

THE RAINDRINKERS

A WANDERING ENCOUNTER BY TIM GROTH, ART BY MICHAEL PRESCOTT

DRINKING HEAVEN'S WATERS

When clear skies suddenly turn stormy, people look for the strange wagons of the Raindrinkers sliding over the mud, collecting the rain as they go. These nomadic peoples know a terrible truth: the earth's waters are tainted. By drinking only rain, they seek to avoid the loss of their memories and culture. Dedicated to preserving their history, the Raindrinker **Council** of Elders is eager to meet with travellers that cross the caravan's path. They trade in lost answers and word of distant places.

MUD-WAGONS

A Raindrinker convoy is made primarily of waterproof wagons that have bottoms like sleds, dragged by donkeys and horses along the surface of the mud. The runners of these sleds are designed to slice through the rain softened earth.

Inside, these wagons have enough room to live in and carry necessities. Outside, they have **vessels** to catch rainwater, including oddly shaped and **decorative tarps** to cover those driving the wagon while collecting extra water. Maintaining the rainwater catchers occupies most of their time.

d10 The Rains They Bring	
1-2	A drizzle, cold, clammy
3-5	Fat splashing drops, warm, soothing
6-7	Heavy straight-down rain, cooling
8	Raging storm, high winds
9	Spitting clouds, pregnant with thunder
10	Clouds following in their wake (roll again for what kind)

FIRE WAGON

These wagons hold hot stones and protected flames. A **guard of the fire** and those who need respite from the damp ride within. Smoke is vented through compartments to cook meat.

COUNCIL WAGON

The elders of a caravan, including the council for the great caravan, convene in a wagon owned by all. It holds cultural **treasures** and artifacts of the Raindrinker peoples. It is also where the most formal **litanies** are recited and taught, especially the **Voice of the Past**. While celebration and work happen out in the rain, debate is reserved for the council wagon.

THE GREAT CARAVAN

Lumbering through the world, is the heart of Raindrinker culture. This great gathering of caravans holds the peoples' elders, items of the lost past, and youth being taught to carry the Raindrinker way of life forward. All caravans intersect and exchange wagons with the great caravan in a languid cycle binding the peoples together. The route of these caravans traces the roads of lost empires.

d6 Encountered Caravans	
1	A single mud-wagon on a stranger task (see over)
2-3	A convoy of a family's d4 wagons
4-5	A small caravan of 2d4 wagons. If you roll doubles, one of the elders is with the caravan.
6	The great caravan: 3d6 wagons plus the elders' council wagon.



GHEN OF THE BUWAL

Description: Gaunt, paper-thin skin, bald, smells of soil, dirt under his fingernails, rich voiced, slight rasp when he breathes

Mannerisms: Maintains eye contact constantly while speaking, snorts when annoyed

Ghen expresses curiosity masked as disinterest until something he needs or wants comes up, at which point he becomes more inquisitive toward, or outright interrogates, visitors. If Tatien is engaged, he questions politely, if she is not he is pushy and rude.

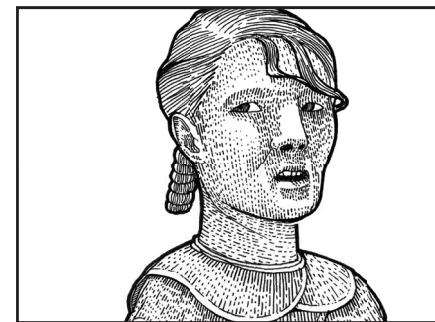
Wants: sketches / samples of strange plants—especially Analeaf, evidence of giant bees

Needs: someone to seed Storm Orchids in a particular place

Has: Edible flowers, dried fruit, wild honey & royal jelly, precious seeds & vine cuttings, deep plant lore, the Gardener's **Litany**, secrets of ancient garden sites

THE BUWAL

The Buwal remember when they tended vast gardens and bee hives. They still keep seeds from their ancient strains, planting them as they travel as local soil and rain conditions allow, for other caravans to harvest. Their elder has a practiced eye for this, and is always eager to discuss strange plants, soil conditions, and other such matters with travellers.



AGYA OF THE JYX

Description: Relatively youthful, vigorous, lean, clear eyed, lilting voice ready for singing

Mannerisms: Precise, relentless questions, paces when not seated, interrupts when excited

Aloofly hostile at first, Agya warms or cools to outsiders as the rest of the council does. When she likes people, she helps enthusiastically. When she doesn't, she suggests they be executed, or at least expelled. If brought around she shrugs off her previous disposition as adapting to circumstances.

Wants: Sketches of ruins, ancient books, proof that the Jyx's old prey still survive

Needs: Evidence of the ancient Martoi and their poisonous weapons

Has: **Litanies** of History, The **Voice of the Past**, fine boning knives, the secret of singing forth rain

THE JYX

The Jyx once drank rain for convenience while following game animals. As they saw the terrible fate that struck those who drank from rivers, they forsook all water save heaven's—which they learned to summon.

From others they learned the weaving of memories into songs and litanies to instill in the minds of others.

Even "young" Agya can bring forth crisp details of times no living eyes have seen.



TATIEN OF THE HENDRI, ELDEST

Description: Wizen, blind, reedy voice, wrapped in many layers

Mannerisms: Long sighs, chewing leaves, folding and unfolding hands constantly

Welcoming, though too tired to do much about it, Tatien becomes more welcoming and engaged as outsiders show deference to the council as a whole instead of trying to court her favour. Those who focus overly on her find her pushing to end the session so she can sleep.

Wants: to sleep, better narcotic leaves, to visit the ancient burial mound where her husband rests

Needs: reassurance the Raindrinkers can survive the coming years

Has: the right to declare people friends of the Raindrinkers, or members of the Hendri people

THE HENDRI

The Hendri are a people of mixed origins that unified and emerged fully within the Raindrinker tradition. They are the source of many innovations to ease the constant rain-soaked travel of the caravans. Those who are adopted into the Raindrinkers become Hendri by default. While Tatien was born into an old family of the Hendri, her husband was found poisoned, healed, and adopted into caravan life. Hendri caravans trace the newest routes, seeking survivors of broken settlements to aid or absorb as the situation demands.



KENAY OF THE YAZIS

Description: Tall and slender, always has a hunting bow, deep lines around eyes, soft voice

Mannerisms: Squinting, dismissive snorts, lots of quoting of poems nobody else has heard of, constantly sizing others up

Kenay is a warrior-poet eager to share his compositions and military theories.

Kenay's boisterousness hides keen evaluation. Overt actions before the council are irrelevant, he discerns the history of outsiders and reacts accordingly. Once he has made his decision about outsiders, he is very direct about it, often voicing his opinion first and setting the tone.

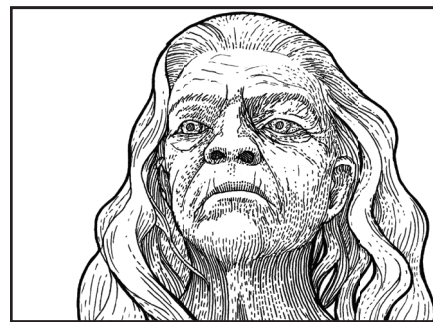
Wants: Interesting weapons and armour, news of battles, contacts that travel, warnings of trouble coming towards the caravans

Needs: Connections to those in far places to expand his people's network

Has: The Archer's *Litany*, thunder arrows, military history and theory, a regional network of informants

THE YAZIS

The Yazis maintain the most extensive contact with others who wander and those who are settled. They retain ancient warrior traditions, as well as new ones particular to their current conditions. While the Jyx keep the official chronicles, if you wish to know about ancient battles it is the Yazis to ask.



ULROCH OF THE VEK

Description: Short, still nimble (her cane is a prop), loud and powerful voice

Mannerisms: Quick to laugh and smile but hollowly, always has a story ready, mockingly mimics voices of others

Suspicious while playing at friendliness, Ulroch also tries to mask her opposition to Tatien by mirroring the first speaker's mood. Befriend Tatien, and Ulroch will be against you, earn Tatien's enmity and Ulroch may yet help you.

Wants: Word of destroyed communities / poisoned waters, restoration of lost stories, proof of the lost Vek city

Needs: Another safe source of water

Has: The Voice of the Past, many plays and legends, a text on the Martoi in a strange language, knowledge of what the other elders want and need

THE VEK

The Vek lived as traveling performers and message carriers in a previous age. Before joining with the Raindrinkers they lost some of their ancient stories and as a result are eager to spread them as a hedge against further loss. Their elder is convinced the disaster that birthed the Raindrinker way of life is coming again, soon, and soon again after that. What's worse, she suspects it will drive others to a similar lifestyle, wrecking the balance of the world.

RAINDRINKER LITANIES

Due to their lifestyle, the Raindrinkers do not have many written records—though they have an extensive writing system to capture the five and one languages of their culture. Instead of volumes of history, they have litanies. These are collections of chants, sayings, and call-and-responses that guide them through tasks until the task and words become fused as a reflex.

THE VOICE OF THE PAST

The greatest of the litanies, the Voice of the Past, can achieve a miracle: the perfect replication of a memory from one mind in the minds of those exposed to the litany. Of course, once the memory is in its new home it is just as vulnerable any other memory.

RAINDRINKER TREASURES

Raindrinkers prefer songs, stories, and other performed art to material cultural works. However, to accompany their chanting, Raindrinkers create drums and wind instruments of treated wood that resists the damp. Their music evokes thunder and storm winds. For plays, everyday goods serve as props. The elders keep the few enduring masks and costumes, evoking beasts no longer known in the world and long forgotten gods.

d10	Strange Tasks
1-2	Scattering seeds
3-4	Hunting snarks
5-6	Chasing rumors
7-8	Scavenging battle sites
9-10	Seeking ruins

TRILEMMA ADVENTURES