

THE CLIFFS QUEEN'S COURT



BEASTS & BARBARIANS HEROIC TALE #1:

THE CLIFFS QUEEN'S COURT

A SWORD AND SORCERY SAVAGE WORLDS HEROIC TALE FOR BEGINNING
SEASONED CHARACTERS.

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INTRODUCTION

THE HEROES were crossing the Cairnlands as part of a caravan, either working as hired guards, or as passengers traveling from the Marqueses to Valkheim. This morning the caravan was ambushed by a band of Cairnlander marauders, and only the heroes escaped.

To make matters worse, during their escape, they killed the marauders' chief's son! The heroes are presently fleeing on horseback, with the marauder band in close pursuit. The chase has lasted several hours, and their horses are exhausted—if the heroes don't find refuge soon, they are almost certainly doomed...

SEA OF FOG

The heroes long ago left any recognizable trails, attempting to lose their pursuers in the wilderness along the shore of the Drowned King Sea. A thick sea fog has risen up, and covers the ground up to the horses' fetlocks. This gives the heroes the eerie illusion of racing across a sea of fog—the ground is totally hidden from sight.

A group of marauders have pulled ahead of their comrades, and emboldened, spur their mounts in an attempt



to catch the heroes. Run this using the Chase Rules in *Savage Worlds*. The Range Increments are 5" and the two groups are 20" apart at the start of the chase. Obstacles are Sparse, and include things like rabbit burrows, and small bushes concealed in the fog. Finally, the heroes' horses are Exhausted (see Fatigue in *Savage Worlds*) and suffer a -2 to Trait rolls. The marauders' horses are Fatigued and suffer a -1 to Trait rolls.

At the start of the fourth round of the chase, the leading hero may make a Notice roll. Success allows him to spot a cliff edge rapidly approaching, and he can warn his comrades, and pull up in time. Failure on the Notice roll causes the horse to spot the danger and balk, possibly throwing its rider. If the heroes fail a Riding roll, he is thrown for 2d6 damage. With their escape blocked, the heroes must face their pursuers. Luckily the chase may have split the marauders up, making them somewhat easier to deal with.

(M) Cairnlander Marauders (2 per hero).

THE CLIFF'S DOOR

Once the leading group of marauders has been dealt with, the heroes have a few moments to catch their breath before deciding their next move. This allows the efforts of the day to catch up with them with a vengeance. Have each hero attempt to succeed on a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue.

Through the fog the heroes can hear the drumming of hooves, as an overwhelming mob of marauders race towards them. Their only hope of escape is down the cliff face. Heroes who peer over the edge spy a narrow, dangerous rough-hewn stairway, which disappears into the fog.

The stair descends for several hundred feet, until eventually it ends at an ancient, rusty, algae-covered door set into the rockface. A successful Notice roll uncovers strange runes beneath the rust, and detritus. Written in the old Cairn language, these runes translate as "Beware things unaged! Beware the gifts not refused".

HONORED GUESTS



The door opens into a dark, damp, kelp-covered tunnel, leading deeper into the cliff. After a few minutes of traveling strange ethereal harp music and indistinct talking and laughing is heard ahead. As the heroes progress further they become aware of a light ahead, which appears to be cast by torch or brazier, but also has the quality of light, refracted through water. Eventually the cavern opens up

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into a spectacularly beautiful grotto. Read, or paraphrase the following:

Before you is a cavern rivaling any palace. The stone floor is polished, and exquisite coral columns appear to support the roof. Well made tapestries cover the walls, and are obviously made by many different hands and styles. They do however all depict aquatic scenes. Burning braziers masked by light-distorting seaweed drapes, warms the chamber.

You have interrupted a feast. Seated upon cushions around a large stone table are dark skinned, beautiful, strangely ephemeral women dressed in revealing silks. Human maidens, dressed in green serve them, many are Cairnlanders, but others from other further flung lands are also present. Other dark skinned women are dancing to music played on a coral harp by a tall woman who's beauty dwarves all others in the room.

When the heroes make their presence known, the playing, and the dancing comes to a sudden, chaotic halt as everyone stares at the heroes, startled. Quickly, the harp player visibly collects her wits and greets them, introducing herself as Seablossom, Queen of the Kingdom Under The Cliff, asks them their names, and invites them to eat and drink. She does everything possible to make them feel welcome and too soothe their worries.

If the heroes raise worries about the Cairnlander Marauders, Seablossom assures them the high tide will cover the tunnel entrance they used until dawn, she is evasive on all other questions claiming there will be plenty of time to talk once the heroes are rested and refreshed.

THE FEAST

Cushions are brought for the heroes, and space is made at the stone table. The serving maids place coral plates heaped with strange and exotic seafood delicacies, alongside cups of amber wine with a slightly salty taste.

Each male hero is seated between two of the dark skinned beauties, and the male hero with the highest Charisma is placed near the head of the table next to Seablossom herself. Female heroes find themselves placed at the far end of the table and all but ignored. If the heroes reject the offered seating, and insist on sitting all together, Seablossom and her court will be offended by the refusal, and treat them with icy indifference for the rest of the feast.

During the course of the feast the male heroes enjoy the attentions of the courtesans seated either side of him. They hand feed him choice treats from their plates, and

frequently touch the heroes, their caresses straying very close to intimate areas. As the feast continues they start to openly flirt with the hero, competing with one another for his attention. Whether the hero responds to this attention or not has no mechanical effect upon the rest of the scenario. However, a less than polite rebuttal of the attention earns them a cold stare, and they are ignored for the rest of the festivities.

The food may be strange, and exotic to the heroes, but it proves to be not only delicious, but also must be enchanted. Each hero may remove either a Wound or a level of Fatigue.

During the meal, have the heroes make a Notice roll. The hero who succeeds with the highest score becomes aware of a Cairnlander serving maid trying to discreetly attract their attention. Seeing her success she approaches the hero using the excuse of refilling his wine glass, or empty plate to lean in close and whisper:

"You are in danger! Don't drink or eat anything more!"

Unfortunately, before she can be questioned further, she is shooed away by one of Seablossom's courtesans. The hero can try and alert his companions, but should do so stealthily. Those alerted may also want to question the serving girl, but this will prove to be almost impossible unless one of them claims to need to answer a call of nature. Seablossom looks disgusted at the thought of such a base act, but orders one of the serving girls to show the hero to a nearby alcove. Fortunately, it is the same girl who approached the hero. If the heroes are discovered in their plotting—or just flat out accuse Seablossom of trying to poison them—the Cliff Queen at the very least starts the next part of the celebration, the Dance.

Once she is away from Seablossom, and her courtesans, the serving maid is able to talk, albeit hurriedly. They only have a few minutes before their absence will become suspicious. The girl reveals her name is Winna — read or paraphrase the following depending on the questions the hero asks:

"You are all in terrible danger! The queen and the others are not what they appear to be. They are witches who feed upon the flesh of men to preserve their youth and beauty. If you stay here you will all be dead before dawn and your women will be enslaved, just as I was. The only way out is another exit above the tide line, but it is barred by a locked gate which is opened by a key which hangs around the queen's neck. If you can get that, there is a chance of escaping to freedom!"

Only the hero being personally attended by Seablossom has a chance to steal the carved coral key, hanging on a seaweed cord around her neck. To do so they are going to have to allow her to play her seductive games with them,

THE DANCE

hoping an opportunity will present itself to take the key undetected.

Once the hero initiates the attempt, he must make alternating Persuasion and Stealth rolls, opposed by the queen's Notice. Each success grants the hero a token—two with a raise. He only has five rounds to gather five or more tokens, which signifies the key has been stolen unnoticed. If he fails to gather enough tokens in the allotted time, Seablossom halts proceedings to initiate the Dance. If he rolls a critical failure, the queen realizes what he is attempting to do and attacks him.

THE DANCE



At some point—either decided by the heroes' actions, or the Game Masters' whim—Seablossom stops what she is doing and loudly calls for everyone's attention. Read or paraphrase the following:

“The night is young, and our company is youthful and vigorous! It is time for us to dance! Play!”

At Seablossom's words the coral harp she was playing earlier starts to produce beautiful and rhythmic music, even though no one is playing it. Seablossom, and many of the courtesans start to sway, adding to the music with finger cymbals. Other courtesans leap to their feet with gleeful

shouts. Some descend upon the heroes—even the women—and attempt to pull them to their feet, and into the dance.

Ask the players if they are going to join in, those who refuse discover they are being compelled magically to dance. They must succeed at a Spirit roll with a -2 penalty if they ate the feast's food, and a further -2 penalty if they drank the wine. Failure means they are forced to dance.

Initially the dance may seem amusing, but it soon becomes frenzied and exhausting. Every fifteen minutes each dancing hero must succeed at a Vigor roll—the penalties from eating and drinking are halved—or suffer a level of Fatigue. Only if they succeed with a raise are they able to cease dancing. Anyone who dies from exhaustion rapidly ages and decays.

The heroes who stop dancing are attacked by Seablossom and two of the courtesans, with razor sharp claws. If the harp is destroyed, the compulsion to dance ends—it has an Toughness of 7. Dancing heroes can still use Intimidation and Trick attacks, though they suffer a -4 penalty due to not being in control of their bodies.

(M) (WC) Seablossom

(M) Seablossom's Courtesan (2 per hero +1)

ESCAPE THROUGH THE PALACE

Once Seablossom and her evil coven are dealt with, and they have recovered the coral key, Winna can lead them out of the palace through the other exit.

They must hurry, because a few moments after Seablossom's death the palace starts to crumble!

“Come on!” Winna shouts “We must leave this place before it is too late!”

Handle this situation as a chase. The heroes start at Medium distance and each Range Increment equates to 5” on the tabletop. Consider Winna to be “attached” to the character she spoke before.

Every 10” advanced from the heroes in the chase (2 Range Increments), they cross a particular location. Consider every location to be 10” long for chase purposes.

Dark Corridor: Dark Light Conditions, which inflict a -2 on all rolls.

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Slippery Stairs: Anyone attempting to climb these stairs must succeed on an Agility roll or have their Pace halved (round down). Rolling 1 on the Trait dice, regardless of the Wild Die, slips and falls, suffering 2d6 damage. They do advance 3" however.

Treasure Room: Piles of gold, jewels and gems lie in this room—loot from earlier victims. A hero may forgo his movement and gather 300 Moons in gold and treasure (15 lbs). However doing so can encumber him. Greedy heroes may have to succeed at a Spirit roll before being able to move on.

Chamber of Specters: The souls of past victims have collected in this room and shriek their hat at any who pass through. Each hero must make a Guts (-1) roll every round they are in the chamber.

The Gate: A massive rusting bronze gate bars the heroes final exit. It has three separate locks, all which are opened by the same key. Luckily the mechanisms are smooth and if the hero succeeds at an Agility roll, it is possible to disengage two locks in the same round, otherwise only one is unlocked.

AN UNHAPPY END

Opening the gate washes the heroes in the sunlight of dawn.

You escape barely in time, while, behind you, the entrance to Seablossom's reign collapses among the debris.

They have emerged in the ruins of a watchtower further down the coast. As the sunlight strikes Winna she starts to rapidly age, until she becomes an aged crone. Before



she succumbs to old age she whispers her last words to the heroes:

"I was forced into service over a century ago, and I knew what fate awaited me should I escape. Do not grieve for me. I die, but I die free!"

The heroes have ended a threat which plagued this region for centuries: Seablossom, the Cliff Queen! The marauders they were fleeing from earlier are nowhere to be seen. They may have emerged from the fallen palace with gold and treasure.

Today is a good day to be alive!

CREATURES AND NPC

Cairlander Marauder

These fearsome warriors of the Cairnlands have the features of a skull painted upon their faces with white wode. Small bones from their ancestors hang from their armor. The Cairnlanders believe they can draw upon them for strength and skill.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Gear: hand weapons (Str+d6), bow (Damage: 2d6, Range: 12/24/48), leather armor (+1).

Hindrances: Greedy.

Edges: -

Special abilities:

• **War Leader:** One in every eight marauder has Fighting d8, Riding d8, and the Command Edge.



Seablossom

This stunningly beautiful creature was once a witch who was forced into marriage by an ancient king of the Cairnlands. Ruthlessly evil, she murdered him, and usurped his throne. Gradually she became the depraved demon she is today, and find the touch of sunlight to be painful. She lives within her palace in the cliffs enticing men into her clutches so she may feed on their flesh.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Sorcery d10, Stealth d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- **Attractive**, Seablossom is a stunning beauty and has Charisma +6;
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Demon:** Demons are immune to poison and disease and gain a +2 bonus to recover from being Shaken.
- **Weakness (Harp):** Destroying Seablossom's harp removes her sorcery skills – she cannot cast any spell.
- **Sorcery:** Seablossom is a powerful witch. She has 20 Power Points and knows the following Powers: *deflection* (fast reflexes), *fear* (frightening illusions), *stun* (glowing eyes), and *smite* (pain touch).

Seablossom's Courtesan

These creatures were once the hand maidens of the Cairnland Witchqueen Seablossom. Over the years they have become corrupted into the foul creatures they are today.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Persuasion d8, Throwing d6, Stealth d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

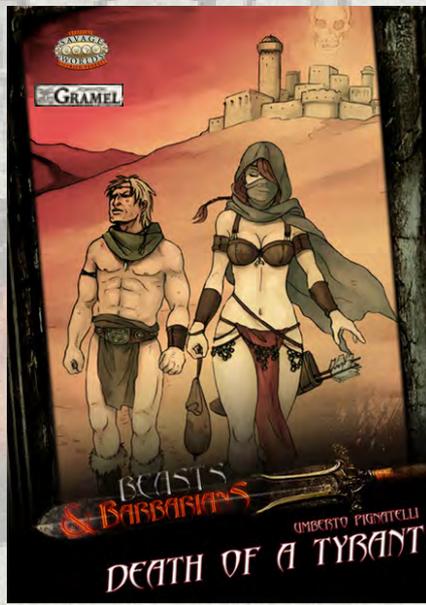
Gear: Chackram bracelets x2 (Damage: Str+d4, Range: 4/8/16, -1 to Fighting rolls, AP 2 A raise on the Throwing roll negates the target's cover).

Special Abilities:

- **Attractive**, Courtesans have Charisma: +2;
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Demon:** Demons are immune to poison and disease and gain a +2 bonus to recover from being Shaken.



COMING THIS SPRING!



PLAYER'S GUIDE