

07 What we do in the Shadows

Lexi and Kato Jet continue in the Forest of the Baboons the next morning.

Current Shadow Axioms – PATTERN+2, TECH+0, MAGIC+1 (???)

As Kato Jet has some Magic, after a few hours he may be able to sense the “flavor” of Magic here... I’d guess it’s a Difficulty +4 target each hour, but with a bonus equal to the strength of magic in the place and it doesn’t need any expenditure of the Magic Track. Jet’s Mental power (including +1 for his Magic = +3)...

+1 +1 +1 -1 Total +2

Jet sniffs, shrugs, eyes constantly watching for more baboons. “This place supports Plant and Beast Magic, not anything useful to me. Sooner we leave here, the happier I’ll feel.”

Lexi decides to try and thin out the dense, looming trees and, trying to guess what type of place her father would have sought, aims for a place with more Magic.

Lexi - OVERCOME

Intention Shadow-Walking slowly
(3hrs = DC2)

Roll 2 FOCUS + 4

Fatig 0 **Broken** 0

Succeed with Style: You succeed and gain a boost

After three hours, they are emerging from the thick pines into sparsely wooded hills with a lush meadow for the horses to graze at when they stop to rest.

Lexi’s Pattern Track is empty again now, so she’d have to tick Fatigued to try again.

As this is an ideal place to rest, it’s not worth the risk of fatigue for Lexi to press on with the shadow-walk. As there’s no apparent time pressure, they camp in the pretty meadow.

Not All That Seems Fair...

Is this “perfect place” one of Brand’s traps? Seems Unlikely... **NO!** 30

So, all they have to worry about is a hostile encounter – I’d already said that such things would be Almost Certain as they press on... **YES+** 86

So, there is an encounter, a big one, but not matching numbers so not too Deadly.

Is it NPC(s)? seems 50/50... **NO!** 23 Is it Beast/Monstrosity 50/50? **YES+** 84

As it’s a big YES+, we’ll use the “Full Monstrosity” and generate...

Full Character

Full Monstrosity

Name: BleatKeha
Size: Huge (whale-sized)
Primary Form: Amphibian
Characteristics: Fangs / rows of sharp teeth & Tentacles / tendrils
Abilities: Create illusions & Burrower

As one of its abilities is “Create Illusions” we’ll assume that when they reached this new MAGIC+2 Shadow, that it favor’s illusion magic. This whale-sized thing sounds a bit more deadly than I was

anticipating, so I'll assume it's very slow and relies on its initial illusion of a peaceful glade to lull its victims and then a surprise strike as it bursts out of the ground below them. They'll get a chance to spot something is wrong when the horses shy away from what appear to be tasty flowers. It'll be a +3 Awareness check **+1** **0** **+1** **-1** Total **+1** so a Great +4 check is required. If they both fail the check, I'll stat up the rest. If only one succeeds they can get clear but the other is attacked. On a tie, it grabs a horse instead!

Lexi - OVERCOME

Intention Sense that something is wrong (Target +4)

Roll **1** INTELLECT + 2

Fatig **0** **Broken** **0**

It's worth spending a FATE Point to allow Lexi's "Rebellious" nature to mean she's always expecting trouble when things look too peaceful.

Lexi approaches her horse as it shies nervously away from the strange flowers that flicker as it tries to graze.

Jet too senses the approach of the thing in time.

Perhaps sensing the illusion covering the land because of his own Magic, he is quick to leap back as the land beneath them rips open and a huge arching maw rises above them, barbed teeth hanging above in rows like stalactites of black and bloody stone.



Leaping into their saddles they spur the terrified horses away.

Let's make that a Flair-based roll to control the horses well enough to save them. Same difficulty, target 4. Followed, if they fail, by a Haste roll for each of them at the same target, Damage 5 + a Fudge roll...

NPC ACTION

Character Kato Jet

Action OVERCOME

Intention Sense Danger

Roll **1**

Bonus +3 Good

NPC ACTION

Character Kato Jet

Action OVERCOME

Intention Save frightened horse

Roll **-2**

Bonus +3 Good

Despite Jet's charm and familiarity with horses, the beast is too scared and runs the wrong way, is soon lost within the falling wave of giant teeth.

NPC ACTION	
Character	Kato Jet
Action	OVERCOME
Intention	Scramble aside
Roll	0
Bonus	+3 Good

Jet tries to scramble out of the way, but one of the giant fangs drops towards him.

I'll give Lexi choices – Save her Horse (Kaze) and herself (4+), Save Jet and Kaze and herself (6+) or Save herself and Jet (4+) or Save just herself (3+).

In that moment as the teeth fall upon them, Lexi has to make a split-second decision. Turning her back for a moment on Kato Jet, she leaps first for her horse, hoping to mount and race to the fallen samurai and scoop him up as they ride past. It's a crazy gamble...

Lexi - OVERCOME	
Intention	Crazy Risk (target 6+)
Roll	1 HASTE + 1
Fatig	0 Broken 0

By spending both her remaining FATE Points ("Daughter's of Amber" do NOT fail and "Determined", she can scrape a Tie...

Tie: You attain your goal but at a minor cost, such as the GM introducing a complication or presenting a tough choice

With a supreme effort she forces Kaze to obey her, and they race between the crashing fangs, grab Jet's outflung hand and half carry, half drag him out of the meadow. The final fang slashes the beast's flanks and as they race clear, Kaze stumbles and falls screaming, froth-mouthed and eyes rolling.

Back in the meadow Jet's horse is gone and the place is a dark pit of overturned earth, stained with blood. The grinding sound of the monster chewing can be felt through the ground.

There are hot tears in Lexi's eyes as she raises her hand to stop Kato Jet as he draws his blade and approaches the injured horse. "I'll do it" she almost sobs "He was mine". He bows and even offers her the trump-etched blade, but she shakes her head and inhales deeply then reaches to hold Kaze's big head, stare comfortingly into his huge eyes "Easy boy, Easy...", then SNAP.

There is nothing to say as they walk away. Their supplies are gone now so they face an uneasy night in hills where at any moment a monstrous death-bringer might erupt from the ground. Was that nightmare placed there by Brand to dissuade those seeking his Pattern? Or was it some nightmare from her own subconscious – demonstrating a lack of experience in the "imagining" of the Shadow-walk? Or just bad luck?

In Fear of the Earth Sharks

They find a rocky hill to camp on, ignoring the distant rumblings of the burrowing monsters. "What the hell did they eat before we came along!" Lexi was more shaken by the loss of her horse than she had expected. Kaze had only been in her life a couple of days, but she'd liked him. His name had meant "Wind".

It seems Likely that Kato Jen would check in on them by Trump calling his son – not wanting to risk disturbing Lexi in case she was in the middle of Shadow-walking... **NO!** 3

It seems Likely that Kato Jet would be grateful for Lexi saving his life – we should probably find out if it changes their relationship in any overt way (we don't know yet if Jet is aware of his father's secret intentions). Maybe he would offer her some clue or advise her to turn away from this and forget it? Maybe even come clean altogether?

Gratitude? **YES+** 46 A YES+ but not a match (such as 44 or 66) so a big effect but not ultimate.

Time to find out whether Jet is a knowing accomplice in the plot against Lexi. Seems unlikely...

NO! 56 So maybe he suspects that all is not as it seems (50/50)? **NO!** 23

In that case, I think it'll be Likely later, that when the true purpose is revealed, he will step in to help Lexi.

Are conditions good for open-air sleeping 50/50... **No** 47 Are they disturbed in the night 50/50...

NO! 30.

Although it rains and becomes too cold for comfort, no other predators approach them before sunrise the next day. There's nothing to eat or drink.

Let's check if the Magic+2 Axiom matches the target location...

0 **+1** **0** **+1** Total **+2**

Lexi feels that this Shadow has the right amount of Magic to match their destination, so the trauma of yesterday was at least worth something.

It was too uncomfortable for them to be fully recovered, but Lexi can start Shadow-walking again. Probably best to try it quickly as each hour on the move increases the chance they will stumble into another Earth Shark!

This will be a trade off between the chance of encounter and the difficulty of rushing the Shadow Walk. 20 mins = DC8 and Almost Impossible to get an Encounter. 30 mins = DC6 and Unlikely Encounter. 1 hr = DC4 and 50/50 Encounter, 2hrs = DC3 and Likely Encounter. She has no FATE points but got all her Stress and 1 pt of Pattern back. I should probably try and self-compel to get back a FATE, but nothing springs to mind.

Eager to be out of this place, Lexis pushes hard and after an hour...

Lexi - OVERCOME

Intention Shadow Walking DC4

Roll **2** FOCUS + 4

Fatig **0** **Broken** **0**

50/50 Encounter... **NO!** 12

As she already knows that PATTERN is stronger at the destination, she pushes for lower TECHNOLOGY level – approximating Shadow Earth's Iron Age. They have little of their equipment left to them to worry about.

Warriors and Wings

Having no fixed idea for the Shadow, I decided to roll on the Oracles for some inspiration.

For Action & Theme: **Locate / Religion**

For Region, Location, Location Descriptor: **Deep Wilds, Fields, Inaccessible.**

Where there had been a suggestion of a cobbled and overgrown road before through the hills of the Earth Sharks, they lost the ever-present grindings of the unseen monsters and found themselves on bleak moors of tangled gorse, approaching hills that **might** match the painting.

The zip on Lexi's jacket ceased to work (apparently too technical for this Shadow!).

-1 **0** **-1** **+1** Total **-1**

And this technology level feels somehow right.

They are getting close. Just need to climb the steep gradient of increasing Pattern. She could try again today but knows it would fatigue her.

Might as well push on towards the hills in this Shadow – one less detail to have to force into place tomorrow. Maybe they can forage something along the way or at least find fresh water.

As they crest a slight rise they come upon a ring of standing stones.

Are they occupied? 50/50... **YES+** 86. Let's go for "Full Character"

Full Character

Full Monstrosity

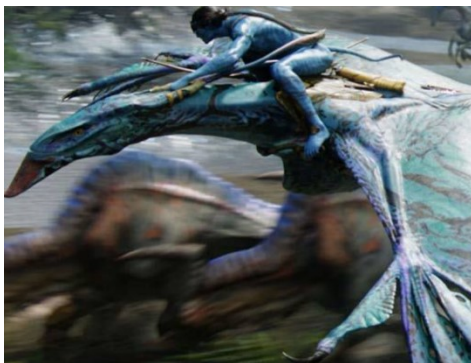
Name: Artiga
Role: Guard
Apparent Goal: Create an item
Descriptor: Oppressed & Ironsworn
Apparent Disposition: Unfriendly
Apparent Activity: Socializing

Male? 50/50 but Small yes & Matches would be Androgynous **YES+** 77 so, a very manly man!

Human (Likely)? **YES+** 64

Alone (50/50)? **No** 19 small no, so just one companion. Human (likely)? **No** 14 so a beast 1. Mount, 2. Pack animal, 3. Guard, 4. Hunting beast, 5. Pet, 6. Flying Mount **6**

A large muscular man is kneeling at the Stones but their eyes are drawn to a massive Pterodactyl (a bat-winged lizard) waddling about on the floor nearby and wearing a leather saddle! The blue-skinned man is armed with a long spear and a short sword, with a bow and quiver of arrows on his mount's saddle.. To Lexi his equipment looks a bit like a roman legionary. [*although the only decent image I found is from Avatar, so he might as well be blue-skinned too*]



The beast sees them and squawks angrily. The warrior's head snaps round, and he snatches up some kind of amulet to put in his leather satchel, and lifts his long spear. "What in the hells art thou?"

He speaks in Thari, but with an archaic twist. His head sweeps around to watch for any other strangers sneaking up on him.

Lexi and her companion are dressed very strangely to Artiga, and he has never seen men with their skin color or with Jet's unusual (to him) eyes. "If thou art devils, know that I am Artiga, Blessed Warrior of the Sacred Dawn and my soul shall not come cheap"

Lexi shoots a glance at Jet and raises a hand to stop him from drawing his blade. "We're not after your soul... but if you... thou?... have any spare food and water, we'd be grateful".

Lexi - OVERCOME

Intention Persuade/Pacify (target 3+)

Roll -1 GUILF + 3

Fatig 0 **Broken** 0

Artiga's eyes narrow with suspicion and he grips the spear more tightly.

Perhaps the Pterodactyl is intelligent? Unlikely...

No 73 (pity!)

"Thou shalt not trick me ... Snake-haired Demon!" –

clearly dreadlocks aren't universal!

I'll self-compel some arrogance out of Lexi for her "Father..." Aspect in order to gain a FATE Point.

Stepping forward quickly, Lexi grabs at the spear and tries to wrench it out of his hands. "Look mate, you have no idea who you're dealing with. I tried to be nice, and it's not getting us anywhere."

Lexi - CREATE ADVANTAGE

Intention Wrench spear from Artiga (???)

Roll -2 FORCE + 2

Fatig 0 **Broken** 0

It's time to work out who/what Artiga and his ferocious-looking mount are.

Just a Mook (Unlikely)... **NO!** 35

From the Amber Accelerated Rules...

Slightly more significant NPCs should have three broad approaches... Body & Speed & Mind, one at +2, one at

+1 and one at 0 They get three aspects and a stunt and 3 Stress boxes and one 3-point Condition. To randomize NPCs a bit more for the purpose of this SOLO experience, I plan to roll Fudge Dice and any positive result above +2, will indicate their Highest Approach+Skill.

0 0 +1 0 Total +1

So Artiga's main skill "Combat" is just +2 (before adding any bonuses for relevant Aspects).

Artiga

Aspects: Blessed Warrior of the Sacred Dawn, Pterodactyl Rider, Superstitious Cultist

Approaches: Body+2, Speed+1, Mind+0

Stunts: Pterodactyl+1, Magic 1

Combat: +3 (Body plus one relevant Aspects), **Damage:**+1 ("warrior") **Armor:**1

Mental Combat: +2 (Mind plus two relevant Aspects), **Mental Damage:**+2

Stress:3 and **Magic Track:**2, **1 Consequence: WOUNDED (3 Stress, -2 on all rolls)**

As this is a MAGIC+2 shadow and he was clearly performing some sort of pagan ritual, I've given him Magic 1 as a free Stunt. Let's say it's a sort of Divine Smite ability to deal extra damage to creatures of a non-terrestrial origin (including Lexi) and a Ward vs Evil to protect vs Magic/Psionics/Fear.

Is the Pterodactyl a Mook - seems Likely... **Yes** 28

Pterodactyl

Aspects: Huge Winged Mount of the Sacred Dawn, Fierce Predatory Reptile

Good At (+2): Flying, Pecking

Bad At (-2): Moving on the ground, Thinking

Stunts: Pterodactyl+1, Magic 1

Damage:+0 **Armor:**2 (for size)

Combat:+4 (Pecking + two relevant aspects – size and "fierce")

Mental Combat: +0, **Mental Damage:** n/a

Stress:2 no consequences

I'll assume there is a magical bond between rider & mount

[It occurs to me that if Lexi ever needs some unusual shock troops, she could do worse than recruit the Order of the Sacred Dawn!]

The blue-skinned warrior is both strong and skilled and flicks his spear out of her reach then thrusts strongly back while giving an odd whistle that brings the massive lizard waddling forward and squawking aggressively.

Lexi- DEFEND	
Intention	Parry the spear
Roll 2	FORCE + 2
Fatig 0	Broken 0

Tie or Succeed: You are mostly unaffected by your enemy

With a strength that clearly surprises him, Lexi bats the spear aside “Easy Blue... you could have someone’s eye

out with that thing”

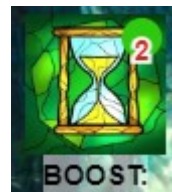
“Demoness, thou shalt die at my hand and thy sacrifice shall empower my Amulet!”

The girl is eyeing the looming figure of the lizard and its long hooked beak with some concern and moves to keep Artiga between them.

Lexi - CREATE ADVANTAGE	
Intention	Keep Artiga between her and the Lizard
Roll -1	GUILE + 3
Fatig 0	Broken 0

As the Lizard is bad at “moving on the ground” that’s easy.

Succeed with Style: You create the aspect with two free invokes, or add two.



It moves awkwardly, on its “elbows” and can’t get a clear strake at her past its master.

Kato Jet’s glittering blade is out and he slashes at the spear, intending to cut through the haft.

NPC ACTION	
Character	Kato Jet
Action	CREATE ADVANTAGE
Intention	Slice the spear haft
Roll 3	
Bonus	+5 Superb

Succeed with Style: You create the aspect with two free invokes, or add two



That display of superior skill (from both of them) and superior weaponry that can slice through his spear as if it was a twig, brings a look of stunned shock to Artiga’s face.

It seems Likely he might surrender, no, his Fanaticism makes it **Unlikely... NO!** 29

Hurling the broken halves of the spear at Lexi, he draws the shortsword and hacks at her.

Lexi- DEFEND

Intention Parry the sword

Roll 1 FORCE + 2

Fatig 0 **Broken** 0

She knocks his sword arm aside and he grunts at the impact, eyes widening further. Then she steps inside his reach and delivers an uppercut.

Lexi - ATTACK	
Intention	Uppercut
Roll 0	FORCE + 2
Fatig 0	Broken 0

Might as well spend both her Boosts and knock him out in one huge blow.

Artiga crumples like a puppet with its strings cut but Lexi catches him and swings the unconscious man between her and the angry lizard.

Lexi- DEFEND	
Intention	Dodge the Lizard
Roll 3	HASTE + 1
Fatig 0	Broken 0

Is it intelligent enough to back off if they threaten Artiga? Unlikely... **No** 60 It strikes at Lexi.

The young woman dodges around avoiding the huge beak, despite the weight of the slumped blue giant in her arms.

“Try and scare it off, don’t kill it, it’s his mount... like Kaze...”

Kato Jet sighs , lowers his blade and holds out a hand, furrowing his brow with concentration.

Spells can be cast with a Focus Roll equal to the Spell’s Level, with a bonus or penalty equal to the Magic Axiom of the Shadow and take a number of Actions equal to 5 - The Magic Axiom (so Negative Magic Axioms make it take longer and Positive Magic Axioms make it quicker). MAGIC+2, 1st Level Illusion so in 3 actions DC -1, in 2 Actions, DC +0 and in 1 Action, DC 1+

NPC ACTION	
Character	Kato Jet
Action	OVERCOME
Intention	Casting an Illusion Spell
Roll	1
Bonus	+3 Good

A moment later, a jet of flame erupts from his fingertips, forcing the creature to rear backwards, confused and frightened.

Most animals are afraid of fire, but it is loyal to Artiga, I’ll make it 50/50 to back off... **Yes** 51

Only a small Yes, so...

With a few beats of its huge wings, it flaps off a short distance and lands on a rock glaring down at them.

***** End of Session 007 *****

I’ll say there is food and drink in Artiga’s satchel so they can rest here and MAYBE recover **fully**.

As she succeeded with lots of Shifts and he is only a Shadow so takes +2 more damage from Lexi’s punch, Artiga is going to be out for several hours.

Next session the dice will decide if they are disturbed or if the Lizard resumes its attack.

