

Symbaroun

Monster Codex

*"By the end, at the dawn of the future,
blightlings were swarming, humans would run or be dead.*

*In the abyss, in darkness nocturnal: parents and spawn,
in combat till dawn, a slaughter to finish them all.*

*But the ending would hatch a beginning,
here we bravely create, a world that again,
will fall into ruin and silence."*

SYMBAROU

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Symbaroum

⌘ JÄRNRINGEN

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Beasts, fiends & abominations!

JUST ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, Team Järnringen released the bestiary for our version of the RPG Mutant, called Zonernas Zoologi (the Zoology of the Zones). When we look back at all we have written and illustrated, this magnificent book is always mentioned in the discussion regarding which product fills us with the most pride and joy. Knowing this, it is easy to understand that it took some time before we felt ready to start working on a bestiary for Symbaroum's more or less notorious creatures. And it hardly comes as a surprise that we launched the project with a notable sense of performance anxiety.

But now, here it is: the SYMBAROUM MONSTER CODEX, brimming with beasts and abominations that are longing to sink their teeth, claws or swords into the characters of your gaming group. The production process was guided by three primary goals: the outcome should be beautiful, enjoyable to read and useful at the gaming table. It is now up to you to decide the extent to which we succeeded, but regardless of what your judgment may be, we are sending the book to print with a pleasant feeling that this monster codex will make Symbaroum an even better roleplaying game.

Happy gaming!

TEAM JÄRNRINGEN



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Welcome...

... TO SYMBAROUM'S Monster Codex, a book featuring a collection of astonishing creatures and remarkable phenomena which can be encountered in the vast forest of Davokar and its surroundings. Between its covers, you will get to meet previously unknown, or at least not yet described, monsters and adversaries who are very eager to put your players and their characters to new and tougher tests. You will also find rules and guidelines that will be helpful when you are creating your own, unique monstrosities or when you are designing interesting challenges in Ambria, Davokar or the mountains.

The Advanced Player's Guide

When writing the Symbaroum Monster Codex we have assumed that gaming groups also have access to the Core Rulebook and the Advanced Player's Guide. It is fully possible to use the material in this book without the latter, but in that case, the Game Master must be prepared to ignore or replace the abilities and mystical powers taken from there.

WE HOPE THAT this bestiary will demonstrate how Symbaroum's more or less beastly inhabitants are constructed, so that you who shoulder the Game Master's jacket will have an easier time creating, adding and modifying the content to your liking and needs. The book is divided into three sections, entitled Hordes of the Eternal Night, Monsters & Adversaries, and Rules & Guidelines – sections that are very dissimilar in style and content but that we believe will complement each other and together provide material for many, many thrilling (and probably dangerous) hours at the gaming table.

SECTION 1: HORDES OF THE ETERNAL NIGHT

The opening section is in many respects based on its namesake – the original work written by the famous monster scholar Father Almagast. Initially, we had plans to base most of the section's descriptive texts on the words of the venerable black cloak, but we soon noticed that his analyses, accounts and judgements would convey an all too biased and overconfident description of the

creatures in question. Instead, we have striven to apply a broader, less categorical perspective, so that the presentations are more in line with the uncertainties that actually exist when it comes to their history and nature, also supplemented with examples of the reports, depictions and legends which the black cloak drew from in his work. It should also be mentioned that we have kept much of the style and design that signifies the original, in honor of Father Almagast, and maybe also in the hope that he will forgive us for diverting from his portrayals to such a degree.

The twenty seven parts of Hordes of the Eternal Night describe one creature each. Often, two or more versions of the same creature are introduced (with different age, size or rank), and sometimes the parts present different types of what may seem to be one and the same creature. But on the whole, the idea is that each part will serve two main ends: it should say something about and deepen the understanding of Symbaroum's setting, while at the same time introduce adversaries that can challenge the gaming group in new ways, socially or tactically.

Finally, each part presents an adventure set-up. The Game Master can choose to take it as it is and develop it into a playable scenario, or let it act as inspiration and an example of how the various creatures can be put into action.

SECTION 2: MONSTERS & ADVERSARIES

The second section of this book aims for quantity rather than depth. Without being completely exhaustive, it introduces close to ninety persons, animals and beasts with stats and short descriptions – some residing in the shadows of Davokar, other more often encountered under the open skies of Prios. Most of them are new, but we have also taken this opportunity to collect some of the creatures which were introduced in previous publications, as for instance the episodes in The Throne of Thorns – with or without small adjustments. The intention is that this section will make it easier for the Game Master to find relevant stats for the monsters and adversaries encountered by the characters, but we also hope that it will function as inspiration in the process of designing unique homebrewed non-player characters, and non-player beasts.

SECTION 3: RULES & GUIDELINES

The final section of Symbaroum's Monster Codex features thirty seven monstrous traits, adding to the nineteen in the Core Rulebook – enough to build hundreds of creatures that challenge the characters in different ways. In this section you will also find the previously mentioned guidelines

on how to create your own creatures and balanced combat challenges, hopefully clear enough to explain how the rules are intended to work, and still short enough not to be perceived as long-winded. Furthermore, this section features tips on how to use the many creatures of the bestiary when creating three types of adventure campaigns, or "Monster Chronicles" as we call them.

In conclusion, we wish you much fun with this book, and we hope that it will live up to our high ambition: that its content will provide material for hundreds of unforgettable gaming hours, in a world that the same material contributes to make even more marvelous and captivating!

The original edition of Father Almagast's Hordes of the Eternal Night is the Sun Church's principal work when it comes to understanding the monsters of the world.





It is likely true that few people, if any, know as much about the Lawgiver's enemies as I do. I know them all, from the hugest abomination to the smallest glint, from the oldest arch troll to the youngest blight spawn. I've heard the legends, studied the accounts, examined both cadavers

and living specimen. Still, I have no definite answer to the question that meets me more often than others: which is the most abominable monster under Prios' sky?

The candidates are many, but naturally there are those who stand out from the rest. The ancient blight beasts which have ravaged and ruined since long before the fall of Symbaroum display both the darkness and strength to be qualified contenders. For sure, the same can be said about the world serpents, especially if the World Serpent itself would awake; also the dragons, supposing that the rumors of their return can be taken as truth. Additionally, there are more devious, and in that respect vile beasts, such as ravenous willows, parasitical glints and lurking night swarmers - all immensely hungry, all cunning and calculating in their hunt for life and blood.

However, one must wonder if there isn't another creature that overshadows them all, a creature with the actual potential to drown all of Creation in the darkness of the Eternal Night. Even if this creature revels in light, it can be seduced to blacker paths, if it isn't warned about the temptation, taught to resist the lure and punished for every transgression. Yes, dear reader, I am speaking of you. I am speaking about the human...

- Excerpt from *Hordes of the Eternal Night*, Father Almagast



SECTION 1:

HORDES OF THE ETERNAL NIGHT

Arachs

The predatory arachs comprise the remains of the Spider King's subjects, survivors of the realm that was finally crushed by the early High Chieftains of Karvosti. The existence of the arachs is closely linked to the Spider King and it was commonly assumed that they had been destroyed along with their ruler. However, in recent years there have been reports, from more or less credible groups of explorers, claiming that **the arachs still live and are active in the deeper parts of Davokar**. Some say they have encountered arach hunting parties in the woods or scouring for artifacts in some ruin; others testify that members of their group have been abducted, presumably to be used as slaves or eaten. **According to the wildest rumors, inhabited pyramids have been found, as grand as Serand's** but uncharted, sunken and overgrown with dense forest.

The Transformation

The process through which a cultural being is transformed into an arach involves a ceremony, performed in two phases. Initially, an egg-shaped, human-sized cocoon of silken threads is spun. Through the ritual's power and clangor it is given a golden luster. This egg may wait up to a year for phase two, when a dazed or unconscious cultural being is placed within.

During the hour-long chanting of the second phase, the cocoon slowly shrinks while the threads grow harder and thicker, so that the prisoner finally is caught as if in a vice and the transformation can begin. The malnourished creature that emerges about a month later retains its memories, but is consumed by a desire to serve its new leaders and comrades. It takes a passed Resolute test for him or her to be able to leave the collective, and then repeated tests not to return. To perform an action which is directly harmful to other arachs requires a successful [Resolute -5] test.

These sporadic, but all the more frequently occurring, reports and rumors have triggered speculations about **the people of the Spider King being ready to rise again**. A legend told among the clans warns of precisely this: that the arachs will resurrect their fallen monarch and launch a new war of conquest, spreading fear and death in Davokar. But such a development is highly unlikely. A majority of the eye-witness accounts describe the arachs as **certainly dangerous but basically nothing more than the pitiful remains of a once glorious race**, now roaming the forest much like other predatory beasts.

It is said that the humanoid arachs can be mistaken for humans from a distance, especially if they dress in human garb. But on closer inspection, there is no mistaking their spider-like attributes: **four spider-eyes in a row, jaws with poison channels, limbs with seven joints that end in three claws rather than fingers, bodies covered in bristling hairs**. It may even be that there are different kinds of arachs. A few statements affirm that threatened arachs have rubbed off their hairs so as to create an irritating or even poisonous cloud around them; other witnesses claim that sometimes a single arach has a back covered in wart-like spinnerets, able to produce spider webs. Hence, one theory is that arachs evolve towards the more and more spider-like, without knowing if this change has to do with maturation, or if it is an effect that comes with elevated social standing or some kind of holy exaltation.

Dear sister,

I am writing to you from inside an egg of golden threads, with a dying candle as my only source of light. The letters spread over the parchment as the poison spreads through my veins. My killer lies next to me, her body pierced by my trusted estoc; death has captured the many joints of her limbs at unnatural angles, and her face features the spider's four eyes in a row. Her jaws are poisonous mandibles, one of them broken and set deep in my thigh.

My other hand is squeezing the Taar-cross, wrongly called an ancient symbol of Pios by the seller in Thistle Hold. It is not a sun, it is a golden spider, the holy symbol of Angathal Taar whose realm once stretched out around a network of pyramids. Serand's Pyramid is known and surveyed, but I found another, sunken into the ground and untouched for centuries. The taar-cross was my key, the way into the pyramid, down to the lower chambers and the golden egg. Oh, how it sang at my touch; how it opened up, thread by thread, to expose its empty interior.

When the watchers came climbing I fled in here to avoid certain death. It was not until the egg closed that I realized that this was their intent, to drive me into this golden trap. I hear them singing out there, hoarse and with clattering jaws. Initially, I wondered if they sang for me or their fallen sister, but now I realize that it is part of the ritual. I will transform, I will die and be reborn as one of them. You who are reading this letter, please take it to my sister in the town of Thistle Hold.

Beloved sister, the house is now yours, and you won't have to put up with my sloppiness and dreams of the Spider King. I have been drafted into his army, and the next time we meet, your poisonous words will be nothing compared to the venom of my jaws.

Respectfully, Lemelio Starak

Crumpled up letter, found on a dead arach, killed in the depths of Davokar.

THUS SPOKE AROALETA

“... and there, in the clattering, hissing enemy swarm, there fought Angathal’s spawn, erect and proud. With spear and axe, with dripping jaws, arak-an and arak-zanz attacked the stronghold of Serembar...”



Adventure Set-up

II he exalted arach Maz-at-tezz has started spinning the gospel of spiders in a sunken, partially collapsed and completely overgrown ruin at the border between bright and dark Davokar. Her Poisoners have banished (or killed) all beasts and a goblin tribe from the area, and started their most important tasks - hunting for artifacts in nearby ruins and ensuring the growth of the princess’ army. The latter is achieved by taking human prisoners to the bottom level of the pyramid to be transformed.

The player characters might get involved when people start vanishing from some outpost or village at the border of Davokar. Maybe one of the banished goblins can be found and tells about the ruin it lived in; maybe the characters visit the goblins’ former home and encounter a group of treasure-hunting Poisoners? Why not let them come across Lemelio Starak’s letter in the ruin, to give them a hint of what is happening? If so, their next task will be to find the overgrown pyramid, get inside and try and free the prisoners that are yet to transform - likely with heavy resistance from Maz-at-tezz and her warriors.

The thread that’s been spun has beginning, has end, but never ceases to be. The thread that’s been ended still remains, forever bound to existence — essential, unbroken, unchanging. If end is merged with end, beginning is void, end is void, and that which ended becomes eternal. So shall happen, one day, to Angathal Taar, our sovereign and lord of the world.

Excerpt from Taar’s Prophecy

ARACH, POISONER

Manner	Clacks fiercely with its mandibles
Race	Arach (cultural being)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	Armored (I), Natural Weapon (I), Poisonous (I)
Accurate	7 (+3), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 15 (-5), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 13 (-3), Resolute 9 (+1), Strong 11 (-1), Vigilant 10 (0)
Abilities	Backstab (adept)
Weapons	Bite 3 (short), +4 with Advantage and poison 2 for 2 turns
Discreet/Accurate	
Armor	Leathery skin 2
Defense	-3
Toughness	11
Pain Threshold	5
Shadow	Spotted gray brown, like a chunk of bog iron (corruption: 0)

Tactics: Tries to encircle and flank the enemy to gain Advantage, after which they rely on their venomous bites.

ARACH, EXALTED

Manner	Proudly observing
Race	Arach (cultural being)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	Companions (III; one Poisoner, one Trickling and one Etterherd), Harmful Aura (II), Natural Weapon (II), Poisonous (III), Web (III)
Accurate	5 (+5), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 9 (+1), Persuasive 15 (-5), Quick 11 (-1), Resolute 13 (-3), Strong 10 (0), Vigilant 7 (+3)
Abilities	Backstab (adept), Dominate (master), Loremaster (adept)
Weapons	Bite 4, +4 with Advantage and poison 4 for 4 turns
Persuasive	
Armor	None
Defense	-1
Toughness	10
Pain Threshold	5
Shadow	Rusty brown with golden stripes, like unpolished amber (corruption: 0)

Tactics: Urges its companions to attack first and focuses on one target at a time, capturing and poisoning it while all who come within melee range suffer from its harmful aura of poisonous hairs.

Bestiaal

I didn't understand the odd looks and signs of protection that were aimed at us in Thistle Hold, and it took a long while before I realized that they actually were about our choice of guide. The masked girl was reclusive and careful not to show her face in view of others, but there is no doubt she was qualified – she found the quickest route through the forest, and on several occasions her instincts led us unharmed past ambushes and traps. Sure, she tracked like a dog, sniffing along the ground, but this is a method also practiced by barbarians.

Honestly, I couldn't see what caused the alarm and worry – until we were surrounded by dragouls. The girl grew wings and flew over us with her bow singing, to later dive to the ground and launch into battle, suddenly tall, muscular and with long, razor-sharp claws. I must say, in that moment our guide became the most interesting thing about our expedition.

Brother Erbalmer
expedition leader in the name of Prios

According to their own tales, the age-old race of shapeshifters calling themselves bestiaals began as allies to the humans of Symbaroum, but eventually became their slaves and enemies. Judging by some of the fragmentary mosaics found at Odaban, assumed to tell about the siege of Symbar, the bestiaals fought against the humans, alongside the elves. It took the scholars many years to realize that the multi-shaped creatures depicted in the mosaics were of the same race, sometimes

winged, sometimes not; at times tall and sturdy, at other times tiny and seemingly harmless. A bestiaal's natural form – the one they wake up in every morning and assume at the moment of death – is human-like with beastly features, sparse fur and a hairless tail. Because of their shapeshifting ability, they may assume a variety of forms and traits, thus adjusting to the requirements of the situation.



Homing pigeon from the Ravens

Surrounded in the Ravens, far to the north. We found their village, in wooded vale. Darcen and Sagal were there, he pierced on a skewer, she bound. The beasts discovered us, we ran, here. The silence reveals they are closing in. May Prios lead this pigeon to you with my farewell. Yours always – Enon.

After the fall of Symbaroum, the shapeshifters withdrew into isolation amongst the Ravens. Lately they have reappeared in regions occupied by humans – first in Vajvod, then spreading to the west and south. Their agenda, if they indeed have a common one, is unknown. The individuals encountered in bright Davokar and in Ambrian border-settlements and outposts seem to act alone or in small groups, as hunters, or more precisely: as predators. According to many horrific stories, not even humans are safe from their appetites.

From what is known, almost all members of this race are capable and dangerous in combat. However, there are some tales describing bestiaals who truly excel in this respect; individuals feared even by others of their kind. This is supposedly the matter of specimens whose highly developed shapeshifting ability makes them capable of entering into a kind of symbiotic relationship with glints (see page 46). So far, no such glint-carrying bestiaals have caused a

True Form and Bestiaal

The mystical power True Form can reveal the basic form of a bestiaal, without any of the traits added by the Metamorphosis. Additionally, with the adept level of the same power, the bestiaal can be forced to assume its basic form, without extra traits, and the master level can stop it from reactivating the extra traits.

racket on Ambrian soil, and this is fortunate since they are said to be both lightning fast and extremely tough. On the other hand, there are stories from both Thistle Hold and Kastor about bestiaals having vanished or been found slaughtered after claiming to have glint-carriers on their trail. Maybe there is some truth to the analysis of Order Master Eufrynda, that most bestiaals found in Ambria are on the run, and that the glint-carriers are sent from one or more settlements hidden in the vales of the Ravens?

Adventure Set-up

The characters receive a distress call from a logging camp or similar outpost in Davokar – people have been killed or taken, up to two at a time; all that has been found are the slaughtered remains. The best (maybe only?) way to expose the murderers is to use live bait, possibly one or two disguised player characters. At the first attempt they can be attacked by something entirely different (predators, rage trolls or elves), but it is soon evident that these could not have caused the previous killings.

A second attempt yields results; they are attacked by 4–5 bestiaals. However, as the trap slams shut, one or more bestiaals falls to its knees, begging for mercy. If the characters let them live, they disclose that they are refugees from a mountain village, and that the glint-carrier sent to hunt them down holds two of their children captive and forces them to feed him with fresh meat, preferably human. The characters will have to choose whether to slay the hunting party, help them to kill the glint-carrier, or try to rescue the children so that the refugees can get away from their tormentor.

BESTIAAL, CLAWING FIGHTER

Manner	Purposefully aggressive
Race	Bestiaal (cultural being)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	Armored (II, from Metamorphosis), Bushcraft, Metamorphosis (III), Robust (II, from Metamorphosis)
Accurate	15 (–5), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 9 (+1), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 13 (–3), Resolute 7 (+3), Strong 11 (–1), Vigilant 10 (0)
Abilities	Marksman (adept), Man-at-arms (novice), Twin Attack (adept)
Weapons	Bow 5, two one-handed weapons 7/4
Armor	Leathery skin 7
Defense	–1
Toughness	11 Pain Threshold 6
Shadow	Deep, unreflective grey, like a worn lump of lead (corruption: 0)
Tactics	Moves over the field of battle to reach the enemy's archers and mystics. When these are down, it takes on the melee fighters.

BESTIAAL, GLINT-CARRIER

Manner	Shifts between calm and furious
Race	Bestiaal (cultural being)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	Armored (II, from Metamorphosis), Bushcraft, Metamorphosis (III), Robust (II, from Metamorphosis), Sturdy (I), Swift (I)
Accurate	15 (–5), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 9 (+1), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 13 (–3), Resolute 7 (+3), Strong 11 (–1), Vigilant 10 (0)
Abilities	Marksman (adept), Man-at-arms (novice), Twin Attack (adept)
Weapons	Bow 5, two one-handed weapons 7/4
Armor	Leathery skin 7
Defense	–1
Toughness	17 Pain Threshold 6
Shadow	Deep grey with fiery streaks, like a faintly glowing lump of lead (corruption: 0)
Tactics	Walks straight towards the enemy's strongest fighter to slay it with flashing strikes. When the glint-carrier dies, a glint is released and immediately attacks (see page 48).

New Rule: Playing a Bestiaal

It is fully possible, though challenging, to play a character of the Bestiaal race. It is challenging in two respects: first in the sense that bestiaals do not have a given role in Ambria, making them difficult to portray; second, it can be difficult from a rules perspective, to handle the flexibility provided by the trait Metamorphosis. Nonetheless, if the player is prepared to accept these conditions, members of this beastly race may prove very rewarding to play.

Note that the basic form of a Bestiaal has only the monstrous trait Metamorphosis, the trait/boon Bushcraft and (as a suggestion) the burden Pariah.

BESTIAAL, WINGED HUNTER

Manner	Squinting, focused
Race	Bestiaal (cultural being)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	Armored (II, from Metamorphosis), Bushcraft, Metamorphosis (III), Wings (II, from Metamorphosis)
Accurate	15 (–5), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 9 (+1), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 13 (–3), Resolute 7 (+3), Strong 11 (–1), Vigilant 10 (0)
Abilities	Marksman (adept), Man-at-arms (novice), Twin Attack (adept)
Weapons	Bow 5, two one-handed weapons 4
Armor	Leathery skin 4
Defense	–4
Toughness	11 Pain Threshold 6
Shadow	Deep, unreflective grey, like a worn lump of lead (corruption: 0)
Tactics	Flies up and hovers above the battle. From there it fires arrows at melee fighters, attempting to hamper their movements so that its allies can get through to mystics and enemies with ranged weapons.

Colossi

Well, sure, you'd better believe I have seen a coloss up close, terrifyingly close.

It was on one of those days when you'd rather stay in the tent – a gushing rain fell on the tree tops; the droplets smashed into a wet mist or assembled on the leaves to fall in heavy sheets that truly hammered against the scalp. But I buckled on the quiver and forced myself out to check the traps.

One of the traps was placed close to the ruin of the Anchor Cross, and it was there I found him. That he was a witch, I knew immediately, from his cloths and the mask of bark. Lifeless. As if dead. No visible wounds but with black stains in the face, as if from acid or possibly... well, from death?

Anyway, I hurried to feel his pulse. The heart was beating, though faintly. Shortly after I started dabbing his face with an herbal cure, I heard it – a loud creaking bang behind me, as if a sturdy tree branch slowly broke asunder. I turned my neck, was met by an abysmal bellowing and a foreleg that was raised to crush me. I froze. Completely paralyzed.

At that moment the witch awoke, and the coloss froze, like me. If the herbal cure had taken one single breath longer to work, I would have become one with the soil, and you would not exist. That's the truth of it!

Grandpa Toste brags to his grandchildren over a pint of beer at The Rusty Dragon, Kastor

Among Ambrians as well as most barbarian clans, the legendary mounts of the witches are called Colossi. These massive carnivores that look like a blend of wood and flesh, instill fear and respect in any and all, but maybe these feelings would be even stronger if those meeting them knew their true origin. In truth, the colossi are not beasts like all others. They are created.

The mystical ceremony used by the witches in this context is a well-preserved secret, only known by the most experienced among them – the Huldra, the Keepers of the clans and their equals. When

speaking to outsiders, the initiates claim that the colossi came with the Iron Pact from the west, why they tend to use the Elven name for the creature, elient, as often as they say coloss.

The act of creation starts with a witch who is balancing on the edge of becoming blight born, and who willingly agrees to be sacrificed in order to continue fighting. During the ceremony that transforms the witch into a hybrid of flesh and wood, the subject is cleansed of all corruption, and stripped of memories and will. All that remains is the unruly hunger of the coloss and a desire to serve the witch the ritual bound it to.



This also explains why **wild specimens are so rare**. Lonesome colossi are always the result of their witch being **killed or otherwise hindered in caring for his or her creation**. Such individuals are instinctively drawn to places where beasts or cultural beings gather, with the aim of finding a new master, worthy of their loyalty and assistance. They often linger in an area for an extended period of time, and if they do not get help to satisfy their hunger for fresh meat, they will sooner or later attack – **to feed before they journey onwards to some other place**.

Adventure Set-up

The characters arrive at a settlement around which **a lone and hungry coloss** is stalking. Initially, tracks are found in the vicinity; later, loud creaks are heard when the frustrated beast beats down on fully grown trees, followed by actual observations. **Then come the first attacks** (possibly against livestock), soon followed by the slaying of a cultural being.

One of the authority figures in the settlement asks the characters for help in dealing with the situation. **This can be done in several ways** – direct combat is possible, but a passed *Cunning* test with *Beast Lore* opens up for the option to feed, and hence clam, the creature. Whatever they do, a serious complication is revealed: someone recognizes a piece of equipment on

The witch's coloss can carry
The witch's coloss can trample
Kick and scratch and **chew, indeed,**
yes, that is what **the colossi need.**

Popular children's song in Davokar

COLOSS			
Manner	Stoically enraged		
Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	Colossal (II), Natural Weapon (III), Robust (III), Sturdy (II), Wrecker (III)		
Accurate 7 (+3), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 5 (+5), Persuasive 9 (+1), Quick 13 (-3), Resolute 11 (-1), Strong 15 (-5), Vigilant 10 (0)			
Abilities	Iron Fist (adept), Natural Warrior (adept)		
Weapons	Hoofs 12/8 (long, wrecking), two attacks at the same target		
Armor	Bark-like hide 4		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	30	Pain Threshold	8
Shadow	Trembling bright green, like beard-lichens in the wind (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: The coloss charges forth, trampling its enemies to death.			

the coloss (a witch's braid, facial mask or similar) and knows **who used to ride and care for this particular animal: the witch Ayda**.

This is deeply worrying, since every fall (or at some other suitable time) **the settlement** suffers problems associated with a passing monster (arch troll, winter elf, lindworm or similarly powerful being). **Ayda has always helped the residents to divert the attention of the hungry, threatening monster when it passes the settlement; with her gone, maybe dead, the residents are in serious danger.**

The player characters are asked to track down **Ayda**. As a suggestion, they find her dead, **after having been captured or ambushed**, but among her belongings they discover instructions on **how to divert the monster's attention from the settlers**. Putting these instructions into practice also falls on the characters, and if they fail they must prepare for a really tough fight – **or they can decide to run away, knowingly leaving hundreds of children, women and men in great peril.**



Create Eliend, ceremony

The mystical ceremony which transforms a witch into a coloss requires a minimum of four participants, one of which acts as officiant. It takes a whole day to complete and the participants jointly suffer 5D6 temporary corruption, divided equally between them, and without causing any further side-effects. One of the participants is bound to the newly awakened creation, just as if it was a familiar.

Furthermore, should a witch encounter a lone coloss in the wilds and gain its trust, he or she can bind to the creature using the ritual *Familiar*.

Corrupted Nature

We had the witch surrounded, and she knew it. She had nowhere to run; with the face of the cliff on one side and the swamp on the other, she retreated into the gorge and had her cursed Thorne Beasties hinder our advancement.

Several of our guides hesitated when ordered to follow her down into the shadows, but I pressed on. Admittedly, the floor of the gorge offered a disheartening view – ashen grey, as if the rock itself had been incinerated and no life later returned; even the air was dry in a way which suggested that the winds could not bring moisture into this valley of cinders. A befitting place for the death of a witch, I thought. It was not until we started our attack that I realized that her withdrawal was carefully planned, that she too knew she would die and had decided to take us with her.

As our warriors moved in, we spoke our prayers and weaved our spells while the witch called upon her dark allies to combat us. The corruption oozed in the air, as unavoidable here as everywhere else. We knew what we were doing – fire may be fought with fire, by those who are disciplined enough. Or so we thought. Then and there, we were totally wrong.

Corruption fell to the ground like black teardrops, and where each drop landed, a daemon appeared to immediately attack – us or the witch; they did not discriminate in deciding who to tear asunder. The last sound I heard before my squires dragged me away wounded was the witch laughing, a laugh that turned into a scream when she and the rest of my troop were destroyed in the depths of that cursed gorge.

Templar Aralo Patio, statement after the return to Templewall

Discovering Corrupt Nature

That you are entering an area with corrupt nature can be noticed with a successful Vigilant test by anyone with Bushcraft or Witchesight. With Bushcraft the character realizes that the place is unnatural and dangerous; with Witchesight it is also possible to perceive the corruption in the air, ground and waters.

If the test is successful, it is possible to turn back and find a way around the area, at the cost of a longer route (+1D12 hours).

The hallucinations that sometimes occur in corrupted areas can feel so real that they in themselves may be the end of an entire adventuring party.

Understanding the Danger

When the characters have established that they are in a corrupted area, someone with the abilities Witchesight or Beast Lore may try to predict what is coming. A passed Cunning test gives information regarding which type of danger/dangers are likely found in the area (Virulent Corruption, Retaliation and/or Materialization). Should the test pass with a difference of 5 or more, the character also gets an idea of how grave the dangers are (the Game Master gives a hint of the resistance in terms of ordinary, challenging, strong or mighty).