

Pirates of Dark Water: World Book

The Pirates of Dark Water

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The World of Mer

Introduction

The Pirates of Dark Water is filled with elements of classic myth that give it a universal appeal. The motif of the hero's journey, out of a known environment, to undertake a task that leads to the source of life, has been an elemental part of storytelling for centuries. However, the ingredients that allow Dark Water to soar beyond the realm of the conventional tale of the hero's quest are humor and creativity.

Mer is an alien world, an environment unlike any we have ever seen. Everything, at every turn, surprises and amazes, yet it seems natural to the environment of this watery world. Mer, a planet in a constant state of flux, has island continents almost simultaneously being created, destroyed, and recreated. Even so, there is an unnatural natural order to all things on Mer. A simple example of this is its weaponry. In addition to standard medieval-type weapons, a number of items are of a design that takes advantage of the world's peculiar ocean life. Poisonous sea urchins are hurled with deadly accuracy from powerful sling shots, alien starfish are used as shurikens and blown glass muskets contain lizard-like creatures that, when "triggered," expel their deadly breath weapon.

To help you fully understand this unique world, we have provided you with a number of aids, the first being this, the *World Book*. Within these pages are descriptions of the lands, inhabitants, special characters and everything else needed to role-play on this fantastic world. The next aid is the *World of Mer Map*, which shows all of the land masses and places of interest that existed at the time of the map's creation.

The last aid consists of over 100 new creatures on three-hole-punched sheets so that they may be organized with other similar monster sheets. [Andorus's note: I didn't have the patience to type these up, plus none of them have much bearing on the series—as it says, they're *new* creatures, and even if they appeared in the series, their descriptions differ from those from the show.]

[snip **Role-Playing in the World of Mer**]

History of Mer

As told by Shalimar Essper

Mer, the world of my birth, is a vast, ever-changing planet with an abundance of inhuman creatures, unexplored lands and a vague, almost non-existent history. However, to ensure that our children do not forget their heritage, my family, the Esspers, has been given the titanous task of recording events which have taken and are taking place throughout Mer.

Now, a little of my history to help explain why I and my kindred were considered *qualified* for this auspicious task. I come from a lineage of telepaths that can only telepathize amongst our kin. Therefore, all Esspers, save my Granduncle Zeffer, whose constitution is too weak to allow travel, are dispersed over the Twenty Seas. Seeing as our telepathy is unrestricted by distance, all information gathered is relayed to Granduncle Zeffer, who is on our small island, where he records it in the Book of Records. Most people we have talked to in our vast travels have a common question: "Doesn't being away from your family take its toll on you?" All I can say is that we are in constant, telepathic contact, and no matter the distance, we are only a thought away.

This job of mine is the most rewarding job on Mer. However, I envy my forefathers, as they spent vast amounts of time with the Kings of Octopon, the true rulers of Mer. I, on the other hand, have only been in contact with Ren, son of King Primus, for a brief period, as he embarked on the quest for the Thirteen Treasures of Rule. After all, I couldn't go with him. His travels are arduous and history-making, but, although my intellect is great, I was not meant to be a swashbuckler. However, whenever Ren returns to Octopon, I am contacted and told about the events in which he has partaken. Lastly, I, the youngest of the Esspers, have been assigned yet another prestigious job—to tell in my own words to you, the apprentice scholars of Merian history, the events of Mer. Anyway, enough about my personal life. This tome is to help you better understand the workings of Mer and how all of the eclectic events throughout this magnificent world are interconnected.

Mer, predominantly water-covered, is a two-mooned world with an abundance of unexplored island continents. For centuries, these islands were just a blur in the minds of early Merians, and in some ways, things have not changed. To this day, over 60% of Mer's population is jammed into its four major cities, where most individuals live their entire life.

Although the population is not spread out, even a cursory look at the maps of Mer tells you that there is still an abundance of unexplored territories, and the vast open spaces that King Primus termed "the tyranny of distance" only accentuates the sheer overpowering extent of Mer.

Mer is in constant flux, with land masses being randomly created and destroyed. Although many continents have existed for thousands of years, many are born, live and are destroyed almost overnight. In addition to constantly changing the appearance of this planet, this flux causes wide climactic variations. While a monsoon drenches the southern coast of Octopon, snow falls on the Merigol Mountains just a few leagues to its north. However, despite these extremes, the climate where most of Mer's population dwell is mainly tropical, with few, if any, seasonal differences.

To the eye, Mer's landscape looks rugged and inhospitable, yet with a sprinkling of rain, the land blooms with hundreds of varieties of wildflowers, and just behind jagged cliffs lay forests of indescribable beauty.

Most of Mer's culture and beliefs evolved from the land. Merians learned to survive in even the harshest conditions by becoming one with nature. Early civilizations lived along the shores where food was plentiful and often island-hopped in large bamboo rafts. They hunted and foraged in small communities and became highly adept at survival and developed sophisticated ways of living with the land. As time went on, and the small communities began to grow, a brave few set out to explore the unknown wilds of Mer. However, due to its ever-changing appearance, creating a useable map of Mer was all but impossible. Most expeditions failed to return home. Finally, after years of exploration, a number of land masses appeared constant, and maps were created based on those lands. At this time, entire communities moved as one in the hopes of

finding a more prosperous land. These communities are the forebears of the city-state culture that today exists on Mer.

Since their earliest days, the city-states have arrived at informal agreements when it suited them, with trade and profit usually being the common factors which overcame the rivalries that were always just below the surface. Even though each city-state had its own priorities and worries, there was a growing realization that this self-seeking system could not continue to exist. With piracy running rampant, it became necessary to form some sort of federation between cultures to insure that commerce could freely continue. After years of negotiation, a Trade Federation was established between Mer's four major cities. Although this agreement was heralded as an end to piracy, it had little to no effect on it. As before, each city-state only protected itself, and as soon as a ship left its waters, it was fair game for all. Over time, the treaty was all but forgotten, with each city-state becoming more and more isolated from the others. Today, each city-state has its own culture, people, and laws, and unless visitors know in advance about a specific culture, those visitors are considered outsiders and treated as such.

Perhaps I have gotten ahead of myself. Although this is pertinent information, I believe that there is an even more important story to be told: the slow death of Mer.

From the beginning of time, the Thirteen Treasures of Rule have sealed the heart of our planet. The Treasures, imbedded in a reef far below the sea beneath Octopon itself, have emanated a collective power, nourishing the entire planet with a harmonious life-force.

Then, one day, years ago, the mystical stones were pried loose by a violent and unknown power. They were scattered far and wide in a furious storm of upheaval. From that day forward, the planet headed on a course of slow, degenerative destruction.

The crippling, which at first appeared only spiritually and emotionally, soon took living form in the substance which has become known as Dark Water. This substance oozed slowly, perversely, from the fissure where the Treasures were ripped from the bowels of the earth.

In the early years there were wild tales of a capricious, driving shape that moved across the watery planet, devouring anything unlucky enough to land in its path. Then, slowly, there were more and more sightings of the Dark Water, always moving, consuming and leaving nothing but loss and despair in its powerful wake. The vastness of all that is evil had taken a form...become tangible....It was the Dark Water.

When King Primus, a past ruler of Octopon, saw what was happening to his world, he left his infant son, Ren, in the care of a lighthouse keeper, and set out with his royal fleet on a quest for the Treasures of Rule, the only things able to save his kingdom.

One day, word returned to Octopon that Primus had located seven of the Thirteen Treasures, but then he had been attacked by pirates under the direction of a grotesque giant named Bloth. Whatever hope the Treasures had for Primus and Octopon, the Pirate Lord saw them only as a chance to master the evil power of Dark Water and use this control to extort all of Mer.

Under siege, Primus dispersed the seven found Treasures among his most trusted captains and ordered them to flee in different directions in order to successfully hide the Treasure. Unfortunately, Primus himself was not so lucky and was captured and held aboard Bloth's great ship, the Maelstrom.

As all this was taking place, Ren was living the simple life of a lighthouse keeper, being totally unaware of his true heritage. That is, until one fateful night when he risked his life to pull a drowning man from a storm-tossed sea. The old man Ren saved was Primus, long-lost King of Octopon...and Ren's father! The words issued from Primus's dying lips told of his escape from Bloth and illuminated the youth's true destiny—Ren must return Mer to its former glory by completing the quest for the fabled Thirteen Treasure of Rule. With this mantle of destiny passed, Primus died in his son's arms and was washed out to sea in a violent wave.

Then, just hours later, in the glow of a fire, Jenna, the lighthouse keeper and guardian of Ren, unwrapped a strange half-sword and gave it to Ren. The sword belonged to his father, and Jenna was instructed to give it to Ren if Primus should ever fail to return from his quest for the Thirteen Treasures.

Ren will not learn the truth about this strange weapon until he has fulfilled his destiny by locating the seven treasures scattered by Primus' royal captains, and continues the search for the remaining six treasures.

Ren's adventure began only moments after he learned of his destiny. Bloth saw Ren rescue his escaped prisoner, Primus, and sent Niddler, a monkey bird, to capture the youth in the hopes of finding out any information that Ren may have learned from the old King.

Niddler grabbed Ren and deposited him on the deck of the Maelstrom. It was here that Ren first met his father's captor, Bloth. When the pirate learned that Ren was to continue his father's quest, and in so doing, stand in Bloth's way towards gathering the Thirteen Treasures, he attempted to kill Ren. Fortunately, Niddler's running hatred of his cruel master caused the monkey bird to turn on Bloth. Ren took advantage of the situation by striking a bargain for Niddler's help, which Niddler quickly agreed to. The new alliance guaranteed Ren's escape.

Ren's first stop in his new-found quest was to seek out Alomar, his father's spiritual guide and keeper of the compass, a magical item able to locate each of the Treasures. At the Abbey of the Gallows, Ren learned the first lesson of his incredible journey towards enlightenment and the salvation of his world, "things are often not what they appear." Alomar turned out to be a powerful, gigantic reptilian creature, not at all the mystical priest-like image Ren had anticipated.

Acquiring the compass, Ren and Niddler next searched for a craft to take them on their quest. At a seaside tavern, they befriended a mercenary fortune hunter, Ioz, who promised to find them a boat for a cut of the fortunes they sought.

Unbeknownst to Ren, Ioz then stole the fastest vessel in the harbor, the Wraith, and it was not until they were being chased out to sea that Ren realize the kind of friend he had made in Ioz.

Although Ren did not completely trust this mercenary, Ioz took a liking to Ren and saw the youth's noble quest as something he would never take on himself, but none the less, didn't mind being a part of...for a cut of the treasure, of course.

Tula, a strong and beautiful girl, was at the tavern where Ren and Ioz became quest mates and overheard their plan to sail for treasure. She stowed away aboard the stolen Wraith. Once discovered, she quickly proved her mettle and knowledge of the sea and was accepted as one of the team.

So, this ragtag band of heroes, Ren, Niddler, Ioz, and Tula, took to the high seas to face blood-thirsty beasts, the black hearted pirate Lord, Bloth and the dreaded substance Dark Water.

The mystical compass Ren now wears about his neck emanates an ethereal blue light which shows them the way to the nearest of the Thirteen Treasures, but whoever gains the treasures first, the heroes or Bloth's band of cutthroats, embraces the power to chart their own destiny and set the course of the watery planet for ages to come.

Now, as the hour grows late, I end my story, leaving it up to you to determine its final ending. But before I bid you farewell, I leave you with a detailed listing of Mer's most famous heroes and the shapers of its destinies.

Races of Mer

Although the world of Mer boasts hundreds of unique races, each with individual strengths and weaknesses, we concentrate only on the four major races that inhabit the planet. [attribute chart explanation deleted, from here as well as from the race descriptions]

Humans

Humans are the most populous race on Mer but not the most advanced. Because Mer is mostly water, the majority of humans depend on the sea for their livelihood, be it from pirating or fishing. Although the sea is the main source of profit for men, there are many who choose to merchandise their wares to the seafarers.

The humans of Mer are a rugged breed and may best be described as sea cowboys. Most humans average just under 5'10" in height and are darkly tanned from the strong Merian sun.

Despite the ever present heat, the majority of men wear their hair long, and it is considered a sign of manhood to have a beard.

Due to the tropical nature of Mer, humans dress scantily, and, unless a battle is anticipated, choose not to wear armor, preferring instead to wear light, breezy, uninhibiting clothes. However, if melee is certain, armor is never shunned.

Due to the dangerous nature of Mer, over 85% of its human population reside in communal settings. Most of these communities have a population of under 200. However, there are large towns with populations well into the thousands. No matter what the size, they all possess a port, at least one tavern, and an unlimited supply of unscrupulous characters.

Kree

The Kree are an ancient race of forest dwellers who are much more comely than humans. They have long golden hair and usually have deep blue eyes. However, the one characteristic that separates them from humans is their long, pointed ears and canine teeth.

The Kree live in harmony with nature and often try to build their dwellings to enhance their natural surroundings. For example, they only use natural materials taken from the local area and often build directly into the surrounding foliage and/or terrain.

This race is friendly and social, and often interacts with humans. The Kree prefer to live in groups of under 20 individuals; this is to help ensure that the natural pattern of nature is disturbed as little as possible.

It is rumored that thousands of the Kree gather for the summer and winter solstices to celebrate the passing of another year. However, the Gathering has never been witnessed by a non-Kree, and it is commonly believed that the Gathering is only legend.

Although the Kree do not live in large communities, they are ruled by a council of elders who discuss matters of importance concerning their race and nature. Once a decision is made by the council, runners spread the official new law throughout their peoples, and all such delivered news is considered law.

The Kree are one of the few races of Mer that are not a seafaring people, as they are content to live within the natural beauty of the land.

Scon

Scon are short and muscular humanoids that inhabit the caves and mountainous areas of Mer. They are an ancient race, and it is commonly believed that they were the first inhabitants of Mer—all Scon claim this as true. They are a proud, honorable people, who hold honor in high regard, and their word is inviolate.

Scon and Antari are traditional enemies, with the Scon believing that the Antari are nothing more than egotistical, self-serving creature that ruin the natural beauty of their underground world by building cities. For countless years these peoples have been warring with each other over the rights to their underground domain. Although Scon and Antari have been known to work together, they do so only in times of great need (such times are at MP discretion).

Scon dwell in underground communities, which range in number from 100 to 1000 individuals, with each community being ruled by a single leader, usually the strongest male. Each tribe is an individual entity, and each only interacts with the others in times of calamity, such as when warring with the Antari.

Scon believe that their domain is an integral part of their lives. Therefore, they do not build permanent dwellings but, instead, live in tent-like structures that can easily be packed and moved, thus leaving areas virtually unchanged by their presence.

Scon are expert seafarers and are highly feared when pirating.

Antari

Antari are 7' tall albino humanoids, who inhabit magnificent underground cities in Mer's cavernous depths.

Antari are a private race, preferring interaction only with their own kind. Although they are not hostile to humans and work with them if the need arises, they are seldom seen above ground, preferring the cool depths of the underworld.

They are expert craftsmen, specializing in carving extremely small items. Antari craftsmen are especially known for their carving images out of precious stones, even emeralds and diamonds. Therefore, these master craftsmen are always in great demand.

Antari are the sworn enemies of the Scon, believing that Scon are nothing more than vermin that need to be eradicated from the Antari domain. Unless otherwise arranged, they attack Scon on sight, believing that they are doing everyone a favor by destroying them. If forced to work together for a common good, they do it. However, it is an easy truce at best, and the slightest provocation puts the two races at each others' throat.

Although they dwell underground, Antari are expert seamen, utilizing the many underground rivers and lakes much as men use the seas. They often attack ships from these tunnels and then quickly disappear back into them before any retaliation can occur.

[Pregenerated Characters]

[Skills]

The Magic of Mer

Magic has long been a force to be reckoned with on the World of Mer. In the trained hands of an Ecomancer, magic may change the course of the world.

[snip RPG-specific material]

The Ecomancer

In the World of Mer, there is only one type of being able to use magic, the Ecomancer. Here, spells are not bestowed upon characters by divine means, rather, they are gained by tapping into the Lei Lines which criss-cross the sky above Mer, or can be cast from an item of magic.

Mer is criss-crossed with Lei Lines, or powerful lines of magical energy which may be sensed and tapped into by Ecomancers. These lines are of varying degrees of intensity and thickness, and, seeing all spell power is gained from them, no material components are needed to cast spells.

When the proper incantation is spoken, the Ecomancer is bathed in a soft blue energy field, and seconds later, the spell is cast. (See *High and Low Magic Skill* following for further details.)

Ecomancers in Melee

Since Ecomancers spend the majority of their time studying the arcane arts, they are usually not as proficient with weapons as someone who constantly uses them. However, with the proper training and skills, a character can be a proficient, fighting Ecomancer.

Ecomancers may not use any ranged weapons.

Ecomancers & Armor

Ecomancers may only wear animal hide [snip] padded [snip], or leather armor [snip]. However, they are able to increase their armor Ranking by the use of certain spells and enchanted items.

Languages & Writing

In addition to the common language of Mer, Ecomancers speak a distinct language of their own. This language is used for all spell casting, incantations, and when conversing with other Ecomancers. Anyone who is not an Ecomancer is not able to understand anything written or spoken in this language without the use of an enchanted item or interpreter.

High & Low Magic Skill

On Mer, there are two distinct types of magic—High and Low. All Ecomancers must start with Low Magic before gaining High Magic. [snip RPG-specific material]

Artifacts of Mer

Compass of Location

This item is mystically attuned to the Treasures of Rule and emits a thin, piercing blue light toward any Treasure within 500 miles of it.

Once within this range, the compass points to the most direct route to the Treasure, and does not warn of any dangers or obstacles in the way.

Sword of Primus

The sword of Primus is an ancient sword that was used by Primus himself when battling the Dark Dweller. Although it was broken at this time, it still remains 70% intact, and is a highly magical weapon. [snip]

Feryx Lance

A Feryx Lance is a 16" lance that is made from the bones of a Feryx, and that inflicts 3D10 wound points when used against one. In addition to this, the lance offers its user complete protection against Steka Breath three times per day. [snip]

Treasures of Rule

The Thirteen Treasures of Rule are the most powerful items on Mer, and when brought together are the one force that may cure Mer of the disease of Dark Water.

Although individually, each Treasure is incredibly powerful, it is not until they are used in conjunction with each other that their true might becomes apparent. As the Treasures are accumulated, their might combines, with the power of any single Treasure being doubled. For example, treasure 1 is able to inflict 1D10 wound points on an opponent and Treasure 2 can heal 1D4 wound points per day. However, possessing Treasures 1 and 2 enable them to inflict 2D10 wound points and heal 2D4 wound points per day.

Acquiring these Treasures should be extremely difficult, and only very powerful characters should have any chance at success.

[snip]

Rules and Game Mechanics

[snip Initiative, Using the Chart]

Special Weapons of Mer

In addition to normal, medieval-type weapons, Mer boasts an abundance of unique weapons. Some weapons use living creatures to enhance their power, and many creatures themselves are used as weapons and are bred for such purposes [snip].

Directly below is a quick description of the mechanics involved with Merian weapons.

Range: Range is a weapon's effective distance in feet. If (Special) see the weapon's description.

Rate of Fire (ROF): Rate of Fire is the number of times a weapon may be fired per minute, with the first number representing the number of times it can be fired and the second number representing the minute in which it can be fired. For example, (1/2) means that this weapon may be fired once every two minutes.

Damage (DM): Damage is the type of die rolled to determine the amount of damage inflicted by the weapon. If (Special) is listed, the damage is detailed in the weapon's description.

Weapon	Range	ROF	DM
Dagron Bow	30'	6/1	1D4 (X6)
Dart Pistol	20'	1/1	1D
Dart Rifle	40'	1/2	2D8 (x2)
Gas Pistol	3'	1/1	(Special)
Glowfish	(Special)	1/1	(Special)
Grub Crossbow	15'	1/3	(Special)
Octupucker	(Special)	1/1	(Special)
Sea Sucker	(Special)	1/1	2D8
Sea Urchin	12'	3/1	1D4

Spear Gun

20'/40

1/2

1D12

Weapon Descriptions

Dagron Bow

A Dagron Bow is a small, specially made bow that fits in the palm of the hand and holds up to 18 dart-sized arrows.

Dart Pistol

A Dart Pistol is a weapon that shoots a single, 12-inch, three pronged dart by the use of a bow-like mechanism. Although it is limited in range, this is an easily concealed weapon that is deadly at close range.

Dart Rifle

A Dart Rifle is a 3' long, two-handed weapon that shoots two, 18", multi-pronged darts.

Gas Pistol

A Gas Pistol houses a Gazier in a hollow metal tube [snip].

When this weapon is discharged, a sharp point pricks or a rope squeezes the Gazier, which, in turn, causes it to emit its foul, poisonous gas. When this occurs, everyone in a 3' radius in front of the weapon is engulfed in the gas. The players of all characters in the gas must make a successful roll against their MR, or they fall asleep for 1D6 minutes.

This weapon has one major flaw: it is a high maintenance weapon. It is necessary to release the Gazier daily in order to feed and care for it. This can be accomplished by detaching the tube and depositing the creature directly into a cage or box. If this is not done, the Gazier becomes weak and isn't able to emit its poisonous gas. If neglected for two days, the Gazier dies of neglect.

Glowfish

Glowfish are small fat fish that emit a piercing flash of light when agitated. They are usually kept in covered bowls until they are needed. To upset them, the bowl is vigorously shook, which causes the fish to "flash." Anyone looking in the direction of the fish at this time is blinded for 1D4 minutes.

Grub Crossbow

A Grub Crossbow is a cross between a crossbow and a flintlock rifle that uses sacks full of exploding grubs as missiles. When these missiles explode everyone within a 5' radius sustains 3D10 wound points.

Octupucker

Octupuckers are small octopus-like creatures which are commonly used to disable and capture opponents.

Octupuckers may be thrown, and when they strike an object, they immediately entangle it with their tentacles and emit a toxic chemical which causes paralysis for 1D6 minutes. In addition to the paralysis, 1D4 wound points are inflicted per minute attached.

Range varies depending on mode of propulsion. For example, a hand thrown octupucker does not travel as far as one shot from a catapult.

Sea Sucker

Sea Suckers are too large to be used in melee combat. However, they are often shot from catapults. When shot through the air, these creatures' mouths open wide and stick to any surface that they strike. Once attached, Sea Suckers emit a strong acidic substance that inflicts damage until detached.

Range varies depending on mode of propulsion. For example, a hand thrown Sea Sucker does not travel as far as one shot from a catapult.

Sea Urchin

Sea Urchins are small fish that are commonly used as [shuriken] (throwing stars). In order to wield them, gauntlets or light chain mail gloves must be worn, or their user also sustains damage.

Spear Gun

A Spear Gun is a large, spring-loaded pistol that can be used either on land or underwater. It is capable of firing any spear up to 48" in length.

Armor

On a world mainly consisting of water, most individuals choose to wear little to no armor, and that which is worn, although strong, is usually light weight.

The majority of Mer's armor is made from natural items, such as coral or dagron scale. [snip RPG-specific content and armor ranking]

Armor Type

- None
- Shell shield
- Dolphin hide
- Dolphin hide & shield
- Crab shell
- Crab shell & shield
- Clam armor
- Clam armor & shield
- Coral armor
- Coral armor & shield
- Dagron scale
- Dagron scale & shield
- Leviathan scale
- Leviathan scale & shield

Merian Ships

Since Mer is comprised mainly of water, ships play an integral part of all Merian life, with crafts ranging in size from one-man row boats to the Maelstrom [snip]. This section covers the type of ships that may be encountered and the statistics needed to incorporate them into any fantasy campaign.

Ship Types

In addition to the everyday ships of Mer, a number of special crafts have been designed to meet certain races' special needs. The following charts detail the specifics of these ships.

Defensive Values

The Defensive Values of a ship represent the maximum damage that each part of it can sustain before sinking or becoming unusable.

Ship	Hull	Forecastle	Mast
Octopian Warship	42	30	20
Octopian Transport	20	17	35
Antari Warship	30	12	20
Antari River Barge	17	NA	15
Scon Warship	12	8	12

Hull: The hull is the main body of the ship, and when it is destroyed, the ship is sunk.

Forecastle: The forecastle is a fortified wooden enclosure that houses the wheel on most Merian ships, and when destroyed, the ship is unable to use its rudder. Therefore, its sails must be dropped and its oars, if any, employed.

Mast: The mast is the main support for the sails, and when destroyed, the ship has to depend on oar-power to propel itself.

Ship Armaments

Consult the following table to determine the number and types of weapons on each vessel.

Ship	Lt. Cat.	Hvy. Cat.	Ram Str.	Dagrons
Octopian Warship	4	2	1D20	2
Octopian Transport	1	--	--	--
Antari Warship	3	3	1D12	--
Antari River Barge	--	4	--	2
Scon Warship	2	2	1D8	1

Ship to Ship Combat

Most Merian ships are mounted with modified land catapults to enable them to destroy an adversary at a distance. Since these catapults are on wheels, they may be deployed wherever they are needed. However, once they are secured for battle, it takes 10 minutes to move them. For this reason, a ship often places all of its weapons on one side and tries to constantly keep them pointed at their enemy.

Ramming

All Merian warships are equipped with a below-the-waterline ram. In order to successfully ram another ship, the ramming vessel must maintain its maximum rowing or sailing speed for three minutes. As soon as ramming has taken ship, the ramming ship must immediately withdraw or risk sinking with the rammed ship. To determine the amount of damage inflicted on a rammed ship, consult the previously given armament chart.

Grappling & Boarding Parties

In many instances, if long distance combat proves unsuccessful (or even if it is successful), the crew of one ship may attempt to grapple and board another. In this way they can kill all of the opposing crew and claim the ship and any wealth aboard as their own.

Grappling takes place by the use of a grapnel and rope, used to secure one ship to the next. Grapnels are either thrown by hand or shot out of specially made ballistae. For game purposes, assume that there are enough people throwing grapnels in order to ensure success. However, the defending ship has a 30% chance of cutting the lines.

Once two ships are successfully joined, boarding may take place. When this occurs, melee and ranged combat are identical to land combat.

Length, Width, & Speed

These statistics should be determined by similar existing vessels in your current gaming system.

[snip The Maelstrom & The Wraith]

The Lands of Mer

The following section gives a detailed description of the island continents of Mer and their inhabitants. [snip RPG-specific content]

Andorus

Climate: Tropical

Population: None (100% human, when restored)

Treasure of Rule: Yes (special, see following)

History

Andorus is the original home of all Ecomancers, the only known magic users of Mer. Although all Andorians have the ability to use ecomantic magic, the power of such magic varies from individual to individual. Also, due to the dispersion of the Andorian people, the Andorian

race has intermingled with other Merian races, thus spreading ecomantic powers throughout Mer's many cultures.

For hundreds of years, Andorus thrived under the guardianship of the Viva Tree, a huge, fifteen-story tree whose roots stretched from shore to shore across Andorus. This tree was the main source of ecomantic magic, the center of all Andorian life and furnished all physical and mental sustenance for the entire Andorian race. Andorian legend states that the island itself is nothing more than a layer of earth covering the massive root system of the mighty tree. In fact, this is not far from the truth, as the Viva Tree is a highly magical entity that is one with the land and which shares its very essence.

When Dark Water pervaded Mer, it denuded Andorus of all flora and most of its fauna, with only a few hundred ecomancers escaping what has come to be known as the Great Wave of Black Death. Even the mighty Viva Tree could not withstand the Wave's onslaught and placed itself in stasis until it could find sufficient power to be reborn.

Geography

Andorus was a beautiful island, with crystal-clear water, lush foliage, rolling hills, and a city with a population of well over two thousand. However, on the fateful day of the Great Wave of Black Death, the Viva Tree, in an effort to escape the fate of Dark Water, removed its presence from the land. Now, all that is left of Andorus is the skeletal remains of the once great tree, a barren land covered with stagnant pools of Dark Water and a deserted, ruined city.

The Viva Tree

Any ecomancer who comes within 150' of the base of the Viva Tree senses a great dormant power coming from deep within it, and, if the ecomancer comes within 5' of the tree, a man-sized hollow appears in its base. If a non-ecomancer enters this hollow, he immediately suffers 5D10 wound points and continues to do so for each minute he remains within the tree. However, if an ecomancer enters, hundreds of moss-like tendrils grow out of the Tree, wrapping themselves around his head, thus sharing its knowledge with him and causing him to become one with the Tree. When this occurs, the ecomancer is told of the day Andorus was destroyed, how to restore it to its former glory and where the second Treasure of Rule is hidden. [snip RPG note] The Viva Tree explains to him that its essence is weak, and the only gift that can restore it is ecomantic essence. [snip MP note]

If the High Magic points are shared with the Tree, small green buds immediately begin to appear on it, small colorful butterflies begin to flutter about and the water becomes noticeable cleaner. After 20 minutes, birds begin to sing and bushes and flowers appear and begin to bloom. After two weeks, the land that was once as barren as a viper pit, is now alive with color and beauty, as it was before the disease of Dark Water struck.

If the ecomancer doesn't have the sufficient number of High Magic points to give the Viva Tree, it bids that he return on a future date when he is more powerful. Whether he agrees or not, the Viva Tree reveals that the second Treasure of Rule is under the Viva Tree itself. It also states that it has been using its power to hide the treasure from those it deems unworthy, and that is why even Ren's compass did not point to its exact whereabouts. Lastly, it reveals that the Treasure may only be "unlocked" if Primus' Sword is present.

Andorus Restored

Once the 75 High Magic Points have been bestowed upon the Viva Tree and two weeks of healing time has passed, Andorus starts with life anew. The Viva Tree regains its former glory.

Due to the mystic might of the Tree, all Ecomancers with 20 or more High Magic points sense its rebirth and have a strong urge to come and seek the Tree's tutelage. This urge is not a command, and, at the start, may be ignored. However, for each week of game time that passes, the character has a cumulative 5% chance that he must return and commune with the Tree. This urge is referred to as "the Calling."

Miragon

Climate: Tropical

Population: 1 human

Treasure of Rule: Yes

History

Miragon is a virtually uninhabited island that is rarely visited. It is a relatively young land, being pushed upward from the ocean's bowels only 167 years ago. Due to its remote location and inhospitable terrain, no other historical information about Miragon is available.

Geography

Miragon is a swampy island completely surrounded by 150'-high cliffs, and, therefore, it is only accessible by scaling the cliffs. Only those individuals who have the Mountaineering Skill of 6 or more have a chance to scale the cliffs. However, due to the turbulent swells of the ocean and the wet sheer cliffs, climbing attempts have a -5 modifier. [snip point-related info]

[snip more point-related info]

Once the cliffs are overcome, a desolate, swampy island comes into view, and, except for an occasional palm tree and a single, spiral cliff, the island appears to be nothing more than mud. Only 10% of Miragon's mass is solid, and what little topography exists seems only to distribute the water-flow into streams, inlets and ponds.

Due to the knee-deep mud, travel on Miragon is difficult by foot [snip]. Movement by shallow boat is the most efficient mode of transportation throughout most of this dismal land.

Blast Tunnels

These naturally formed tunnels or tubes are formed in a way that forces air through one side, thus enhancing the speed by 1 to 10 times of anything that enters from the windward side, depending on the size of the propelled object and its wind-catching abilities.

[snip RPG-specific info]

Once through a tunnel, a vessel or individual is hailed by a small gnome-like man, who introduces himself as "Slaggon, the Bio-Transmuter." He explains that he greets all visitors to his island personally, as he is immediately warned of their presence by his pet Hawk Knife. He goes on to say that he leads a hermit's life, studying and practicing his transmutations. If asked about his work, he explains that he creates new life-forms by combining the life essence of existing creatures but does not go into detail.

If asked about the Treasures of Rule, Slaggon informs his guests that there is an incredibly powerful magic item at the top of what he calls "the Spire," but he doesn't know what the item is. He then explains that the item is guarded by numerous Sand Crabs (see the *Gallaquin* creature sheet for details) and that only he can tell them how to safely retrieve the item. If the characters are interested, Slaggon asks them for a donation of 250 gold pieces to share his information. Whether his offer is accepted or not, Slaggon seems to break down for the good of his new-found friends. He then explains that the only way that the magic item can be obtained, and the Gallquins driven away, is by using a Loa plant. In actuality, this is a lie, as Slaggon only wants the flower to use in one of his insidious transmutations. He then asks the characters to return to his hut in order to give them a means of finding the flower.

Slaggon's hut is a 20' by 20' single room hut, with every inch of floor space being covered with cages, tanks and scientific instruments. The cages are filled with hybrids of all shapes and sizes that were created by Slaggon. He eagerly shows off his transmutations.

After this, Slaggon goes to the back of his hut, rummages around and produces a fish bowl. Floating in the bowl is a creature that has the lower body of a fish and an upper body resembling a cute teddy bear. Slaggon then attaches the bowl to the end of a 5' long wooden staff and hands it to one of the characters (MP's choice). Once the bowl is touched, the creature in the bowl awakens, swims furiously for a moment, raises its head above the liquid and stares at its new owner. Slaggon explains that he named this creature, one of his transmutations, a Roulette. He goes on to say that the Roulette is psychically attuned to whomever holds the staff and is able to find the object of the holder's greatest desire.

Mobo Island

Climate: Tropical

Population: 80% Monkey Bird, 20% Humanoid

Treasure of Rule: Yes

History

Mobo Island is an ancient island, home to hundreds of wingless Monkey Birds. This island used to be a resting place on their long migratory flights, as it was centrally located between two, now non-existent land masses. At first, this was a perfect respite on their long journey. However, through the years, those Monkey Birds that continued to visit the island grew weaker and began to lose their wings. No one was sure why this occurred, all that was known is that a wingless Monkey Bird was a freak among its own kind. Therefore, these unaccepted creatures, the Mobo, which means "the Accursed Ones," eventually made this island their home, as they knew that no other Monkey Bird would risk coming there to further torment them, for the fear of losing their own wings.

Geography

Mobo Island is a small, remote, mountainous island surrounded by a three-mile thick, 80' high band of *Stekka Fog* (see following for details). The fog lifts within two hundred yards of the island, although it is still visible at an altitude of over eighty feet. There is a 65% chance that anyone outside of the fog will not notice the island.

Stekka Fog

Stekka Fog is a highly corrosive mist that slowly dissolves anything with which it comes in contact. [snip RPG-specific stuff]

Cloth items begin to disintegrate immediately upon contact with the fog and completely disintegrate at the end of 2 minutes. Wood begins to rot the beginning of the 5th minute and becomes brittle and useless by the end of the 6th.

Once through the fog, the 50' wide white sand beaches of Mobo Island come into view. Past the beach is a three-mile thick area of rain forest teeming with life. The only visible break in the canopy of rain forest is a 1200' steeply sloped peak completely void of vegetation.

Once the rain forest has been passed, miles of rock-hard red dirt stretches to the beginning of long, rolling hills, growing ever steeper, and not ending until they reach the peak that is visible from anywhere on the island. Until the peak is reached, the hills teem with an abundance of plant and animal life, and small pools and tributaries give the landscape a friendly, hospitable look. Once the base of the peak is reached, the area becomes desolate, as if all life has been sucked out of it.

Encountering the Mobosians

There is a 65% chance that anyone walking on the beach has a feeling of being watched from the woods. If they look carefully towards the woods, they make out dozens of pairs of eyes looking out at them. If any threatening move is made, the eyes immediately disappear. However, if communication is attempted, ten Mobo—Monkey Birds with small, non-functioning wings—appear. They are cautious and frightened and won't react until those on the beach react. If the characters attempt to communicate, or if there is a Monkey Bird present in the group, the Mobo prove friendly and offer their hospitality in any way possible.

If hostile actions are taken towards the Mobo, 6D10 arrows are shot from the woods by the remaining twenty Mobo left behind. This barrage of arrows continues until the intruders have been driven off or killed.

If for some reason the Mobo were not noticed from the beach, there is a 25% chance per hour that the characters see the Mobo spying on the characters. If this occurs, the Mobo act in the manner described above.

If good relations are formed, the Mobo take the characters a mile inland to the site of their village where they introduce the characters to an ancient Mobo, called Grandfather.

Grandfather

After introductions are made, Grandfather explains that Mobo Island is under a terrible curse and asks for help. If he is refused help, a look of agony crosses his face, but he still remains hospitable. However, although remaining polite, he ends almost every sentence with the

words, "but it really does not matter since everyone on the island will be destroyed by the Feryx of the Cliff." (see following and the *Feryx* creature sheet for a complete description of a Feryx)

If help is offered, Grandfather appears very pleased. He then gives the character a Feryx Lance to aid them. He also informs them that for their risk they can keep the "great treasure" that is hidden in the Feryx's Lair. Grandfather then gives exact directions to the creature's lair and bids the group good luck.

Octopon

Climate: Tropical

Population: Scavengers & Dark Disciples (human when restored)

Treasure of Rule: No

MP Note: Octopon is the most important city on Mer, and if your players' characters are questing for the Treasures of Rule, their quest ends here. If they aren't on the Treasure Quest, Octopon may be used as a source of adventure or to get them interested in the quest.

Depending on the timeline of your campaign, Octopon may be encountered as a beautiful, thriving city, a city in ruins or a city in partial reconstruction. Therefore, a description of a rebuilt Octopon and an Octopon in ruins are included herein. Octopon half rebuilt isn't detailed as it is merely a combination of the other two descriptions. No matter what the state of Octopon, the locations outside of the city are still inhabited by the creatures listed following.

History

Octopon is one of the oldest and greatest cities on Mer and was founded over twenty-three hundred years ago by Schwar Primus. Since its founding, Octopon has been ruled by Schwar's direct descendants, and legend states that it will survive as long as there is a living heir to its throne.

At first, Octopon was a roisterous, untamed shanty town, populated by hard workers, dreamers, pirates and vagabonds. A few of them found fortunes, most remained poor. The pirates who wanted riches without working remained nearby and subsisted on robbery and violence.

Despite this, rumors of the great city of Octopon spread, and everyone that was looking for a better future began to migrate here.

So a mass exodus occurred—an immense movement of people which saw more than six thousand enter the area. Boatload after boatload of immigrants arrived, speaking many languages and coming from a multitude of cultures. Almost half were human, with the remaining numbers being humanoid in nature. Despite this cultural hodge-podge, Octopon enjoyed a period of unprecedented prosperity. There was a ready market for all of her agricultural products, and the discovery of a large load of gold just off her coast made Octopon self-sufficient.

This period was quickly ended, however, when the Dark Dweller caused a huge underwater fissure which allowed Dark Water to emerge (see the *Dark Dweller & Dark Water* creature sheets for details). On that fateful day, Octopon was all but wiped from the face of Mer. Fires raged uncontrollably, buildings crumbled and the earth itself split asunder.

Octopon in Ruins

Geography

Octopon is situated in the middle of the southern end of the island, with the once beautiful city now appearing as a scab along a desolate coastline. Its harbor contains nothing more than the battered skeletons of ship hulls, human refuse and clouds of flies. The city itself is in ruins, and its streets are covered with rubble. Only the partial remains of the Lighthouse and the Place of Primus remain standing (see following for location descriptions).

The surrounding landscape is also dead and appears to have been burned to a crisp. Not a single blade of grass remains, and there is no sign of life anywhere. Small bubbling pools of Dark Water dot the entire area and immediately flow toward anyone who approaches within a 100' radius.

Although the land is ruined, its topography remains relatively unchanged. To the north lies the Meridol mountains, which stretch to 1000' at the highest peak.

The eastern and western parts of the island, which were once mainly grassland, are now nothing more than cesspools of evil, bubbling Dark Water.

Despite the ruin of Octopon, a large community of sea goblins (see the *Sea Goblin* creature sheet for details) use the ruins as a base for raiding passing ships.

Population

Only seventy-two scavengers and eight Dark Disciples occupy the city (see the *Dark Disciples* creature sheet for details).

Scavengers

Scavengers are comprised of all races. They spend the majority of their time digging through rubble in the hopes of finding valuables or uncontaminated food. [snip]

Places of Interest

The following section details special areas throughout Octopon. It is assumed that the areas are present despite the assault of Dark Water (at MP discretion).

The Lighthouse

MP Note: The obstacles in the Lighthouse can only be overcome when at least seven of the Treasures of Rule are obtained. Otherwise, anyone entering will not survive. In addition to this, the characters must possess the Broken Sword of Primus in order to gain access to the Dark Dweller (see following for details). It is recommended that the characters navigate the obstacles of the lighthouse to gain this information.

The Lighthouse sits atop a 450' cliff on Octopon's southern-most shore, and it is only accessible by a rubble-strewn, curving path which winds its way through the hills. The path proceeds for about 300', ending at the shattered remains of a once great edifice. Large chunks of brick and mortar have fallen from it, and its glass dome has long since shattered. Despite its condition, it is still an imposing structure. Its base is 60' in diameter and it is over 150' in height. Its only entrance is a single crumbling door located in the northern wall.

If tested, the door easily opens, revealing a circular stairway leading upward, which is covered in rubble. As soon as anyone sets foot upon the first stair, 4 Dark Disciples appear from higher up in the tower. Before any action occurs, they immediately demand that any Treasures of Rule carried by the characters be turned over to them. If the Treasures are present or not, the Disciples immediately attack, fighting to the death.

If the Dark Disciples are dispatched, a 50' climb reveals a 5' wide landing with a single door hanging loosely on its hinges. The room behind it is 20' by 20', with a door directly opposite the one entered. It is apparent that this room was once a bedroom, as there are the remnants of an old mattress, a table and chairs, a large rickety wardrobe and a plain wooden chest.

If the wardrobe is searched, the searcher finds a number of moth-eaten robes and a pair of worn sandals. The robes are just as they appear. However, the sandals are magical, allowing the wearer to walk on all types of water, even Dark Water.

If the chest is open, two gallons of Dark Water erupt outward, causing everyone within a 10' radius to sustain 1D10 wound points per minute on its victim.

The second door leads to another 5' by 5' landing with stairs continuing upward. After a 75' climb, the stairs end at a solid-looking oak trapdoor in the ceiling.

The door is magically locked and may only be opened by the use of magic. If force is used on the door, a trigger mechanism is sprung, causing an explosion that causes everyone in a 20' radius to sustain 3D12 wound points. (The explosion is magical, leaving the door and surrounding structure unaffected.)

The trapdoor leads to a 25' by 25' square room, completely void of furnishings, with walls so white that they appear to have been recently polished. In the center of the room is a 6' circular pool of bubbling Dark Water which erupts upward 4' into the air and continues to do so as long as anyone remains in the room. Anyone coming within 15' of the bubbling pool is attacked by 1D4 globs of Dark Water, each inflicting 1D20 wound points per minute it remains on its victim.

In addition to this, the remaining 4 Dark Disciples emerge from the pool itself and immediately attack. When in melee, there is a 40% chance per minute that the Dark Disciples are able to position their adversaries in range of the erupting pool.

At the start of the 4th minute of melee, Jenna (see *History of Mer* for details), who monitored the characters' approach to the Lighthouse, appears from the trapdoor with two Octoponian guards.

Although the guards immediately attack the Dark Disciples, Jenna stays out of the fray, yelling that the only way to get to the Dark Dweller is to have and use the Broken Sword of Primus. She yells that there is a hidden lock in the middle of the eastern wall that only unlocks with the Broken Sword. Even knowing the exact location of the lock, there is a 25% chance that it will not be found the first minute it is looked for. For each additional minute that searching takes place, this percentage decreases by 5% so that after 5 minutes it is automatically found.

As soon as this information is given, Jenna retreats, and all surviving Dark Disciples move in front of the lock, protecting it with their lives. (Note, if the sword is not possessed, there is no way to pass through the hidden door, as the powers of the Dark Dweller prevent it.)

When the lock is found and the Sword of Primus is inserted into it, the entire eastern wall swings inward, revealing a 35' by 35' room, with a 4' wide steaming fissure running down its center. This is the end of the fissure that ripped Mer asunder and allowed the Dark Dweller to be released. It is here that the final conflict will take place.

Just seconds after the room is entered, the ground begins to violently shake, and the Dark Dweller appears as a distorted, human-shaped blob of tar. Gazing slowly over all assembled, he emits a low, bloodcurdling chuckle and attacks.

The only way to stop the Dark Dweller is to possess the first seven Treasure of Rule. If the Treasures are revealed in the Dark Dweller's presence, they fly upwards directly above its head and begin to spin rapidly around it. As this occurs, hundreds of intense beams of light shoot out of the Treasures directly into the creature. Although no wounds are apparent, the Dark Dweller lets out a horrible, agonizing scream and slowly begins to melt into a thick, pus-like substance. However, before it totally dissipates, it flows back into the fissure and disappears from sight. Once all of this occurs, the Treasures embed themselves in the upper walls of the Lighthouse, glow brightly for a moment longer and then fade. Just seconds later, the fissure begins to seal itself, and after mere moments, no trace of it is to be seen. All remaining Dark Disciples melt and dissipate.

When the fissure has completely closed, Jenna reappears, hailing everyone present as heroes. She states that the Treasures must remain where they are until the final six are found, when their combined strength can be used to permanently destroy the Dark Dweller. Then, looking sad, Jenna states, "No, the Dark Dweller has not been destroyed, it has merely been weakened, and it will return some day in the not-too-distant future." Then, brightening once more she says, "But with heroes like you in the realm, Octopon has little to fear!"

Octopon Restored Geography

The perimeter of the island consists of both beautiful beaches and high, dangerous, jagged cliffs. Moving inward, the majority of the eastern part of the island is covered with beautiful pine forests, the trees 200' and taller. This forest is rumored to contain many small bands of Kree (see *Races of Mer* for details) as well as a strange magical area of power.

To the north lies the Meridol Mountains, with the highest peak being over 1000' high. It is believed that a large community of sea goblins uses these mountains as a base for raiding passing ships. Despite countless expeditions sent to find the sea goblins, their community is as yet undiscovered.

The western part of the island is covered with fields of wheat, wild flowers and plants of every conceivable shape and size.

Octopon itself is a thriving city, whose buildings are made of a white sandstone which glitter brightly from the sun's rays.

Population

Over 50% of Octopon's population is human, with the other half being a melting pot of different races. Despite the races co-existing with each other, each specific race has set up its own unique community, complete with traditions and beliefs.

Once inside the city, piracy is virtually unknown, as Octopon has an elite militia comprised of over 300 men. For each hour traveling in the city, there is a 30% chance that 1D8 of the militia are encountered. Unless law-breaking is taking place, the guards greet everyone with a friendly nod and continue on their way. If something suspicious is occurring, the guards detain everyone involved in order to determine what is transpiring.

The majority of Octopon's citizens are highly educated and would rather pursue their personal studies over all other activities. That is not to say that Octopon doesn't have its share of thugs. Many unsavory characters delight in such a city, as they know that its citizens are easy prey when the militia is not in sight. The majority of these cutthroats reside in northwestern Octopon.

Places of Interest

College of Ecomancy

MP Note: All of the clearings mentioned in the following text are under a powerful magic that pacifies all beings that enter them. Therefore, unless stated, no aggressive actions can be taken when in these clearings.

Located approximately 15 miles northeast of Octopon lies the College of Ecomancy. This ancient and highly magical area, just over 1 mile in diameter, was used by ancient ecomancers to attune their skills and become one with nature.

There is a well-tended, two-yard footpath leading from the gates of Octopon directly to the woods surrounding the college. Anyone traversing it is completely safe due to the ancient ecomantic powers that protect it. The path ends at two, six-foot high black marble columns, which seem to lead to an impassible section of woods. Huge thorny vines, some over two feet in diameter block the way, and plants and trees of every size impede progress.

Any non-ecomancer who attempts to go through the columns is immediately attacked by the vines, which are actually Vine Octopae [snip]. As soon as one of these creatures is destroyed, another replaces it. This continues until the characters leave the area.

Main Clearing

If an ecomancer is present when the columns are passed through, the foliage parts, revealing a 200' circular clearing under a dark cool canopy of foliage.

A worn marble path leads to a six-foot circular sunken bath directly in the middle of the clearing. If examined, it is apparent that small steps lead downward into its warm, dark, bubbling water. Anyone completely immersing himself in the water regains all wound damage in 3 minutes. However, if a being leaves the pool before the end of 3 minutes, no healing takes place.

[snip]

The same worn path that leads into the clearing circles the bath and then branches north, east, and west.

The Northern Clearing

The northern path leads deeper into the woods for 100 yards before it emerges into a small circular clearing covered with clover-like plants. One contiguous marble bench encircles the entire clearing. This clearing appears to be nothing more than an area of great beauty. However, any ecomancer who sits on the marble bench for 3 or more minutes and communes with nature receives an additional 1D4 points of Intellect.

The Eastern Clearing

The eastern path extends almost 300 yards through the lush foliage. It ends in a circular clearing with three long marble benches evenly spaced out around a red marble circle. Hieroglyphics and arcane runes are carved into the marble by each of the benches. Hundreds of small blue and white flowers intermix with thousands of tiny mushrooms.

This area has been taken over by a colony of Toad Stools, and anyone staying in the area for more than 1 minute is attacked [snip].

[snip MP note]

Due to the nature of the hieroglyphics, only those characters with a Language Skill of 17 or over are able to decipher the [hieroglyphics]. Their literal interpretation is:

THOSE ONE WITH NATURE WILL DIE
THEIR SPIRITS SOAR THROUGHOUT THE SKY
FOR EARTH AND MAN ARE TRULY AS ONE
AS WE ALL ARE CHILDREN OF THE ONE GREAT SUN.

This poem is meaningless and was simply placed here as a tool to help ecomancers contemplate their meaning of existence.

The Western Path

The path to the west continues almost one mile before it gently curves and leads back to the main clearing. There is nothing special about this path, and it was only used when solitude was desired.

Beach of Doom

Despite its name, the Beach of Doom appears as nothing more than a 100' wide, white sandy beach with a gentle surf caressing its shores. It is lined by tall, Menga palms, which cast cooling shade over the oven-hot sand.

The Beach of Doom is a 300-yard strip of sand located 11 miles due west of Octopon and can be easily reached from the city. It is extremely beautiful and seems to have a mysterious calming effect over anyone who walks on it. [snip] If the roll is over the MR score, the person is overcome with a feeling of peace and serenity, causing him to want to walk on the sand to enjoy its natural beauty. This sounds harmless, but in reality it is not. Spread evenly along the beach are 15 Skeeve lairs [snip]. Anyone coming within 10' of one is instantly attacked. Due to the individual's tranquil state, the Skeeve always gains initiative. Although alerted, as soon as the melee ends, the peaceful state returns, continuing until the beach is left.

[snip MP note]

The Lighthouse

The Lighthouse sits atop a cliff on Octopon's southern coast. A curving, six-foot wide path constructed of tiny pieces of multi-colored coral winds upwards for almost ` before reaching the structure's base.

The path ends at a great Lighthouse that stands almost 150' in height, has a base diameter of over 60' and is constructed of pure white coral. Although the sun sparkles and reflects off its beautiful surface, a 20' glass dome at its top emits a brilliant, pure white light that causes even the sun to pale in comparison.

A single, sturdy oaken door is set in the northern wall at the base of the lighthouse, with four Octoponian Guards standing at attention, two on each side of the door. The Guards do not speak unless spoken to first, but if a conversation ensues, they are civil, treating everyone with respect. However, they only allow entry upon Jenna's command or if those requesting entry are in possession of one or more Treasures of Rule.

[snip attribute chart]

If entry is granted, one guard leads the characters through the door and up a three-foot wide circular stairway. It spirals upwards for 50' before ending at a 5' wide landing ending in a silver door. The Guard places both hands upon the door and orders everyone present to do the same. The door is highly magical and is controlled directly by the seven Treasures of Rule that are housed within the Lighthouse. Everyone must touch the door in order for the Treasures to determine if the individuals' true intentions and thoughts are pure and for the good of Octopon and Mer. If their thoughts are noble and they have no wish to steal or harm the Treasures, the door slides into the ceiling and disappears. If the Treasures sense any harmful thoughts or emotions, everyone on the landing with evil intentions immediately sustain 250 wound points. Even if they manage to survive this assault, those affected are instantly phased outside of the Lighthouse. They appear 450 feet in the air (at the top of the cliff) and plummet to the jagged

rocks below, doing 10D10 wound points to those that cannot save themselves by flight or magical means (at MP discretion).

As the door was created by the combined might of seven of the Treasures of Rule, it cannot be destroyed, nor can it be affected by any magic. The only creature in existence that may have a chance of getting through it is the Dark Dweller and then only at a great price (which should be determined by the MP).

Once the silver door has been passed through, a 20' by 20' room is entered. A beautiful canopied bed adorned with bright blue sheets rests in the eastern corner of the room, with the remainder of the room taken up by an elaborately carved wooden chest, a 6' high wardrobe with double swinging doors, a small table, and two plush, comfortable-looking chairs. The guard explains that this is Jenna's bedroom. The chest and wardrobe are filled with Jenna's clothing and personal belongings, and there is nothing of value within the room.

A second door leads to a 5' by 5' landing, with 75 feet of stairs leading upward. The stairs end at an open wooden trapdoor, which the guard bids you to enter.

Once the door is passed through, the characters enter a 25' by 25' room with Jenna standing silently in its center. After a moment's hesitation, she greets everyone and asks what she may do for them. She is civil and polite but seems to be preoccupied with something. If questioned about what is preoccupying her or if presenting her with a Treasure of Rule, she leads the characters through an opening in the eastern wall. This leads to a 35' room with seven of the Thirteen Treasures of Rule embedded in the walls. Jenna points to them and explains that they have been glowing strangely for the past few weeks. She is afraid that they are trying to warn her of impending danger. At this point she sighs and states that everyone must wait to see what this cryptic sign means. However, Jenna believes that this sign represents the strengthening of the Dark Dweller.

At this point the characters will either give Jenna one of the remaining six Treasures of Rule or be asked to go on a Treasure Quest for one. If offering a Treasure, it flies from Jenna's hands and embeds itself in one of the walls with the others.

[snip MP note and Jenna's attribute chart]

MP Note: The last six Treasures of Rule are not described herein, as the quest for the first seven should take quite a while to accomplish. However, the last six Treasures are to be described in a future product.

Janda Town

Climate: Sub-Tropical

Population: 50% human, 50% humanoid

Treasure of Rule: yes

History

Earliest records indicate that Janda Town was founded over 300 years ago as a stockade for a small group of weary explorers who were attempting to chart Mer's seas. However, after their treacherous trip, this new land seemed very appealing, and they decided to stay. The leader of the group, Kray Janda, named the entire area after himself, thus making him immortal. At first there were perhaps 50 houses made of wood, stone and clay. As time progressed, however, word spread quickly of this new boomtown, complete with a natural hidden port and miles of supposedly safe land.

At first, only a handful of pilgrims arrived, and it was not until about 100 years ago when pirates realized that Janda Town was a safe base of operations. Therefore, the town's population began to swell.

Geography

Janda Town is a bustling port city that boasts the largest contingency of bars, game houses and undesirable individuals anywhere.

Despite its population, Janda Town is a beautiful city where extravagant, multi-hued blossoms cover every inch of open ground. Its large urban area covers almost 14 miles, much of

it being built on undulating hills. Although most of Janda Town's structures are built from mortar and brick, a large number are constructed of wood and placed on stilts to catch the cooling breezes and to help keep them from flood waters.

Miles to the north of Janda Town, a large waterfall, aptly named Janda Falls, cascades off the nearby cliffs and forms Janda River which loops through the heart of the town.

Despite the large size of Janda Town, the areas to the east and west of the city are mountainous and inhospitable, and, therefore, largely unexplored. In actuality, once a mile-wide mountain range—which reaches heights of 800' to 1500'—is passed, a lush pristine paradise stretches for miles in every direction. Due to its secluded location, the land is extremely wild, and creatures of all types prey freely on all intruders.

Population

Janda Town has approximately 1000 permanent residents, the majority of which are business owners or traders. However, its transient population is large and dwarfs the city's residents. Ninety percent of the Town's transients are pirates, most of which have a gruff, mean demeanor and are almost always looking for a fight. Pickpockets abound and mercenaries of all races sit in its bars awaiting lucrative employment.

Places of Interest

Port of Janda

Janda's Port, virtually a thieves' market, is a city within itself. However, instead of permanent dwellings, all business is conducted ship-side or on the ships' decks themselves. As long as the buyer is unconcerned how the merchandise was acquired, almost any item can be purchased for a greatly reduced price. In order to determine who is selling what, there is a 50% chance that any longshoreman will know what and where a specific item can be purchased and will divulge this information for a price (at MP discretion).

[snip MP note]

There are at least 5D6 ships docked here at all times, and the port is always bustling with activity. If a lone individual or an unrecognized group is seen, there is a 75% chance that 2D6 pirates approach and try to intimidate the individual(s) into revealing what he or they are doing there. The pirates do not attack unless provoked, as they are merely patrolling the area to be sure no one is trying to bring them to justice.

If treated roughly in return, the pirates laugh and continue on their way. If the individual or group reacts in a cowardly manner, the pirates demand a tribute of 10 gold pieces in order for the coward(s) to stay in the vicinity. However, as before, if their request is refused, or if they are stood up to, the pirates laugh and continue patrolling for potential "trouble makers" and cowards.

[snip pirates' attribute chart]

Janda River

Janda River flows through Janda Town before it stretches east to west in a slow, meandering manner.

The river is heavily used by traders barging their goods to and from their outlying farmsteads. However, except for this small area, the area surrounding the river is wild and dangerous and is rarely traversed.

At its deepest point, Janda River is only 12' deep, therefore, only rafts, canoes or shallow-bottomed boats may traverse it.

For each hour spent on the river, there is a 40% chance of encountering 2D12 Trees or 1D10 Crocmen [snip].

Janda Falls

Janda Falls consists of three, mile-wide, interconnecting crescent-shaped waterfalls which cascade over a 800' cliff, before emptying onto tall jagged rocks. A thick mist covers a 350-yard area directly around the falls. Rainbows flicker and fade in a heartbeat throughout this area. The mighty roar of the water muffles all but the loudest of sounds. Although the cliffs are steep and slick and are all but unclimbable, there is a hilly rise leading to the top of the falls just 30 yards to the east.

The moment anyone sets foot on the rise, a beautiful melodic song can be heard, even above the roar of the water. Any male hearing this alluring sound immediately proceeds toward it unless a successful roll is made against his MR score.

The song emanates from a Siren that dwells at the highest point of Janda Falls [snip]. From this vantage point, the Siren is able to lure ships to their doom and also preys on land-bound individuals.

Approximately halfway up the path is a small, concealed cave which is the lair of 6 goat-headed Hubes [snip]. They dwell here in order to collect the never-ending bounty retrieved from the Siren's prey. The Hubs ignore anyone proceeding upward, preferring to let the Siren do the killing.

Once the top of the falls is reached, the path continues directly to the river's edge. There, sitting on a single boulder in the middle of the river, just before the water plummets over the falls, waits the Siren [snip]. This creature appears as an exquisite woman with flowing blond hair and eyes as clear as a baby's conscience.

Anyone entering the water with a Swimming Skill of 15 or lower, unless aided, is immediately caught in the current and carried over the falls in 1D4 minutes.

If the siren is defeated, the surviving individuals may find the Hube lair. The lair is nothing more than a natural shelter among the rocks. As soon as any survivor comes within 20' of the lair, the Hubs immediately attack and fight to the death.

If the Hubs are destroyed and the lair is searched, the bounty found therein is at MP discretion.

Zoolie's Tavern

Zoolie's Tavern is the most unique tavern in Janda Town. Its patrons swear that it is the best tavern on Mer. From the outside, it looks like a plain two-story wooden structure, and if it were not for Zoolie's name hanging on a small wooden sign over the door, it would appear as nothing more than a typical house.

Zoolie does not allow weapons of any kind into his tavern, and anyone entering the tavern must give up their weapons to Draig and Idence, the tavern's large, troll-like doormen. If a weapon is not surrendered or is smuggled in, once discovered, 1D20 tavern patrons immediately attempt to subdue the offender, throwing him into the Grudge Pit (see following for details).

The majority of Zoolie's clientele are gruff, no-nonsense pirates who are looking for trouble, and, even though Zoolie keeps his bar relatively safe, there is a 25% chance that 1D6 of his patrons take a dislike to newcomers and challenge them to a fight in the pit. All of his customers are unfriendly and tight-lipped, and only the promise of money peaks their interest.

Zoolie often works behind the bar, and there is a 10% chance that he is there at any given time [snip].

The tavern consists of two levels, with the first being a single square room measuring 80' by 80' and the second being comprised of 10 individual 15' by 15' rooms. The bar is 50' long and takes up the entire western wall of the tavern. Thirty stools are situated directly in front of it, with a long tube-like vines emanating from the ceiling and hanging down over each stool. These vines are Cohol Vines, which naturally excrete an intoxicating substance. For a single gold piece, a customer may drink at these vines for as long as he wishes. No matter the time, there are always 2D8 individuals sitting at the bar.

The center of the room is taken up by a 25' circular sunken pit, which is ringed by a 3' high railing. This is known as the Grudge Pit. When it appears that any of the tavern's patrons are about to fight, everyone in the bar (or as many individuals as it takes) grabs the combatants, throw them in the Pit and place wagers on the fight's outcome. The Pit may also be used upon request to settle a dispute, and there is a 10% chance that it is in use each time the characters enter Zoolie's palace.

The remainder of the room is taken up by round card tables and typical chairs. This area is used for personal gaming, eating and drinking or simply socializing, and no matter what the time, there are 2D12 individuals occupying the area.

Six of the ten rooms on the second floor are used for storage, three are used for private, high-stakes gambling and the remaining three are guest rooms which are used to house any guests of Zoolie's that may be in town. [Andorus's note—that adds up to 12, though, not 10...maybe they mean 6, 2, and 2? Or 4, 3, and 3? :P]

Kalinda

Climate: Tropical

Population: Varies (see following)

Treasure of Rule: no

History

Kalinda is a port city known as the home port of the largest fishing fleet on Mer, and was, in fact, founded by fishermen. The waters of this area have always been abundant in game fish, and over time, as this was discovered, more and more people began to gather here to reap the sea's harvest.

In the beginning, Kalinda was nothing more than a small, seasonal, tent village, but as fishing vessels grew larger, and merchants came directly here, it made sense to build permanent dwellings.

As trade grew, shopkeepers of all sorts began arriving to buy and sell their wares. In the early days, only a few sellers set up shop in a small open-air market near the center of town. However, as time progressed, hundreds of merchants arrived, and now Kalinda boasts one of Mer's largest open-air markets.

Geography

Kalinda is built in an orderly grid system exactly one mile square and is bordered on its northern side by the river Cols, on the east by miles of rich rain forest, and on the west by countless miles of gently rolling plains.

If one travels west for 36 miles, he reaches a 15-mile wide row of mountains before the sea is again reached. These imposing edifices reach hundreds of feet into the sky and are not easily crossed without wings. The temperature on the tops of these mountains are always well below freezing, often reaching lows of 40 below zero at night. Snow always covers their peaks, and the biting wind often gusts up to 65 miles an hour.

Merian legend states that there is a priceless treasure hidden in a frozen cavern somewhere deep within them, but this has never been proved because no one has ever had the gumption to test their skill against the savage location.

Population

Kalinda's population exudes an air of dignity at respectability, while at the same time giving the feeling that they enjoy the better things in life, such as wine and piracy. Most of its population are either fishermen, shop keepers, or traders. Greed is rampant and offers and counter offers are the main topics of conversation. Like most cities on Mer, piracy is a large problem. However, robbery is the norm, although even that is done in a civilized manner. Murders are rare, and most people do not fight unless given no other choice.

Due to its large market, Kalinda's population is open to most outsiders, no matter what their race, and willingly accommodate anyone with gold. Money talks in Kalinda, and most individuals can easily be bribed, or information extracted from them for the right price.

The only race that is discriminated against in Kalinda is Monkey Birds, which are considered to be nothing more than slaves. Kalinda law states that monkey Birds are not allowed on the streets unless leashed, and they may not enter any type of dwelling. Instead, they must be tied to a post in front of all establishments while their masters are inside.

Places of Interest

Arakna Island

Arakna Island, a dormant volcano that was thrust upward from the ocean depths eons ago, lays just six miles north of Kalinda. It is a small tropical island that measures less than two

miles in circumference and consists of nothing more than a fifty-foot beach, a volcano and dense, inhospitable rain forest.

Starting three hundred feet out from and encircling the island is a coral reef. Once the reef is reached, even the smallest boats cannot continue, as the water is only 3' deep. The only way to get to shore is to wade through the shallow, warm water. Anyone walking on the reef has a 70% chance per minute of being attacked by a school of Sea Urchins, which continue attacking until the characters are on the island or until the reef is left for deeper water [snip].

Anyone setting foot on Arakna Island for the first time has a 15% chance to notice its complete lack of typical jungle noise. Even listening carefully, the only sound to be heard is the surf laughing amongst the reef. Once the beach is left, a thick rain forest is entered, and all movement is halved. The noise made by a passing party will disturb the thousands of Bameme that inhabit the upper branches of the trees, and there is a 45% chance per turn that they drop onto anyone passing beneath them [snip].

Almost the entire middle of the island is taken up by a 400' high black volcano, and despite the lush vegetation of the island, the mountain is dull and black, with the forest abruptly ending approximately 250 yards from its base, revealing a desolate burned out hunk of ground. From this distance, the mountain appears to have been used for artillery practice, as holes of every shape and size cover almost every square inch of it.

The moment anyone sets foot upon the clearing, a high pitched screeching sound will begin to emanate from the volcano, and grows louder until the mountain's base has been reached, when it abruptly stops. As soon as the noise stops, a multitude of Giant Spiders emerge from the holes, which are actually their lairs, and stream down the mountain, reaching their intended prey in 4 minutes, to attack en masse.

It is rumored that these caves actually lead to a subterranean labyrinth of hundreds of levels stretching miles beneath the earth. However, though countless expeditions have attempted to verify this, no one has ever been able to do so [snip].

[snip MP note]

Pandawa (Monkey Bird Island)

Climate: Tropical

Population: 75% Monkey Bird, 25% human

Treasure of Rule: yes

History

The island continent of Pandawa has always been the home to thousands of Monkey Birds, and legend has it that their race was born from Pandawa itself.

Monkey Birds have peacefully existed here for hundreds of years, evolving and living harmoniously with nature. Then, slightly under 200 years ago, an unknown pirate ship landed here for resupplying. In addition to supplies, its captain caught a dozen Monkey Birds to use as free labor. These creatures exceeded his wildest hopes, for once they were broken, they made excellent servants and slaves. As word spread of these new slaves, slavers from throughout Mer descended upon Pandawa, until a savers' city was created.

At first, Pandawa was only a collection of wooden huts, housing the hundreds of slavers that came into the area. However, as time progressed, those individuals that made a fortune in slaving built grand houses for themselves to occupy when in Pandawa. It is said that these houses are the grandest on Mer as no expense was spared in their building.

Geography

Pandawa resembles a lopsided figure eight, with its residential area on the east and its massive slave market on the west. The area around Pandawa is covered with primeval fern gullies, waterfalls and a plethora of plant species. Lush beaches surround its shores, and a single mountain range divides the island from north to south.

Despite the splendid town, Pandawa is vastly uncharted and unexplored.

Population

Pandawa has under two hundred full-time residents, all of whom are human. These are the shop keepers, traders and barkeepers who run a thriving business supplying the slavers with their wares. Although its population is small, hundreds of slave buyers, their crews and the slavers themselves give Pandawa the appearance of a large bustling city. Anyone who is an apparent outsider, or who seems out of place, has an 85% chance of being mistreated verbally, and if he appears weak (at MP discretion), is captured and sold as a slave.

Only money and strength impress Pandawans, and they see all others as inferiors.

Monkey Birds

Long before civilizations flourished, there existed on Pandawa a culture rich and complex in its customs and life styles. For more than ten thousand years before any Merian visited the shores of Pandawa, Monkey Birds occupied this land.

Monkey Birds are very superstitious and often link local landmarks with their sacred beliefs. They considered many unique geological locations to be sacred sites, and they consider themselves and the land as inseverable.

Monkey Birds live in large communities of one hundred or more individuals. Their economy is based on the hunting activities of their males and of the fishing and gathering of the women. They take only what is needed to feed themselves, therefore keeping in step with their environment.

Tribal elders, who possess specialized knowledge of the community and the land, are given the responsibility of leading the community. Although there are male elders, all of the special ceremonies are conducted by women, and the entire ruling class is female.

There may be a number of elders, but only one female may hold the rank of Queen. Even though she often consults with the elders, her word is law and is always obeyed. She is as a living deity to her people, and they hold her in extremely high regard.

Queens rule for life, and it is only when another queen egg is hatched that she realizes her death is near. Once every 50 to 75 years, a large golden egg is laid by a tribe member, with the golden color signifying that a new queen is to be born. The incubation period for a queen's egg is unusually long, sometimes taking up to eight years. For some reason, the current queen weakens as the egg matures and dies just after its hatching. Due to the importance of this egg, and its long incubation period, it is hidden securely away in the miles of caverns beneath Royal Mountain in the *Cavern of the Egg* (see *Cavern of the Egg* in the following section).

Places of Interest

Slave market

Pandawa's Slave Market is called Lawoola, or "hell on earth" by the Monkey Birds that are held there, as it is a place of extreme cruelty, where merciless floggings, dunkings, and acts of mutilations are common place.

The Slave Market is divided into three separate sections, the waiting area, the bidding area and the departure area. The waiting area is covered with hundreds of bamboo cages stacked three high. Although many cages are empty, there are always 5D12 Monkey Birds imprisoned here. The cages are small and cramped, and their occupants have to hunch painfully while awaiting sale. There are always 2D8 slaver guards patrolling the area amongst the cages, both tormenting and guarding the pitiful creatures. For every 10 minutes that an individual remains in the area, there is a 75% chance that the slaver guards approach the individual, bully and provoke him and demand an explanation for his presence in the area. Although they are tough talkers, the slaver guards are used to dealing with helpless Monkey Birds, and if threatened, the slavers quickly withdraw. However, they return within 1D6 minutes with an additional 2D10 slaver guards that attack on sight.

[snip slaver guards' attribute chart]

Although the cages are poorly made and can easily be broken by a healthy individual, the Monkey Birds are near starvation and are much too weak to even consider escape. Even if freed by outside means, they are too weak to effectively escape and simply remain near their cages until they are recaptured.

If anyone attempts to free a captive, 2D20 slavers appear in 1D4 minutes and immediately attack.

From this area, the Monkey Birds are escorted to the bidding section by twelve heavily armed slavers. This area consists of a large 50' by 50' raised platform where each day at 10 AM, 12 PM and 2 PM the Monkey Birds are bid on. Each auction attracts 1D100 individuals of all races. When the bidding ends, the Monkey Birds are brought to the third section of the Slavers' Market to await their departure to the docks. There are no guards patrolling the departure area. However, any interference brings the wrath of the entire crowd of bidders down on the wrong doers. [snip]

The departing area closely resembles the first, consisting of nothing more than hundreds of caged Monkey Birds. However, now that they have been sold, they have been given larger quantities of food and water in an effort to strengthen them for their new employers. Unlike the captives of the first section, if freed, they immediately attempt to fly away and escape, but they fight to the death if necessary. As before, 2D20 heavily armed guards appear the moment a Monkey Bird is released.

There are always at least 1D12 slaver guards patrolling this area, and there is a 75% chance that they are encountered for each 10 minute period an individual is present. If this occurs, the slaver guards immediately detain him for questioning. Despite their apparent concern, they are easily bribed and quickly release anyone for 10 gold pieces. If a bribe is not offered, or if their questions are not answered satisfactorily, they attempt to take him into custody. If the slaver guards meet resistance, they call for backup, and an additional 1D20 slaver guards and an ecomancer captain arrive within 1D4 minutes. The ecomancer captain immediately calls a Sleep spell on the individual, then, all of the slavers rush in to subdue him. If this does not work, the MP should figure out the next course of action that is taken.

Once subdued, the individual is chained to a large hitching post near the auction platform and sold as an added attraction.

[snip MP note]

[snip ecomancer captain's attribute chart]

Cavern of the Egg

The egg of the yet unhatched queen is one of the most revered treasures in the entire Monkey Bird community, and when laid, is immediately taken deep within the miles of catacombs within Royal Mountain, located at the center of the island.

The entrance to the caverns is a 6' by 6' cave located near the top of the west side of the mountain, which is so heavily camouflaged that unless its exact location is known, there is only a 5% chance per hour that it can be found.

Once the cave is located and entered, only a small rubble-filled passageway leads downward, and it must be traversed single file. After approximately 250 feet the passage opens into a cavern almost one hundred yards in diameter, with a seemingly endless number of passages branching out of it. The sound of dripping water echoes throughout the chamber, and huge stalagmites grow from the floor like mighty warriors eternally guarding their castle of stone.

There are 101 different passageways leading out of this chamber, with only one of them leading to the Egg Chamber. Passages 1-51 and 53-101 lead directly to an indecipherable maze of corridors within the heart of the mountain, and there is a 95% chance that anyone entering these passages become hopelessly lost.

Only passage 52 leads to the Egg Chamber. This passage continues straight for over three hundred yards, before it gradually begins to descend into the bowels of the earth. After another eighty yards the passage opens into a seventy-five foot wide cavern notable for its smooth walls and complete lack of stalagmites and stalactites. Weapons and Armor in various states of decay line the right hand wall, and another passageway is visible at the other end of the cavern. It is apparent that no one has passed this way in years.

This cavern is actually a living entity. Electrical impulses travel through a large concentration of iron ore closely resembling computer circuitry, thus providing the entity with a brain. This brain has complete control of the cavern and can channel electricity in such a way

that it is able to turn its walls into powerful electromagnets. During the first minute that anyone enters the cavern, a slight tugging is felt on all metal objects. During the second minute there, those metallic objects not securely attached to an individual are pulled off and fly to the nearest wall where they remain. After the third minute, anyone with a Strength of 15 or less loses all metal hand-held items, and the movement of anyone in metal armor is halved. During the fourth minute, the power peaks, and characters in metal armor are pulled from their feet and dragged 10' per second toward the nearest wall. However, a character should be allowed to remove himself from his armor in 1D20 minutes.

Once all the characters have left the cavern, the metal items that stuck to the wall fell to the floor. The whole process starts over again if anyone enters the cavern with a metal item.

The second passage leads downward, and after just a few yards, a cold, gusty wind springs up, biting into the skin and chilling everyone to the bone. The air is heavily laden with moisture, and in a matter of seconds everyone is soaked to the skin. A fast moving stream flows along the floor, with the water quickly disappearing into the many cracks and crevices in the cavern floor. The stream continues to follow the passage, and it grows deeper as it progresses. After another fifty yards of this, the passage abruptly ends at a dark, slow moving river, approximately 30' wide and of unknown depth. The passageway can be seen continuing on the far side of the river.

It should not be difficult to determine that the river is only five feet deep. However, it is not apparent that there is a strong undertow that can easily sweep someone off of their feet. Anyone entering the river without proper precautions—tying himself down, etc.—has a 90% chance of being swept away. Unaffected individuals have 30 seconds to affect a rescue or the unfortunate character disappears underwater and remains so for 1D6 minutes. If he survives, he finds himself emerging in the sea on the island's west coast.

Once the river is crossed, the passage continues for almost a mile, with the air becoming noticeably warmer and less humid. The passage opens into a 35' circular man-made room, lit by rows of flickering torches. Off to the right is a large, plush-looking nest made of straw, brightly colored flowers and earth, with a three-foot golden egg resting delicately in it.

As soon as this chamber is entered, three exceptionally strong-looking Monkey Birds appear and order the trespassers to immediately leave. If the characters do not comply, the Monkey Birds attack and fight to the death to protect the egg.

[snip monkey bird guards' attribute chart]

If the guards are killed, the egg is free for the taking. However, as soon as it is removed from its nest, an alarm goes off in the Monkey Bird Community, and 3D20 warriors immediately rush to the egg chamber, arriving in 1D6 minutes.

If the egg is stolen, the Monkey Bird community does everything in its power to safely get it back. Whatever happens, the thief is hunted by the Monkey Birds for life and is immediately attacked on sight no matter where the thief is or what he is doing.

Monkey Bird City

The island of Pandawa is the only known location where there is a community of over two thousand Monkey Birds. Monkey Bird City is located on a thickly wooded valley surrounded on all sides by 800', treacherous mountains. The city is built into the trees themselves, and, due to the heavy cover of the tree tops, the city is not visible from the air.

Each tree holds from two to four wooden structures, which are under ten feet in diameter, and, although they are sturdy and well built, appear to be nothing more than large nests with dome shaped roofs.

Monkey Bird City is over a mile in circumference and has a population of twenty-three hundred. Although most Monkey Birds choose to fly from location to location, the entire city is connected by a vast series of tunnel vines, which are large hollow vines that grow up to eight feet in diameter. These vines offer protection from the weather and predators and allow access to all points of the City.

If the City is approached by an unknown individual, between 1D12 Monkey Bird Warriors fly down to question them.

[snip monkey bird city guards' attribute chart]

If the unknown individuals are non-threatening, the Monkey Birds quickly befriend them and welcome them into their city. If deemed trustworthy, they introduce the outsiders to their queen.

The Queen greets them in a friendly manner, and like her warriors, she willingly befriends all honest individuals. After becoming acquainted, she asks her visitors to help free a number of captured Monkey Birds that are being held in the Slave Market at Pandawa City. She also offers the characters any equipment that they may need to accomplish the task. However, she does not risk sending Monkey Birds with the party for fear that they too will be captured and sold as slaves.

[snip MP note]

If this is agreed to, and the mission is successful, the Monkey Bird Queen rewards her helpers with the sixth Treasure of Rule.

[snip MP note]

The fifth Treasure of Rule [Andorus's note: fifth or sixth? And in the series it's the *second* Treasure, so...this is odd] is a single stone set in the Queen's crown, which, due to its magical nature, prevents itself from being found by mystical means.

From this point on, the visitors are honored guests in the Monkey Bird community and are given any aid that is needed.

[snip Monkey Bird Queen attribute chart]

Despite being a very old Monkey Bird, the Queen has an aura about her that befits one of royalty. She is highly intelligent and places the safety of her community above all else.

Although when first met she appears aloof, she is merely determining her guests' intentions and is trying to judge their character. Through years of dealing with individuals and meting out justice, the Queen is a great judge of character, and there is a 85% chance that she is able to detect any falsehood that she is told. If the Queen believes that she is being lied to, she immediately summons 1D10 Monkey Bird Warriors and orders them to remove the offending individual(s).

Although tolerant of all races, the Queen has an intense hatred for Pandawa and its population. If given the chance, she would willingly destroy the city and its entire population. If she believes that anyone has the power to accomplish this, or to free her enslaved people, she attempts to enlist them for her cause.

The queen willingly aids anyone she befriends, but she only gives the Treasure of Rule to those individuals who have done something meritorious for the Monkey Bird Community—such as freeing slaves from Pandawa.

Floating Island of Undar

Climate: (see following)

Population: 2 Game Players, & Creatures

Treasure of Rule: no

History

In reality, this is not a natural land mass at all. It was created as a personal playground for two humanoid creatures that refer to themselves as Game Players.

For years, these creatures thrived on gambling and wagered on every possible event. As time progressed, they grew bored with every day events and longed for a game so exciting that they would never grow tired of it. Thus, The Game was born.

Unfortunately, although they loved The Game, no one was willing to play it for them. Therefore, they constructed a special hidden land where their "players" had no choice but to play The Game. Thus, the island of Undar was made.

At first, ships freely stopped at this newly created land mass, not recognizing it for what it truly was. However, as time passed, and word of the horrible game spread, ships steered far and wide of Undar, and again, the Game Players were left without players.

To solve this problem, they used their great magical abilities to encase the entire island with a large air bubble and created a device which allowed it to submerge and resurface at will. Now, Undar travels freely and may appear anywhere at any given time.

[snip MP note]

Geography

Undar is perhaps the most interesting land mass on Mer, for it is located underwater much of the time. It is a small island, measuring less than three miles in diameter, but it has every topological feature possible. Rain forests flow easily into glacial regions, and desert terrain quickly dissolves into lush grasslands. Rivers and small ponds dot the landscape, and tall buttes [buttes?] are located throughout. The entire island is surrounded by tall, hundred foot rock spires that stretch upward until they end in sharp, jagged points.

The island remains submerged until a ship passes over it. At this point, there is an 85% chance that large columns of stone erupt directly under it, and lift the entire ship sixty feet into the air. As soon as this occurs, another 150' rock column rises upward, and the Game Players appear.

Once the Game Players appear, they offer the ship's crew a choice. They can either be dropped from sixty feet, effectively destroying their ship, or they can play The Game for their freedom! If their offer is refused, the column of rock supporting the ship quickly retracts, and the ship plummets to the ocean, sustaining 5D10 points of hull damage. From this point on, there is a 60% chance per round that a jagged column of rock bursts upward through the ship, causing 1D20 points of hull damage. This occurs until the ship is sunk or has traveled outside of the island's perimeter.

Population

There are only two individuals on Undar, the Game Players, both of whom are powerful Ecomancers. All of the other inhabitants of the island are creatures that are kept for use in The Game.

Once The Game has started, the Game Players place large wagers on how long it will take their captives to reach freedom, how many creatures they will kill and any other part of The Game upon which they can wager.

The Game

Any number of players may participate in The Game, with anyone agreeing to play being teleported to the west end of Undar. [snip]

The rules of The Game are simple, being nothing more than having its players successfully navigating their way from one side of Undar to the other. Of course, they have to traverse quicksand, rapids, waterfalls, pits, fluorescent geysers, and a multitude of other natural hazards. In addition to this, they must test their fighting ability against the dreaded denizens of Undar.

Although the Game Players are fair judges, they created The Game so the odds are with them. Therefore, any magical items or weapons that the characters possess may not be used. Also, movement spells do not work on Undar.

The island (playing area) is not consistent, and not only changes each time it is visited but also every ten minutes. Therefore, when The Game is in session, the MP should roll 2D8 and consult the following chart to determine what transpires next. The Game is over when the players are dead or they have reached the end of the playing area.

Once everything has been explored in an area, and the creatures have been destroyed, simply roll the 2D8 again to see what the players encounter next.

Although the terrain is randomly chosen, all of the creatures encountered by the players should remain with them until the creatures or the players have been killed.

[snip]

Encounter Chart

The number given in front of the following descriptions are the number rolled on 2D8.

2. Pit

A hidden trapdoor opens beneath the characters causing them to slide down a slick tunnel for 150' before dropping them into the middle of a muck-filled lake 20' deep and 30 yards wide. Anyone falling sustains 1D12 wound points from the fall, and anyone wearing metal armor or non-magical armor over class C must remove it within 3 minutes or drown. Just as the characters reach the shore, two Hube appear from underwater directly behind them and attack [snip].

3. Open, level grassland

No dangers encountered.

4. Geyser Erupts

A 40' column of bright, multicolored, scalding water vents upward causing everyone within a 50' radius to sustain 3D12 wound points.

5. Quicksand

A patch of solid-looking ground is nothing more than a layer of plants over a treacherous 25' deep mud pit. Anyone caught in the mud sink 2' per minutes until he is completely submerged. Anyone caught in this quicksand must be aided by outside means or there is no escape.

6. Beautiful Pond

The land quickly changes into a flowery glade with a 10' wide shallow pond in its center. The water is crystal clear and calm, and there is no danger in sight. However, the water in the pond is a Self Love potion, and there is a 55% chance that anyone within the area sees their reflection. If this occurs, a roll against his MR score must be immediately rolled, with failure resulting in the character falling madly in love with his reflection and refusing to leave. Once this happens, only a Remove Curse spell is able to free the afflicted individual from the enchantment. If force is used to remove the afflicted individual, he becomes violent and fights to remain near the pond.

7. Floating Skull

Amongst a group of flowering shrubs is a single skull that is floating 6' off the ground. If anyone comes within 10' of it, a neck, torso and legs quickly grow from the head, and a whole skeleton appears and immediately attacks. If no one approaches the skull, it yells for someone to come near and bury it so that it may rest in peace. This is a lie, and it immediately attacks when anyone comes within range.

The skull cannot be destroyed and appears back in its original location as soon as the body is destroyed. Once back, it may animate again as soon as anyone steps within 10' of it. [snip floating skull's attribute chart]

8. The Peak

The terrain turns rocky and treacherous, and the only safe route is a single, 2' wide path leading up a steep hillside, with the walk up being uneventful. However, as soon as its peak is reached, two Gaziers are found blocking the path downward, and the players may not continue until the creatures are defeated [snip].

9. Well

A single brick well, no more than 3' in height and 4' in diameter, rests directly among an outcropping of trees. If the well is examined, a spiral slide leading into the darkness is noticed. The blackness is impenetrable. Anything dropped into the well slides quickly out of sight after the first few seconds.

If an individual slides down, there is a 50% that he appears back where he started The Game, and therefore, must start over.

10. The Bridge

The land abruptly ends at the base of a 200' chasm with a narrow wooden bridge across it. The bridge is supported by heavy chains that are set in marble columns, two on either side of the chasm. Standing at the far end of the bridge is an Et, with its shark head in constant control of its body [snip]. The instant anyone attempts to cross the bridge, the Et rushes to impede their bridge crossing and immediately attacks. Once the Et is destroyed, the bridge may be easily and safely crossed.

11. Grasslands

The ground has become lush and rich with 2' to 3' high grass. A gentle breeze carries the fragrance of thousands of wildflowers, and a more beautiful area could not be imagined. However, the players are attacked by 4 Rim [snip].

12. Waterfall

A narrow rocky gorge leads directly to an 8' wide waterfall with a 1' wide crevice leading to apparent safety just behind it. The water from the falls forms a small pool at the crevice's mouth, then flows quickly downward and out of sight into numerous holes at its base. There is no way out of this gorge except through the crevice, and there is no way to avoid getting drenched by the water when the crevice is entered. Anyone coming in contact with the water must immediately roll against his MR or immediately begins to disrobe, bath and sing loudly, and continues to do so until a Remove Curse spell is cast on him. Touching or drinking the water does not cause harm, only complete immersion (walking under it) causes its effects to be felt.

For each minute that there is singing, there is an 85% chance that 1D4 creatures of the MP's choice appear and attack every one present.

13. Message in a Bottle

The players come across a swiftly moving, 4' wide stream with a corked bottle floating in the middle of it. Although the water's momentum is fast, the bottle remains stationary as the water rushes by it. The stream is not deep and can easily be crossed. However, if anyone tries to retrieve the bottle, it floats downstream just slightly out of his reach, and only a roll equal to or lower than his DX score allows him to grab the bottle. The bottle is normal in all aspects, and it is apparent that there is a rolled up piece of parchment in it. It opens easily, and, if read, the note states:

DANGER! THIS NOTE IS THE PROPERTY OF AGUA THE WATER ENTITY. PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH OR OPEN THIS BOTTLE!

As soon as the note is read, the water begins to form into a 14' tall Water Entity, in the shape of a turbulent wave. It then crashes over and attacks the person who opened the bottle [snip].

14. Glacier

The air suddenly becomes bitter cold and the ground under foot turns to solid ice. The wide wails mournfully, and everyone is pelted by thousands of tiny, stinging ice pellets. Due to conditions, visibility is halved, and anyone who engages in melee does so at a -20 on his AV. As soon as the characters enter this area, they are attacked by 2D6 missile-throwing Coldlings [snip].

15. Heavy Jungle

The players find themselves in the middle of an almost impassible jungle. Movement is halved and they must cut their own path to proceed forward. It takes at least 30 minutes to cut through this terrain.

For each 10 minutes of travel, there is an 85% chance that two Beast Bushes attack the characters, and due to the heavy foliage, there is a 90% chance that the Beast Bushes are not noticed until it is too late [snip].

16. Desert

The ground is dry and barren, and only an occasional tumbleweed shows that there was any life here at all. The sun beats down mercilessly, and everyone is immediately covered with sweat. Everything is quiet for 20 minutes. However, immediately after that, two Spiwak, apparently coming out of nowhere, appear and attack [snip].

Winning/Losing the Game

All winners are immediately teleported back to their ship, where the Game Players await their arrival.

The Game Player who bet on the players seems ecstatic and beams broadly as he collects his winnings from his counterpart. The loser is quiet and sullen and only speaks in mumbles.

Once the money is exchanged, they wish the players a fair adieu, at which time the columns entrapping their ship(s) slowly lower, and the island sinks from sight.

Any game participant killed while participating in The Game is immediately teleported back to his ship, and no mention of him is made o the contestants until The Game is completed. At this time, the Game Players graciously offer to restore him to life, with the price for this service being him playing another round of The Game—or other price at MP discretion.

[snip Game Players' attribute chart]

Banjamaar

Climate: tropical

Population: Banjamaarians

Treasure of Rule: no

History

Unknown

Boulder Ring

Banjamaar is a remote island that is encircled by a wall of large flying boulders. This ring of boulders stretches from one hundred yards under water to over three miles above the surface of the water. These rocks constantly circle the island at speeds of over 500 miles an hour, effectively destroying anything that they hit. Only the use of magic or the ability to breathe underwater enables one to get through this ring of death. For example, teleporting directly onto the island or casting a Water Breathing spell in order to swim below the rocks are just two methods that allow a character to circumvent the boulders.

The Vision

The moment the ring of boulders is successfully navigated, the spectral image of King Primus appears before all present. He warns that Mer is in great peril and only that the ringing of the "great bell" can save the planet. Once these words are spoken, the image fades away and all returns to normal.

In reality, Primus has nothing to do with this vision. It was caused by the Dark Dweller in an effort to fool the characters into freeing a Kiroptus that was trapped by the magic of the Banjamaarians. (See *The Bell Chamber* in the following section for more information.)

Geography

The shore of Banjamaar appears as a rugged, barren coastline, with 20' waves pounding thunderously off of mile-high cliffs. At this point, it quickly becomes apparent that the only place to dock on this island is along the 8 mile stretch of beach in front of Banjamaar City.

The northern section of the island is tropical in nature, with temperatures averaging well over eighty degrees. It is here that the last remaining Banjamaarian city is located. The city stretches eight miles from east to west and two miles to the north and south, with the long section bordering the sea. Its dwellings consist mainly of hundreds of igloo-shaped bamboo huts, with walls made of mud and roofs made from the abundant palms that cover the area.

Although the northern section of the island is warm, the location of Banjamaar and the influence of Mer's two moons have wreaked havoc with the rest of Banjamaar's weather.

The southern part of the island is covered with snow, and temperatures often dip well below freezing once night falls. Glacial activity is common, and there is always at least 1' of snow covering the area.

The eastern and western parts of the island are barren wastelands, with temperatures often exceeding 115 degrees Fahrenheit at mid-day. The entire area is covered with coarse black sand, and the only evident plant life is sage brush and an occasional cactus. Water is nowhere to be found, and anyone traveling through this area must bring a supply or risk death by dehydration.

Population

The only populated area is the city of Banjamaar, on the island's northern shore. At one time, thousands of Banjamaarians occupied this city. However, they are now a dying race, and it

is believed that the remaining 300 Banjamaarians living here are the last of their kind. Being a shy, unobtrusive people, anyone entering the city is viewed with suspicion and avoided if at all possible. Although the city is large, its inhabitants live only in the southern most section, and it is here that all activity takes place. The rest of the city is nothing more than a ghost town.

Anyone remaining in the city for more than an hour finds himself being openly followed by 2D8 members of the Banjamaarian militia. They do not interfere with the characters in any way and withdraw if confronted. However, once the characters resume moving, the militia reappears and follows along until the characters leave the city.

[snip Banjamaarian Militia attribute chart]

Places of Interest

The Bell Chamber

Located in the exact center of town is a 50' high bell-shaped building, with a single, open-arched doorway in the center of its western wall. It is apparent that the Banjamaarians avoid this structure, although if asked, no one says why. If an outsider attempts to enter the structure, Banjamaarians immediately leave the area, and the militia that have been shadowing the characters orders the entering character to stop. If obeyed, the militia explains that a horrible creature is trapped within a great bell, located in the structure, and no one is allowed to enter it for fear of releasing the evil beast. If questioned, the militia explains that if the bell is rung, the horrible beast will be freed. Even if the guards are told of the vision of Primus, they stand firm and do not allow access to the bell.

If the characters ignore the warning, the militia immediately attacks, fighting to the death. If this occurs, anywhere within 10' of the bell, there is an 80% chance that a weapon accidentally strikes it, causing a deep, hollow ringing to sound.

If all of the guards are killed and the structure entered, only a single golden gong is seen situated directly in the middle of the chamber. If it is struck, the same hollow ringing occurs.

No matter how it is struck, the sound emanates for 15 seconds before dying in the wind. The moment the sound stops, the features of a huge Kiroptus begins to form along the bell [snip]. Just seconds later, the creature becomes three-dimensional and comes to life. Immediately upon forming, the Kiroptus places itself between the gong and everyone else present, for if the gong is rung again within 1 minute, the magic of the bell sucks the creature back into its intra-dimensional prison.

If the gong is not rung during this time, the bell begins to dissolve and is completely gone within 5 minutes. If this occurs, the Kiroptus lets out a triumphant yell of freedom and attempts to return to its master. From this time on, the Dark Dweller knows who freed its pet, the Kiroptus, and harasses that person (the degree of harassment is at MP discretion).

[snip Treasure Quest; already covered in the series itself]