

Paradigm Concepts

Presents



DESPERATE MEASURES

PART ONE OF A TWO PART ADVENTURE

A 4-HOUR LEGENDS OF ARCANIS ADVENTURE
HARD POINT ADVENTURE 1, CRUSADES YEAR 1
15TH OF LAMPYRIS, 1070 I.C.

BY HENRY LOPEZ

"Our hearts must be pure; our actions unblemished - only then may our noble purpose find the grace of the Gods"

- Primus Sabinus val'Assante', spiritual head of the Milandic Church addressing the first Calling of the 6th Crusade of Light.

The 6th Crusade of Light has been Called by noble King Osric IV of Milandir as rumblings from the infernal hordes have the entirety of the Hinterlands in a panic. But before they may test their courage against fetid demons, the heroes must uncover a plot just as foul in the staging township of Mil Takara, if they have any hope in preserving the honor of Milandir and the purity of the Crusade itself!

It is Recommended that *Desperate Measures* (A1-HP1-1) be played before *Desperate Times* (A1-HP1-2).

A LEGENDS OF ARCANIS INTRODUCTORY adventure is designed for Tier 1.

CREDITS

Author: Henry Lopez
Editor: James Zwiars
Cartographer: Pedro Barranechea
Version: 2.0

CAMPAIGN-RELATED INFORMATION

The entirety of this adventure takes place in the town of Mil Takara, in the Hinterlands.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

The Milandisians are erecting a temple to Hurrian, as He is venerated as the Rain Giver in the Hinterlands, as well as smaller shrines to some of the more popular Deities of the Milandric Church, such as Saluwé, Yarris and Illiir.

At the top of the Temple to Hurrian is a large brass bell, which the priests of the temple use to keep track of time, to call the faithful to prayer, and to sound alarms, as needed.

The bell is a concession to the Khur Gi, who use hand bells when performing rituals to Hurrian to send rain.

Unbeknownst to the Milandisians, the Khur Gi have an ancient shrine to Sarish that has been re-sanctified since the fall of the Wall of the Gods.

ORGANIZATIONS

There are two major factions in Mil Takara: the Milandisian Crusade and the Khur Gi Yhing hir.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Milandisian Crusaders are outfitted at Mil Takara because it is considered the staging area for the Crusade. As such, the default leader here is the Knight Commander of Mil Takara, Sir Hansdel val'Ossan, a veteran of the previous Crusade and now a hollow of a man, driven to drink for the gods know what reason.

The Khur Gi are led by the venerable red headed Southern Fox himself, Yeh Cho Li. Though he has not maintained a domicile in Mil Takara since it was razed by the returning Milandisian Crusaders, he is known to maintain a close eye on the so-called

'reconstruction' of the city.

His representative in Mil Takara is sun-baked Balam, known as the Red Asp. One of the Southern Fox's many grandchildren, Balam is also one of his most ruthless and vengeful. He has a special hatred for the Milandisians due to the razing of Mil Takara and their seeming occupation of the traditional Khur Gi territory.

Balam has instituted a new coming of age ritual where he sends young Khur Gi bucks into Mil Takara and has them kill a Milandisian Crusader. They are told to cut out the tongues (a symbol for the lies that the Milandisians told to the Khur Gi people) and return.

Now, with several Khur Gi warriors missing, Balam has the young bucks out searching for answers - where are these warriors? Who took them? And what did the Milandisians do with them?

INTRODUCTION

TO BE READ TO THE PLAYERS:

GM please read or paraphrases the following:

"You must remember that all this happened a long time ago and my memory may be a little fuzzy on all the details, but I'll try and get the important parts right.

"We were all so young back then; I don't think any of us knew each other yet, or at least not very well. Never thought such a group of different people could become such close and dear friends. But war will do that to you - you bleed for one another, shake in complete terror together and somehow bolster each other's courage. Before you know it, you'll be treating that stranger better than family.

"Anyway, I can't speak for the others, but when I heard that King Osric had made a Call for Crusade, I couldn't get myself out the door and to the staging grounds fast enough. A Call? Yes that's with a capital 'C' a Call is a formal declaration by the king and sanctified by the Primarch that a bona fide Crusade was launching. I'm told that this has all sorts of legal ramifications, but all I cared about was that I had a chance to claim some glory and, if I was lucky and courageous enough, I could be knighted and join the ranks of nobility.

"Like I said, I'm not sure what motivated the rest of them. I never asked, but there we were, standing

ankle deep in the mud that passed for ground here at the staging ground. I remember there being a light drizzle that morning...”

Well, here we go again!

Welcome to the first Hard Point adventure in the Crusade story-arc for the Chronicles of the Shattered Empires Campaign. The Campaign Rules will deal with the minutiae of playing in and running the campaign, but the general overarching theme of them can be summed up in two rules:

- 1. Have Fun!*
- 2. Don't be a jerk (or jerk-ette)*

Now I like to call the Chronicles of the Shattered Empires campaign an “Interactive Storytelling Game”. By this I mean that while I have the duty of writing as good a story as I can, and the GM has the duty to run this adventure in a fun and fair way, the Players have a duty to participate in the experience beyond just responding to some stimuli – and you have your first task coming up: introduce yourself to your fellow heroes and then tell the GM (and at your discretion the other players) what motivated you to joining the Crusade.

GM please note: The players are not just puppets that react to whatever is written in the adventure saga as if it were a script. They should be active participants.

Should a player refuse or give a very nonsensical or obviously quick remark simply because he/she doesn't feel inclined to role play, then dock them the experience points for this section of the adventure. Consider it a teaching tool to get everyone role-playing.

Key Concepts: This scene is to set the stage and to give the players an idea of where they are and what environment they are dealing with.

Once everyone has introduced themselves and given you an idea of why they are here, read the setting description below:

You find yourself standing ankle deep in muddy terrain as a warm drizzle falls from the sky. The trail you've been following ends here, at the threshold of the city of Mil Takara – or should one say, the rebuilt city of Mil Takara.

During the 5th Crusade, Khur Gi raiders and marauders took advantage of the fact that the majority of Milandir's defenders were off fighting

Infernals at the God's Wall and began raiding deep into the kingdom.

While traveling back with the wounded King Osric, the vanguard of the Crusade heard of these ignoble attacks - attacks on the families of those who fought and bled to keep the Yhing hir safe from the Infernal Horde.

Incensed, Osric ordered the razing of Mil Takara and the head of Lo Kaijou the Black, the Nawal of the Khur Gi, as fitting retribution for the depredations caused by these Yhing hir. Though Osric's men were never able to find Lo Kaijou, the city of Mil Takara was destroyed.

Thus it remained for the most part, until the stirrings of a new Crusade was heard through the lands. Needing a staging area in the Hinterlands to assure that their supply lines were not stretched too thin (though many political enemies of Osric accused him of trying to turn the kingdom into an empire), it was decided that Mil Takara should be rebuilt.

Though not occupying the exact same spot as the original, the new Mil Takara is being built within a few hundred yards of the original. While still in the early stages of construction, it has been used as a staging ground for new units of the Crusade being sent up to the front. For their part, the Khur Gi were completely against the rebuilding of the town and even went so far as to attack the workers on various occasions. Swift reprisals consisting of the hanging of the attackers as well as providing some of the finer creature comforts to buy off certain elements within the tribe has gone a long way to settle the situation.

As you take in the town and its milling occupants, numbering easily in the high hundreds, you notice that few structures seem to be of a permanent nature. In fact, there appears to be a sea of tents arranged haphazardly all around and through the town.

Besides the tents, there are a handful of wooden buildings and two stone structures – a temple with a large bell tower at its apex and a typical Milandisian keep, both under heavy construction. Further south, there are a series of small buildings, that while wooden structures as well, appear to be built to be sturdier than other similar buildings. The wood used gives them a slightly green color, instead of the brownish color of the other wooden structures.

Just as the bell begins to toll the hour, someone bumps into you from behind. A young man seems to have slipped on the muddy ground and has dropped his backpack, spilling its contents. Apologizing profusely, he begins to collect his gear.

Heroes, meet Rohan Stetz, a fresh-faced recruit for the Crusade.

Rohan Stetz – Age 23, commoner of Milandir. From the city of Volgast.

Rohan is recently arrived in Mil Takara (18 days or so ago) and has been assigned to a unit of Cantons under the banner of Count Felix val'Ossan. He is excited to be fighting alongside true knights and his hope is to fight well enough that he will be elevated to knighthood.

Rohan is scheduled to leave in the morning and is more than happy to show the new arrivals around.

He will also insist that they should present themselves to the Knight-Commander, Sir Hansdel val'Ossan.

He'll explain that the Crusade is made up of several different types of 'recruits'. There are those who have come up from Milandir to fight the Horde because of either a sense of duty or religious obligation, then there are those who come up to the Wall to fight for personal reasons, like those who have something to prove, thrill seekers, or even death seekers with nothing left to lose. Lastly, there are the ones who do it for the coin – mercenaries. Since the Royal Coffers seem open these days, there are plenty of those.

Role-playing: Rohan is friendly, open and will avoid a fight with his fellow Crusaders at almost any cost. He feels that any injury inflicted upon a fellow is aiding the enemy.

Rohan actually is a likeable fellow and should be played as such. He will inform the players about all the information stated above.

Assuming that the players use Rohan as an information source, he can tell them about the information in the entries described below. If they choose to send him on his way, they'll have to stumble around blindly and on their own.

Specific Areas of Note in Mil Takara

1. The Keep of the Knight-Commander

This large stone structure is slowly beginning to take shape. The outer wall is a quarter of the way completed and the tower itself, a modest three stories tall, is starting to look like one.

On the bottom floor are the quarters of the Knight-Commander and holder of this land in the king's name, Sir Hansdel val'Ossan and his family, along with his retainers and staff, twenty-five in all.

The Knight-Commander's staff is the one that can give the Heroes their assignment for the Crusade, depending on their motivation, as explained by Rohan above.

Within the shadow of the keep and within its walls are stalls and areas for a variety of craftsman – anyone from blacksmiths to leatherworkers can be found working tirelessly, forging weapons and armor or repairing them.

Rohan's Impression: The Knight-Commander is a fair and just man, even if he has taken to indulgences of late. If asked what indulgences, he'll mime putting a glass to his lips and drinking.

2. Temple of Hurrian and the Bell Tower

The only other stone structure being built at the moment is the Temple of Hurrian with the bell tower situated at its apex.

Hurrian is one of the most venerated deities in the Hinterlands as he is seen not only as the Defender of Man but as the bringer of rain; in the semi-arid plains of the Hinterlands, rain is life.

Though in a similar phase of construction as the keep, about halfway to completion, the bell tower appears to be in working order as demonstrated by it striking the hour. To the Yhing hir shamans, the usual way of attracting Hurrian's attention and thus, hopefully, a rainfall, is to ring bells.

Quartered in the temple is a small contingent of Hurrianic Templars and priests. They are led by a stern Templar by the name of Kaspar Tillmin.

The Templars act as the "police force" for Mil Takara and usually get around on horseback.

Rohan's Impression: Templar Tillman is a hard man. I think stones smile more than he does, but he has a reputation of fearlessness in the face of the enemy.

They say that he's been wearing that big leg brace ever since a Devil Hound grabbed him by it. Now, I haven't seen a Devil Hound, but the scuttlebutt from some of the veterans who come back through here is that they can snap a man's leg with their huge jaws.

They say that Templar Tillmin forced the jaws open with his bare hands and then broke the beast's neck. Not sure how much stretching has gone into that story, but after you meet Tillmin, I don't think you'll doubt it.

The Templars act as the Watch and they're not too bad. They frown on drunken and disorderly conduct, but at least they tend to be a fair-minded bunch.

3. Encampment – Tents

The sea of tents belong to various groups and mercenary companies that have not yet been assigned to a particular commander or have yet to receive their "security payment" and are waiting for the money to arrive.

Rohan's Impression: Be careful out there. There's nothing worse than a bunch of armed and trained soldiers with nothing to do.

There's been talk about a few mercenary companies being so bored that they started raiding nearby villages – some nasty stuff happened out there if the gossip can be trusted. Templar Tillmin put a quick stop to that by hanging the leaders of the offenders and leaving their bodies out there to rot, for all to see.

4. Tavern

Once the decision was made as to where to place the keep and the temple, the next question out of the engineers' lips was, "And where do we place the tavern?"

One of the more prominent wooden structures in the new Mil Takara is the tavern, known by everyone as the Rat's Inn due to the unfortunate and, according to the proprietor 'Jowls' Sartini, a Cafelan ex-patriot, unavoidable infestation of rats. Jowls says that he's doing his best to import some cats to get rid of the problem. For their part, the rats seem to welcome the shade and don't seem to really bother anyone in the tavern.

Though mostly deserted during the day, at night, the Rat's Inn's patrons pack the place and spill outside as well. Many of the 'priestesses' from the Tents of Sighs (#8) come over to drum up business when they're having a slow night. Jowls' young son entertains the clientele with his singing and lute.

Rohan's Impression: Rohan tries to stay out of the tavern as much as possible. He isn't much of a drinker and the couple of times he's been there, he's invariably ended up in a fight.

5. Square of Penance

Right in the middle of the sea of tents, is an area given a wide berth by that area's temporary inhabitants. There, under the direct order of the Knight-Commander, is the gallows. It consists of a series of metal cages where criminals and other malcontents whose crimes are not capital in nature, can be punished. Though a death sentence for the more ill or frail offenders, most leave the cages, rather worse for wear, but alive.

Capital offenders are usually hung, an unusual form of execution for Milandisians, but it offers the advantage of serving as a visual reminder of what happens when the laws are broken, more than a simple beheading.

Rohan's Impression: My impression? It smells; it's a bunch of rotting bodies that no one but a damned Canceriman would want to be around.

6. Stables

Off to the west is a penned-off area used as a corral with an inadequately sized wooden stable adjacent to it. Whoever built the stable either underestimated how many horses would have to be tended to or he'd never been outside of a city. To handle the overflow, a series of corrals were erected.

Tended to by an old Khur Gi named Alatun, his five sons and a horde of grandchildren, it is not only a safe place to keep one's steed, but to get it groomed and fed as well. Horses are also available for purchase.

Rohan's Impression: I don't have a horse myself, but those who do say that Alatun and his sons are fair and great with the horses. Not one has fallen prey to predators since they were put in charge of the stables.

7. Khur Gi Tents

If one were to look north a few hundred yards, they would see another endless array of tents. These are the Khur Gi. They have taken up residence in the shadow of their former city, the original area upon which Mil Takara was built.

Under direct orders from the king, good relations should be attempted and preserved by whatever means possible between the Crusaders and the Khur

Gi. As long as they do not pose a threat to the establishment of this staging area, they are to be left alone and placated as best possible.

For the most part, Khur Gi enter the new Mil Takara to trade with the Crusaders and partake of the amenities of the Rat's Inn and the Tents of Sighs.

Rohan's Impression: The few Khur Gi he's had any dealings with seemed pleasant enough people, if a bit suspicious. He has heard stories of gangs of young Khur Gi attacking lone Milandisians, but hasn't actually seen any evidence of that.

8. The Tents of Sighs

Whenever a large group or army moves out in the field, a caravan of stragglers on inevitably materializes and accompanies them. These hangers-on range from blacksmiths and coopers to cooks and women specializing in 'comforting' those so far from home and loved ones.

The brightly colored Tents of Sighs are such a group of women, with their attendant 'guardians'. The women claim to be itinerant priestesses of Larissa, though this is an outright lie. They may indeed be devotees of the Divine Whore, but they have no divine abilities save for those tender mercies that most women know.

Rohan's Impression: <<Looks down to the ground and smiles sheepishly>> I don't know anything about them – I've never been there.

9. Green Tinged Wooden Buildings

These wooden buildings were constructed to act as warehouses for the goods that will (hopefully) be shipping through here once the Mil Takara is complete.

Rohan's Impression: Rohan has never been to that area and from what he's heard, there haven't been any caravans stopping for more than a few days at most. The Knight-Commander says that once Mil Takara is completed, that the riches of the Hinterlands will flow through here on its way to the rest of the Known Lands. We'll see.

10. Small Market Square

While most of the Khur Gi don't actively trade with the Milandisians, their old trading partners (other Yhing hir) are tentatively trying out the new market place that the Knight-Commander made available for them. While few have taken him up on his offer, the few that are there do offer a variety of comfort or

exotic items that the Quartermaster of the Crusade does not.

Rohan's Impression: Rohan has shopped there a couple of times, but has rarely found anything more than some exotic fruits and meats that caught his eye.

Once the players have asked all the questions they wish, Rohan will say the following:

"It's going to be dark soon. If you haven't reported in to the Knight-Commander, you really should. He's a bit of a stickler when it comes to protocol."

Development: Here the players have a few choices: they may head off on their own or follow Rohan to the Knight-Commander.

Either way, you should go directly to Scene 1.

A Note About Moving Around Mil Takara

Please do not worry yourself over what the exact location of the Heroes and how far away they are from Point B or Point C. It doesn't matter. There is no time pressure and they can get to wherever they are going in time to do whatever it is they wish to do.

DO NOT stress over distances unless you are in combat. The rest of the moving about between scenes happens "off-screen". Remember: Cutting out the boring parts leaves more time for the fun parts!

SCENE ONE

Key Concepts: This is the first combat that the players will encounter. It should be a fairly easy one and should be used as a tutorial on how combat works.

Please do not kill any Heroes. Though the chance is small, you never know what the dice may do. So if it appears that you just rolled a quintuple Attribute die explosion, fudge it.

Also, while the player's may at first dismiss this as a gratuitous fight, in fact a very important clue and a red herring can be gleaned here.

Whether the Heroes are following Rohan to the Knight-Commander or have gone off on their own, they will encounter this little tussle between a couple of Milandisian nobles and some Khur Gi toughs.

Please read or paraphrase the following:

As you continue on your way, you notice a strangely

garbed man off in the distance. He is wearing a heavy, voluminous robe, dark in color with a large hood that obscures his face.

Before you can do more than take note of his presence, you hear something that sounds like a struggle happening behind an area of tents. The large tents obscure your ability to see exactly what's occurring, but you can clearly hear the words, "Where are they? What have you done with them?" as well as grunts and yelps of pain.

If a player asks specifically if they notice anything else about the robed stranger, have that player make a **Perception action roll TN = 22**. If successful, they detect a slight smell of kerosene coming from that direction.

If Rohan is with the Heroes, he will urge them to follow him and investigate.

If the Heroes decide to ignore it, continue on to Scene 2 if they were going to check in with the Knight-Commander or to whatever they were planning on doing.

If the Heroes wish to investigate the robed man, inform them that by the time they turn back to him, he's lost in the crowd.

If the Heroes decide to investigate, continue with the following:

The area behind the tents creates a natural cul-de-sac. There, quite a few Khur Gi young men are enjoying themselves beating up two unarmed and unarmored men, obviously of Milandisian origin. One older looking Khur Gi mounted on a black stallion waves off the ones who are kicking the prone and bleeding men and snarls in a thick Milandisian accent, "This is the last time I will ask you. Where are they? Where did you take them?"

Belabored breathing and the spitting of blood from their mouths echo dully before one of the men says, "To the Cauldron with you! We don't know what you're talking about."

If the Heroes try to parlay with the Khur Gi, the leader of the group, one Yi Menj, will turn to them and say, "**Alright Milandisians**, (to him, everyone other than a Yhing hir is a Milandisian) *where are our warriors? Why have you taken them*"

The Heroes will know nothing about the missing warriors and say something to the effect of, "*What*

COMBAT STATISTICS - SCENE ONE

4 Khur Gi Thugs		d6, Med, Humanoid Minion Threat (Tier 1)	
Avoidance	Fortitude	Discipline	
13	13	15	
St/Wo: 1 (1)	Pace: 20'		
AR: 2	Initiative: 2		
Attacks:	Short Sword: +3 (a)	d6 (d6)	
	Sp: 4, Ra: Melee		
	Dagger: +3 (a)	d4 (d6)	
	Sp: 3, Ra: Melee or Throw 10'		
Talents	Waylay, Wolf Pack Tactics		
Skills	(+3/14/11) Athletics, Intimidate, Melee: (Balanced) & (Unarmed), Perception, Streetwise.		
Gear	Studded Leather, Dagger (2), Short Sword		

Yi Menj, Khur Gi Leader		d10, Med, Humanoid Elite Threat (Tier 1)	
Avoidance	Fortitude	Discipline	
17	19	18	
St/Wo: 26 (1)	Pace: 40'		
AR: 3	Initiative: 4		
Attacks:	Scimitar: +3 (a)	d8 (d10)	
	Sp: 5, Ra: Melee		
	Dagger: +3 (a)	d4 (d10)	
	Sp: 3, Ra: Melee or Throw 10'		
Talents	Leadership (T1), Wolf Pack Tactics, Martial Technique (Unbalancing Attack)		
Skills	(+3/16/13) Athletics, Intimidate, Melee: (Balanced) & (Unarmed), Perception, Persuasion, Streetwise.		
Gear	Sicarite Reinforced Leather, Scimitar, Dagger, Buckler, Horse		

Rohan Stetz Elite Combatant		d10, Med, Humanoid Elite Threat (Tier 1)	
Avoidance	Fortitude	Discipline	
16	19	18	
St/Wo: 26 (1)	Pace: 30'		
AR: 3	Initiative: 4		
Attacks:	Broad Sword: +3 (a)	d8 (d10)	
	Sp: 5, Ra: Melee		
	Dagger: +3 (a)	d4(d10)	
	Sp: 3, Ra: Melee or Thrown 10'		
Talents	Forward Stance, Die Hard, Challenge		
Skills	(+3/16/13) Athletics, Melee (Balanced) & (Unarmed), Ranged: (Thrown), Ride, Knowledge: (Geography), Linguistics (Speaks: Milandisian & Low Coryani)		
Gear	Broad Sword, Chain Shirt, Dagger		

Unbalancing Attack

A quick strike is all you need to create a deadly opening.

Requirements: Ranged or Melee +3

Attack: Discipline (Prowess)

Ra: 30'

Sp: +1 (4)

Effect: Weapon -3 damage, if you attack the same target on your next action you gain a +2 to hit and add your Prowess Attribute Die as additional damage.

missing warriors?" at which point the hot-headed Menj will snarl in disgust and send his men to *'beat it out of you'*.

If the Heroes rush in to defend the Milandisians, the Khur Gi will turn towards them and the leader will order his men to attack

To begin the combat, have everyone roll initiative. Remember to start your clock at 1.

Minions all go on the same tick. Even if they are all doing different actions, such as moving fighting, etc. use the Highest Speed value for all of them. Minions are always as fast as their slowest member.

Depending on the number of players at the table, please use this rule of thumb:

The Stat Table below is the equivalent of 1 Mob. If your table consists of 4 players or less, just have one Mob and the Khur Gi leader oppose the Heroes. In a table of 5 or more, add an additional Mob.

Note on the Combat: During the fight, have Rohan take care of one or two of the Minions. If the PCs are having a tough time with the thugs, then you can have Rohan intervene, but don't use him unless you really need to do so. **DO NOT KILL ROHAN.** He will be needed later.

Once Combat is complete, you can ask the players if their Heroes put the "vanquished" Khur Gi to the sword or let the authorities deal with them.

Attracting the attention of a mounted patrol of Templars is not too hard. They will be more than happy to deal with the Khur Gi thugs.

To the Victor, the Spoils:

Unless they are butchering the Khur Gi, they really can't loot them. What they can get is the Khur Gi leader's horse (which will turn out to be a stolen horse - See Scene Four).

If the Heroes examine the horse, they find that it is a riding horse (black in color with a white patch on its muzzle) and that a brand that once marked the animal on its flank has been marred, making the brand unidentifiable.

The Milandisian Crusaders: The two Milandisian Crusaders, Marik and Valik val'Ossan, are brothers who have come to join the Crusade. They are very minor nobles (their claim to fame is that their father is a Knight) and they hail from a small town between

Naeraanth and Volgast.

Though a little worse for wear, the two brothers have only some cuts and bruises - no life threatening or serious injuries.

What Happened: They say that they were lured into the back area by one of the younger looking toughs who claimed that his obese mother had fallen and could not get back up. As the knightly code dictates, they went to help the helpless and were ambushed. They kept asking where we had taken 'them', but the Khur Gi never said whom 'they' were.

After thanking them for their help and vowing to return the favor, the two brothers go off to find a medic.

Development: *Assuming Rohan is with them:* Rohan's face will be flushed and an excited gleam will be in his eyes. This was his first fight and he feels 'alive'! He'll urge the Heroes to report to the Knight-Commander, especially after what's happened.

If Rohan was not with them during the fight, he'll pop up now, drawn by the commotion and then urge the Heroes to report to the Knight-Commander.

If the Heroes agree, then continue to Scene Two. If they decide to strike out on their own, then ad lib as best you can given the information stated above. Eventually they'll have to return to the Knight-Commander to get the next part of the adventure.

SCENE TWO

Key Concepts: The purpose of this Scene is to introduce the Heroes to some of the movers and shakers of Mil Takara, namely the Knight-Commander, Templar Tillmin, and their first glimpse of a Crimson Slaver.

It is quite possible that the players may attempt to use Empathy to see the general emotional state of each of these characters. Please remember: Empathy **IS NOT** a lie detector.

When the Heroes are ready to present themselves to the Knight-Commander, read or paraphrase the following:

Note: *It is assumed that Rohan Stetz is accompanying the Heroes. If not, then adjust the text as necessary.*

Word of your victory over the rogue Khur Gi elements seems to have traveled quickly throughout the camp. Though certainly not everyone has heard, as you make your way to the Keep of the Knight-Commander, you notice a few erstwhile Crusaders looking up and either smiling or nodding a greeting to you.

Arriving at the makeshift stone walls that will form the first line of defense, you are asked to knock the mud and gore from your boots before entering.

Rohan shrugs, "The Lady of the manor prefers a tidy citadel."

Rohan quickly leads you past a courtyard where the rhythmic cadence of the blacksmith's hammer competes with the squawking of crows as they head to roost.

After a series of steps up to the second landing, you note that while the rest of the keep is still far from complete, its heart is quite a different matter. Polished double doors, made from the expensive Burnt Ash trees found only in the Faerdwalden Forest stand before you. Smiling at you, Rohan pulls open the doors to the inner sanctum of the Knight-Commander of Mil Takara.

Within, the Knight-Commander, Hansdel val'Ossan, sits slightly slumped in his chair. A goblet mostly drained of whatever he's drinking tilts precariously on the arm of the chair. Flanking him are two men. One stands to the side with his arms folded; a heavy brace on his leg gleaming from the obvious attention given to it. The other is a robed individual who immediately lowers his voice as he sees you come in from the corner of his eye, but finishes hissing something to the Knight-Commander.

As you enter, the cloaked man turns and quickly leaves by a side door. For a moment, the only sound to break the awkward moment is the crackling of the fire in the fireplace.

Rohan begins to stammer out an apology...

Have the players make a **Perception roll TN 15**.

If they succeed in achieving a 15 or better, then they note the following from the man who just left:

- He was speaking in a heavy accent that is not from this region and definitely not Milandisian;

- Though also wearing a cloak, he was not the man you saw just before the fight with the Khur Gi;
- He wore a thin moustache that draped down past his chin;
- His face looked sun-baked, like leather.

If they succeed in achieving a roll of 18 or better, then will have heard him hiss in the Knight-Commander's ear:

- "I was not paid to deal with that monster."

If they succeed in achieving a roll of 22 or better, then they also notice:

- That the irises of his eyes were transparent.

Allow the players to role-play the situation. As they begin to interact, first by apologizing for the interruption hopefully, then improvise using the information provided below.

Remember, do not just do an info dump! Use the information to answer the player's questions. If they don't ask certain questions and thus you don't get to use all the information provided, that's OK.

The Knight-Commander d6 Med. Humanoid

Personality: By nature Hansdel is a very likable old bear of a man, much like the stereotypical grandfather, complete with a snow-white beard and moustache. However, when he drinks his mood is mercurial - laughing and charming one moment and belligerent the next.

Demeanor: Concerned/worried

Discipline: 15

Goals: To get drunk enough to forget all the principles and beliefs he has always stood and fought for! Hansdel is being made to turn a blind eye to the activities being done under his command.

Normally he would be the first to turn in the conspirators, but he fought in the last Crusade and knows how deadly these Infernals are. He also knows that since the Milandric Church has practically expelled any and all Sarishans, that the weapons needed to truly fight the Infernals, namely Sarishan Steel is in rare supply.

Consequently, he leaves every bit of this sordid affair to Tillmin and tries to numb himself with drink.

NOTE: Hansdel will NEVER admit the above to anyone. He knows his duty and no matter how

distasteful it is, he will carry it out to the best of his abilities.

Information:

- There is always a need for more of the faithful (or even not so faithful) to fight the great battles in the north
- The basic pay for a Crusader is 10 silver a week, with payment being made every six months.
- Who was that man? None of your concern, Crusader. Know your place. (Belligerent mood swing)
- Missing Khur Gi men? I haven't heard about anyone missing. But you know those Yhing hir, always on horseback and riding off somewhere. These missing men are probably just off on a ride and these thugs were using it as an excuse to attack our men.
- How long before we are assigned and sent out? Rohan here has been waiting for two weeks, but we're trying to accelerate the process.
- What's the hold up? By King's Order, we need to issue every recruit some sort of Sarishan Steel blade. Between the ones salvaged from casualties and the ones being forged, it can sometimes take a bit.
- Who makes the Sarishan Steel blades? (Belligerent again) How the hell should I know! Do I look like a merchant or blacksmith to you?
- Can I get one? You will all be issued Sarishan blades of some sort before you are sent to the God's Wall.
- Where will you be stationed? Depends what unit needs your type of skills. You'll be questioned about that later.
- When will the town/keep be finished? They tell me the keep will be finished in a few months and the town itself in about a year or so. I don't know. I think it has its charm as it is now.
- The Khur Gi? For whatever reason they camp in the area surrounding the original land where Mil Takara stood. We were going to rebuild the town there, but my betters told me that after discussing it with their Nawal, it would be a sign of respect to rebuild nearby instead. Some legend, superstition or some such. I have no idea.

Kaspar Tillmin, Head Templar
d10 Med. Humanoid

Personality: Tillmin is a cold-hearted man obsessed with winning the war against the Infernals at any cost. He's been to the front lines and knows how easily a second Time of Terror could sweep across the continent. He is determined not to allow that to happen.

Many will ask him how one devoted to Hurrian could participate in such horrible deeds. He will calmly state that he would gladly sacrifice a hundred Cancerimen to save one Milandisian.

Demeanor: Cool and aloof. He tries to be friendly, but it always comes out awkward for him.

Discipline: 22

Skill: Deceit +4

Goals: To make sure that the flow of Sarishan Steel continues so that every person he sends to the God's Wall has a chance at survival.

Information: In addition to most of the information that can be derived from the Knight-Commander:

- I am a Templar, dedicated to the Milandric Church and devoted to Hurrian.
- My people (the Templars under his command) act as the Watch of Mil Takara, at least until the town is completed and the Knight-Commanders own people can come and take over for us. [If the players attempt to see if he is bitter or uneasy about this prospect, they will see that he is not. Tillmin seems completely disinterested in honorifics or glory.]
- Missing Khur Gi? I have not heard any reports of any Khur Gi missing. It may be as the Knight-Commander said; they went off on a hunt or whatever it is that these Yhing hir do.
- What was the front like? Someone once said it was three weeks of complete boredom and then hours of sheer terror. I couldn't have put it better.
- What happened to your leg? You have quite the mouth on you boy/girl; you'd best keep it under control at the God's Wall. Not many have quite the sense of humor that I have.

Near the midpoint of the conversation, have Templar Tillmin's second in command, Templar Andreas come in and whisper something in Tillmin's ear. Andreas will then turn, nod to the Heroes and walk out.

Continue with the conversation with Tillmin.

- Ah, now I see your obsession with the missing Khur Gi men. It seems, my lord, that we have heroes amongst us. These fine beings rescued a couple of crusaders from being beaten by a few Khur Gi toughs.
- The Khur Gi toughs? They are in custody, awaiting trial. As you may know, Milandir is a kingdom of laws and order. We don't just execute people without a proper trial. See - there's that humor for which I am famous for, creeping out in the most inappropriate times.
- The Khur Gi legend? No idea. I have little use for heretical beliefs or superstitious claptrap. I put my faith in the Gods, as I hope all of you do.

Once the questioning starts to wind down, have the Knight-Commander interject the following:

"You know, Tillmin, I know the very thing to keep these young Crusaders occupied until they are assigned. Why not have them look into that nasty bit of murder that happened last night? "

"I think that my men can handle..."

"Nonsense, Tillmin. Your men have over a thousand Crusaders, mercenaries and what have you to police and keep in order. You're always complaining about not having enough manpower. Well here you go!"

Turning to you, the Knight-Commander continues. "Last night, one of the Yhing hir merchants, I have no idea which one - their names all sound the same to me - was found murdered in his tent. Torn limb from limb, if truth be told.

Now, since I doubt any natural being could do that to a man - I'm worried we may have something unnatural running around here. Not an Infernal - I very much doubt that - but some sort of wild animal or predator from the Hinterlands. Who knows what creatures inhabit this uncivilized place?

"I'm assigning you to this little mystery. Get it right and I'll make sure you leave for the front with a little extra jingle in your pouches.

"The murder took place in the Market Square. Crusader Stetz, you don't leave until morning, correct? Then escort your fellow crusaders over to the Square and then get some sleep!"

If the players ask for some more information, they really have no more to give. Some merchant was torn limb from limb in his tent in the Market Square and that he was a Yhing hir.

If asked how much "extra jingle", belligerent Hansdel will emerge and start yelling, *"What are you, some money grubbing mercenary? Someone's dead and the lord of the land is asking you to look into it. What do you think? That I'm going to cheat you? Get out of here before I change my mind and have you digging a sewage system for my city - you'll be begging to fight Infernals then! Now GET OUT OF HERE!"*

If the players want to do a check to see how Tillmin is reacting to this, have them make an **Empathy roll TN 22**. If successful, they see that the usually stoic Tillmin's cool facade cracks for an instant. They note that he's surprised by the Knight-Commander's action. Nothing else.

Development: Assuming the Heroes don't want to spend the rest of the adventure digging latrines and they agree to follow Rohan to the Market Square, continue to Scene Three.

If they wish to do something else, you'll have to play it by ear and use the information in the mod to assist you.

SCENE THREE

Key Concepts: The Heroes try and investigate the murder of the Yhing hir merchant and find only obstruction and suspicion from the locals.

Once the players are ready to continue, read or paraphrase the following:

You reach the so-called Market Square, which is really a cleared out space that the Knight-Commander's men have roped off so that merchants can set up their tents and such. Apparently he was more optimistic than realistic, because the area could easily accommodate two scores of large tents. Instead, there are barely a half-dozen.

Rohan turns to you and says that he must be off as his big day is tomorrow. With a wave of his hand, he's off.

NOTE: If the Heroes try and persuade him to stick around, he will really resist doing so as the thought of disobeying a direct order from the Knight-

Commander is anathema to him. If a player can achieve a **Persuasion TN 21** or greater, he'll agree to stick around until they finish their investigation here and not a moment longer.

As you begin to approach, you note that the merchants are not trying to sell you any wares; indeed some are packing their merchandise away.

The merchants here are all of the same tribe, the Vanomir of Sicaris. The Vanomir are the typical Yhing hir, bowlegged with signs of strong Khitani heritage. Unlike the Khur Gi, the males wear the middle portion of their hair long, for some strange reason. (*See the Codex Arcanis if curious*).

The merchants here are very suspicious of anyone not of their tribe and even then, will be only slightly less hostile. They feel that they have been lured to this fool's paradise and have lost a season's worth of money, listening to the honeyed words of the Knight-Commander who promised them a shower of gold from all the traffic coming through here.

Instead they have been harassed by various mercenary companies, had to spend money on food and other products that they assumed would be cheap here and instead was at a premium (it seems that the recruits have a higher priority for getting foodstuffs than the civilians) and lastly, they have even been preyed upon by their cousins, the Khur Gi. One of the merchants, a proud old man by the name of Len Far had his prize riding horse stolen (yes, this is the same horse the Heroes 'liberated' from the Khur Gi thugs, so you can add horse thievery to assault and battery to their charges). For Yhing hir, the theft of his horse is a grave offense as their ancient proverb, "**A man without a horse is not a man**" explains.

The last straw, of course, was the brutal slaying of one of their own, Len Folir. True, Folir was as crooked as a snake and sometimes dealt in commodities as well as with people who would be unpleasant by the most generous of descriptions.

Len Folir's History: One such client that Folir dealt with was the leader of the Crimson Slavers here in Mil Takara. This unpleasant individual is addicted to an exotic narcotic called Hag's Brine. While readily available in Garundi, the capital of the Isle of the Crimson Slavers, it is virtually non-existent in the Milandisian territories; non-existent, that is, unless you know the morally malleable Len Folir.

Having run out of the local currency, the Slaver paid Folir in Canceri Bahts (the local currency in that

dismal place) as well as some jewelry taken from the val'Mehan children recently captured by the Slavers.

Folir has been using the jewelry to entice one of the prostitutes in the Tents of Sighs. He had planned on doleing it out slowly, so as to extend whatever store of exotic trinkets he may have. (This will have terrible consequences for the young woman later in Scene Five).

As the Cancereese Adjurer, Nagyl val'Virdan, followed the tracking devil he was given, the bound Infernal picked up the scent of the jewelry that belonged to the kidnapped Cancereese girl. Unfortunately, it was the jewelry with which Folir had been paid. In the middle of the night, the Adjurer confronted Folir and when he professed not to know anything, the devil ripped him apart. With the still hot blood, the Nierite wrote on the tent wall, "Where is she?"

Of course, the other Vanomir merchants don't know any of this, other than the fact that Folir's dirty dealing finally caught up with him.

They also didn't really see or hear anything due to the fact that their tents are spread out, given the amount of space available to them.

When the Heroes arrive, the Vanomir will be utterly reluctant to speak with any of them. If asked who was killed, they will feign ignorance, even going so far as saying, '**Me no speakee the Milandisian**' (or whatever language the Hero used to communicate).

No amount of persuasion will work to open them up, [the TN of such a roll would be 40 due to their fear and utter contempt for all things connected to this accursed place].

The only person who will speak at all is Old Mejima, and she will only speak of what a horrid place this is as well as what complete hypocrites the Milandisians are, spouting talk like a Coryani, about bringing law and order as well as defending them against the Infernals.

Just as the Heroes are running out of patience, have her drop this little tidbit, "What kind of place is this when your own cousins steal your horse from you?" That should perk up the player's ears. Hopefully they will put two and two together, perhaps by asking her to describe the horse, etc.

Assuming they still have the horse (they should, unless this adventure has gone way off script - which

is fine if it did...just reel them back in), they can offer it back to the Vanomir, either as a sign of good faith or as a trade to get the information.

Obviously, either method will work, although by turning it in without any strings attached will garner them greater respect and kindness from the Vanomir (not to mention experience Points).

Once they have their trust, the Vanomir, will quickly show them Folir's tent and explain that he was a distant cousin dealing in rugs, spices and other sundry items.

Inside Len Folir's Tent

Description: The tent is huge, like most of the Vanomir's merchant tents. The tent is partitioned by the judicious use of curtains and other materials, such as hanging rugs, to give the impression of hallways and different rooms.

In the front section is where Folir kept his main articles of sale: rugs, brass items, such as cups, plates, etc.

Deeper within, there are various other "rooms" with other items, such as glass items, spices, and various sundry items of finer quality.

Note: If the players feel that this is their time to loot, tell them to guess again. All this property belongs to Folir's hetman (similar to a leader or chief), old Len Far. If they start loading up on items, a couple of the younger Vanomir, as well as old Mejima will give them the eye, basically telling them, *"Put the stuff back and there won't be a need to call the Templars"*.

The "room" all the way in the back is Folir's living quarters - a place where very soft rugs are piled high to act as a bed and pillows stuffed with down litter the area.

Unfortunately, the expensive elegance is marred by dried blood that has been splashed everywhere. The smell of rotting meat, from the smaller pieces of Folir that weren't recovered, permeates the room, and there are the soft squeals of rats making a meal of those forgotten bits.

On one of the walls, written in Low Coryani are the words, **"Where is she"**, in dark, dried blood.

Hero's Actions: Assuming the Heroes wish to search the place, have each of them make a **Perception**

Action Roll. The TN is unimportant as these clues are necessary for the continuance of the story.

Select the two highest rolls as the ones who find the following:

Perception Roll success - second highest: The Letter

Hidden underneath his sleeping pillow is a letter, still smelling sweetly of perfume. Within, in a decidedly feminine script is written the following in Low Coryani:

*"I shall treasure your gift always, my noble prince. Until we may know the joy of each other's touch."
- Signed, Love always, Jadia*

Below the signature are lip prints in red.

Perception Roll success - highest: The Chest

Hidden beneath a series of rugs and cushions, not to mention the rats nibbling on their grisly meal, is a small chest that sits in a hollowed out space in the dirt floor.

Note: If the players wish to check for traps, allow them to do so, but no trap exists. However, the chest is locked and no key has turned up during the search.

To pick the lock on the chest requires a successful **Larceny (Quickness) TN 15**. They can always break the lock, if necessary.

Inside are a number of small velvet bags.

Velvet bags #1- #3: Money in Milandisian Crowns, totaling 30 Silver Coins between the three of them.

Velvet bag #4: Small vials containing an odorless greenish blue powdery substance.

If the Heroes wish to identify the substance, then have them make the following Action Rolls:

Streetwise (Logic) TN 20 or **Heal (Logic) TN 25**.

If the Streetwise roll is successful, then the Hero will identify it as an exotic narcotic known as the Hag's Brine and that, while available in the more cosmopolitan cities, it is grown only in the Coryani province of Salantis and in some of the Islands in the Pirate Isles.

If the Heal roll is successful, the Hero will know what it is, but not where it is grown. He will also

know that the narcotic is known to counteract pain and will keep a person awake and alert for days on end. The side effects are unpleasant, as it leads to frequent bouts of vomiting and irritability and can eventually induce psychosis.

If the Heal Roll is successful, give the player(s) with Streetwise a second chance (**Streetwise TN 15**) to identify its source, since they now know what the substance is.

Velvet bag #5: This bag is a little larger than the others. Within it are more tarnished looking bronze coins, though smaller than Milandisian Crowns or Coryani Imperials. These are Bahts and Satang, and any Heroes from the Coryani Empire, Milandir, Altheria or the Hinterlands will know that they are the common currency of the Theocracy of Canceri. The total in coin works out to 7 and a half Bahts.

In addition, there are an assortment of rings, necklaces, bracelets and other trinkets - the majority of which look to be crafted for either slight females or young women.

Have the players examining the jewelry make another **Perception TN = 18** roll. If successful, they will note that etched inside rings or in some innocuous place is a sigil.

Upon a further successful **Arcanum (Sorcery) TN 20** action roll, the Hero will identify the runes as simple tracking runes, used to find lost items. Not a very potent rune and good for very short distances.

Note: If the Players wish to steal the money and jewelry, (and let's not mince words, it is stealing) they may be able to remove the small items because the Vanomir are not watching them like hawks - they trust the Heroes. It is only the large, heavier items that the Vanomir will immediately notice are being looted.

If the Heroes question the Vanomir about the items, they will get the following responses:

Bahts: The Vanomir know that the Baht is the currency the Theocracy of Canceri, but they haven't done business with any Cancere in many years. No one here would dare pay with Bahts, given the Milandisians complete disgust and disdain for the Cancere.

Hag's Brine: The Vanomir don't know what the substance is. If told that it's a drug, they will be shocked. Folir never seemed to be under any sort of

drugged stupor (nor exhibited any symptom of the narcotic). These Vanomir merchants have never traded in such substances.

Jewelry: The pieces are good quality jewelry and worth quite a bit of money (collectively, almost a twenty-five (25) Gold Crowns). They seem to be made for either very slight men and women or they are the jewelry of young men and women.

NOTE: If not discovered already, Old Mejima, who was examining the jewelry, will toss it aside as if the metal burned her. She will exclaim that there are sigils etched on the inside of the rings and in subtle hiding places within the rest of the jewelry pieces. She will exclaim that they are Sarishan curses against thieves.

Jadia: If asked about Jadia, Old Mejima will snort, *"She's one of those 'Larissan priestesses' over in the Tents of Sighs. That idiot Folir was smitten by her and spent every coin he earned just to 'enjoy her company'. He actually thought the girl was in love with him and that they were going to run off together. I'll say one thing about those priestesses, they sure know how to reel in a customer!"*

If asked to describe her, Old Mejima will say she's a small, skinny thing that looks like she hasn't had a good meal in years. She is blonde with light eyes, which makes her a novelty out here among the Yhing hir.

Robed Man: If the players happen to bring up the question of a stranger wearing thick, voluminous robe, reeking of kerosene, has been seen in the area, they will be told that he was in the area, looking around and asking questions about who we were and if we had been traveling through and with whom. The Vanomir will describe him as a strange man with blazing red hair and he stank of kerosene.

Development: Armed with the knowledge gleaned from what they discovered here, the Heroes will probably wish to speak with Jadia. If so, continue with Scene Four.

SCENE FOUR

Key Concepts: In this Scene, the Heroes will meet Jadia, pick up a clue for Part II's adventure and hopefully begin to see that something dire is occurring in the new Mil Takara (if they haven't already).

With any luck, the Heroes are starting to piece together the idea that these murders are somehow connected to Canceri and at least one young woman or young adults (think of ‘twens; 12 – 14 years of age).

Having found the letter and the jewelry and after some additional questioning from the other Vanomir, all roads lead to the Tent of Sighs and the “Larissan priestess” Jadia.

When ready, please read or paraphrase the following:

The sweet scent of perfume wafts powerfully from the dozen multi-colored pavilions that make up the Tents of Sighs. Hanging on a ten-foot high pole is a faded painting of Larissa’s Holy Symbol, the gold coin with Her face embossed upon it.

Getting to Jadia is not too much of a problem and basically involves speaking to a huge brute of a man, who is obviously not all there (but competent enough to call for the “Head Priestess” when “penitents” arrive).

The Head Priestess, a middle-aged woman whose years of “work” are beginning to show, tells the Heroes that to “speak” with priestess Jadia requires a tithe of 5 silver crowns **EACH**. Even if the Heroes explain that they really just want to talk – and nothing else – she will still insist on the tithe.

Assuming that they pay, they will be ushered into the large set of tents. After traversing the winding corridor created through the judicious use of cloth and veils (much like Folir’s tent), they will arrive at Jadia’s room.

Read or paraphrase the following when the Heroes are ushered into Jadia’s chamber:

You make your way through a series of “passages” cleverly made by hanging scores of drapes, scarves and other material between the tents creating a cozy feeling.

The pervasive perfume is even further concentrated as you make your way into a chamber. It’s a fairly large room, filled with hanging scarves, a faded divan and countless pillows and cushions. A series of overlapping rugs provide insulation from the cold earthen floor; three hanging lamps ensure a suitably romantic atmosphere.

Positioned with practiced poise Jadia lies back on pillows. She is fairly attractive, thin woman with

deep dark red lips and some sort of blue makeup that seem to accentuate her eyes. True to Old Mejima’s description, her long tresses gleam golden in the lamplight.

Smiling at your group’s entry, she smiles and says, “I was told you just wanted to talk. I hope that’s true.”

Jadia is a fairly open woman with nothing much to hide. She doesn’t feel she owes anything to Folir, given that he’s dead. So as long as the Heroes treat her in a respectful manner AND sprinkle some coin to loosen her tongue, this should be a fairly easy interrogation for the Heroes.

What Jadia knows:

- She readily admits that Folir was a regular customer of hers.
- He would come in irregularly until about a month ago, when he began to come in at least every other day.
- At first he paid her in the local currency, like Imperials or Crowns, but for the last couple of weeks, he’s been paying her in Bahts. She normally wouldn’t accept it as payment, but he began to give her gifts as well.
- “Gifts like this necklace and ring”, she’ll say as she pulls out a small coffer, pulls out some jewelry and show it to the Heroes.
- If a Hero wishes to examine a piece of jewelry, she’ll hesitate saying, “It’s not stolen. You can’t take it from me.” As long as the Hero gives her some sort of assurance, she will hand over a ring. Assuming they are looking for the sigil found in some of the other jewelry in Folir’s chest, they can easily find one almost identical.
- Did Folir say where he got these? Not exactly. He just said he had some new clients and that they usually traded in such goods rather than coin.
- Did Folir use any drugs? No, Folir drank a bit and smoked, but I never saw him take any narcotics. [If they specifically mentioned Hag’s Brine] She’ll say, but I know someone who does. (She’ll then hint at some money to give up the information).
- Assuming they bribe her: (She’ll get all excited and giddy like an adolescent girl gossiping with her girls friends) “He started coming around about a month or so – so handsome and dashing, even if at first those clear eyes of his scared me a bit.

- Who was this man? *My charming Sea Captain. His name? I always called him 'Captain', but I think he said his name was 'Tabor' when he first introduced himself. 'Tabor val'Ossan'. Isn't that soooo exotic? Well anyway, he's a fantastic <cough, cough> customer; always paying without haggling, never hits me, AND he gives me real expensive jewelry, not the cheap stuff that Folir gives me.*
- If a Hero wishes to examine a piece of the jewelry from Tabor val'Ossan, she'll hesitate again. As long as the Hero gives her some sort of assurance, she will hand over a ring. Assuming they are looking for the sigil found in some of the other jewelry in Folir's chest, the ring as well will have an identical match.
- The Drug? *Oh yes – that's his only flaw. When he takes it he becomes a different man – very scary. He complained that he had run out and that he didn't know where he would find more, but a few days after that, he said he found a new supplier. I don't know whom he meant. Do you think it was Folir?*
- When will he come to see you again or where he stays? *I don't know. I don't get out of here too much, except to go to the Market Square to go shopping, if you can call it that.*
- Have you seen a Robed Stranger around? *No, I haven't.*
- Do you know anything about missing Khur Gi? *"One of Alatur's sons comes and 'visits' with me once in a while. He mentioned something about warriors disappearing without anyone seeing them leave or without any word given. He started talking about some legend, but honestly, I just stopped listening at that point.*

Note: If the players ask about the Robed man, that can also lead to Jadia talking about the Sea Captain. In fact, it's the one thing she is eager to talk about. Try to give them any and every opportunity to discover this information.

Jadia doesn't really know much of anything else. When the questioning starts to stall and it looks like the Heroes are about to move out, have them all make a Perception Roll. TN is unimportant. Tell the player who rolled the highest Action Roll that he smells the strong odor of kerosene.

Just as he announces it to the rest of the Heroes (or as the player begins to take an action) read or paraphrase the following:

Just as the smell of something burning reaches your noses, the interior of the Tent of Sighs erupts in screams of terror!

Note: If at any point, the players decide that Jadia is in eminent danger, perhaps because they discover the hidden sigils in the jewelry, go immediately to the description of the smell of kerosene and the flames enveloping the Tents of Sighs and go to Scene Five.

Development: The Tents of Sighs is under attack. More specifically, the Bone Cracker Devil has tracked the jewelry to Jadia and if the Adjurer doesn't get the answers he wants, then...

SCENE FIVE

Key Concepts: The robed man makes himself known and the Tent of Sighs goes up in flames.

Refer to Map #2

As you may note from the map, Jadia's private tent is close to the middle of the entire structure. Give the players a moment to come up with a plan.

Odds are they will either leave through the entry flap of the tent or attempt to cut their way out. The inner material is very flimsy and anyone with a sharp object can cut an opening large enough for an adult to move through in 3 ticks.

Where is the robed man and the devil? They are approximately 6 or so squares from wherever the Heroes emerge. Remember the idea here is to have an exciting fight. That won't happen if the opponents are so far apart they spend ten minutes getting into position. Don't waste that time. If the heroes cut a way through the back, there they (the robed man and the Devil) are. If they go out the opening out of the Jadia's tent, there they are, at the end of the corridor. The idea is to get the fight going and not waste time on non-essential issues.

Once they decide what to do and start to move out of the tent (or if they decide to wait where they are) continue with the boxed text below.

Also note that the interior walls are not very solid. The exterior walls are made of canvas, while the

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD: FIRE RULES

Every 5 ticks from the point that the fire catches up with the Heroes, (in this case Tick 6), roll the following attack against each character:

Flaming Debris (d6)

Environmental Event (Tier 1)

Attack: +2, *Avoidance* (2d10+1d6+2)

Damage: 3d4

Effects: If the attack also bypasses the characters *Fortitude* the character is burned and suffers an additional 1d4 points of damage.

Note: If Jadia (or any of the panicking people inside the Tents) are being protected by a Hero, (for example, using a shield or their own bodies to shield them from the flaming debris) then lower the Hero's *Avoidance* by 2 and use that new *Avoidance* number for the Hero and Jadia as well.

The robed man, the Nierite Adjurer, is protected by the flames by his flame retardant robes. His robes are soaked in a chemical bath that, ironically, gives off a smell similar to kerosene. Therefore, there is no need to roll to see if the Flaming Debris hits him. The Devil can be damaged by this hazard as normal.

interiors are made of much lighter material, meaning one can be pushed or stab through it.

On Tick 6, (assuming the Heroes are fighting inside the Tents of Sighs), the fire reaches where they are fighting.

Once the Heroes see the Nierite and the Devil, read or paraphrase the following:

The crackling of the fire is starting to get closer and the screams of the others trapped within the Tent of Sighs is deafening at times.

As you make your way out of Jadia's rooms, you see a figure through the smoke. He is a tall being, swathed in thick robes. A large wavy sword rests with its point on the ground.

Behind him, a savage looking Infernal looms - its mottled red skin looks almost like chitin in places. Long, powerful arms and equally large clawed hands drag at the ground near its cloven feet. Its tiny beady eyes gleam with malign intelligence. Yet perhaps the eeriest thing about the creature is how silent it is - not a sound has issued from its toothy maw.

COMBAT STATISTICS - SCENE FIVE

Nagyl val'Virdan Nierite Adjurer, Cancerese		d12, Med, Humanoid Adversary (Tier 1)	
Avoidance	Fortitude	Discipline	
20	21	19	
St/Wo: 61 (1)	Pace: 40'		
AR: 5	Initiative: 5		
Attacks:	Flamberge: +4 (a)	d10 (d12)	
	Sp: 6, Ra: Melee		
	Gauntlet: +4 (a)	d4 (d12)	
	Sp: 3, Ra: Melee		
Talents	Die Hard, Smite Infidel (T1), Martial Technique (Sweeping Strike), Weapon Training (Flamberge: Mighty Swing), Bloodline Power: <i>To know the sight of our lord.</i>		
Skills	(+4/17/14) Athletics, Battle, Melee: (Balanced) & (Unarmed), Knowledge (Religion), Perception, and Persuasion.		
Gear	Cancerese Gothic Plate, Gauntlets (2) Flamberge		

Bone Cracker Devil		d10, Large Infernal (Devil) Brute Threat (Tier 2)	
Avoidance	Fortitude	Discipline	
18	20	18	
St/Wo: 56 (2)	Pace: 25'		
AR: 4	Initiative: 4		
Attacks:	Claws: +6 (a)	d6(d10)+5	
	Sp: 5, Ra: Melee 10'		
Talents	Fel Sight, Natural Armor (T2), Powerful Attack (Claw), Monstrous Charge, Martial Technique (Sweeping Strike)*		
Weakness	Vulnerability: Sarishan Steel, Bestial Intellect		
Skills:	(+6/19/13) Athletics, Melee: (Unarmed), Tracking		
Gear	Nil, may not wear armor of any kind.		
Special Note:	Due to this Infernal's abnormally large arms and claws, it may utilize sweeping strike with its claw attacks.		

Mighty Swing

Attack: Avoidance (Might)

Sp: +1 (3)

Ra: Melee (1 Target)

Effect: +5 damage

Sweeping Strike

You strike in a wide arc, catching several enemies at once.

Requirements: Might 7, Melee (any) +3

Attack: Avoidance (Prowess)

Ra: Melee

Sp: +1 (2)

Effect: You may perform an attack against any two opponents within melee reach. Each attack must be rolled independently.

Pushing his cowl back to reveal a shock of red hair, the man speaks in heavily accented Low Coryani - "I have no quarrel with you. I merely want the girl"

If the players try to parlay with the Adjurer, he will snarl and say he has no time for stalling tactics. He does have a point - the building is burning down around them.

Feel free to announce that Initiative should be rolled.

What Happens if the Players Do the Smart Thing?

So what happens if the players decide that running is the better part of valor and try and escape to the outside and call for any patrolling Templars?

If they do that, it's their prerogative and it might be a good idea to fight outside a burning edifice, but it's not very Heroic. Unless the Heroes are very close to all being defeated, the Templars will arrive when the battle is over.

Defeated Foes: Remember that once an opponent is reduced to 0 Stamina, they are not dead; they are either incapacitated or unconscious.

The Devil will have to be killed as it will not fall unconscious or allow itself to be captured. When its Stamina falls to 0, give the players a moment to decide whether to kill it or not. If they do not and begin to capture it, it will vanish, summoned back to the Sarishan that bound it.

The same does not apply to the Cancerese Nierite. The Heroes should hold him for questioning, but if they decide to butcher an unconscious man, that is their prerogative.

The heroes may keep the Adjurer's equipment, as it does not belong to the Crusade.

Once the fight is over, go to the Conclusion

CONCLUSIONS & ENDINGS

Once the battle is concluded, read or paraphrase the following:

As you drag the body of the Nierite away from any further flaming debris, Templar Tillmin and a squad of his men arrive on horseback.

Looking down at your soot-smearred faces, he nods

his head, as if grudgingly showing that you have earned his respect.

"Amazing - I hear that a quarter of Mil Takara is in flames and that Infernals are stalking our citizens. I rush down here with my men ready for the worst and I come to find that you already have the situation in hand. Well done."

Motioning his men to relieve you of your burden, they place the Nierite in chains.

"I assume that this is the person responsible for the murder of our citizen? We'll make sure he has a fair trial before he's hung. We are a civilized people, after all."

"Civilized?" yells the Nierite as he struggles weakly against his chains. "Do civilized people steal young sons and daughters from their grieving parents? Do they stalk us in the night and steal our own children from us?"

As he is dragged away, the Nierite continues, "Monsters! Slavers!"

Shaking his head, Tillmin says loud enough to be heard by the crowd that has gathered to see the show. "It is against the laws of Milandir to traffic in slaves. We are not like the depraved Coryani who sell people like you would a chair. The Milandisian society is too morally superior to dirty our hands with such a barbaric practice.

"Here," he says, tossing a pouch to one of you, "for a job well done." Turning his horse, he heads back towards the Keep.

If the Heroes state that they kill the Nierite, read the above but interject the following between paragraphs #3 and #4:

"Is he dead? Pity - I would have preferred to have taken him alive for questioning. You must learn to control your blood lust, crusaders. On the Wall..."

"My lord," one of the Templars interrupts as he examines the Nierite's body, "he still lives. Barely, but I think I can patch him up so that we can get some answers from him. See, he stirs even now"

If the Heroes protest that they want to question the Nierite now or question Tillmin about what he said, they'll have to wait until the second part of this adventure, Desperate Times.

The End

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

Awarding experience points is easy. Sum up the experience listed on the table below for each objective that the heroes accomplished. Additionally, you can grant the Role-Playing Bonus, or any fraction therein, individually to each hero. In fact, we urge you to carefully consider this bonus; granting values in the middle of the range, with higher amounts for players who acted in character, even in challenging situations. Similarly, players who consistently act out of character should receive values at the low end of the range, even 0 if that would be appropriate.

Objective	XP value
Playing the adventure to its completion	150
Befriending Rohan Stetz	5
Defeating the Khur Gi Toughs	10
Giving the Stolen Horse back to the Vanomir	15
Discovering the sigil on the jewelry	5
Getting Jadia to speak about the "Sea Captain"	20
Defeating the Nierite Adjurer and the Bone Cracker Devil	10
Role-Playing Award	10
Total Experience Possible	225

TREASURE SUMMARY

Any item listed in the summary below is available for a character to keep; alternatively, the party may elect to sell the item for half-value. Items of unusual quality or that possess magical properties will have an entry listed on the *Chronicle Page* associated with this adventure (under Items Found); if the party did not find that item, strike that from the list. Any entry on the *Chronicle Page* is available to all characters who completed the adventure, unless it specifically states otherwise on the *Chronicle Page* or in the *Treasure Summary*.

On rare occasions, an item may have a certificate issued for it. In such situations, the item may only be kept by whichever character receives the certificate.

Living creatures, be they animals, dominated monsters, minions and so forth, may not be kept from a scenario unless specifically allowed for on the *Chronicle Page* or a stand-alone certificate.

It is okay for the heroes to form relationships with NPCs, but these cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts and influence must also be specifically listed as Story Achievements on a *Chronicle Page*.

Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some heroes. A hero may steal, and keep the proceeds, up to 5% of the listed obtainable Sc from the adventure. If the hero attempts to steal an item that is worth more than 1 Gc that is of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), or is a magical item; the character will be

caught. Being caught stealing in this fashion, imposes a fine equal to five times the value of the item that was stolen; if the hero does not have sufficient coin, then items will be taken from the hero to cover the remainder that is owing.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things it later finds unreasonable but that were allowed at the time; although, the circumstances under which such an action will be taken are unusual at best.

The heroes should generally be awarded all items for encounters they defeat unless stated otherwise in the adventure. This includes guards giving the heroes items if they subdue or keep alive minions with those items.

The listed value beside items in the treasure summary is the sale price and represents 1/10th of the item's normal market value in Sc.

FOUND ITEMS

SCENE THREE

30 Sc (stolen)
7 Baht 50 Satang (stolen; cannot be sold)
2 Vials of Hag's Brine (stolen; illicit)

SCENE FIVE

Cancerese Gothic Plate (6 Gc)
Gauntlets (x2; 1 Sc each)
Flamberge (6 Sc)

CONCLUSION

Maximum of 1 Gc 6 Sc per Hero

STORY ACHIEVEMENTS AND SPECIAL ITEMS

SCENE THREE

If the heroes gave the stolen horse back as a gesture of good faith, they gain the Vanomir Reputation +1 entry.

ADVENTURE MAP #2 – SCENE FIVE: THE TENT OF SIGHS

