makeup. She is accompanied by Dolthas, her Nabastissean bodyguard and has been tasked by her mistress with locating and destroying the Scions of Adartu.

Str). 10	Combat actions.	3	1-3.	Right Leg.	0/5
Con).12	Damage Mod.	Na.	4-6.	Left Leg.	0/5
Siz). 13	Improvement Mod.	+1	7-9.	Abdomen.	0/6
Int). 15	Magic Points.	14	10-12.	Chest.	0/7
Pow).14	Movement.	8m	13-15.	Right Arm.	0/4
Dex). 13	Strike Rank.	14	16-18.	Left Arm.	0/4
Cha). 17			19-20.	Head.	0/5

## Common Skills

Athletics 41%, Brawn 33%, Culture(Khazistani) 87%, Dance 61%, Evade 73%, Evaluate 44%, First Aid 36%, Influence 67%, Insight 68%, Lore(Dipur) 63%, Perception 49%, Persistence 49%, Resilience 53%, Sing 47% , Sleight 77% , Stealth 54%

## Advanced Skills

Courtesy 69%, Culture(Susrahnite) 47%, Disguise 39%, Healing 31%, Language(Susrahnite) 55%, Lore(Carnal Arts) 69%, Lore(Scions of Adartu) 32%, Lore(Poisons) 43%, Lore(Kardeslik) 79%, Mechanisms 46%, Oratory 53%%, Seduction 70%, Streetwise 67%.

**Equipment** - comfortably furnished villa, four servants and a bodyguard. Clothing and costume jewellery to suit every event and occasion, dagger, shortsword, several doses of blade venom. Several doses of assorted ingested poisons. 30 silver and 16 gold coins.

**Tactics** - Miru uses her womanly wiles to manoeuvre her enemies into a position of weakness before striking. She will often feign helplessness to gain advantage but is really an accomplished fighter, backstabber and poisoner, all learned as part of her training for the Kardeslik.

Weapon.	Size.	Reach.	Damage.	Ap/Hp.	Range.	Special
Curved Dagger.	S.	S	D4+1.	6/8.	na.	Bleed
Shortsword.	M.	S.	D6.	6/8.	na.	Bleed, Impale

## Weapon Style

Kardeslik (Dagger, Shortsword) 78%

## Dolthas - Nabastissean Bodyguard

A stocky and mostly silent fellow, clean shaven with long hair in oiled ringlets that are tied loosely at the nape of his neck. He wears a hauberk and bracers of rigid leather armour under a loose fitting robe of rust red wool that can be discarded, at a moment's notice, to reveal the twin shortswords that are scabbarded at his waist. He has been hired, by persons unknown, to act as Lady Miru's personal bodyguard and he has become completely enamoured of his charge, to the point where he will happily give his life for hers.

Str) 16	Combat actions.	3	1-3	Right Leg	0/6
Con) 16	Damage Mod.	Na	4-6	Left Leg.	0/6
Siz) 12	Improvement Mod.	Na	7-9	Abdomen	2/7
Int) 12	Magic Points.	13	10-12	Chest	2/8
Pow) 13	Movement.	8m	13-15	Right Arm	2/5
Dex) 15	Strike Rank.	14(12)	16-18	Left Arm.	2/5
Cha) 11			19-20	Head	0/6

### Common Skills

Athletics 49%, Brawn 56%, Culture(Nabastissean) 82%, Evade 41%, Evaluate 33%, First Aid 36%, Influence 34%, Insight 44%, Language(Nabastissean) 75%, Lore(Nabastis) 75%, Perception 38%, Persistence 46%, Resilience 61%, Stealth 48%

### Advanced Skills

Courtesy 37%, Culture(Khazrajite) 44%, Culture(Susrahnite) 38%, Disguise 28%, Healing 28%, Language(Khazrajite) 51%, Language(Susrahnite) 55%, Lore(Carnal Arts) 29%, Lore(Scions of Adartu) 28%, Lore(Kardeslik) 38%, Mechanisms 46%, Streetwise 67%

Weapon	Size	Reach	Damage	Ap/Hp	Range	Special
Shortsword	M	S	D6	6/8	na	Bleed, Impale

### Weapon Style

Twin Blades (Shortsword in either hand) 95%

**Tactics** - Dolthas will defend his mistress even to the cost of his life. Should any harm befall Lady Miru he will hunt down and kill the perpetrators without mercy.

### Special Ability - Self Sacrificing

Dolthas never leaves his mistress' side if combat ensues. If forced to do so by a Knockback, he may immediately expend a Magic Point to ignore said Knockback. He may choose to intervene 'at any time' during an attack on her. By spending a Magic Point, he can make a Parry on her behalf(even if she has already made and failed an Evade or Parry roll herself). The result of the attack is then figured against him rather than Lady Miru. There is no limit to the number of times he can do this in a round apart from the availability of Magic Points and the ability has no effect on his own Combat Actions. He can also use this Heroic Ability to throw himself in the path of arrows and other missiles.

# The Jade Dragon Guardian

Strength).	39.	Combat Actions.	3.	Tail.	1-2. 8/11
Constitution)	14.	Damage Modifier.	+2D8.	Right Hind Leg.	3-4. 8/11
Size).	39.	Magic Points.	17.	Left Hind Leg.	5-6. 8/11
Intelligence).	11.	Movement	6m.	Torso.	7-14. 8/12
Power).	17.	Strike Rank.	+12.	Right Front Leg	15-16. 8/11
Dexterity).	13.			Left Font Leg.	17-18. 8/11
Charisma).	11.			Head.	19-20 8/11

**Traits** - Darksight, Demonic(2AP), Irridescent Scales (6AP), No Armour Penalty, Formidable Natural Weapons

**Skills** - Athletics 80%, Brawn 75%, Evade 65%, Influence 60%, Persistence 61%, Resilience 52%

**Combat Style** - Bite 85%

<b>Weapon.</b>	<b>Size.</b>	<b>Reach.</b>	<b>Damage.</b>	<b>Ap/Ap</b>
Bite.	H.	VL.	D10+2D8.	8/11

The creature is draconic in appearance, long and sinuous with slender arms and legs. A pair of horns sweep back from it's head, lying almost flat along it's body. It's great fanged maw is surrounded by a mass of waving black tendrils, giving the appearance of a beard and moustaches while longer tendrils crown it's head and stretch down between it's shoulder blades. It's eyes are opalescent and more tendrils grow above them to give the impression of eyebrows. It's scales shimmer with iridescence in the light of the braziers that illuminate the great hall and the scent of Jasmine, Lime and Ginger hangs heavy in the, previously musty, air.

## **Glossary**

**Adartani** - the mongrel race of mixed Khazi and Susrahnite blood that makes up nearly two thirds of the population of Dipur.

**Adartu** - the old Susrahnite name for the City of Dipur

**Arbeletu** - the leader of the Scions of Adartu.

**Dalram Baal** - down at heels merchant and brother to Haram Baal(see Shadow of the Ragged King)

**Dolthas** - Nabastissean mercenary. Currently employed as a bodyguard by the Lady Miru.

**Ekrimala** - mother of the Satrap of Dipur, High Priestess of Nakhramat and founder of the Kardeslik.

**Jarku** - a lotus peddler and member of the Scions of Adartu. Previously the lover of Arbeletu, his jealousy over her relationship with Dalram Baal may bring about all their downfalls.

**Kardeslik** - spies in the service of the Khazistani authorities. Kardeslik means 'Brotherhood' in the Khazi tongue but it is actually a misnomer as both male and female agents are to be found.

**Lakarsha** - the Blood Queen of Adartu, a blood drinking demon in human form.

**Miru** - 'Lady Miru' is an Adartani Courtesan who is also an agent of the Kardeslik.

**Narek Ghul** - a Necromancer who seeks eternal life and uses his links to the Scions of Adartu to advance his plans.

**Rostam Baros** - a barber in the Square of the Grand Souk. He is a vendor of information of other services.

**Scions of Adartu** - a shadowy group of Susrahnite rebels and insurrectionists.