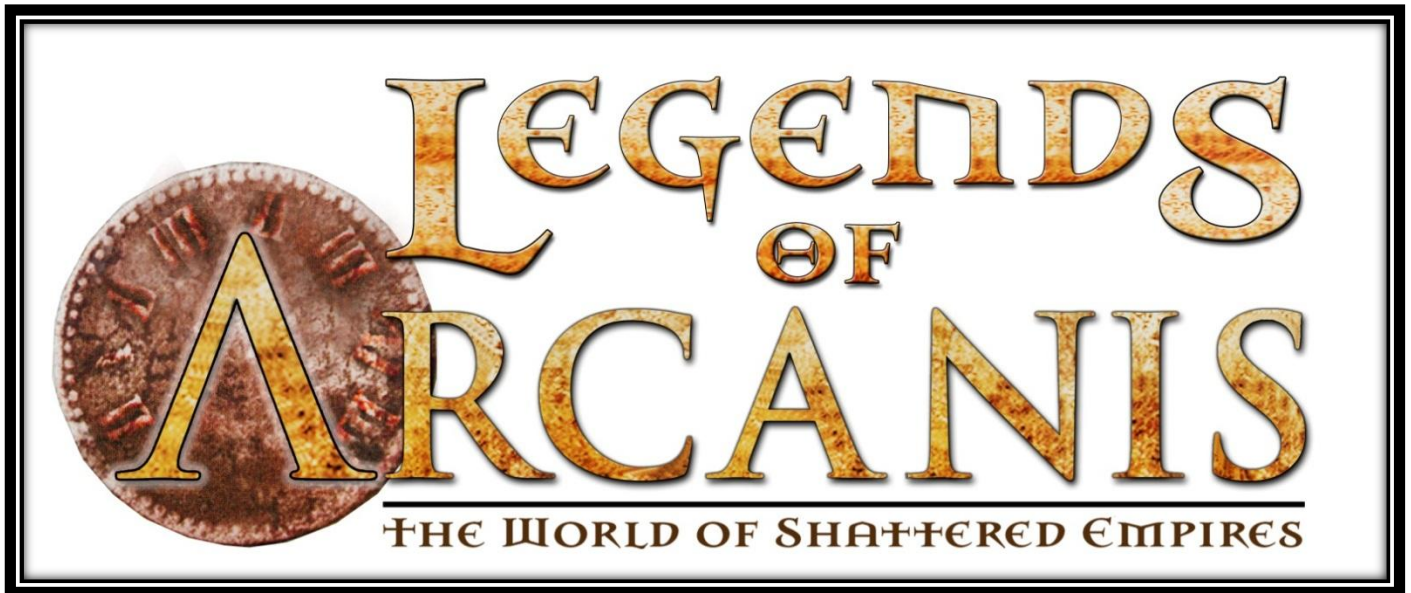


**Paradigm Concepts**  
Presents



## **DESPERATE TIMES**

PART TWO OF A TWO-PART ADVENTURE

**A 4-HOUR LEGENDS OF ARCANIS ADVENTURE  
HARD POINT ADVENTURE 2, CRUSADES YEAR 1  
16TH OF LAMPYRIS, 1070 I.C.**

**BY HENRY LOPEZ**

Having discovered and defeated the person responsible for the bloody murder in the rebuilding Mil Takara, the Heroes are beginning to learn that there may be more to this than a simple "madman" on a rampage. 'Everything Wicked May Come From Canceri' as the saying goes, but something very foul is brewing here in the Milandisian staging grounds for the Crusade.

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

**This LEGENDS OF ARCANIS INTRODUCTORY adventure is designed for Tier 1.**

## CREDITS

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**Version:** 2.0

## **CAMPAIGN-RELATED INFORMATION**

The entirety of this adventure takes place in and around 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. They are also building smaller shrines to some of the more popular Deities of the Milandric Church, such as Saluwe', 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 also 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.

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 its razing 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 for 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, returning with his cut-off tongue (a symbol for the lies that the Milandisian told to the Khur Gi people).

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

## **ADVENTURE BACKGROUND**

In the first adventure, the Heroes arrived at the staging township for the Crusade - a place called Mil Takara in the Hinterlands.

The original Mil Takara was razed to the ground years ago and is now being rebuilt by the Milandisians for use as a common ground where troops and supplies can be gathered and assembled before being sent to the front, known as the 'Wall' or 'God's Wall'.

After a series of encounters, the Heroes should have learned a few things:

1. There have been reports of Khur Gi warriors going missing;
2. There was a brutal murder of a Vanomir merchant. The Vanomir are another tribe of Yhing hir.
3. Upon investigating, it was discovered that the murderer was presumably following a trail of jewelry belonging to young adolescent males and females;
4. These pieces of jewelry had engraved upon them some sort of sigil that served as a low radius tracking device.
5. There seemed to be a link between the merchant and some mysterious man known as the "Sea Captain" according to a "lady of comfort". The Sea Captain purchased an exotic narcotic known as Hag's Brine from

the merchant and paid in either jewelry or Canceri Bahts (the currency used in the Theocracy of Canceri - the mortal enemy of Milandir).

6. This lady of comfort, one Jadia, also had in her possession some rings and necklaces with the same sigil upon them. Some were given to her by the merchant; others by the Sea Captain.
7. It should be noted that Mil Takara is nowhere near the coast or any navigable river.
8. While questioning Jadia, she was attacked by the murderer of the merchant - a Cancerese Nierite and a bound Bone Cracker Devil.
9. After the Heroes defeated the Nierite and the Infernal while the Tents of Sighs burned down around them, the Nierite is hauled away in chains. As he is taken, the Heroes hear him scream that the Milandisians are stealing the "sons and daughters of Canceri from their parents."

## INTRODUCTION

**GM - please read or paraphrase the following:**

*After they took the Canceriman away, there was nothing left to do but tread back to our hastily assigned quarters, a series of tents in the southern outskirts of the rebuilding town. Wisps of still burning silk and canvas still fluttered through the air, following in the wake of ash flakes.*

*I'm not sure about my newly discovered comrades in arms, but I was exhausted. Try swinging a sword or even unleashing sorcerous energy, I'm told, and adrenaline will keep you going until the danger is past, then it feels like an eight-horse carriage has run over you: every cut, every bruise sings in pain for your attention.*

*But as I settled into my cot for the evening, the words of the Canceriman burned in my ears, "Do civilized people steal young sons and daughters from their grieving parents? Do they stalk in the night and steal our own children from us? Monsters! Slavers!"*

*When morning came, it seemed that those words haunted some of my companions as well. After a*

*quick breakfast, some thought that a quick visit to question the prisoner further was in order.*

Welcome back for Part II of the *Desperate Measures - Desperate Times* Two Part Adventure. It is STRONGLY urged that you play through Part I (Desperate Measures) of this Two Part adventure before playing Desperate Times. If not, then you may be spoiled on certain matters in the story.

### **How to Run this Adventure**

This adventure is fairly open-ended and non-linear. The players are free to pursue any lead they wish and interrogate anybody they wish in whatever order they like, with a few notable exceptions that will be clearly stated.

For simplicity's sake and to get the ball rolling, ask the players if they'd like their characters to visit the captured Nierite.

Below is a series of write-ups of places and people where the Heroes may go to investigate the missing Cancerese and (hopefully) Khur Gi as well.

Whenever they have enough information to find the Slavers, you may move off to Scene Eight, Shutting Down the Slavers. That encounter should lead the Heroes to the final scene, their encounter with the Sarishan Sorcerer-Priest.

When ready, head to Scene One, which deals with the interrogation of the Nierite.

If they wish to do something else, feel free to jump around until they accomplish what is required.

Note that Rohan Stetz shipped out with his unit early this morning and his laser sharp intellect and selfless acts of heroism are no longer an available resource for the Heroes in this adventure.

For your convenience, the narrative description of Mil Takara is reproduced below:

### **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 a tower.

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 as to the Crusade, depending on their motivation, as explained by Rohan in the first part of this adventure.

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.

## **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, and in the semi- arid plains of the Hinterlands, rain is life.

Though in a similar phase of construction as the keep, meaning 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 are a small contingent of Hurrianite 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.

## **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.

## **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, the tavern is known by everyone as the Rat's Inn. This is due to the unfortunate - and

according to the proprietor 'Jowls' Sartini, a Cafelan ex-patriot, unavoidable - infestation of rats. Jowls claims that he's doing his best to import some cats to get rid of the problem, but 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.

## **5. Square of Penance**

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

There also, by the direct order of the Knight-Commander, is the gallows. Capital offenders are usually hung, an unusual form of execution for Milandisians, but it offers the advantage of serving as more of a visual reminder of what happens when the laws are broken than does a simple beheading.

## **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 stables 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 Alatum, his five sons and a horde of grandchildren, this area not only provides a safe place to keep one's steed, but to get it groomed and fed as well. Horses are also available for purchase.

## **7. Khur Gi Tents**

A few hundred yards to the north is 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 are to 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.

### 8. The Tents of Sighs

Whenever a large group or army moves out in the field, a caravan of stragglers 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 house 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.

**UPDATE:** The Tents of Sighs are no more. The entirety of their place of business and personal effects was burned down the night before. As such the ladies have spread out across the town, looking for any place where they may seek shelter.

Some have taken temporary refuge in the tavern.

### 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.

**NOTE:** This series of buildings are "Red Herrings". Mention a bunch of buildings that no one knows much about and that has to be the place where the bad guys are. Not this time. The empty warehouses are just that - empty.

### 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 marketplace 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.

**Development:** Assuming the Heroes wish to interrogate the Cancerese prisoner, go to Scene 1.

If they wish to go elsewhere, then feel free to jump to whatever Scene is indicative of their desire.

#### **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 - GATHERING

### INFORMATION:

## THE CANCERESE PRISONER

**Key Concept:** Here the Heroes get the chance to interrogate the Cancerese Nierite prisoner.

The prisoner is being held in the lower level of the Keep until his trial. Getting that information should be fairly easy. No roll needed – it can be obtained merely by asking either at the Keep or any of the Templars on patrol. Remember that the Templars act as the Watch in Mil Takara, at least until the Knight-Commander's entire staff transfers over.

Additionally, due to the fact that word has spread quickly about the Heroes valiant actions the night before in capturing the 'murderous madman', getting direct access to him won't be a problem either.

The following assumes that the Heroes act boldly and go directly to the prisoner's cell beneath the Keep. If they take any detours, you'll have to adjust as necessary.

Please read or paraphrase the following:

*The two guards lead you down the roughly hewn corridor to the small rooms that were originally designed as storage rooms or pantries, but that are being used as makeshift cells. Despite the rising heat above, the area below the keep is cool and damp.*

*As the guards unlock the small wooden door, the strong smell of sweat and human waste assails your nostrils. Chained to the far wall is the Nierite you captured the night before, battered and bloodied - his face a swollen lump that you are fairly certain was not the result of your battle.*

*As you enter, he raises his head to fix one eye upon you. The other is so swollen, that it can't be opened. He smiles at you, despite the pain it must cause his broken lip, which immediately begins to bleed.*

*"Come to try your hand at torture, my honorable adversaries? I'm sure I still have a few teeth left in my mouth that have not been pulled out or loosened yet."*

If the guards are asked if they tortured the prisoner, the guards will shake their heads in surprise. They have not been in to see the prisoner at all. Only the Templars of Hurrian have been in to interrogate him.

**Note:** The guards are not Templars, but from the Knight-Commander's staff.

The following information may be obtained from the prisoner:

- His name is Nagyl val'Virdan and he is an Adjurer from Canceri.
- An Adjurer is an Inquisitor of the Dark Triumvirate, usually answerable to the Dark Apostate himself.
- Several weeks past, an *Alcoma*, a school, (in Canceri, the children of the nobility (i.e. the Clergy) are sent to school for ten years), was burnt to the ground. The few bodies found were of the adult teachers or of children below the age of 11.
- From records, we discovered that over thirty adolescents, ages 12 - 16, were missing.
- Since the sons and daughters taken were those of minor *Awilu* (minor clergy) only a cursory investigation was launched. The thought was that a rival family had attacked and that the situation would resolve itself.
- However, one of those Awilu is a friend of mine and he asked me to track his daughter down. He was certain she was alive, and since the death of his wife, she was the only family left to him.
- Some of the jewelry she possessed had sigils designed to be used as a tracking device. Unfortunately, the tracking device had a very small radius of effectiveness.
- Being a Sarishan Sorcerer-Priest, he was able to summon and bind the Devil you slew to aid me in getting his daughter back.
- The girl was already too far away for the sigil to be of much use. I instead relied on more mundane means of tracking the children.

- After spreading an enormous amount of Bahts in the right hands, I discovered that a caravan of children of the approximate age I was looking for were bound east across the Hinterlands.
- I eventually tracked the caravan down as they were waiting for their transport to Garundi, the city of the Crimson Slavers.
- After dispatching the slavers, I discovered why it had been so difficult to find anyone who had seen Val children traveling across the Hinterlands - their heads had been shaved and their eyes had been put out so that the telltale grey color of their iris' could not be used to identify them. .
- When I asked for the girl, she was nowhere to be found. It seemed that only val'Virdan and val'Mordane were being sent to Garundi.
- All the val'Mehan children had been separated that first night and taken away by a separate group of Slavers.
- The girl's name is Danica val'Mehan.
- I was able to persuade some of the Slavers to tell me where the others had been sent and they said here, in Mil Takara.
- So I came to this wretched place expecting to find some Khur Gi Nawal savage with a bizarre predilection for val'Mehan. Instead I find that the Milandisians have taken over Mil Takara and are bringing the light and law of their kingdom to the benighted savages of the Hinterlands.
- I was able to find a sigil beacon in the possession of that idiot merchant. When it was evident that he had no idea what I was talking about, I turned to leave when he attacked me.
- The Bone Cracker Devil instantly appeared and ripped him limb from limb.
- I used the opportunity to send a message to the Slavers and to whoever else might be involved.
- As I continued to move about Mil Takara, I was alerted to another marked piece of jewelry in the possession of the harlot, Jadia. But then you and your compatriots arrived to see her as well.
- I had hoped by setting the fire that you would be too busy putting it out to notice me whisking her away, but alas you were single-minded in your duty. And so, here we are.
- Who did this to you? The Templars tortured me. They wanted to know what I knew

about the Slavers and the val'Mehan.

- Was Templar Tillmin here? I have no idea who he is. (When described, he'll say no - no one fitting that description has been to see him).
- Do you know anything about Khur Gi warriors going missing as well? No, they are none of my concern.
- Have you scouted out the green buildings on the outskirts of the town? Yes, but I found them to be deserted.

That seems to be the extent of the Nierite's knowledge, though he will give this parting shot at the Heroes as they leave:

*"And here I thought that you Milandisians lorded your moral superiority over us and the Coryani because you never participated in the slave trade."*

*It seems that you don't have to scratch too deeply to find that we're all alike."*

**Critical Information that the Heroes should have gotten from the Nierite:**

1. That there are Slavers working with someone here in Mil Takara;
2. That Slavers have brought only val'Mehan adolescents to Mil Takara;
3. That the adolescents have probably been blinded to conceal the fact that they are of Val descent;
4. Also implied is that it is against Milandisian law to traffic in slaves.

**Side Note:** If the players think of asking about where the Khur Gi toughs that they defeated in the last adventure are, the guards will say that the only prisoner down here is the Nierite. They will also tell the Heroes that this is the **ONLY** place where such prisoners would be held for trial.

**Development:** After their interview of the Nierite, the Heroes don't have a distinct place they should go to. However, there are valuable clues that they should have gleaned from him that should send them to different sources of information.

**Troubleshooting:** If the players have no idea where to go, suggest that someone make a Streetwise Action Roll (assuming that someone has that Skill) or gently nudge them to some other possible source.

**SCENE TWO - GATHERING INFORMATION:**  
**USING THE STREETWISE SKILL**

**Key Concept:** Here the Heroes get the chance to try and pick up some rumors or other bits of interesting information.

If the player states he's not looking for any specific information he/she may make a **Streetwise Action Roll TN = 12** to get the general vibe and scuttlebutt that's on most people's lips.

- Most people are talking about the burning of the Tents of Sighs and the fact that the Heroes were the ones that killed the Infernal that was behind that murder in the Market Square;
- In the Rat's Inn Tavern there is grumbling from a mercenary company, the *Obun Wolves* out of Almeric, who are being ordered to march off to the Wall in the morning, but have been told that there are no Sarishan steel weapons for them. They were told that they would be issued weapons at the front.
- The Milandisians have put themselves into a tight spot with the Milandric Church all but prohibiting all worship of Sarish, Nier and Neroth.

If the PCs ask specifically about certain topics, then on a successful **Streetwise Action Roll TN = 15**, the Hero may discover the following:

**Topic: Sarishan Steel**

- Because of the worship of Sarish being frowned upon and linked to Canceri, there aren't any Sarishan Binders or Sorcerer-Priests with the knowledge to Bind or Banish Infernals.
- The lack of Infernals means that the Milandisians find they're in short supply of Sarishan Steel weapons.
- If you want details, you might want to ask the Knight-Commander's blacksmith. He may know more about it.

**Topic: Seen the Strangers/Slavers/Description of the "Sea Captain" around?**

- We have hundreds of soldiers and others moving through the town on an almost daily

basis. It's impossible to keep track of strangers.

- I have seen a man fitting your "Sea Captain's" description every once in a while at the Rat's Inn.
- Slavers? Trading in slaves is illegal under Milandisian law. If there are any, they would keep a pretty low profile and not try to peddle any wares around here.

**Topic: Seen any blind kids around?**

- Blind kids? You're kidding right? What kind of a sicko are you? Blind kids...<shakes head in disgust>.

**SCENE THREE -**  
**GATHERING**  
**INFORMATION:**  
**BLACKSMITH**

**Key Concept:** Here the Heroes can discover that the Master Blacksmith is missing. They can also possibly discover the *formula/recipe* for the creation of Sarishan Steel.

When the Heroes arrive at the Keep in search of the Blacksmith, please read or paraphrase the following:

*As you enter the grounds of the unfinished keep, it is unnecessary to ask for directions to the blacksmith's workshop; the rhythmic beating of metal echoes clearly through the courtyard and beyond.*

*Following the sound, you see a large open area where over a dozen burly men and one dwarf are pounding away at glowing hot metal or pouring molten ore into molds.*

If the Heroes attempt to speak with the Master Blacksmith or begin asking any of the blacksmiths here about Sarishan Steel, they will be pointed to one person in particular: Tengir val'Haupt.

**Tengir val'Haupt:** Tengir is a bald, muscular man in his 30's. He has been working under the Master Blacksmith, Evas Sanir, for the past dozen years, the last five as Senior Blacksmith.

The following information may be obtained from Tengir val'Haupt:

- **Where is the Master Blacksmith?** The

Master Blacksmith is Evas Sanir and he's not here.

- He hasn't been around here for the last two weeks or so.
- I told the Knight-Commander that Master Sanir was missing, but I was advised by one of the Knight-Commander's staff that Master Sanir was engaged in a special task for the Church.
- I was never told where he was or how long he would be gone. In the interim, I was put in charge of the smithy by the Knight-Commander;
- **What do you do around here?** We primarily repair weapons and armor here;
- **Could he have gone to another Smithy?** There are no other smithies in the area that I am aware of;
- **How is Sarishan Steel made?** "I have only helped in its manufacture twice when I was studying the technique in the Coryani Empire, and frankly I'd never want to do it again."
- "Sarishan steel is just normal steel - high quality steel, but normal for all intents and purposes."
- "What makes it Sarishan Steel is that just as the molten steel is being poured into the mold that creates the bar from which the armor or weapon is created, a draught of val'Mehan blood is added to the mix."
- "Whatever is in that blood gives the steel a reddish sheen that can never be polished out."
- "I know - that doesn't sound so bad. It's the Tempered Sarishan Steel that's a nightmare!"
- **How is Tempered Sarishan Steel made?** "You start off the same way as making Sarishan Steel."
- "Then, after the weapon is all but finished, it is plunged, one last time, into the body of a living Infernal."
- "Armor and shields are worse, because you have to cut the Infernal at an artery and pour it on whatever you want tempered. Sometimes I can hear those inhuman screams in my sleep. I didn't get these bags under my eyes from wenching!"
- **What does Sarishan Steel/Tempered Sarishan Steel do?** "From what I was told, Sarishan steel puts a whole lot of hurting on those Summoned Infernals but not so much on those Infernals from the other side of the God's Wall. Not sure why."

- "But Tempered Sarishan Steel doesn't care if the Infernal is from the God's Wall or the Emperor's own palace - it'll slice them up nice and neat, just the same."
- **Do we make Sarishan Steel here?** "I guess you're not from Milandir, huh? The worship of Sarish and those other two Canceri Gods are frowned upon in these parts."
- "I know, it kinda shot us in the foot, with the Crusade and all, but like the Holy Primarch says, 'We may die, but our souls will be sent to the Cauldron clean!'"
- **Where do we get the Sarishan Steel we've been giving out to the recruits?** "I know we were getting them from a Coryani Trader - but I haven't seen him in a while. We must have switched suppliers - that Coryani bastard was bleeding our coffers dry."
- "We also recycle the old weapons. Not to scare you, but a lot of folks die up there at the Wall. When you're dead, you don't have much need for any weapons, so we clean them up, sharpen them and hand them back out."
- **Do we have any now?** "No, I'm still waiting on the next shipment. Should be any day now, I hope. They're starting to send guys to the Wall without any - and that's like sending a hen to kill a wolf with just its beak."

**Development:** After their interview of the blacksmith, the Heroes should now know about the importance of Sarishan Steel and how rare it is in the Crusade. They should also have discovered that the Master Smith is gone.

## SCENE FOUR - GATHERING

### INFORMATION:

#### RAT'S INN

**Key Concept:** Here the Heroes can discover that a man fitting the description of their "Sea Captain" comes in for a drink occasionally.

When the Heroes arrive at the Tavern (Rat's Inn) in search of the some information on the "Sea Captain", please read or paraphrase the following:

*True to its nom de guerre, the "Rat's Inn" is swarming with vermin of all type - disgruntled mercenaries, men and women with a desperate and paranoid look in their eyes that is usually reserved*

*for those on the run from the law; and of course, the ubiquitous four legged type.*

*A quick scan reveals that no one even remotely resembling the description of the "Sea Captain" or the man you saw hissing at the Knight -Commander your first day in Mil Takara. The patrons here seem to consist of either other recruits like yourselves ready to ship out, or the new "citizens" of Mil Takara. Oddly, no Khur Gi are present.*

Assuming that the Heroes wish to discreetly question a few people in the tavern, have them make a **Streetwise Action Roll** where the TN depends on what the Heroes appear to be (or just look at their Trait / Background as a rule of thumb.

If the Hero making the roll is a Noblemen, Legionnaire, Templar, Sorcerer, Priest, or other "respectable type" (use your judgment), then the **TN = 30**. There is a certain level of honor among thieves here, and the only people who may know anything are those engaged in less than legal dealings.

Should anyone actually make that Action Roll, they'll find someone who, for a modest price of 30 silver, will tell them that the "Sea Captain" usually shows up at (2 bells after whatever bell just rang). He'll be glad to scout out the area for them and give them a heads' up when he shows up for a mere 10 silver more. Obviously, this is a complete hoax and the Heroes are being fleeced.

If the Hero making the **Streetwise Action Roll** is a less than reputable type of individual (someone whom one would consider a scoundrel or a ne'er-do-well if one were feeling generous) then the **TN = 15**.

If successful, the contact will inform the Hero that:

- The rest of the patrons give those men a wide berth - especially the one with the horns - some Dark-kin who serves as the Captain's First Mate.
- A few days ago, a group of the more desperate "entrepreneurs" of Mil Takara decided to follow the Captain and his Mate out when they were good and drunk and divest them of their coin.
- They went to the southern edge of the town, just where the tents stop, but before they could jump them, they were joined by an entire patrol of Templars.
- The Templars weren't arresting them or giving them a hard time, like they do me and my buddies. They just joined up with them, waiting until they mounted up and headed

out.

- Which way? I didn't pay that much attention, but I'd say south, maybe south by south-east.

The Heroes can wait all they want, but the Slavers will not be putting in an appearance tonight. They know what's going to go on this evening and want no part of it. They are staying indoors for the duration.

**Development:** It is possible that the Heroes leave the Rat's Inn with absolutely no useful information. That's fine - there are other places where they can get similar information.

## SCENE FIVE - GATHERING

### INFORMATION:

### KNIGHT-COMMANDER'S

### OFFICE

**Key Concepts** Here the Heroes can discover that all is not well between the Knight-Commander and the head of the Templars, Tillmin.

When the Heroes arrive at the Knight-Commander's Office in search of the some information, please read or paraphrase the following:

*As you approach the door to the Knight-Commander's office, you hear the muffled sounds of voices raised in anger. Additionally, you notice that the two guards usually stationed here are coming up the hall and will be at the door in a few seconds.*

Now the player's have a choice - listen at the door and catch a snippet or do the honorable thing and knock before entering? Either way they will have only 15 seconds or so to act before the guards arrive.

If they listen at the door they will hear the following exchange between the Knight-Commander and the Templar Tillmin:

K.C. - *"This has gone too far, Tillmin. I never agreed to this. Murder is one thing but this...this will damn those poor..."*

T.T. - (Snarling) *"We've been over this before. I don't like this any more than you do, but our orders are clear. Or would you rather usher in the next Time of Terror?"*

K.C. - *"We can still win, can't you see..."*

T.T. - (Fist hitting flesh is heard) *"Get your hands off me, you slobbering drunk!"*

At that point, the guards will be seconds away.

The door is locked and picking the lock will take longer than the time the Heroes have before the guards arrive.

The Heroes can either pretend to have just arrived and wait for the guards to announce them - OR -

They can knock on the doors and announce themselves to the Knight-Commander.

**Troubleshooting:** If the Heroes try to break the door down, telling the guards that the Knight-Commander is under attack, the guards (who were getting the Knight-Commander's meal) will unlock the door and enter. The Heroes won't be able to break down the stout doors in the time they have available to them.

Once they enter, they'll see the Knight-Commander on the ground and Tillmin over him. The Templar will quickly recover by extending his hand to offer the Knight-Commander help getting up.

If asked what happened, the Knight-Commander will say that he tripped and fell and that Templar Tillmin was just helping him up.

If the Heroes don't pick up on that and demand for Tillmin to be arrested or accuse him of attacking the Knight-Commander, they will look at them as if they are crazy. Neither of the men will attempt to explain what the Heroes overheard and will turn it around on them asking, *"What were you doing eavesdropping at my door? Did you know I could have you flogged for that, at a minimum?"*

Templar Tillmin will leave in a huff, leaving the Heroes alone momentarily with the Knight-Commander.

**Troubleshooting:** If the Heroes seek to detain Templar Tillmin, he will snort.

*"I don't know what you may have thought to have overheard while eavesdropping on a private conversation, but you are gravely mistaken. What are you going to do? Arrest me and turn me over to whom? The Knight-Commander? Do you wish to arrest me, Sir?"* <The Knight-Commander will shake his head, 'No'.>

*"Then what? Kill me? Strike me down with your righteous fury? What will that accomplish, except for charges of murder being levied against you? I suggest that you unhand me before things get much, much worse for you!"*

Hopefully the players will understand that as long as the Knight-Commander doesn't back them up, there's really nothing they can do.

When they are alone with the Knight-Commander, they may ask him whatever they wish.

He will deny anything that has to do with the previous conversation or anything having to do with the conspiracy. He will feign surprise at anything the Heroes may have discovered and say, *"I'll get someone to look into that."*

If the Heroes are insistent, the Knight-Commander will ask in exasperation, *"Why are you doing this? Why is this so important to you?"*

This is the tie for whatever player wishes to make a plea for his help to rise to the occasion. No roll is needed. Just have him tell you, the GM, what the Hero will tell the Knight-Commander.

If you, as GM, feel that the player gave an impassioned and rational argument as to why they should stop what is going on, then they will elicit the following response from the Knight-Commander.

**Note:** they need to explain that the whole plot has to do with the shortage of Sarishan Steel and that the Slavers were sent to Canceri to kidnap val'Mehan adolescents because their blood is needed to create Sarishan Steel. If they have also figured out why the Khur Gi are being captured as well, they can tell him that as well.

*Sitting heavily in his chair, the Knight-Commander sighs deeply. "What you say is very interesting and your clear-eyed innocence reminds me of me when I left on the 5th Crusade.*

*Whether any of what you said is true or not, I have no idea. However, if it were true, then where would you hide such a place? It would have to be large enough for all these conspirators that you mention.*

*No place here in Mil Takara would suffice as there are too many people here and someone would see something out of place, especially with blinded children from Canceri being drawn about.*

*No, I'm afraid it would have to be someplace outside my town; someplace that even the Khur Gi wouldn't discover. But they go about everywhere in the Hinterlands with impunity - well, everywhere except those places they consider to be Taboo - areas where they are forbidden to enter - like that small valley directly south-southeast of here.*

*They say that the two trees there, trees that somehow grew intertwined with one another as if they were strangling the life out of each other, are actually trees that are inhabited by demons from the Time of Terror, no less.*

*Because of that the Khur Gi stay away and don't go anywhere near that little valley. Someday, when Mil Takara is finished, I'm thinking of leading an expedition out there, but I just haven't the manpower for that now.*

*Anyway, I have a terrible headache coming on and I'm sure you have things to do. Dismissed!"*

**Troubleshooting:** If the Heroes have not yet figured things out, (such as if they came to the Knight-Commander's office first), they can always come back later and tell him their theory.

**Development:** After their discussion with the Knight-Commander, the Heroes have their first solid clue as to where the Slavers may be. They can either go directly there (Scene Eight) or continue to investigate.

## SCENE SIX - GATHERING INFORMATION: TEMPLAR TILLMIN'S OFFICE

**Key Concept:** Here the Heroes can discover that the Templars are being stretched thin because of some extra duties.

**Note:** If the Heroes come here **AFTER** their altercation with Tillmin (assuming they had one), then they will be refused entry or any information whatsoever. They are to be considered *persona non grata* by the Templars.

When the Heroes arrive at the Temple of Hurrian in search of the some information, please read or paraphrase the following:

*The temple bell begins to toll the hour just as you arrive at the Temple of Hurrian. Still under construction, the small stone building that serves as the gathering for the faithful as well as the makeshift living quarters of the Templars is Spartan by anyone's definition. The only affectation of opulence that the Templars of Hurrian have carried with them is a beautifully embroidered tapestry in grey with Hurrian's Lightning Bolt prominently emblazoned upon it. It lies over one side of the otherwise bare stone altar, the bolt facing where the faithful would gather.*

*No more than a handful of Templars file through the chamber, performing sundry duties.*

There are very few Templars here when the Heroes arrive. If they ask where everyone is, one of the Templars will reply that many of their people are pulling double duty patrolling the town as two squads of Templars were assigned special duty outside Mil Takara.

If asked where they went, the Templar (or anyone else here) has no idea, exactly.

If the Heroes begin to tell the Templars what they suspect Tillmin is doing, they won't believe them. Tillmin is a Hero in their eyes and without undisputable evidence they won't turn on their leader.

While they will not attack the Heroes, they will say that they and their blasphemies are no longer welcome at the Temple.

**Development:** After their visit to the Temple and perhaps discovering that two squads of Templars are on duty outside the town, the Heroes may continue their investigation.

## SCENE SEVEN - GATHERING

### INFORMATION:

### THE KHUR GI ENCAMPMENT

**Key Concept:** Here the Heroes can get some additional information on the Khur Gi Warriors that are missing.

When the Heroes first arrive at the Khur Gi encampment, no one will speak with them, even if one or more of the Heroes are Khur Gi themselves.

The sentries will explain that the Milandisians may have taken their land, but that doesn't mean that they have to have relations beyond what is necessary.

They will call Khur Gi Heroes *Mastrada* meaning Outcast in Yhing hir.

If the Heroes go back to the Vanomir they befriended in the first part of the adventure and have them vouch for the PCs' honor to the Khur Gi, please read or paraphrase the following:

*With the good words of the Vanomir you befriended, especially that of Old Mejima, who some of the Khur Gi think is a witch, you are allowed into the camp of the former owners of Mil Takara.*

*The Khur Gi were a nomadic people like any other Yhing hir tribe, but sometime in the past, they settled in the area in what would become known as Mil Takara.*

*However, perhaps owing to their nomadic heritage, their new encampment has no permanent structures. Instead, a veritable field of multi-colored tents and pavilion dots the landscape.*

*You arrive at one of the many squares that are left open for fires and other gatherings. Seated beside the fire is an old man whose face is so wrinkled it appears as if his eyes and mouth were swallowed by them. His once-red hair is now streaked with silver.*

This man is the Nawal of the Khur Gi, the wizened Southern Fox, Yeh Chu Li.

After appropriate greetings, the following is what the Southern Fox is willing to divulge (again, assuming that the right questions were asked).

- Have the missing Warriors been found? No. Since the first three did not return from hunts weeks ago, there have been an additional six that have disappeared without word or trace.
- Were any of these warriors sorcerers? Did they have val'Mehan blood? Were they full adults or still coming of age? They were warriors - Khur Gi warriors do not traffic in the black arts. Those born under the sign of the Lord of Secrets are given over to the Ehtzara for training as has been done for many moons.
- All were strong adult males, at least a score of hunting seasons old. None of them have Val blood of any of the families.

- Why do you give those born under the sign of Sarish to the Ehtzara? What is an Ehtzara? When the Time of Terrors came generations ago, the worshippers of the Lord of Secrets came and defended us against the Infernals. When an Arch-Demonius threatened our people, many Sorcerer-Priests died defending us. They were able to bind the demon to the ground, but asked us to make sure that the markers they crafted were maintained and strong. Should they fail, the thing from the past would rise from the ground to prey upon us again.
- So we settled down for the first time in generations, turned our backs on our true homes in the north and did what the Sarishan asked. We built four half-buried fortresses at the cardinal points of the city to protect the markers and there started a new life.
- While some Ehtzara venerate the Hyena-Queen and her cult, others keep the old ways alive. We no longer have the knowledge to keep the markers in good order. It is the responsibility of the Ehtzara and those children that are born under His sign to assure that the Arch-Demonius continues to slumber.
- Have you seen any strange men/blind children/caravans coming through this land? To us, all those from the West are “strange looking” none more so than any other. Nor have we seen any blind children. My scouts tell me of large wagons that travel during the night in the south, but the Templars travel with them, so we do not raid them.
- If the Heroes ask about the Taboo area that the Knight-Commander mentioned: There are many such places in the Hinterlands and they are taboo for good reasons. Do not think that because we do not live in stone buildings or covet gold and comfort that we are savages with stupid superstitions. If an area is taboo to our people, there is reason for it.
- The area you speak of is where two Wood Demons were bound by Sarishans during the Time of Terror. Each blamed the other for their capture and so they spend eternity trying to destroy each other. But be warned: what and where the binding marker is, is lost to us. You could accidently step over it and break it, releasing the demons. Please - do not go to such a place.

<b>COMBAT STATISTICS - SCENE EIGHT</b>			
<b>6 Common Slavers</b>		<b>d6, Med, Humanoid Minion Threat (Tier 1)</b>	
<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Fortitude</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	
15	14	13	
<b>St/Wo:</b> 1 (1)	<b>Pace:</b> 20'		
<b>AR:</b> 2	<b>Initiative:</b> 2		
<b>Attacks:</b>	<i>Short Sword</i> : +3 (a)	d6 (d6)	
	Sp: 4, Ra: Melee		
	<i>Dagger</i> : +3 (a)	d4 (d6)	
	Sp: 3, Ra: Melee or Throw 10'		
<b>Talents</b>	<b>Wolf Pack Tactics, Moving Target</b>		
<b>Skills</b>	(+3/14/11) Athletics, Intimidate, Melee: (Balanced) & (Unarmed), Streetwise, Seamanship.		
<b>Gear</b>	Studded Leather, Dagger (2), Short Sword		
<hr/>			
<b>Personal Guard (2)</b>		<b>d8, Med, Humanoid Common Threat (Tier 1)</b>	
<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Fortitude</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	
16	19	14	
<b>St/Wo:</b> 26 (1)	<b>Pace:</b> 20'		
<b>AR:</b> 4	<b>Initiative:</b> 3		
<b>Attacks:</b>	<i>Mace, Horse</i> : +3 (a)	d8 (d8)	
	Sp: 5, Ra: Melee		
<b>Talents</b>	<b>Dedicated Defender, Diehard</b>		
<b>Skills</b>	(+3/15/11) Athletics, Intimidate, Melee: (Unbalanced) & (Unarmed), Seamanship, Streetwise.		
<b>Gear</b>	Horseman's Mace, Ring Mail, Small Shield		
<hr/>			
<b>Grutang's Son Dark-kin</b>		<b>d10, Med, Humanoid Elite Threat (Tier 1)</b>	
<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Fortitude</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	
16	19	15	
<b>St/Wo:</b> 26 (1)	<b>Pace:</b> 30'		
<b>AR:</b> 3	<b>Initiative:</b> 4		
<b>Attacks:</b>	<i>Tralian Hammer</i> : +3 (a)	d12 (d12)	
	Sp: 7, Ra: Melee		
	<i>War Axe</i> : +3 (a)	d8 (d12)	
	Sp: 5, Ra: Melee		
<b>Talents</b>	Mighty Foe (Might), Furious Rage, Infernal Heritage (Massive Horns)		
<b>Skills</b>	(+3/16/13) Athletics, Intimidate, Melee: (Unbalanced) & (Unarmed), Seamanship, Streetwise.		
<b>Gear</b>	Chain Shirt, Tralian Hammer, War Axe		
<hr/>			
<b>Captain Tabor val'Ossan</b>		<b>d10, Med, Humanoid Elite Threat (Tier 1)</b>	
<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Fortitude</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	
16	19	18	
<b>St/Wo:</b> 27 (1)	<b>Pace:</b> 40'		
<b>AR:</b> 3	<b>Initiative:</b> 4		
<b>Attacks:</b>	<i>Side Sword</i> : +3 (a)	d6 (d10)	
	Sp: 4, Ra: Melee		
	<i>Dagger</i> : +3 (a)	d4 (d10)	
	Sp: 3, Ra: Melee or Throw 10'		
<b>Talents</b>	Leadership (T1), Weapon Mastery (Side Sword), Weapon Training (Side Sword: Pummel Strike), Side Step Charge, Bloodline Power: Yarris' Step		
<b>Skills</b>	(+3/16/13) Athletics, Deceit, Intimidate, Melee: (Balanced) & (Unarmed), Perception, Persuasion, Seamanship, Streetwise.		
<b>Gear</b>	Chain Shirt, Side Sword, Dagger (2)		

**Development:** After their visit, the Heroes may still not know why the Khur Gi warriors are missing, but they do know that the kidnappings are continuing.

## SCENE EIGHT

### SHUTTING DOWN THE

### SLAVERS

**Key Concept:** Having finally tracked down the Slavers to their camp, the Heroes may finally bring some resolution to the mystery.

As they approach the area of the intertwined trees, please read or paraphrase the following:

*Just as the Knight-Commander described, as the land dips into a small valley, an enormous tree comes into view. Even from this distance, an aura of malice and foulness can be felt emanating from it. Upon closer inspection, it can be seen that the tree is actually two large acacias wrapped around one another like rope; their limbs penetrating and ripping through the opposing tree's foliage. They do indeed look as if they are two ancient adversaries locked in an eternal struggle. While the grass you traveled through was alive and verdant, there doesn't appear to be anything alive in the area immediately adjacent to the trees. It's as if they have sucked the life from all the plants and grasses surrounding them.*

*Arranged around the large acacias are a number of covered wagons circling the trees.*

*In the direction you are facing, you can clearly see a large fire where several men are encamped. They seem unaware of your approach.*

There is literally nothing higher than a foot in the surrounding area. The grasses are dry and yellow and act as an early warning system as walking across it produces a loud crunching noise that can easily be heard.

If the Heroes attack during the day time, the Slavers will have plenty of time to prepare for them. From the gentle slope (with living plant life) from which the Heroes can see the encampment to the encampment itself is forty yards at its closest point.

If the Heroes wait until nightfall, they may have a better chance to sneak up on the Slavers, but that bit of strategy is up to the Heroes. Merely advise them that it is broad daylight and that they would be fairly

exposed should they attack during the day.

**Note:** If they decide to attack with ranged weapons during the daytime, the Slavers are not stupid - they will seek the wagons as cover and return fire (issue them standard bows and arrows from the Rule Book in such a case).

After their (hopefully) successful battle, they will discover that, even though the wagons are indeed fitted with cages designed to hold human beings, they are all empty.

Assuming they kept Tabor val'Ossan alive for questioning, they will be able to threaten the following information out of him.

**Note:** Obviously, the Slaver does not want to help the Heroes, but will trade the release of himself and his people (or at least their lives) in exchange for the information and a guide to where the Sorcerer is.

If they can't come to some sort of agreement, the Heroes will have to use force (i.e. torture) to get this information from him. Hopefully, some accord can be achieved.

- The merchandise has all been delivered to the Sorcerer.
- We captured a total of nine Khur Gi warriors. We selected Khur Gi only because they were convenient. It could have been any strong and healthy adult type.
- The Sorcerer and his companions are using the Khur Gi for some experiment - they're turning them into human spiders.
- I don't know why, but I want nothing to do with it. That's why my men and I are as far away from there as possible.
- Tonight's when they're supposed to perfect the experiment, whatever it is.
- Yes, we also were commissioned to deliver some val'Mehan adolescents. (see story given by the Nierite in Scene One).
- The Sorcerer was very specific - they had to be between the ages of 12 - 17 - no younger or older.
- We had to blind them - it was the only way to move Val children around without raising too many red flags.
- I get paid by the Templars of Hurrian.
- If asked **specifically** to whom he reports in the Templars, Tabor will say, "**Andreas, Tillmin's second in command.**"

**Development:** With Tabor val'Ossan in hand, the Heroes can proceed to the lair of the Sorcerer-Priest of Sarish. Please proceed to Scene Nine.

## SCENE NINE

### FOR KING AND COUNTRY!

**Key Concepts:** The Heroes arrive at one of the ubiquitous subterranean fortresses that dot the Hinterlands.

This is a very short scene, only setting up the scene before they enter the subterranean fortress to which Tabor led them. Please read or paraphrase the following:

*At your guide's suggestion, you commandeer one of the slaver's horse-drawn wagons and begin a three hour journey to the south - deep into another mysterious region of the Hinterlands known as both the Plain of Falling Stars and the Blood Plains, the former for unknown reasons while the latter for the tall red grass that grows here.*

*Your guide tells you that you'll just be skirting the edge of the plain and turning east to the more barren part of the territory. Eventually you begin to see sand dunes with greater frequency until you're told that the due to the terrain you'll have to walk the rest of the distance.*

*A short half-hour later, you find yourself standing before two pitted S-shaped stone pylons, one on either side of a large opening. The opening, some forty feet wide and slanting down in a gentle slope, looks to be pitch black.*

The guide, not named since any of the slavers could have been used to get to this point, will say that it's a straight shot down the sloped corridor, which levels out after thirty feet and then another short fifty foot passage which ends at the chamber where he handed over the "merchandise".

The Heroes must decide what to do with the Slaver guide. They can decide anything from cold blooded murder to leaving him tied and incapacitated somehow. Or they can decide to take him with them, but that's not a smart idea since if he gets the chance he will fight against the Heroes.

**Development:** Once they decide what to do with the guide and how they wish to proceed, continue with either Optional Scene Ten or Scene Eleven.

<u>COMBAT STATISTICS - SCENE TEN</u>		
<b>2 Arachnosis</b>		<b>d10, Large, Infernal (Demon)</b>
<b>Demons Final Stage</b>		<b>Adversary Threat (Tier 1.5)</b>
<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Fortitude</b>	<b>Discipline</b>
22	21	19
<b>St/Wo:</b> 62 (1)	<b>Pace:</b>	45'
<b>AR:</b> 4	<b>Initiative:</b>	4
<b>Attacks:</b>	Bite : +4 (a) d8 (d10)+5*	
	Sp: 6, Ra: Melee	
	* Poison: +1 (Fort) d8 damage, 12 ticks	
<b>Special</b>	May cast <i>Entangling Webs</i> as a spell, may speak with spiders.	
<b>Talents</b>	<i>Fel Sight, Special Ability (webs), Trample, Natural Armor (T2), Poisonous Attack, Ravenous, Quick, Powerful Attack (Bite).</i>	
<b>Weakness</b>	Vulnerability: Tempered Sarishan Steel, Sarishan Steel	
<b>Skills</b>	(+4/17/13) Athletics, Arcanum: (Sorcery) at +5 (+2 additional when casting <i>Entangling Webs</i> ), Deceit, Melee: (Unarmed), Stealth, Perception.	
<b>Gear</b>	Nil	

## OPTIONAL: SCENE TEN

### THE WELCOMING

### COMMITTEE

**Key Concept:** The Heroes trip a magical ward which alerts the Sorcerer-Priest that company has arrived.

#### **IMPORTANT!!!**

Only use this encounter if you still have plenty of time left in the Convention Slot or if you are playing at a Game Day or home where time is not an issue.

After the players announce that the Heroes will be going down the ramp/corridor, please read or paraphrase the following:

*As you travel down the sloping ramp, the air feels cooler than above. Instead of smelling musty or stale, however, the air is alive with a hot pepper smell.*

*Before anyone is able to comment on the strange odor, you hear a faint scuttling sound from further down the passage. It stops for a few seconds, then you hear it again - like the clicking of multiple stylus' against a polished stone wall.*

Let the players prepare themselves as they will. This is a very simple map to draw as it's a forty foot wide passage that slopes down for thirty feet from the opening then continues level for an additional fifty feet. The ceiling is eight feet high.

Roll Initiative.

When the Demon's turn arrives, you may use the following to describe them:

*Hurling as if boiling out of the darkness, two nightmares race towards you - one scuttling on the floor, while the other on the left wall. The immense creatures are a bizarre and horrid mix between humans and spiders. The human torso, positioned as if lying on its back, has hairy thick legs jutting out of its sides. His head, looking at you upside down as it hangs downward, is that of a human Khur Gi male; all except for its eyes - its large multi-faceted eyes that track your every movement.*

**Development:** When the Demons have been dispatched, continue with Scene Eleven.

**Note:** If you didn't use this encounter and then discover, that after the battle in Scene Eleven you have 45 minutes to an hour remaining, feel free to run this battle then.

## SCENE ELEVEN

### THE FORGING OF A WEAPON

**Key Concepts:** The Heroes arrive at the place of convergence and must make a moral choice.

The occupants of the chamber know that they have uninvited guests who are powerful enough to dispatch two Arachnoid demons in their final stage of possession.

While they arrange themselves in defensive positions, they will not attack until they know what they are up against.

When the Heroes are positioned near the opening to the chamber, please read or paraphrase the following:

*As you approach the opening to the brightly-lit chamber, a voice rings out. 'This is Andreas Cauplares, of the Templars of Hurrian. Let us parley - please identify yourselves.'*

If the Heroes immediately attack, then roll Initiative.

If they decide to Parlay, Andreas will suggest that one of their party move to the center of the room to speak with him, face to face. He gives his word that

no one shall attack as long as they are under the rules of Parley.

If the Heroes agree, Andreas will meet one of them in the center of the large chamber.

*The chamber is a fairly large and ample one: eighty feet wide and sixty feet long. In one corner is a blazing hot furnace, with a man standing before it at an anvil. He looks quite scared and the shaking of his hands seems more from fear than from the fatigue of work.*

*Hanging from the far wall upside down and in chains are six of the missing Khur Gi warriors. They seem alive and little worse for wear, but they, too, have wide-eyed, terror-filled expressions. If it were not for the rags stuffed in their mouths, they would surely be screaming in horror.*

*Directly below the hanging men are various complex circles and runes; it appears that there is one for each of the hanging men.*

*On the far corner towards the left is a small, balding individual leaning on a staff and dressed in the ceremonial robes of a Sarishan Sorcerer-Priest. His smile gleams from the solid gold tooth incisors he sports. He also stands within a summoning circle. Before him are two ghastly Infernals - squatting and bow legged, long spindly arms resting on distended bellies. Their melon-sized heads are topped with stiff wiry hair and a razor-tooth-filled maw smiles as they see you enter the chamber.*

*Also in the back corner with the Sarishan Sorcerer-Priest are a dozen adolescents, their vacant eyes turning in your direction, their heads tilted slightly upward as if such a position could let them miraculously see you.*

*Lastly, flanking you on either side is a squad of Templars, with Templar Andreas standing directly before you at stiff attention.*

*"You and your people must be congratulated on your ingenuity and tenacity to have gotten this far. But have you any idea of what you are doing? If we stop, you'll be condemning hundreds, if not thousands of your comrades in arms to a horrible death."*

Andreas' Pitch:

- *"As you know, we are dangerously low on Sarishan Steel and especially Tempered Sarishan Steel arms and armor."*
- *"While an Infernal can be killed with normal weapons, it takes more luck than skill to do so. With Sarishan steel blades we are able to bite deeper into their thick scaly hides and send them back to the Hells."*
- *"We tried purchasing them from other sources - the Coryani, the Altherians, even those thieves in the Western Lands - but they kept jacking up the price, emptying the Royal Coffers."*
- *"We tried working with the Mother Church of Coryan - pleading with the Mother Matriarch to send some Sarishan Sorcerer-Priests to aid us against our common foe. She responded with a counterproposal of us rejoining the Mother Church and the head of our holy Primarch as the price for her agreement to our request."*
- *"Then we were approached by this good man, Helic Vargreturk of Canceri. He understood what was at stake and that our two nations were too stubborn to set aside their differences to vanquish this menace."*
- *"He converted to the Milandric Church, on his own volition, I assure you, and explained that many young men and women were being brainwashed and made to see things the way the Dark Apostate wished for them to see it, not as the Gods would."*
- *"These twelve children shall be the first Sorcerer-Priests of Sarish taught to practice their Lord's gifts, not for fiendish pleasure, but in helping us rid the Infernal infestation forever."*
- *"Their eyes? That was not our doing - those idiot Slavers felt it was convenient to do so. But Master Vargreturk says that he knows of Rites that will restore their vision in time."*
- *"The Khur Gi? As you may know, the creation of Tempered Sarishan Steel requires that the still hot blade be plunged into a living Infernal to empower it."*
- *"Summoning and holding Devils is too dangerous, but Master Vargreturk came up with the idea of summoning demons to possess a strong body and then, when it has fully manifested, it should serve the same purpose as would a devil."*

<b>COMBAT STATISTICS - SCENE ELEVEN</b>		
<b>8 Templars (2 x 4)</b>		<b>d6, Med, Humanoid Minion Threat (Tier 1)</b>
<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Fortitude</b>	<b>Discipline</b>
14	14	13
<b>St/Wo:</b> 0 (1)	<b>Pace:</b> 20'	
<b>AR:</b> 4	<b>Initiative:</b> 2	
<b>Attacks:</b>	<i>Broad Sword</i> : +3 (a)	d8 (d6)
	Sp: 5, Ra: Melee	
	<i>Dagger</i> : +3 (a)	d4 (d6)
	Sp: 3, Ra: Melee or Throw 10'	
<b>Talents</b>	Waylay, Wolf Pack Tactics	
<b>Skills</b>	(+3/14/11) Athletics, Intimidate, Melee: Balanced & Unarmed, Streetwise, Seamanship.	
<b>Gear</b>	Broad Sword, Chain Hauberk, Small Shield	
<hr/>		
<b>Whiele and Ozkara (2)</b>		<b>d8, Med, Infernals (Devil) Common Threat (Tier 1)</b>
<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Fortitude</b>	<b>Discipline</b>
18	17	14
<b>St/Wo:</b> 26 (1)	<b>Pace:</b> 20'	
<b>AR:</b> 4	<b>Initiative:</b> 3	
<b>Attacks:</b>	<i>Claws</i> : +3 (a)	d4 (d8) +5
	Sp: 4, Ra: Melee	
<b>Talents</b>	Natural Armor (T1), Special Attack (Insane Laughter), Powerful Attack (Claws)	
<b>Weakness</b>	Vulnerability: Sarishan Steel	
<b>Special</b>	Insane Laughter (Sp: 4 (4), Dr: Instant, Ra: 10' Rad) with a successful attack (+3) vs. Discipline, deals d6 (d8) damage.	
<b>Skills</b>	(+3/15/11) Athletics, Melee: Unarmed, Knowledge: (Arcanum, Infernals)	
<b>Gear</b>	Nil, due to their pudgy bodies they cannot wear armor of any kind.	
<hr/>		
<b>Andreas</b>		<b>d10, Med, Humanoid Elite Threat (Tier 1)</b>
<b>Human Templar Captain</b>		
<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Fortitude</b>	<b>Discipline</b>
16	19	18
<b>St/Wo:</b> 31 (1)	<b>Pace:</b> 30'	
<b>AR:</b> 6	<b>Initiative:</b> 4	
<b>Attacks:</b>	<i>Broad Sword</i> : +3 (a)	d8 (d10)
	Sp: 5, Ra: Melee	
	<i>Dagger</i> : +3 (a)	d4 (d10)
	Sp: 3, Ra: Melee or Throw 10'	
<b>Talents</b>	Leadership (T1), Toughness, Martial Technique x2 (Sweeping Strike, Unbalancing Attack), Armor Training	
<b>Skills</b>	(+3/16/13) Athletics, Deceit, Intimidate, Melee: Balanced & Unarmed, Perception, Persuasion, Seamanship, Streetwise.	
<b>Gear</b>	Milandisian Gothic Cuirass, Large Shield,	

- *"We were about to try out the experiment when you arrived."*
- *"Those Spider demons? They were the first to see if the summoning and possession*

would take. We lost one but the other two were a success."

- "We have no other choice. If there were another ready supply of Sarishan Steel, don't you think we would have pursued that avenue?"
- "You and your fellows are supposed to go to the Wall soon. Think of it - do you want to go armed with a weapon that will give you a fighting chance to survive or would you rather be given a spoon to fight - because against some of those devils, you may as well be using a spoon."
- "So what will it be?"

If the Heroes agree with Andreas and agree to leave and return to Mil Takara, go to Conclusion A.

If not, the Andreas will shake his head and say that he'll do what he must to safeguard the Crusade. He salutes the Heroes and goes to his alternate position on the map.

Roll Initiative.

Remember that the Sorcerer-Priest has already summoned the Devils. When his Initiative comes around, have him say, "As you protected my grandfather, so now protect me: Whiele and Ozkara - attack."

**Development:** Assuming the Heroes are victorious, proceed to Conclusion B.

## CONCLUSIONS & ENDINGS

### CONCLUSION A

*You have decided that the needs of the many outweigh that of a few innocent victims - even if their souls are damned forever due to demonic possession.*

*On the other hand, true to the Sorcerer-Priest's word, the supply of Sarishan Steel miraculously increased almost overnight. You are issued your weapon before you are sent to the Wall.*

*Unfortunately, the Knight-Commander is not there to see you off. It appears that he was killed by a Khur Gi assassin and that the tribe is now being*

### COMBAT STATISTICS - SCENE ELEVEN CONT.

Helic Vargreturk d10, Med, Humanoid  
Human Sarishan Sorcerer Adversary (Tier 1)

Avoidance	Fortitude	Discipline
17	21	20
St/Wo: 61 (1)	Pace: 30'	
AR: 3	Initiative: 5	
Attacks:	Quarter Staff: +4 (a)	d6 (d10)
	Sp: 4, Ra: Melee	
	Elemental Bolt: +4 (a)	d6 (d12)
	Sp: 4 (2), Ra: 30' (1 target)	
Talents	Mighty Foe (Logic d12), Sarishan Mage, Prestidigitation, Sense Infernal Taint, Spell Affinity (Boil Blood)	
Spells Known	<u>Tradition: Blood</u> Diminish Fatigue Bleed Blood Boil <u>Tradition: Elemental</u> Elemental Bolt <u>Tradition: Demonology</u> Summons: Lesser Infernals	
Skills	(+4/17/14) Athletics, Arcanum: Sorcery, Melee: Unbalanced & Unarmed, Perception.	

*hunted down to face justice for the murder of such a beloved hero.*

### CONCLUSION B

*News of you exposing the plot to sacrifice innocent Khur Gi lives in some misconceived plan to supply Sarishan Steel to the Crusade almost ignited full out war between the Khur Gi and the Milandisians. Luckily, a very sober and effective Knight-Commander has managed to calm things down and brokered a peace with the Khur Gi. In exchange for the person behind the plot, the Khur Gi have agreed to help as scouts for the Crusade.*

*Templar Andreas confessed to being the mastermind behind the plot and exonerated Templar Tillmin from any wrongdoing. However, for his negligence in not having rooted out this plot right under his nose, Templar Tillmin has been transferred to the Wall.*

*The Knight-Commander himself recommended you for placement in a very special unit known for its unorthodox methods and assignments that are normally beyond the scope of the usual Crusader unit. You are to report to Count Felix val'Ossan and his Irregulars.*

*Privately, the Knight-Commander thanked you for restoring the purity of the Crusade as well as saving his honor. As thanks, he gives each of you a Sarishan Steel weapon to help keep you alive at the Wall.*

*One last thing – each and every one of those slavers that you left for the Knight-Commander's forces to pick up at that small valley are dead. In fact, if the Knight-Commander didn't know any better, he could have sworn they were turned to wood. It must have been a hellacious battle, though, to have knocked over that pair of intertwined trees. He wishes he could have seen it!*

**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 thereof, 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
Figuring out what was behind the plot	20
Getting the Khur Gi to talk to you	10
Getting the Knight-Commander to divulge where the Slavers were encamped	5
Defeating the Slavers	10
Defeating Andreas and his group	10
Defeating the Optional Arachnosis	10
<b>Role-Playing Award</b>	10
<b>Total Experience Possible</b>	<b>225</b>

## 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 Gc from the adventure. If the hero attempts to steal an item that is worth more than 100 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 half of the item's normal market value in Gc.

## FOUND ITEMS

### SCENE EIGHT

Studded Leather (6; 2 Sc each)  
Dagger (14; 7.5 Cp each)  
Short Sword (6; 2 Sc each)  
Horseman's Mace (2; 3 Sc each)  
Ring Mail (2; 7 Sc 50 Cp each)  
Small Shield (2; 1 Sc 50 Cp each)  
Chain Shirt (2; 6 Sc each)  
Tralian Hammer (6 Sc)

War Axe (3 Sc)  
Side Sword (3 Sc 50 Cp)

## **SCENE ELEVEN**

The Templar's equipment is property of the Templars and will be reclaimed by them.

Quarter Staff (nil)  
Chain Shirt (6 Gc)

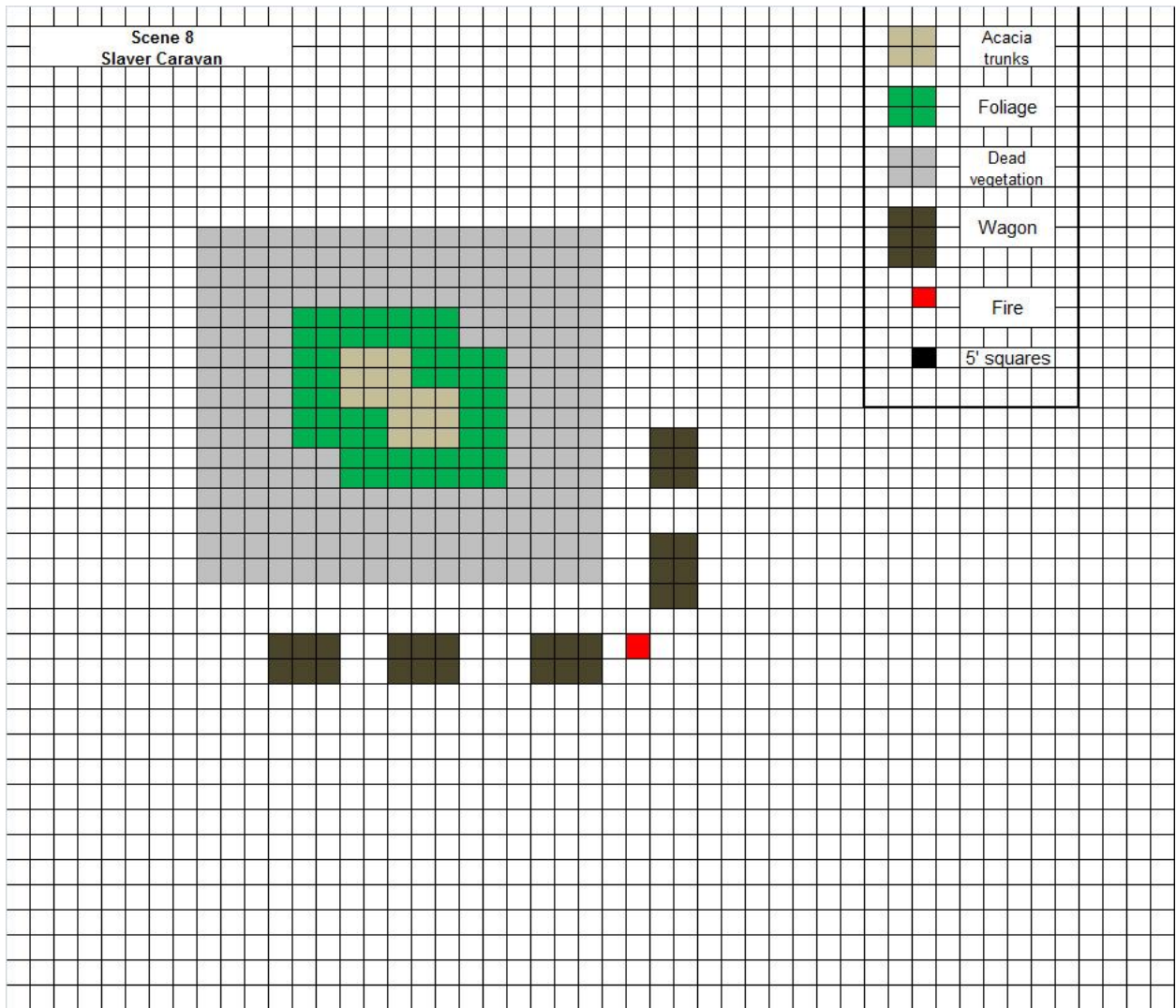
## **STORY ACHIEVEMENTS AND SPECIAL ITEMS**

### **CONCLUSION**

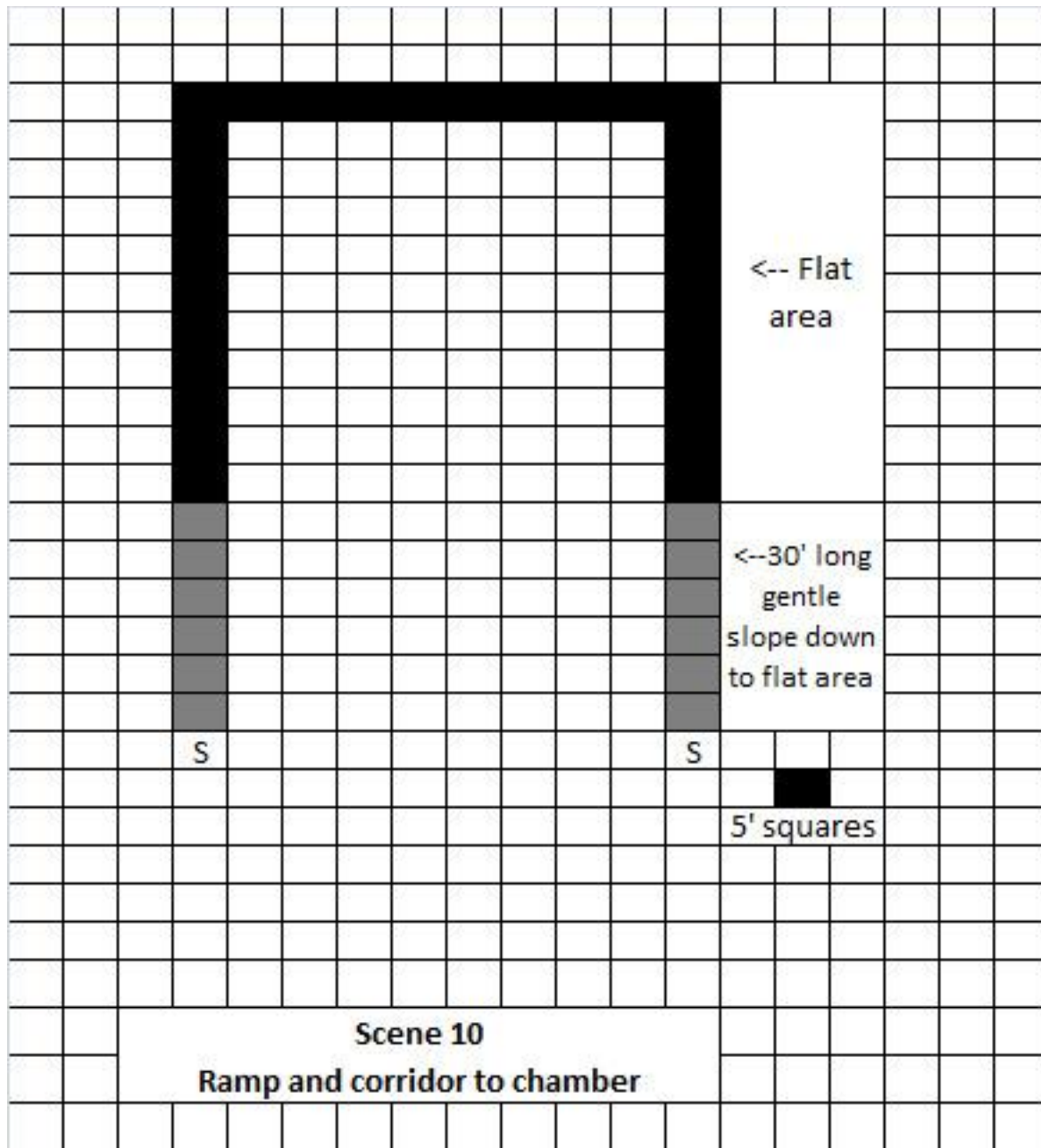
All heroes are issued a Sarishan Steel weapon by the Crusade when this adventure ends.

Total maximum coin of 82 Sc, 53 Cc to be split among the heroes.

# ADVENTURE MAP #1 – SCENE EIGHT: SLAVER CARAVAN



## ADVENTURE MAP #2 – OPTIONAL SCENE TEN: RAMP AND CORRIDOR



# ADVENTURE MAP #3 – SCENE ELEVEN: THE SECRET FORGE

**Legend:**

- S** SORCERER PRIEST
- O** OZKARA (DEVIL)
- W** WHIELE (DEVIL)
- P** PRISONERS (KHUR GI)
- †** TEMPLAR
- BC** BLIND CHILDREN
- A** ANDREAS AFTER PARLAY
- A1** ANDREAS DURING PARLAY