



*Patreon Adventure Supplement
August 2023*

*Vulture's Feast Barbarian
Arena*

Maps: Vulture's Feast Arena - two levels

Vulture's Feast

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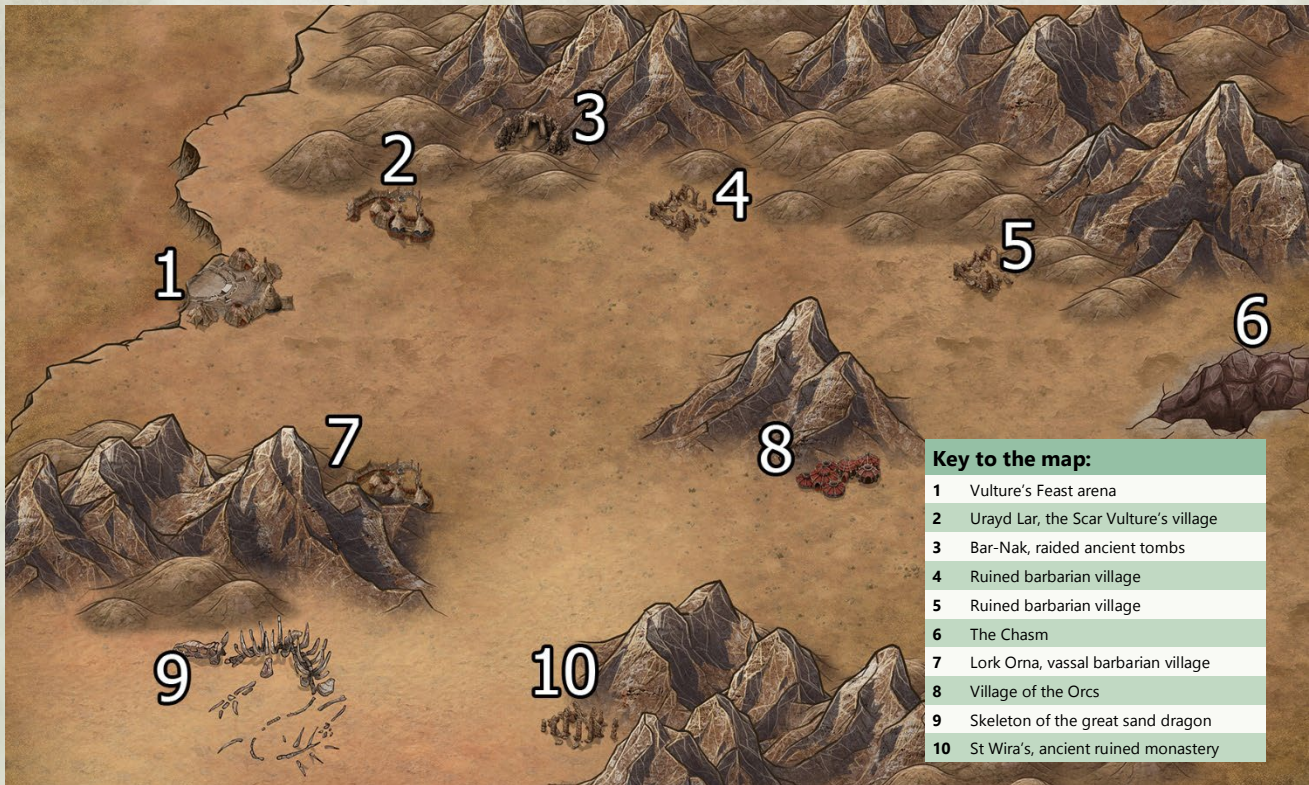
Patreon *Map of the Month* GM's supplement

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SETTING



Setting description

The Eastern Badlands have long been a place of war and want, but for many years the powers sat in balance - one tribe would rise, gain a little ground and then fall away again, subsumed by the temporary rise of another clan. This low-level war of petty blood feuds seemed endless. But for the past few decades, a different story has played out among the harsh, dry country of the Badlands.

Under the leadership of a powerful warlord, one barbarian tribe, the Scar Vultures rose and conquered large areas of tribal land, holding onto these gains and maintaining a strong and bloody grip on the region. Many clans have fallen to their raids; lost wealth, warriors, honour and land. Travellers too are at risk of capture and enslavement, and, although the Badlands have always been dangerous territory, the Scar Vultures enjoy violence and death for its own sake.

The tribe's leader, Warlord Nawgikch, leads by example and likes nothing more than bloody sport. As the tribe's initial burst of conquest settled into a regular rhythm of raids, he opened up a ruined arena for his own amusement and financial gain: a school of gladiator combat where Nawgikch owns the fighters and the outcomes.

Wheeling around the edge of a low cliff, the tiered arena at Vulture's Feast holds a crowd of hollering spectators, baying for the blood of those fighting on the rough sand floor. Beneath them, a maze of old chambers service the contests.

Filling these dungeons with beasts and prisoners, Warlord Nawgikch set his most wild berserker in charge of training a group of indentured fighters. Each week they entertain the mob with a series of fights, but once a year the warlord holds his infamous Tournament of Bones. Here, the fiercest battles rage on the arena floor. Here, outsiders may challenge for a prize. Here, death may come to the careless.

STORIES AND NPCs

Story Starters

Ideas for entering a tournament as a party

- 1 The party is approached by Carn of the Bloodtooth, the leader of a tribe displaced by the Bald Vultures. She has been told by Warlord Nawgikch that she can win back some of her ancestral lands in the arena's grand Tournament of Bones. With the warriors of her tribe slain, Carn seeks brave champions to represent her in the arena.
- 2 In the tavern of a small town, the party chats with Monn the Unwieldy, a gladiator formerly of Vulture's Feast who won his freedom and retired. He has unexpectedly received an invitation to return to the arena for a final battle conferring a hefty reward. Wary of Warlord Nawgikch's intentions, and anxious about facing the horrors of his past, Monn seeks a team to accompany him in his fight.
- 3 As they cross the Badlands, the party are surprised by an enigmatic sorceress that appears before them. Yarisha begs that the strangers help her. She explains that a powerful curse has bound her to Warlord Nawgikch. If the party can free her by killing him, she will share with them the secrets of an ancient magic.

Ideas for players captured by Barbarians

- 1 Captured crossing the Badlands, the party's fighting skills see them sent to the gladiator school where they await an opportunity to escape. Whispers among the gladiators speak of a legendary warrior Goldmuzzle, who achieved godlike powers and took his freedom. The Barbarians are a superstitious people. Perhaps one of the party could convince everyone that they are Goldmuzzle come again...
- 2 Captured and forced to fight at the arena, the party encounters a charismatic gladiator Ongil the Fang, who is planning an uprising during Warlord Nawgikch's grand Tournament of Bones to overthrow the tyrant once and for all. The party see the opportunity to gain their liberty, but notice that Ongil's plans contain rather a lot of flaws.

Warlord Nawgikch, the arena owner

Warlord Nawgikch is a man of great luck. He was lucky when his mother left her bastard child out for the wolves: the people who found him raised him to be a clan leader. He was lucky when his brother-not-of-the-blood tried to murder him: the weak goats-ass just dropped dead in the fight. He was lucky when he saw that his clan, the Scar Vultures, were exceptional warriors – cowardly neighbouring tribes just fell down in front of them.

He feels pretty lucky in his fighting arena too – most of his bets just seem to win, his favoured champions just conquer their foes! Of course, luck is sometimes helped along by others' fear. With a face like a skull, skin like bleached bone and hair the colour of the rotten guts of a mountain lion, Warlord Nawgikch is a fearsome sight. Of late, he has taken to wearing a crown of jaws. He feels his luck might even see him through making a special fighting appearance in the Tournament of Bones.

Hara Wa'nalci, Beast Keeper

Most view the arena's beast keeper, Hara, as a more terrifying force than her beasts. Grizzled and predatory, she trains them with a whip and keeps the animals in dark, cramped conditions to ensure they are at their most enraged and confused when they enter the arena. Hara's clothes are stitched from the skins and furs of fallen arena beasts and she wears a trophy necklace of their teeth.

Berserker Bir

Bir loves the fight. He loves the blood; he loves the chaos. He wishes it were he that could run, club swinging wildly, into the arena each week, but instead, he must watch, salivating, at the gate. Bir trains gladiators in the way he does everything - with screamed commands and crazed laughter. The blood of a 1000 victims still tints his skin - it would be a dishonour to rinse it off.

People watching the fights

- 1 **Krimljaw** - A tattooed half-orc employed by the warlord, who prowls the stands to control the crowd, ensure debts are paid and oaths honoured.
- 2 **Keri Rumbletoth** - a wild-haired gnome inventor who is trying to convince Warlord Nawgikch to deploy their gadgets during fights. They scream with abandon during the battles - usually for the beasts.
- 3 **Ko Barkil** - an avid spectator who offers to train potential gladiators for a cheap fee. Insists he has discerned the best ways to win in the arena. Always on the stands bending someone's ear, his voice can be heard before he's seen.
- 4 **Rakthi the Vokbrand** - a slight, dark-eyed, aging barbarian who is rumoured to have never lost a bet. She has earned the reputation of the arena's luckiest gambler and watches each fight with a silent smile.
- 5 **Brother Fulbere, The Weeping Man** - a devout cleric who has come from a Southern city to convert barbarians. Mocked on the stands for the tears he sheds for the gladiators. Few know that he secretly uses this holy water to offer healing to injured fighters.
- 6 **Mjardi Frossbilt** - although he has done little more than watch the fights, Frossbilt's intense and serious manner has sent a wave of rumour around the stands, that he has come from a distant frozen land, that he has mysterious icy powers, that he intends to enter the Tournament of Bones.
- 7 **Wildfire** - a fiery-haired mess of fur, skins and bone jewellery, this loud-mouth barbarian bard weaves epic ballads about the gladiators and beasts that they loudly chant on the stands to excite the crowd.
- 8 **Chains** - a scant-clothed, wiry former prisoner who beat the arena unexpectedly so many times (by sprinting for hours or hiding audaciously) that he was set free. With nowhere to go, he has stayed at the arena and makes little bets with coins that he can beg or find.

FIGHTING

Notable Arena Fighters

- 1 **Ran Garaz** - a ferocious berserker warrior, driven by uncontrollable rage. Dressed in a goat-pelt kilt, he has tattoos of small plaits all over his bald head. His reckless hammer attacks are very popular with the crowd.
- 2 **The Desert Scorpion** - a mysterious free fighter who wraps herself in black clothing, with long skirts that billow in the wind. A master of hand to hand combat, with lightning-fast reflexes.
- 3 **Guvanix, Beastmaster** - a young wildling prisoner with an innate ability to command ferocious creatures. Fights with a whip and net and thrills the crowd with their skill with the arena beasts.
- 4 **Elf, the Ill-fated** - a nameless, cursed warrior, shrouded in the historical misfortune that brought them to the Badlands. With shorn blond hair and cold dead eyes, they fight with a wooden staff they call 'Father'.
- 5 **Ulfa of the Fire** - a dwarven free fighter tattooed with alchemical scripts and burn scars, she hurls small sand-glass bottles of volatile concoctions at opponents.
- 6 **Blade-dancing Talian** - a handsome and graceful duellist who wields twin blades with speed and deadly precision. Captured as a boy, he has grown up at the arena and been afforded special training due to the popularity his looks command.
- 7 **Morlin the Blacksmith** - a village blacksmith captured on a raid, he is tasked with crafting and repairing arena weapons. He fights with a throwing spear, his rippling muscles flashing from beneath the pieces of armour he straps to his torso.
- 8 **Dane of Iron** - an indentured barbarian warrior, renowned for his devastating punches and astonishing endurance. Dane is also renowned for his slicked-down bowl-cut hair and large, shining front teeth.
- 9 **Laran the Orphan** - as a youngster, she saw her parents taken from her village to perish in the arena. Now, after years of training, Laran is a popular free fighter, strong and deadly. She secretly waits for the moment to avenge her parents.
- 10 **Xadareon the Mercenary** - since the wars in the west no longer required his sword, Xadareon's lust for the fight brought him to the arena. An exciting free fighter who uses a different weapon each time he fights, he is gnarled, rude and wildly popular.
- 11 **Farde, Champion of Ages** - once a renowned gladiator-turned-trainer, gambling debts caused Farn to take indentures and re-enter in the arena. Aging and losing his prowess and doesn't think he will ever gain his freedom.
- 12 **Firstman Brennus** - once the best warrior in his remote tribal community, Brennus was captured by slavers and brought to the arena due to his imposing size and impressive skill in hand to hand combat.

Monsters who fight in the arena

- 1 **Marauvin**: A hulking, ragged minotaur with the body of a powerful warrior. He wields a double-headed axe.
- 2 **Men of the Grave**: a swarm of 5 mummies dug-up from an ancient burial site under the nearby mountains.
- 3 **The Ankheg**: a burrowing insect-like beast with deadly acidic spray. It likes to ambush its prey from underground.
- 4 **Gabb-Eye**: a brutal cyclops who throws boulders around the arena and swings a tree-trunk club.
- 5 **Nhom, Tig and Barish**: a monstrous lion with a hide impervious to weapons, a sabretooth tiger, and a ferocious, scarred dire bear, who fight as a trio.
- 6 **The Scorpairs**: a team of two giant scorpions that have the skulls of previous victims glued to their carapaces.
- 7 **Khorbel**: a fearsome manticore, its lion-like flanks partially armoured, its wings daubed with red and white paint and its tail-end smothered with a sleeping poison.
- 8 **The Warrin**: a huge rhino that has been plated with a crude, iron armour, rusty in places. Its charge is fast and deadly.
- 9 **Kithri, Tarsh and Vinka**: three crazed harpies, tethered to the arena's iron rings with 100ft chains.
- 10 **Plague of Lizardis** - a pack of 10 aggressive, dog-sized rock lizards released around the arena.

Types of contest

Nb. all fights end when an opponent is KO/unconscious.

- 1 **One Warrior** - a person versus a monster. Monster type can be random or selected.
- 2 **Eye on Eye** - a person versus another person. Can be a pre-arranged grudge match, random draws or a short Eye on Eye knock-out tournament.
- 3 **Gangpitch** - two teams of four people fight each other
- 4 **Monstrama** - one giant creature versus three people
- 5 **Show of Strength** - one person versus a team of three
- 6 **War of the Beasts** - monster versus monster (the most popular of the contests for gamblers)
- 7 **Challenge of Heroes** - a team of 4 humans versus successive waves of enemies
- 8 **Beast Riders** - mounted combat with horses and/or any of the beasts from the arena

ROOM GUIDE



A guide to the arena's underground level

- 1 In these large cages, with a direct route to the arena floor, the beasts and monsters that fight in the arena are tended by the Beast Keeper.
- 2 The armory, where arena weapons are stored.
- 3 Fighters about to enter the arena are held here.
- 4 The arena owner, Warlord Nawgikch, rests in this room when attending fights.
- 5 This large guardroom is a living space for the barbarians who work at the arena, training or guarding indentured gladiators and prisoners.
- 6 Free fighters are permitted to rest and prepare in these unguarded cells if they have entered arena contests.

A guide to the arena's underground level

- 7 The hard arena floor has a grazing, dusty surface. Contestants and beasts enter from three barred gateways operated by barbarian warrior guards.
- 8 A storeroom holding food and water.
- 9 Prisoners are housed here in these harsh conditions, sometimes 6 to a cell.
- 10 & 11 The most celebrated of the indentured gladiators sleep in these cells, where they are afforded just a little more comfort, although still watched over by guards.
- 12 More lowly indentured gladiators are kept in these cells where camaraderie is fostered and rivalries fester.