



ARMY OF FIVE EYES

(AN ADVENTURE SET IN R.E.H.'S MYTHIC HYBORIA)

"A cold wind blows south from the bleak fastness of Hyperborea, bringing with it rumors . . . a ragtag army marches, led by a backwater king named Sidor. At the head of his ranks, a creaking cart bears a strange banner--the barrel-shaped corpse of a monstrous demon from beyond the stars, its five-pronged head adorned with scarlet eyes, and fan-shaped wings nailed to a cross . . . men say Sidor found the thing amongst ruins high in the shadow of a blue glacier . . . a city of Elder Ones, reared when this world was naught but a plain of primordial slag."

"It is said no horse will approach the corpse, and even hardened fighting men blanch in fear, as the demon's flesh gives off a stench offensive to the mind as well as the nostrils. Beneath this standard of madness the Hyperboreans slay and conquer, swelling Sidor's power as he marches ever southwards for the Graskull Mountains."

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The PCs are tasked to infiltrate a Hyperborean army heading for Brythunia. Originally, they are presented with the goal of finding some way to steal or destroy the corpse of an Elder Thing the army is using as a banner. However, the heroes soon discover the real threat is posed by King Sidor's sorcerous consort, Iarina, who can summon shoggoths using a mysterious bone flute.

The adventure is purposely left open-ended. For example, the PCs might decide to try and assassinate either Sidor or Iarina, or both, instead of stealing the artifacts. Complicating matters is the threat posed by army sentries, a camp-following cult, and the king's hulking Vanir bodyguard, Thure. *Army of Five Eyes* offers stealthy and subterfuge-oriented heroes a chance to shine, as direct confrontation will likely prove fatal.

START

For their own reasons, the heroes begin in the northern reaches of Brythunia, an area formerly known for the capture of slaves from poorly-defended villages. But instead of bumpkins, PCs find a prosperous kingdom arranged around the new city-state of Briz, ruled by the upstart Kasparas, a blonde-bearded noble with glittering dark eyes--a sign, some say, of old Acheronian bloodlines.

The cattle in this region are fat, grazing among pine-dotted hills. Workers take lumps of amber from the river runoffs of the nearby Graskull Mountains, and trappers return to the city with fine sable pelts, for the coat-linings of Aquilonian and Nemedian noblewomen far to the south. Best of all, Kasparas, by absorbing holdings of lesser despots and consolidating his power, has outlawed slave-taking in the region, thus attracting more and more pastoral Brythunians to settle within his lands.

But there is tension in the rude wooden ale-halls of Briz. Shortly after the heroes arrive, Kasparas himself invites them to dine in his "palace," a stone and timber fort. Over pitchers of rich mead, poured by the king's flaxen-haired daughters, he explains his predicament. You can paraphrase information from the opening, but the gist is his kingdom is in the direct path of Sidor's invading army.

After dining on roast boar, Kasparas takes the PCs back to his private sauna. There, shivering on a pine bench despite the heat, is a stooped Nemedian with staring eyes. Kasparas introduces him as Otranto, a traveling scholar recently returned from an expedition far to the north. Otranto explains:

"My specialty, you see, has always been architecture, and in particular the stonemasonry of the hyperbori tribes. Despite their crude origins, the hyperboreans have built some of the most extensive stone fortifications of our times, granting them mastery over survival in that harsh land. From whence did that knowledge issue? Well, I've read the Book of Skelos, and less wholesome texts, and I've had my theories . . . with some small monies, I approached a minor noble in that northern land, an inbred named Sidor. After some convincing, he arranged an expedition to a tall glacier of blue ice, visible from the towers of his keep."

(He coughs, then hugs himself before continuing)

"What we found in those mountains of ice! A fortress, of sorts, or perhaps an outpost, but the twisting, cyclopean stone constructions were not built by human hands. Not from the time of far-off Valusia, or the the fall of Atlantis, but even farther back, when children from the stars held dominion over the primeval world. Such tricks of stone, such perversions of geometry . . . why, even the arches weren't shaped like arches! But I digress. We found something else in those ruins, the corpse of a barrel-shaped, winged creature, with a head like a starfish and five bulbous eyes."

"Half the expedition went mad at sight of that thing, and fled howling into the snow-covered mountains. But Sidor's consort, Iarina, insisted the body be brought back to the keep. She seemed to be under the influence of some powerful geas. Sidor, too, complained of strange, compelling dreams, and emerged from one of the ruined buildings with a curious artifact he refused to share with anyone, save his queen."

"I decided to flee myself, as I sensed the change in the royal couple. So, with a few others of like mind, we made it back down from the glacier."

Otranto breaks off, staring into space. Kasparas explains the rest: Sidor has amassed an army, using the corpse of the Old One as his standard. Already he has defeated two of his rival Hyperborean kinsmen in battle. Kasparas's spies have told him that Sidor plans to march on Briz, after negotiating one of the many passes through the Graskall Mountains. He fears his own militia and scant fortifications will not be enough to stop him.

Kasparas wants the PCs to travel through the pass, find and infiltrate Sidor's army, and discover some way to either steal or destroy the Old One standard. He feels without this symbol to rally around, the army will lose its cohesion (there's more to Sidor's power than that, but Kasparas doesn't know much about the "curious artifact" Larina now wields). If successful, he intends to reward the heroes richly with fiefdoms and titles within his own lands--and possibly, the hands of one or more of his beautiful daughters in marriage.

Assuming the PCs don't laugh outright at his offer, Kasparas will introduce a Hyperborean turncoat to serve as a guide in finding the army (this is obviated if one of the PCs is a Hyperborean, or a wilderness-type with knowledge of the region--in that case, the heroes can find Sidor without a guide).

CROSSING THE BORDER

Kasparas outfits the PCs with anything they need to make the long journey into Hyperborea, including horses and provisions. If the heroes plan to pose as mercenaries in order to infiltrate Sidor's army, the Brythunian can help them with that, too, supplying appropriate armor, clothing, and weapons.

The journey through the Graskull pass will take at least a week, longer if the PCs are traveling on foot vs. horseback. The GM can arrange to have some wilderness encounters on the way, if desired. As it is late Spring, thaws could mean avalanches high in the mountains, and the PCs might stumble across hungry sword-toothed leopards, as well. Heroes with the Mountain Born boon, or ranks in Hunter or Barbarian (suited to the terrain) should have a chance to bypass these obstacles.

Once into Hyperborea, the terrain becomes far more bleak and brooding. Snow still hugs the hilltops, and in the distance, fang-like mountains seem to bite at overcast sky. Emphasize the alien quality of the landscape: Hyperborea is a land torn from an earlier, more savage time.

AFTERMATH

Sidor isn't heading straight for the pass just yet. He's wheeled his army eastwards, to try and raid for provisions from the small fiefdom of Vosvolod. On the second day into Hyperborea, the PCs spot ravens circling the taiga-like plains ahead. They come upon the aftermath of a small battle or skirmish: corpses litter the field, some stripped, some still wearing ragged hide armor and clutching shattered weapons. One of the bodies grips a fallen banner, crudely depicting a pair of wooly mammoths, rampant. This is the battle-standard of Yegor, Baron of Vosvolod.

Any horses or other animals with the PCs will start to spook. Towards the center of the carnage is a strange sight: a slimy furrow gouged into the ground, the size of two broad wagons across. The corpses lying in this furrow have all been decapitated (the heads are nowhere to be seen), and their flesh looks blackened in places, covered with sucker-shaped wounds and large bites. These are the unfortunate victims of a shoggoth, controlled by Larina and her artifact, a flute carved from alien bone. The remains provide a hint the PCs are up against more than just the corpse of an Old One and a mad king.

APPROACHING THE ARMY

From the site of the battle, PCs find fresh tracks leading across the plain--a *lot* of them. Sidor's army is close. Towards the second evening they spot the smoke-columns of campfires in the distance.

Depending on how the PCs approach, there is a 1-3 chance (d6) they are either spotted early by scouts, or sentries (4-6) when they draw closer to the fringes of camp. People approaching Sidor's army to join up are a common sight, so unless the PCs act furtive or hostile and state their intentions clearly, they will be taken to an under-captain named Aurus, a one-armed sell sword from the Border Kingdom in charge

of foreign mercenaries. Gruff and overworked, Aurus will not be pleased to meet his new charges. After a half-hearted interrogation, he takes the PCs to a remote area of camp and tells them they are essentially on probation until they can prove themselves in battle--which may be soon, he hints, ominously.

There isn't much space in the foreign mercenaries' tents, and the wine and provision rations aren't plentiful, either. PCs will likely have to get into a few fist-fights with the rough lot of primarily Shemite, Nemedian, and Kothite mercs in order to establish their right to a bedroll.

Being under close watch means the heroes won't have much chance to look around camp the first night. On the walk over to the mercenaries' tents, they will likely spot a motley group of camp-follower types wearing crimson robes with five stylized eyes sewn on them, led by a slender figure in much more richly appointed garments with a full cowl. A pair of lambent blue eyes stare out from the cowl's depths. This is Larina, and the lackeys are members of her Cult of Five Eyes.

Attentive PCs will also note something else about Sidor's army: it is much smaller rumors suggest. A high estimate would put their numbers at about 4 thousand medium infantry, mostly spear- and swordsmen, with only a few horse as scouts.

BATTLE !

Somewhat late the next morning, the army breaks camp in order to march--east, towards the town of Vosvolod, visible in the far distance. Discipline among the troops is none too great. PCs will likely get their first glance of Sidor, an unimpressive figure with a narrow face and elongated jaw, and his hulking, red-bearded bodyguard Thure, carrying a mattock slung over his shoulder. This is also an opportunity to get a look at the wagon bearing the Old One corpse. The vehicle is drawn along by a team of human slaves in harness, as no horse would willingly approach the thing.

Sidor's army doesn't march for very long. Near midday, shouts come back from outriders and the troops start forming up in ranks. The mercs (and the PCs along with them) go right in front. The infantry of Baron Yegor of Vosvolod appears on the field--about 5 thousand spear- and swordsman, marching in a wedge, and closing quickly.

Neither army has much in the way of archers or cavalry. PCs will quickly notice the Hyperborean troops behind them don't look very excited at the prospect of battle; some of them even stifle yawns. As the enemy closes, a litter bearing the robed figure of Larina marches towards the front ranks. She throws back her cowl, revealing a once-beautiful face, now gaunt to the point of emaciation, and begins a guttural chant.

You can have the PCs engage in a couple rounds of combat, or simply have them roll against a Moderate check, modified by their Melee or Defense and any ranks they have in Soldier or Mercenary, to avoid damage (d6 LB; armor applies as usual). A Mighty Success means the hero performs exceptionally well, garnering attention and glory.

At some point in the fighting, Aurus becomes surrounded and will quickly be finished off if the PCs don't intervene. Again, you can play this out as combat or have any PCs who want to try and help roll a Tough (-2) check as above, with failure netting d6 LB damage for their trouble. Success means they rescue Aurus by the skin of his teeth, and the disgruntled merc captain, in gratitude, will likely help them later. Otherwise, he's impaled by a spear and the heroes lose a possible ally.

Just as the fighting gets really thick, shouts go up to fall back, and Iarina's chanting becomes audible over the din of battle. A strange, unmelodic piping echoes, and the sky inexplicably darkens over the battlefield. Sorcery! Anyone looking in Iarina's direction will see her playing a bizarre flute carved from gnarled bone (the bone of *what*, exactly, is impossible to tell). Moments later, screams rise from rearmost ranks of Yegor's troops. A shimmering iridescence, like a mass of bubbles, can be glimpsed, accompanied by a horrible stench mixing the charnel smell of death with fetid life, like festering pond-scum.

The summoned shoggoth mows down enough of Yegor's men to cause a rout, then draws closer to Sidor's ranks. Iarina starts playing her flute like mad; the abjured monstrosity fades from this plane, before it can satiate its hunger on friendlies.

Yegor's troops quit the field to fall back to the protection of their keep. Sidor gives the order to pursue, but seems more intent on capturing live prisoners (who are herded into wheeled pens), and ransacking the town for stores of livestock and grain. In any event, he has no siege engines and makes no attempt to take the keep. His victorious men grumble about the poor quality of loot, but all agree there will be better pickings when they reach Brythunia.

THE CAMP

At this point, the rest of the adventure involves a long march to the pass at Graskull Mountains. If the PCs don't succeed in thwarting Sidor (by disposing of the Old One corpse *and* the shoggoth-summoning flute, or assassinating Sidor and Iarina, or somehow setting the two against each other, etc.), then his army will defeat Kasparas and take Briz in a one-sided battle similar to what occurred at Vosvolod. You can set the pace for the rest of the scenario by telling the PCs how close the Graskull Mountains loom in the distance--a sort of countdown to doomsday.

Note on planning: The consequences of failure in this type of scenario are pretty steep. If the PCs are discovered doing bad things, they'll have an entire hostile army to deal with. Even if they manage to escape, infiltrating Sidor's forces again becomes impossible. For this reason, players should be allowed ample time to come up with plans. Normally, too much cogitating in a Swords and Sorcery adventure is something to avoid, but not this time. Additionally, you can remind players about spending a Hero Point to try again if they blow a crucial roll, like sneaking past a tent, or fast-talking a sentry.

During the day there is not much else to do but march. The real opportunity for subterfuge comes at night, when the army stops and sets up camp. After 'proving' themselves at the battle outside Vosvolod, PCs will be much freer to move around, possibly with the assistance of Aurus, if he survived.

The camp is roughly divided into two halves: the 'Army' side, with Sidor's tent and the Old One corpse, and the 'Cult' side, with Iarina and her robed followers. It quickly becomes obvious there is some tension between the two groups: Sidor and Iarina don't seem to have much contact, and the Hyperborean soldiers, injured as they are to the supernatural, act uneasy when they hear the strange cries and ululations coming from Iarina's nightly "services," which are known to include human sacrifice.

Getting into certain sensitive areas will require checks for stealthy movement, arranging clever distractions, etc. Having ranks in Soldier and Mercenary careers can help, as PCs with these backgrounds know how army camps work and what to avoid. Magic-using PCs could have a considerably easier time of it, but Iarina has the Nose for Magic boon and can show up if you feel too much sorcery is being thrown around.

THE ARMY SIDE

This area houses the Hyperborean troops, their captains, and King Sidor, as well as the mercenaries' tents. No one sleeps particularly well here; soldiers toss and turn to strange dreams of tentacled horrors, and every now and then a scream from the other side of the camp shatters the quiet.

Sidor is situated close to the tents of his most trusted captains, a dozen or so Toughs. He has a sentry posted just outside the entrance flap to his tent (relieved about mid-way through the night). Inside, his bodyguard Thure 'sleeps' in a sitting position with his back to the tent pole and one eye open, his mattock within easy reach. Sidor himself, an accomplished swordsman despite his frail appearance, keeps a poniard in his bedroll and an arming sword close by. At sight of anyone in the tent, Sidor or Thure will call out, bringing the captains swarming in 3 rounds. Clearly, trying to sneak in and cut the king's throat will prove difficult.

The Old One corpse and the wagon containing it are kept a fair distance from Sidor's tent (too close and he gets nightmares). An honor guard of 2 captains, rated as Toughs, face outwards from either side of the wagon. Like the tent sentry, these are relieved about halfway through the night. These guards are not particularly observant, as no one seems to want to set foot anywhere near the corpse unless they have to.

Getting rid of the Old One corpse is not as easy as dispatching the sentries. The thing's mummified, alien tissue is extremely tough. Trying to burn it in even a raging bonfire will produce only a slightly singed corpse (Old One flesh is adapted to the rigors of flying through space), and hacking at it with an axe will make a ringing noise, waking both Sidor and his bodyguard. The wagon's wooden wheels creak, even if the metal parts are oiled, so trying to push the cart anywhere will likely wake the tent as well. If the wings are torn free from the spikes holding them to the cross, the body can be moved--most likely dragged, as it weighs about 450 lbs.

The easiest way to get rid of the corpse is to wait until the army has actually reached the Graskull Mountains and camped high in the pass. There, the body can be rolled over the side into one of gorges below, to disappear into ice and mist.

THE CULT SIDE

This part of the camp is active at night, which would normally make it difficult to sneak into. However, many of the Five Eye cultists wear robed cowls, so ready disguises are available after conking a few over the head. Most of Iarina's disciples are former camp-followers, milling about as they prepare for the various rituals and debasements that will last into dawn.

There are several wooden pens full of blank-eyed captives intended for sacrifice. About half are in a state of shock, but the other half are willing to fight to make a break for freedom. This could provide a handy distraction, though it will also eventually draw soldiers from the 'Army' side.

Iarina's tent is made from flayed human skin and ringed with bones. Open in the center to allow a view of the night sky, it's large enough to accommodate up to three dozen people, a fire pit, and a portable altar for sacrifice. Iarina herself is likely in the middle of a ritual when the PCs approach, chanting a litany in some guttural, non-human tongue. She will have 3d6 cultists in attendance inside, classed as Rabble, and armed with sacrificial knives. Iarina keeps the bone flute on her person at all times.

A powerful sorceress, Iarina knows several 'classic' Call of Cthulhu-type spells (see **Appendix B, Iarina's Grimoire**). She keeps a Fleshward spell active, making assassinating her difficult. On the plus side,

screaming and other untoward noises coming from the tent are stoically ignored, so if a fight breaks out the rest of the camp won't immediately come running. Furious at any discovered intrusion, she will first try to slay any interlopers with Shrivel and Eviscerate spells, but attempt to escape if the battle goes against her.

Note that if a sorcery-using PC attempts to infiltrate Larina's 'congregation,' her Nose for Magic boon will allow her to detect this potential rival. She will approach the PC at some point to assess their ability, though will not necessarily assume they are hostile--perhaps another adept will make a good addition to the cult!

ENDGAME

If the PCs can steal or get rid of both the Old One and bone flute, or assassinate both Sidor and Larina, then the army will break up and scatter before it reaches Briz. If they succeed at only some of these things, the army will be significantly weakened, and a pitched battle with Kasparas's militia, perhaps led by the PCs, might still save the day. This is best run using the Land Battles rules in the *Mythic* sourcebook (pgs. 68 -71). Though the two forces are roughly the same size, Sidor's army is much better trained (+2), better equipped (+1), and has a supernatural edge in either the corpse of the Old One (acts as a Second Magnitude spell, +2) or the shoggoth-summoning flute (technically acts as a Third Magnitude spell, +4). Appropriate Heroic Actions for the PCs include Bring Reinforcements, Capture VIP, Destroy (Old One corpse), Hold Position, Kill VIP, and (especially) Prevent Sorcery (summoning the shoggoth).

Additionally, if the Heroes were able to capture the bone flute, a PC with a sorcerous background could attune to the item after a Second Magnitude ritual and use it *against* Sidor, which would be appropriately ironic. Kasparas himself, with his Acheronian heritage, might be able to use the flute if the PCs cannot--though in this case the corrupting power of the artifact could prompt him to raise an eldritch army of his own . . .

APPENDIX A: CAST OF CHARACTERS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

KING KASPARAS, BRYTHUNIAN UPSTART

Attributes	Combat Abilities	
Strength 0	Initiative 1	Lifeblood: 10
Agility 0	Melee 2	Protection: d6-3 (light armor)
Mind 2	Missile 0	Weapons: arming sword, d6
Appeal 2	Defense 1	
Boons/Flaws	Careers	
Attractive	Noble 2	
Acheronian Heritage	Soldier 1	
Obsession (Power)	Scholar 1	
	Merchant 0	

Tall, with deep-set dark eyes that glitter like polished jet, Kasparas can trace his lineage back to the kings of Old Acheron who once ruled in this region. He has made it his life's work to restore honor to his country, though his nationalism hides a ruthless streak. The 'Acheronian Heritage' boon allows him to occasionally manifest sorcerous abilities, despite his lack of training in the Dark Arts.

SWORD TOOTHED LEOPARD, LARGE SIZE CREATURE

Attributes	Combat Abilities:
Strength 4	Attack: +3
Agility 2	Damage: d6H
Mind 0	Defense: 2
Lifeblood: 20	Protection: d3-1

A savage predator of the Brythunian highlands, usually a lone hunter. This is simply a re-skinning of the Andrak from *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic Edition*.

TYPICAL SOLDIER OF SIDOR / TYPICAL SOLDIER OF VOSVOLOD

Attributes	Combat Abilities:
Strength 1	Attack: 0
Agility 0	Damage: spear or sword, d3 (as rabble)
Mind 0	Defense: 0 (or 1)
Appeal -1	Protection: d6-3 (light armor)
	Lifeblood: 3

Rank and file Hyperborean infantry; tall, gaunt, and uncouth. A few carry large shields. They usually attack in formation, if possible (use the 'Horde' option for rabble, *Mythic* rulebook pg. 157). Most are Rank 1 Soldiers.

AURUS, MERCENARY CAPTAIN

Attributes	Combat Abilities:
Strength 1	Attack: +2
Agility 1	Damage: broadsword, d6+1
Mind 0	Defense: 1
Appeal 0	Protection: d6-3 (light armor)
	Lifeblood: 7

A hard-bitten mercenary hailing from the Border Kingdom, bearded and scarred. He lost his right arm to a Nemedian pike early in his career. Aurus has come to detest the sorcery associated with Sidor's army and can be swayed if the PCs are persuasive enough. He is a Rank 2 Mercenary.

FIVE EYE CULTIST

Attributes	Combat Abilities:
Strength 0	Attack: 0
Agility 0	Damage: sacrificial dagger, d3 (as rabble)
Mind 0	Defense: 0
Appeal 0	Protection: 0
	Lifeblood: 3

Camp-following scum who have been converted to Iarina's strange new religion. Most would nominally be Rank 1 Priests, but the blasphemous gods they worship do not grant Fate points.

IARINA, CORRUPT QUEEN

Attributes	Combat Abilities	
Strength 0	Initiative 1	Lifeblood: 8
Agility 0	Melee 0	Arcane Points: 14 (plus stored, see Appendix B)
Mind 3	Missile 0	Villain Points: 5
Appeal 1	Defense 3	Protection: Fleshward spell (see Appendix B)
		Weapons: dagger, d6L or spell (see Appendix B)
Boons/Flaws	Careers	
Nose for Magic	Noble 2	
Power of the Void	Scholar 0	
Cravings (blood sacrifice)	Sorcerer 2	
Delicate	Priest 0	
Unsettling (emaciated)		

Gaunt even for a Hyperborean, Iarina has been growing steadily more emaciated as sorcerous corruption overtakes her frame. She currently resembles a living skeleton with lambent blue eyes and bone-white hair. Her voice, however, and the conviction behind it rings with unnatural strength. A creature of the night, she sleeps during the day in her litter.

The less human she's become, the more Sidor has become repulsed and terrified of her. At present, the couple is in an uneasy alliance. At some point, however, Iarina will go completely insane and use her eldritch power to seize control of the Five-Eyed Army.

Iarina knows several Call of Cthulhu type spells (see Appendix B, *Iarina's Grimoire*), the most devastating being the ability to call and bind a shoggoth, though she needs the bone flute's power to do so.

SIDOR, BACKWATER KING

Attributes	Combat Abilities	
Strength 0	Initiative 0	Lifeblood: 10
Agility 1	Melee 2	Villain Points: 5
Mind 2	Missile 0	Protection: d6-3 (light armor)
Appeal 1	Defense 2	Weapons: arming sword, d6, or poniard, d6L
Boons/Flaws	Careers	
High-Born	Noble 2	
Inspire	Soldier 1	
Unsettling	Scholar 1	
	Sorcerer 0	

Stooped, with a 'Hapsburg' jaw and mismatched eyes (one pale blue, the other green), Sidor would appear to represent several generations of Hyperborean inbreeding. He has a keen mind, however, and an undaunted curiosity regarding Pre-Hyborian eras. Of late, his lust for power has become blunted by a growing fear of Iarina, and he suffers nightmares of a horrible five-eyed crown forged from iron and quenched in blood, the symbol of a new, eldritch dynasty spreading its tendrils across the continent . . .

THURE, SIDOR'S BODYGUARD

Attributes

Strength 4
Agility 1
Mind 0
Appeal 0

Combat Abilities

Initiative 1
Melee 3
Missile 0
Defense 0

Lifeblood: 16
Villain Points: 5
Protection: d6-3 (light armor)
Weapons: mattock, d6H+4, or spear d6+4

Boons/Flaws

Nordheimer's Might
Hard to Kill
Feels the Heat

Careers

Barbarian 2
Hunter 0
Mercenary 1
Soldier 1

Rumored to be part Frost Giant, the red-bearded Thure is a massive Vanir topping just over seven feet. His devotion to Sidor is total--he lacks the imagination to scheme. The Nordheimer's Might boon grants him +1 to his Strength attribute.

SHOGGOTH, IARINA'S MONSTROUS ACE-IN-THE-HOLE

This gargantuan mass of purulent ooze, eyestalks, feelers, and fanged mouths shimmering into and out of third-dimensional space doesn't have stats because it's suicide to try and fight one. The creature can mow right through an army, limited only by its lumbering movement and the fact Iarina has to pay arcane points to keep it under control--otherwise it might go mowing through *her* army, as well.

Physical weapons have little to no discernable effect against a shoggoth. A First Magnitude spell can provide temporary protection from its attacks; a Second Magnitude spell can be used to abjure it from this plane, and a Third Magnitude spell can destroy one outright.

PCs who find themselves in close combat with this horror can spend 1 Hero Point per round to survive. Allow them to make an attack roll if they want to go on the offense, like severing a pseudopod or skewering a pulsating eyeball. Alternately, they can make an Agility check to simply dodge the flailing mass. If successful with either approach, the PC can then make a timely escape by running away at top speed. Otherwise, they have to spend another Hero Point the next round to try again. Once they're out, the shoggoth will consume them entirely . . .

TYPICAL CAPTAIN

Attributes

Strength 1
Agility 1 (0)
Mind 0
Appeal 0

Combat Abilities:

Attack: +2
Damage: sword or spear, d6+1
Defense: 1
Protection: d6-2 (medium armor)
Lifeblood: 7

These are Rank 2 soldiers, rated as Toughs, who make up the command backbone of Sidor's army. They are far more loyal to their King than Iarina.

APPENDIX B: IARINA'S GRIMOIRE

The Bone Flute

Carved from a herd-beast native to Yuggoth, this bizarrely gnarled artifact grants its user the power to call and bind shoggoths when played (see the spell of the same name, below), and grants a bonus die on all rolls when used in this manner. Further, the user can store up to 6 additional Arcane Points within its extradimensional matrices. A sorcerer needs to attune themselves to the artifact (the equivalent of a Second Magnitude spell) before it can be used.

Shriveling

A First Magnitude offensive spell. Alien energies cause the target's flesh to wither and blacken, causing d6 LB damage. The spell bypasses armor and damage caused heals at the slow rate (1 LB per day with light activity). If the caster wants to continue inflicting damage, he or she simply pays the Arcane Power cost the next round without having to roll for success. Difficulty is Hard (-1), and the spell requires Line of Sight and Obvious Technique. AP cost is 4.

Fleshward

A Second Magnitude defensive spell, which can be cast ahead of time. The spell grants the sorcerer an additional 2d6 LB (minimum 6) against normal weapons. The 'bonus' LB is always subtracted first from damage and when it's gone, it's gone. Difficulty is Tough (-2), and the spell requires Casting Time and Ritual Sacrifice. AP cost is 9.

Eviscerate

A Second Magnitude offensive spell. The caster telekinetically pulls forth vital organs from the target! Damage is 2d6 LB plus the caster's Mind attribute, bypassing armor. Difficulty is Tough (-2) and the spell requires Special Item (Ring of the Black Circle). AP cost is 10

Contact / Bind Shoggoth

A Second Magnitude summoning spell, risky in nature. The caster rolls first to call the shoggoth to this plane, then makes a second roll to try and command it. A third roll can be made to abjure the creature, which is recommended if the binding fails or the caster is running out of AP. Difficulty is Demanding (-4), and the spell requires Casting Time, Lunar, and Group Ritual to cast, with an AP cost of 8. Commanding a shoggoth requires 2 AP per *round*; otherwise it will rampage mindlessly until abjured.

The possessor of the Bone Flute only requires Obvious Technique (playing flute) to cast this spell.

APPENDIX C: PRE-GENS

GEGERIX, HYPERBOREAN PIKEMAN

Attributes

Strength 3
Agility 1
Mind 0
Appeal 0

Combat Abilities

Initiative 0
Melee 3
Missile 0
Defense 1

Lifeblood: 13
Hero Points: 5
Protection: d6-3 (light armor)
Weapons: Gunderman pike, d6H+3, or poniard, d6L+3

Boons/Flaws

Pike-Fighter (bonus die)
Resistant to Sorcery
Distinctive Appearance

Careers

Barbarian 2
Worker (Stonemason) 0
Soldier 1
Mercenary 1

Standing 6'5" with gaunt features and a head of prematurely grey hair, the sullen Gegerix hails from the wilds of Hyperborea. A chieftain's son, he was forced to wander after his father was killed in a bloody coup. He eventually found himself among a crack squad of Gunderman soldiers, where he discovered his affinity for the pike.

STILCHUS, KOTHITE EX-SLAVER

Attributes

Strength 2
Agility 2 (1)
Mind 0
Appeal 0

Combat Abilities

Initiative 1
Melee 2
Missile 0
Defense 1

Lifeblood: 14
Hero Points: 5
Protection: d6-2 (medium armor)
Weapons: greatsword, d6H+2, or spiked cesti, d6L+2

Boons/Flaws

Hard to Kill
Fearsome Looks
One-Eyed (penalty die on related tasks)

Careers

Gladiator 2
Torturer 1
Hunter 0
Rogue 1

Stilchus began his career as a pit-fighter in Khorshemish, but eventually attracted the attention of the noble house of Glaucus, the Slave-Taker. Stilchus became Glaucus's right-hand man, meting discipline among the slaves and engaging in occasional raids of "acquisition." Severely wounded during one of these campaigns, Stilchus was later revived by a priest of Ishtar. He now walks the difficult path of redemption.

MAICHA THE MASKED, HYRKANIAN HELLCAT

Attributes

Strength 1
Agility 2
Mind 1
Appeal 0

Combat Abilities

Initiative 0
Melee 2
Missile 1
Defense 1 (2)

Lifeblood: 11
Hero Points: 5
Protection: d6-2 (medium armor with boon), small shield
Weapons: tulwar, d6+1, or Hyrkanian bow, d6

Boons/Flaws

Battle Harness (chainmail vest)
War Cry
Hunted

Careers

Barbarian (Nomad) 2
Slave 0
Thief 1
Mercenary 1

Born into a nomadic tribe, Maicha was taken as a slave by Turanian raiders at thirteen. She strangled her new 'master' with a silken girdle and has been on the run since. Maicha wears a white enameled mask of a beautiful maiden to hide her identity, though she is actually rather plain-featured. She often travels with Horst Gimlet, referring to herself as the "brains" of the pair.

HORST GIMLET, OPHIRIAN ROGUE

Attributes

Strength 1
Agility 2
Mind 0
Appeal 1

Combat Abilities

Initiative 1
Melee 1
Missile 0
Defense 2

Lifeblood: 11
Hero Points: 5
Protection: d6-3 (light armor)
Weapons: big knife, d6+1 or thrown blade, d6L

Boons/Flaws

Signature Weapon ('Baby,' big knife)
Silver Tongue
City Dweller

Careers

Merchant 1
Thief 2
Worker (Leatherworker) 0
Assassin 1

Horst made and lost a fortune as a gem exporter before turning to thievery of his former clients. When things got too hot for him in lanthe, he set out with an escaped slave, Maicha, on a series of not-so-lucrative adventures . . . though he's loath to admit it, Horst isn't quite as clever as he claims to be. He wears a leather tradesmen's apron studded with "tools" that double as throwing blades.

AMITIS, IRANISTANI ASSASSIN

Attributes

Strength 0
 Agility 1
 Mind 2
 Appeal 1

Combat Abilities

Initiative 0
 Melee 1
 Missile 0
 Defense 3

Lifeblood: 10

Hero Points: 5

Protection: d6-3 (light armor, disguise) / 0

Weapons: spear, d6 or dagger, d6L + poison (see below)

Boons/Flaws

Alert
 Master of Disguise
 Fear of Confinement

Careers

Assassin 2
 Scholar 0
 Alchemist 1
 Physician 1

Amitis began her training at a very young age, for one of the noble houses in Iranistan. Part of her strict upbringing involved punishment by being kept in a dark hole, resulting in a phobia that plagues her to the present. She can easily disguise herself as a male if she wishes, and one of her favorite alter-egos is a humble, spear-toting mercenary. She carries a kit with hair-dyes and makeup, as well as two doses of deadly contact poison (Strength roll at -2 to resist; failure yields d6 damage 1st round, d3 damage the 2nd. Even if resisted, the target takes a penalty die on all Agility-related actions for the next hour due to spasms).