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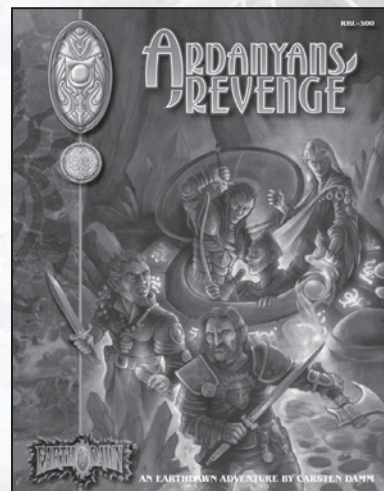
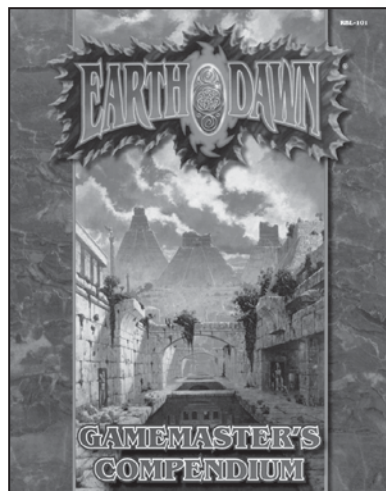
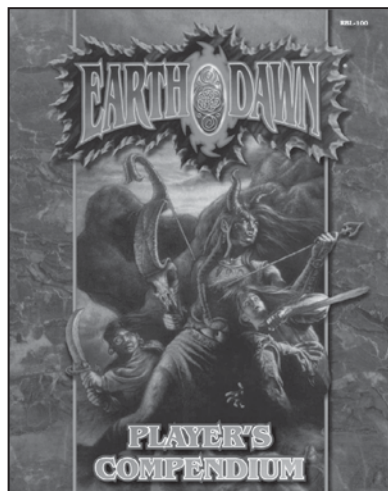
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ALSO AVAILABLE FROM REDBRICK:



KEPT IN THE DARK

Have you lost what little sense the Passions gave you? Imagine a scholar of your age wandering the Servos! And where will that leave me? Less one able scholar, that's where. At least have the decency to take a scribe, so we can record how you meet your end.

• **Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records, berates Wivin Akarem** •



Kept in the Dark is an adventure scenario designed for four to six First and Second Circle adepts of any Discipline, and intends to show players the dangers of entering the wilds of Barsaive.

In this adventure, the characters are hired by a scholar from the fabled Library of Throal to accompany him and his assistant into the dangerous depths of the Servos Jungle. There he hopes to find an almost forgotten healing herb which can reputedly relieve a host of a multitude of ailments, even, it is rumored, Horror-borne sickness. While fighting the natural hazards of the jungle, the characters will also encounter a group of Therans, which may prompt the characters to action beyond their employer's brief.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Kept in the Dark is presented as a series of events. Each is described for the gamemaster, who should use the information given to run each section. There is little text to be read aloud to the players, meaning the gamemaster will have to describe many of the scenes to the characters as he sees fit. Where possible the text describes the terrain and areas the characters will travel through, but much of the detail is left to the gamemaster to devise.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Wivin Akarem is a man, or rather dwarf, with a mission. The Traveled Scholar has set out from the Great Library of Throal to (re)discover a rare fungus in the Servos Jungle which can reputedly alleviate the symptoms of disease, and is supposed to cure Horror-spawned ailments. After many months of researching he found his way to a source of the mushrooms. From fragmented stories and old books and

scrolls he has pieced together the rough location of an old temple which should still contain (at the very least) some of the spores which he hopes to cultivate.

The years have not been overly kind to Wivin however and although his ever faithful and enthusiastic scribe (a windling Named Skreet) has come along in attendance, there is more help needed than that. Wivin is an old Name-giver, his eyesight is failing—he constantly wears crystal eye glasses—his back is arched, making him seem small even for a dwarf and he suffers many aches and pains, including a terrible cough garnered from too many years in dusty libraries and not enough fresh air.

Wivin hopes to use his library funding to procure some adepts or other likely types to help him on his expedition. Unfortunately, a lot of the characters he has met around the lake seem unsavory and he has grown despondent (they're not at all like the adventurers he's read about...). On the upside, Skreet isn't at all put off and is scouring the local area looking for young, fit Name-givers looking for some exciting work exploring the wilds. Who wouldn't want to do *that*...?

PLOT SYNOPSIS

The characters find themselves with little money or lack of adventure near the shores of Lake Pyros, where they are hired by Wivin Akarem to accompany him into the Servos Jungle in search of a rare healing fungus. Once they have met Wivin and his zealous assistant Skreet the Windling, the group will swiftly leave the safety of civilization for the wilds of the Servos.

The characters' first morning of travel is hot and sultry in the jungle and an encounter with primitive humans could lead to violence if not properly handled, otherwise it may just unnerve cautious players. As the rain begins to lash at the characters, they must tread carefully to avoid

being swept off their feet and another of the jungle's inhabitants, this time a giant serpent, assails the group as they struggle through the elements.

An uncomfortable night follows and trouble with crojen and disease further add to the character's woes. With dampened spirits the next day, the characters happen upon some jungle t'skrang, which is a great opportunity to gain some allies if handled with care. A night in the safety of a t'skrang village follows if the characters choose, otherwise yet another visitor descends upon the group during the night, perhaps leaving eggs impregnated in an unwilling host.

After receiving a boost from their newfound allies, the characters head deeper into the hostile jungle, only to come across a Theran hunting party. Typically arrogant, the Theran noble baits the group hoping for conflict. The characters can avoid this with clever roleplaying or stony silence.

Once past this obstacle, the group finally reaches their goal. Within a ruined temple devoted to the Passion Jaspre, the characters will uncover magical flora they seek, along with hints of a Horror and possibly an attack from yet another of the Servos' denizens, an inshalata hungry for Name-giver flesh.

As the group returns, disease once again makes its mark. Wise characters can avoid contracting anything unpleasant with the aid of their newfound plant, but the rains start again and nothing can be done about that. After some travel the group comes upon an abandoned t'skrang village and find an escaped slave, who surely they feel honored to aid (especially with a Throalic dwarf with them).

The following day jungle drums are heard and the Theran noble appears, chased by jungle t'skrang. It is up to the players how they handle this, but the Theran will make tempting offers in return for his life, eventually fleeing if they decline, abandoning further slaves with the characters. After an encounter with the pursuing t'skrang, the characters eventually make it back to Lake Pyros and safety.

THEME AND MOOD

Initiate adepts may well have started from humble beginnings and yearn for the excitement and adventure of discovering long forgotten treasures or other such things that are sung of by Troubadours and fill the books of the Great Library. Although common Name-givers struggle to (and by and large) make a decent living in the wake of the Scourge and invasion by the Therans, their existence is

brittle and still under threat. This Shard aims to show players the dangers of Barsaive that lurk just around the corner, not a stone's throw from the relative safety of a village.

The initial part of this adventure should be light and upbeat, especially in order to contrast with later portions. The characters meet various cheerful folk in a relatively safe part of Barsaive. Engender the feeling of common people carving out a life for themselves on the shores of a river as a pleasant back drop, but before the players get bored of the humdrum surroundings, they get an offer of an exciting adventure into the Servos. Use Skreet to up the tempo and give tales of heroism and success to lift the spirits of the characters.

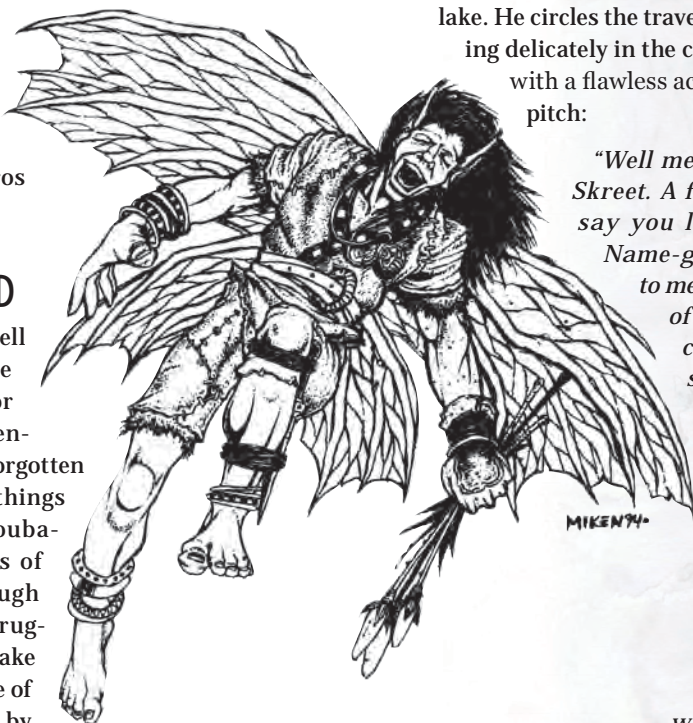
As the story progresses however, the mood should darken. The facade that everything is well in the world steadily disintegrates, as the Servos closes in and the harsh realities of a life of adventure make themselves plain. It should feel like the environment itself is against the characters. Don't forget to use all the senses and include description of how they feel and what they hear (not just what they see). Half-heard sounds and other devices increase the sense of menace.

The journey should be an ordeal, with things steadily going from bad to worse, but should ultimately lead to success. It is up to the players to cope with the pressures and trials that assail them, proving their potential as heroes to eventually become the stuff of legends.

SKREET'S PROPOSAL

The characters find themselves sat around a traveler's rest on the banks of the Serpent, near the glowing shores of Lake Pyros. As they idly chat about their travels and watch the riverboats pass they are approached by a windling, who comes flitting in from the direction of the lake. He circles the travelers once or twice before landing delicately in the center of the group. He speaks with a flawless accent. Presently, he begins his pitch:

"Well met travelers, my Name is Skreet. A fine day is it not? I must say you look as fine a bunch of Name-givers as one might hope to meet — strong of arm, bright of eye and full of youthful curiosity no doubt? On such a beautiful day it would be a shame for you all to just languish here, baking in the hot sun, when you could be in the shade by fine lodgings, drinking at my master's expense. Come now fellows, what say you? Shall we adjourn to the village down the way and you can speak with the wise and venerable Wivin



Akarem, esteemed scholar at the Great Library of Throal? He may have just the task to fill your day and maybe your pockets as well. What say you?

Skreet will continue unabated for several minutes if the characters do not immediately agree and will continue to persist until they relent — after all, what is the harm in meeting for a drink and free breakfast? Presuming the group assents, Skreet will happily guide them back down the trail to meet Wivin. Along the way he will ask questions and try to ascertain the value of this group. Tailor his questions to the looks of the group.

Skreet might ask a heavily armed character if he is a Warrior, or a character in a robe what type of magician he is. He will also ask where the group hails from, where they have been and what perils they fought. As he has spent a lot of time in libraries reading about adventures, he is predisposed to think of the characters as heroes in the making and so will swallow almost anything they tell him of their prowess and vouch for them to his Master later on.

SKREET, WINDLING SCRIBE

Attributes

DEX (11): 5/D8 **STR** (5): 3/D4 **TOU** (8): 4/D6
PER (16): 7/D12 **WIL** (12): 5/D8 **CHA** (12): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 9 **Initiative:** 5/D8
Spell Defense: 9 **Physical Armor:** 3
Social Defense: 7 **Mystic Armor:** 1
Death Rating: 28 **Recovery Tests:** 2
Wound Threshold: 7 **Knockdown:** 3/Tp
Unconsciousness Rating: 19
Combat Movement: 8/26+
Full Movement: 16/52+

+ The second value is the character's flying Movement rate.

Skills

Artisan:

Storytelling (2): 7/D12

Knowledge:

Botany (1): 8/2D6
Legends and Heroes (1): 8/2D6
Windling History (1): 8/2D6

General:

Conversation (2): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (1): 6/D10
Read and Write Language (2): 9/D8+D6
— Dwarf (Throalic), Windling
Research (1): 8/2D6
Speak Language (4): 11/D10+D8
— Dwarf (Throalic), Human, T'skrang, Windling

Equipment

Leather (Phys 3)
Windling Dagger (Damage 4/D6; Range 9–15–18)
Adventurer's Kit
Windling Trail Rations (1 week)

Traveler's Garb
Windling Waterskin
Writing Kit
Journal

Loot

20 silver pieces

Legend Points

45 Legend Points

Notes

The character possesses the windling racial abilities of Astral-Sensitive Sight, Flight, and Increased Physical Defense.

Commentary

Skreet is a windling scribe studying under Wivin. His boundless curiosity and thirst for knowledge led him to want to become a great scribe. Wivin was the only Traveled Scholar who would allow Skreet to become his apprentice. As a result of Wivin believing in him, Skreet's loyalty to Wivin is without question. Skreet is extremely talkative and loves to both tell and hear stories. Skreet seems to have endless enthusiasm, as he is excited about finally going on an expedition into the field with Wivin for the first time.

MEETING WIVIN

A short while later the group approaches a small village on the shores of Lake Pyros. Long before they reach the village proper they have seen the glistening of the lake and several craft on the water. Various Name-givers inhabit the local area, although predominantly dwarves and humans inhabit this particular village (Golden Shore). Children play in the street and some women go about chores, keeping one eye on the errant kids about the place. Apart from them, the village is more or less deserted as everyone else is in the fertile fields. A small militia remains behind, but they are largely the old. Not much of a defense is needed in an area such as this, with plenty of Name-givers in a relatively small location. Still, the characters are eyed suspiciously at first, until Skreet hails the watch and then they are greeted more warmly.

Skreet guides the characters to a large house which extends on stilts out into the water. On the veranda sits an elderly dwarf. Although he is old in body, he is still sharp in mind. He quickly assesses the group and realizes they are not as experienced or accomplished as he would hope for, but they are the best he is likely to get in the circumstances and he needs to get cracking soon or he will be recalled by Merrox, who was skeptical enough of this sabbatical as it was. He begins...

"Greetings adepts, for I see you are such. Take a seat and enjoy Fraya's fine hospitality—I have lodged here a short while and find the food homely but excellent".



The characters can seat themselves and relish the smoked fish and honeyed yoghurt that is on offer. Fraya, the motherly dwarf who owns the place, also provides watered wine and apologizes to any trolls or other large folk about the lack of seating, but suggests they sit facing the river and dangle their legs over the sides as the view is spectacular (and it is). Wivin continues, with his usual coughing and wheezing...

"I have neglected to introduce myself to you, how terribly remiss. I am Wivin Akarem, Senior Scholar to the Great Library of Throal. Perhaps you have heard of me? No? Regardless I have need of some able folk such as yourselves.

After many years of painstaking research I have discovered the location of possible cache of gray-top ashala spores. Incredibly exciting, I know—I'm surprised you can contain yourselves so well. I intend to set off this very day to that secret location and recover as large a sample as I can manage. Unfortunately I am old and not the dwarf I once was. A fine figure in my day I can tell you, many a head I turned, but I digress...

In order to last the perils of a journey into the Servos I require your help. Obviously the chance to be part of the expedition that once more brought gray-top ashala back to Barsaive is reward in and of itself, but I was young once and understand that you will all have things that require a more substantial incentive. As such the Great Library is willing to pay you one hundred silvers a piece for the task, with all living expenses included. In addition you will have my gratitude, and a favor such as that is not to be sniffed at. I have no doubt that young Skreet here will write up a glorious account of events and your exploits will be archived into the Great Library for all time.

Well, with such generous terms, how can you resist? What say you? Are you as keen and vital as

Skreet suggests, or are you more eager to try your hand at fishing or farming for the next week?

Hmmm?"

WIVIN AKAREM, THIRD CIRCLE TRAVELED SCHOLAR

Attributes

DEX (9): 4/D6 **STR** (10): 5/D8 **TOU** (10): 5/D8
PER (16): 7/D12 **WIL** (16): 7/D12 **CHA** (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 6 **Initiative:** 4/D6
Spell Defense: 9 **Physical Armor:** 3
Social Defense: 8 **Mystic Armor:** 2
Death Rating: 31 (49) **Recovery Tests:** 2
Wound Threshold: 8 **Knockdown:** 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22 (37)

Combat Movement: 14

Full Movement: 28

Karma Points: 11

Karma Die: 4/D6

Talents

Astral Sight (1): 8/2D6
Book Memory ^D (4): 11/D10+D8
Durability (6/5) (3): 3
Evidence Analysis (3): 10/D10+D6
Item History ^D (3): 10/D10+D6
Karma Ritual (3): 3
Melee Weapons (3): 7/D12
Read and Write Language ^D (4): 11/D10+D8
— Human, *Sperethiel*, T'skrang, Windling
Research ^D (4): 11/D10+D8
Search ^D (1): 8/2D6
Speak Language ^D (3): 10/D10+D6
— Human, T'skrang, Windling

Skills

Artisan:

Wood Carving (2): 8/2D6

Knowledge:

Botany (5): 12/2D10
Creature Lore (3): 10/D10+D6
Passion Lore (1): 8/2D6
Legends and Heroes (3): 10/D10+D6
Throal Politics (2): 9/D8+D6

General:

Alchemy (2): 9/D8+D6
Animal Handling (1): 8/2D6
Conversation (1): 7/D12
Etiquette (1): 7/D12
Navigation (2): 9/D8+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
— Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 9/D8+D6
— Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*
Streetwise (1): 8/2D6
Throwing Weapons (1): 5/D8

Loot

170 silver pieces, 60 gold pieces

Legend Points

140 Legend Points

Equipment

Leather Armor (Phys 3)

Dwarf Sword (Damage 8/2D6; w/scabbard)

2 × Daggers (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)

Adventurer's Kit

Arcane Tomes

Wood Carving Tools

Crystal Eyeglasses

Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case

Scrolls in Map Scroll Cases

Trail Rations (2 weeks)

Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Waterskin

Writing Kit

Notes

The adept possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

Commentary

Wivin Akarem is an elderly dwarf Traveled Scholar who works for the Library of Throal under Merrox. Currently on a sabbatical from the Great Library, Wivin is in search of the fabled gray-top ashala spores that are rumored to be able to cure any disease. Following a lead gleaned after years of painstaking research pointing to the Servos Jungle, Wivin has traveled to Golden Shore near Lake Pyros, accompanied by Skreet. Wivin is using the town of Golden Shore as a base to plan his trip into the Servos Jungle to procure the mushrooms, as well as looking for bodyguards to protect himself and Skreet on this adventure.

Wivin has been struck by the physical malaise that come with age. Years of poring over and deciphering small and almost unreadable texts have ruined his eyesight, forcing him to rely on his crystal eyeglasses to see. His back is arched from many long nights hunching over texts in the Great Library. He has developed a nagging cough from years of breathing dusty and mildew-covered tomes. Despite his physical problems, his mental acumen has not dulled with age. Wivin recruited Skreet to act as his eyes and ears in Golden Shore and to help recruit adventurers for the task at hand. He becomes more depressed and impatient with each day Skreet is unable to find heroes to aid them, as he fears Merrox will soon recall him to the Library of Throal.

PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

Wivin has allowed a further two hundred silvers for expenses and although he sends Skreet to arrange three pack mules and sufficient rations, he has bought no other

supplies other than his own tent, books, notes, inks and quills or other paraphernalia. He knows little of rough travel and is relying on the characters to organize anything that might be needed. If necessary, he can provide a further hundred in silver, but must be persuaded. This is not hard to do, as he has little idea what is really needed, but he wants to make sure that the Library's coin is not being squandered unnecessarily. The characters can purchase mundane items of all sorts in Golden Shore, such as clothing, lanterns, bedrolls, tents, weapons, armor, and livestock. Magical items are restricted to healing aids only, at the gamemaster's discretion.

The group has an opportunity to gather information before they embark on their trip. Speaking to the locals about the jungle will garner about a fifty-fifty cache of good information to bad. Largely everyone warns that the jungle is dangerous and to be careful if one really insists on going in, although staying out all together would be best. Information they may retrieve is in the **Rumors** section, below.

After the characters' arrangements have been made, the group should be ready to set off around midday after a fine lunch of cold meats and fresh garden vegetables. Wivin rides one mule; with the expedition gear stored on the other two. Skreet spends his time flitting between the characters, sitting on their shoulders and swapping tales of legends and heroes. While his cheerfulness and enthusiasm is infectious at first, it may soon become grating.

RUMORS

People around the village of Golden Shore have the following to say about the Servos and the expedition if asked:

Fishermen

"The Servos? Has cannibals in it, my lad! A taste for Name-giver flesh they have and a large appetite. Steer clear of those my friend, sharpen their teeth on rocks they do those primitives. Better to take your chances with a crojen."

Housewives

"Be careful in there young master. Full of beasts is the jungle and careful what you eat — everything is poisonous. It'll be better when we've cleared the trees and made good farm land."

Kids

"There's monsters in there, Dad says. Can I come, I want to see? Will you get eaten up?"

Wivin

"Well the Servos sprang back up after the Scourge — within a hundred years it is as large and lush as you see now. Some say it is Horror tainted, but those things destroy not create, especially such lush abundance of life. A vast array of flora and fauna, very exciting. Native peoples live in there — primitive Name-givers who survived the