

G U R P S

Caravan to Ein Arris

AN e23 ADVENTURE
FOR GURPS® FROM
STEVE JACKSON GAMES
FOR 3 TO 6 PLAYERS

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1. Introduction

The air is buzzing in the market of Khedris – the great market that stretches from the fishmongers on the shore to Caravan Square. Halmaro the Red – master of the powerful Merchants’ Guild, second in power in Khedris only to the emperor of Lantara himself – is organizing a caravan! And this is no ordinary caravan; it will carry goods and gifts for the wedding of Halmaro’s daughter Kira to Prince Eiru of Mashanda.

The caravan will be huge, even by Khedran standards. It includes 220 camels, 50 horses, 40 head of fattened cattle, and 50 oxen pulling five wagons. The wagons are quite a rarity in a caravan; some of the wedding gifts must be huge!

The word is out that Halmaro is looking for herdsmen, scribes, translators, cooks, guides, physicians, laborers, and other hirelings for the caravan. Many of these will come from the various guilds, but there will be plenty of room for freelancers. Of course, guards will be needed too. Caravanning is not without its risks; bandits, highwaymen, and thieves take their toll on the caravans, as do sandstorms, heat, and floods.

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CHARACTER CREATION

This adventure is designed for three to six 100-point characters. The following skills will be useful; skills marked with a * will be *very* useful. After hearing the introduction, the players may figure this out on their own; if not, you may want to offer some hints.

Combat skills*	Desert Survival*
Horse Riding	Camel Riding*
Animal Handling	Thief skills in general
Merchant	Bard
Diplomacy	Fast-Talk
Detect Lies	

Horse Riding and Camel Riding default to each other at-3.

Languages

The local “common tongue” is called Lantrai; it is the official language of the empire. Other languages which might be useful on this trip include Nomic (related to Lantrai approximately as Swedish is related to Norwegian), Yat Ayun (the language of an island kingdom to the south), Shandassa (the language of Mashanda – this is spoken in Ein Arris) and Ayuni Trade Pidgin. A character who speaks Khedran Lantrai will have a default of Nomic at (Lantrai-3) and Ayuni Trade Pidgin at (Lantrai-5). Ayuni Trade Pidgin is a Mental/Easy skill; the rest are Mental/Average.

Note that the Ayuru Trade Pidgin skill cannot go above 6; no matter how smart someone is, he will never be able to translate Shakespeare (or his Lantrai counterpart) into Trade Pidgin, or even do much more than trade and carouse. This language could be written in Ayuni script, but nobody would ever bother; it is only useful as a spoken tongue. See box, p. 16.

Patrons

The following organizations may be useful as patrons for local characters:

The Merchants Guild is a powerful force in Khedris. Twice in the past, strikes declared by the Merchants’ Guild have caused a change of emperors, and the threat of a third nearly caused a civil war. The Guild has offices in all Lantrai cities of any size, and conducts diplomacy with similar organizations in other countries. Treat it as a very powerful organization which can give orders but appears rarely – a 10-point advantage.

A member of the Guild has a +2 on any reaction from Tsorvano or Halmaro, should it be necessary to make one.

White Sword is an association of freelance bodyguards, watchmen, and mercenaries. Think of it as a temporary help agency for soldiers of fortune. Members are entitled to wear the “white sword” insignia – some flaunt it, some display it discreetly, some don’t bother. It is a reasonably powerful organization that appears fairly often but cannot order its members – a 15-point advantage.

A member of the White Sword has a +1 on any reaction from Tsorvano, Halmaro, or any city guard who knows the PC is working for Halmaro. Unemployed members of the White Sword wouldn’t rate much of a reaction bonus except from other White Sword members!

Equipment

Each PC needs personal weapons (unless he’s a total non-fighter) and his “personal travel belongings.” Armor is certainly possible. However, the weather all along the travel route is quite hot. Normally, nobody wears armor except troops in battle. Plate is absolutely not worn here; even scale and chain are rare. Anyone with Merchants’ Guild experience knows the desert brigands wear no armor at all – not from bravery, but for comfort.

Anyone wearing any armor heavier than heavy leather will have a -2 on all reactions from townsfolk.

Trustworthiness

When the players make up their characters, it would make sense if one of them is a member of either the Merchants’ Guild (in which case they will be loyal to Halmaro) or White Sword (in which case he is *paying* them to be loyal). If no one wants to belong to one of these organizations, someone in the party should have Sense of Duty, Honesty, or a good local Reputation. Halmaro will be sending the party on important missions, and he needs someone he can trust! These jobs would not be assigned to random street scum.

And, during the adventure, there will be a number of opportunities for the PCs to take valuable items and run. In every case, Common Sense would warn them that they will do better by serving Halmaro loyally. For good roleplaying, let the PCs act according to their nature – but for the best possible adventure, most of the PCs should be trustworthy.