



Caravan of Glauu the Seer

A Side Trek for 6th-level PCs

Sometimes the PCs get stuck on a matter of plot. They've missed—or misinterpreted—clues and are consequently missing the key piece of the puzzle that can drive the adventure forward.

Rumor or random chance leads them to a crossroads just outside of town where a caravan of ushemoi (from *Monster Manual V*) have constructed a primitive gladiator ring. Their leader, an arkamoi named Glauu Hatari (arkamoi sorcerer 10), can cast *contact other plane* on the PCs' behalf—if the PCs can defeat his chosen gladiators.

GLAUU HATARI'S BARGAIN

Glauu Hatari has a small, well-trained stable of ushemoi gladiators, and he travels around challenging local champions—and making a killing on the gambling proceeds. The caravan is still setting up the stands when the PCs arrive. Glauu Hatari offers the PCs a bargain: He'll cast *contact other plane* and ask one question on the PCs behalf for each PC victory in the gladiator ring (up to five questions, which is the most he can ask with a single casting of the spell). The PCs lose nothing if they are defeated, but Hatari warns them that they're responsible for their own healing.

Why is Glauu Hatari making this offer? You can leave the answer unclear—the sorcerer is inscrutable. Perhaps the PCs figured prominently in a dream, or maybe Glauu

Hatari is connected to your campaign in some as-yet-unrevealed way. Or his reasons might be more prosaic: The ushemoi gladiators might need the practice.

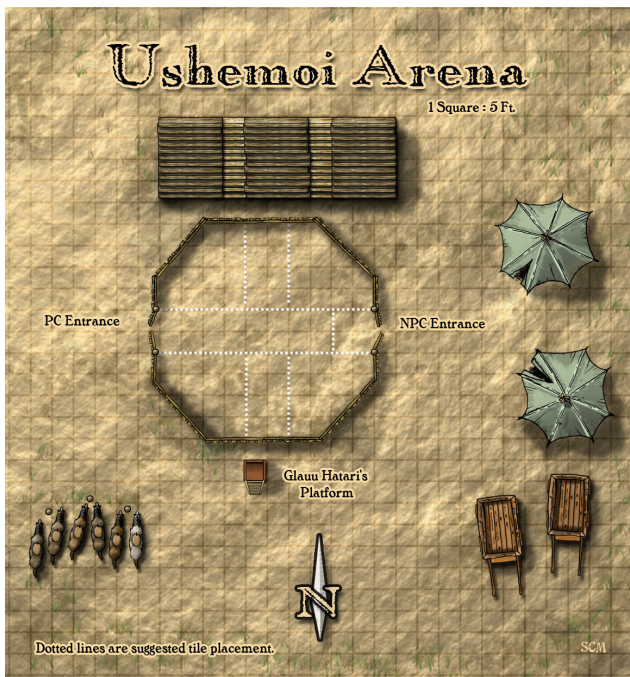
The Rules

The ushemoi gladiator matches are simple “two man enter, one man leave” affairs, but there are a few ground rules. Spellcasting on behalf of a combatant means forfeiting the match, and Glauu Hatari tells the PCs ahead of time that he'll be watching with *detect magic*. “If you're worried about a comrade dying, by all means, cast a healing spell if you like,” he explains. “You'll lose the match, but you won't lose your compatriot. How excellent!”

A SERIES OF SOLO FIGHTS?

This Side Trek breaks a key conceit of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS—namely that it's a team effort. Each PC at your table gets a moment in the spotlight—a one-on-one battle against a single gladiator. Ordinarily you don't want one PC engaged at a time, but as a change of pace it works fine.

One of the side effects of this solo play is that only one player is involved at a time. Fortunately, battles against ushemoi tend to be brief, because ushemoi escalate their effectiveness as the battle rages on. Encourage the non-combatant PCs at your table to cheer for their comrade in the ring and do your best to keep a fast pace at the table.



Using your own magic, including items, is fair game. Hurting or endangering the onlookers is grounds for forfeit. If an onlooker enters the ring, the match ends.

The match continues until someone yields, is knocked unconscious, flees the ring, or dies.

The PCs decide what order they'll fight in, and then Glauu Hatari chooses one of his gladiators for each PC to face. He generally matches like against like, sending an arkanoi against a spellcaster, a hadrimoi against a rogue, ranger, or other lightly armored combatant, and a lashemmoi barbarian against heavily armored PCs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Noonan is a designer and developer for Wizards of the Coast. His credits include co-designing *Dungeon Master's Guide II*, *Heroes of Battle*, and numerous products for the Eberron campaign setting. He lives in Washington state with his wife, son, and daughter.

PCS HEALING

Gladiatorial combat is dangerous. It's okay for the PC gladiator and a bystander PC healer to agree on a hit point threshold where the healer rushes in and casts a spell. That costs that PC the match, of course.

For example, if Tordek is in the ring, Jozan the cleric can declare, "I cast *cure moderate wounds* if Tordek falls below 10 hit points." This isn't a foolproof technique—if Tordek takes enough damage to take him from 11 hp to -10 hp in one blow, he's still dead. But it's a good way to provide at least a measure of insurance against PC deaths.

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VERSUS THE ARKAMOJ

Encounter Level 4 (Solo)

SETUP

The PC starts on the west edge of the ring, and the arkamoi starts on the east edge. Spellcasters can cast any spells they like on themselves, but spells from others are forbidden (and Glauu Hatari dispels them if he notices). With a clap from Hatari, roll initiative and get the battle underway.

When the PC takes a spot in the ring, read:

A wooden fence forms a rough circle some 50 feet across. On the far side is a bald, gray humanoid whose fatty flesh ripples like water as he moves. With a wave of his hands, he casts a spell and suddenly multiple versions of him appear, shifting and melding into each other.

"Fight hard, my gladiators! Bleed with joy and courage!" cries Glauu Hatari, then he claps once and yells, "Begin!"

Glauu Hatari: From this vantage point, Glauu Hatari (a 10th-level sorcerer) casts *detect magic* and watches for interference. If he sees any, he casts *dispel magic* (with a dispel check of +10) against the offending spell and announces, "Interference! My gladiator wins! Outstanding!"

Arkamoi: The arkamoi relishes the chance to test his magic against another spellcaster. Glauu Hatari has four different arkamoi gladiators he can use in today's matches: Kulian, Truul Gahn, Vantan the Smiler, and Venomous Jorr. They're statistically identical.

ARKAMOJ

CR 4

MM5 184

hp 29 (4 HD); DR 5/slashing or piercing

Usually NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Draconic, Undercommon

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12

(+2 Dex, +2 natural)

SR 14

Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +5

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee quarterstaff +4 (1d6) or

Ranged light crossbow +6 (1d8/19–20)

Base Atk +4; Grp +4

Special Actions arcane mastermind

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th); strength from magic:

2nd (5/day)—*Melf's acid arrow* (+6 ranged touch),

mirror image

1st (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 13), *disguise self*, *jump*, *mage armor*

0 (6/day)—*daze* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 12), *light*, *ray of frost* (+6 ranged touch), *read magic*

Abilities Str 11, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 15
SA spells, strength from magic

Feats Combat Casting, Toughness

Skills Concentration +9, Hide +9, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Listen +1, Spellcraft +11, Spot +1

Possessions quarterstaff, light crossbow with 20 bolts

Arcane Mastermind (Ex) When an arkamoi's bonus to spell save DCs from its strength from magic ability (see below) is +3 or higher, its mind begins to work with lightning precision. Once per round as an immediate action, the arkamoi can lend tactical advice to an ally. This grants a +2 morale bonus on that ally's next check, attack roll, or damage roll.

Strength from Magic (Ex) Each time an arkamoi casts an arcane spell, magical feedback grants it a rush of power. For each arcane spell cast, the arkamoi increases the save DC of subsequent arcane spells it casts by 1. Additionally, the arkamoi gains a +2 bonus on damage rolls for subsequent spells, and gains a +2 deflection bonus to AC. This benefit lasts for 1 minute from the round in which the arkamoi's first spell is cast.

These bonuses stack each time the arkamoi casts an arcane spell, to a maximum of a +5 bonus to save DCs, a +10 bonus on damage rolls, and a +10 deflection bonus to AC.

ARKAMOJ TACTICS

The arkamoi casts *mirror image* and *mage armor* (raising AC to 18) before the battle. That means it starts (due to its strength from magic ability) with +2 to its save DCs, +4 on spell damage, and +4 deflection bonus to AC (raising AC to 22). For the first 8 rounds of the fight, those bonuses remain.

Once the battle starts, the arkamoi lobbs *Melf's acid arrows* at its enemy, resorting to *burning hands* only when it runs out of 2nd-level spells or when the PC comes closer.

If the arkamoi has 7 hit points or less, it yields and flee the ring.

WHEN THE BATTLE ENDS

Ushemio drag off the body—or corpse—of the loser. Then Glauu Hatari announces, "Splendid! Such sweet agony! I call forth the next gladiators! Outstanding!"

VERSUS THE HADRIMOI

Encounter Level 5

SETUP

The PC starts on the west edge of the ring, and the hadrimoi starts on the east edge. Spellcasters can cast any spells they like on themselves, but spells from others are forbidden (and Glauu Hatari dispels them if he notices). With a clap from Hatari, roll initiative and get the battle underway.

When the PC takes a spot in the ring, read:

A wooden fence forms a rough circle some 50 feet across. You face a thin humanoid with arms that split midway into twin forearms, twirling four daggers in its hands as it glares in your direction.

"Ah, the mysteries of life and death, written here in blood! How succulent!" cries Glauu Hatari, then he claps once and yells, "Begin!"

Glauu Hatari: From this vantage point, Glauu Hatari (a 10th-level sorcerer) casts *detect magic* and watches for interference. If he sees any, he casts *dispel magic* (with a dispel check of +10) against the offending spell and announces, "Interference! My gladiator wins! Outstanding!"

Hadrimoi: The hadrimoi in Glauu Hatari's employ are Brokenfang Luurek, Brillach, and Yao Truul the Tusker. They're statistically identical.

HADRIMOI

CR 5

MM5 185

hp 58 (9 HD); **DR** 10/slashing and piercing; speed from pain

Usually NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages Common, Undercommon

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10; Dodge, Mobility (+4 Dex)

Fort +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

Weakness falling courage

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee 4 daggers +13 each (1d4+1/19–20) with perfect symmetry or

Ranged dagger +13/+8 (1d4+1)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +10

Atk Options dagger dance

Abilities Str 13, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 11

SA dagger dance, speed from pain

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse

Skills Hide +13, Jump +7, Listen +4, Move Silently +13,

Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +4

Speed from Pain (Ex) Each time a hadrimoi takes damage, the fibrous tendrils that make up its body become increasingly elastic and responsive. The hadrimoi gains a +2 dodge bonus to AC, a +1 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and a bonus to his land speed of +10 feet. This benefit lasts for 1 minute from the round in which the hadrimoi first takes damage.

These bonuses stack each time the hadrimoi takes damage, to a maximum +10 dodge bonus to AC, +5 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and +50-foot bonus to land speed. These bonuses accrue each time the hadrimoi takes damage, even from multiple attacks in the same round.

Falling Courage (Ex) A hadrimoi whose bonus from its speed from pain ability reaches +30 feet or higher takes a –4 penalty on saves against fear effects and on the level check made to oppose an Intimidate check. In addition, while in this state, a hadrimoi can be affected by fear effects that do not normally affect creatures of its Hit Dice.

Perfect Symmetry (Ex) As a full attack, a hadrimoi can attack with up to four light weapons with no penalties on attack rolls. If it tries to use heavier weapons, it can make multiple attacks only according to its base attack bonus, and takes the normal penalties for attacking with two or more weapons.

Dagger Dance (Ex) As a hadrimoi converts its pain to superior agility, it can perform a deadly attack. Once a hadrimoi's bonus from its speed from pain ability reaches +30 feet or higher, the hadrimoi can move up to its speed as part of a full attack. It can move before, after, or between each of its attacks, as long as its total movement in the round does not exceed its speed.

HADRIMOI TACTICS

The hadrimoi is a maneuverable foe, but in a fight against a single foe in a largely empty ring, its maneuverability is mostly wasted. But these hadrimoi start the battle with great confidence, so they're more than willing to rush across the ring and stand toe-to-toe with a PC, gaining bonuses with each wound it suffers.

If the hadrimoi has 15 hit points or less, it yields and flee the ring.

WHEN THE BATTLE ENDS

Ushemai drag off the body—or corpse—of the loser. Then Glauu Hatari announces, "Superlative! A whirlwind of carnage and courage! Let's fight again, shall we? Excellent!"

VERSUS THE LASHEMOI

Encounter Level 6

SETUP

The PC starts on the west edge of the ring, and the lashemoi starts on the east edge. Spellcasters can cast any spells they like on themselves, but spells from others are forbidden (and Glauu Hatari dispels them if he notices). With a clap from Glauu Hatari, roll initiative and get the battle underway.

When the PC takes a spot in the ring, read:

A wooden fence forms a rough circle some 50 feet across. You face a gaunt, gray biped with long claws and a feral sneer. It clambers into the ring on the far side, tongue lolling as it bares fangs at you.

"Who can predict the outcome of such blood-mad slaughter? Who, indeed? How marvelous!" cries Glauu Hatari, then he claps once and yells, "Begin!"

Glauu Hatari: From this vantage point, Glauu Hatari (a 10th-level sorcerer) casts *detect magic* and watches for interference. If he sees any, he casts *dispel magic* (with a dispel check of +10) against the offending spell and announces, "Interference! My gladiator wins! Outstanding!"

Lashemoi: The lashemoi gladiators are Cannibal Kuterrek, Planak Ruul, and Arran the Painbringer. With levels in barbarian, they're far tougher than the CR 1 lashemoi in *Monster Manual V*. The three lashemoi are statistically identical.

LASHEMOI BARBARIAN (RAGING)

CR 6

MM5 186

hp 76 (7 HD); **DR** 5/slashing or piercing; lesser strength from pain

Lashemoi barbarian 5

Usually NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +3

Languages Common

AC 11, touch 8, flat-footed 11; Improved uncanny dodge, uncanny dodge (+3 natural)

Fort +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +6

Weakness broken courage

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee 2 claws +11 each (1d6+3)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +8

Atk Options rage 2/day

Abilities Str 17, Dex 11, Con 20, Int 5, Wis 11, Cha 8

SA lesser strength from pain

SQ fast movement, trap sense +1

Feats Improved Natural Armor, improved Natural Attack, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Hide +4, Listen+1, Spot +3

Broken Courage (Ex) A lashemoi takes a –4 penalty on saves against fear effects and on the level check made to oppose an Intimidate check. In addition, a lashemoi can be affected by fear effects that do not normally affect creatures of its Hit Dice.

Lesser Strength from Pain (Ex) Whenever a lashemoi takes damage from any source, it gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls, a +1 bonus on damage rolls, and its natural armor bonus to AC increases by 1. This benefit lasts for 1 minute from the round in which the lashemoi first takes damage.

These bonuses stack each time the lashemoi takes damage, to a maximum bonus of a +5 bonus on attack rolls, a +5 bonus on damage rolls, and a +5 natural armor bonus to AC. These bonuses accrue each time the lashemoi takes damage, even from multiple attacks in the same round.

When not raging, the lashemoi barbarian has the following changed statistics:

AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13

hp 62 (7 HD)

Fort +7, **Will** +4

Melee 2 claws +9 each (1d6+1)

Grp +8

Abilities Str 13, Con 16

LASHEMOI TACTICS

The lashemoi rages immediately, then it wades into melee, clawing as often as it can. Each time it takes damage, the lashemoi gains +1 on attack rolls, +1 on damage, and +1 to Armor Class, until it reaches a total of +5 to attacks, damage, and AC. Thereafter it's attacking at +16/+16 for 1d6+8 damage.

If the lashemoi has 15 hp or less, it will yield when its rage ends, but not before.

WHEN THE BATTLE ENDS

Ushemoi drag off the body—or corpse—of the loser. Then Glauu Hatari announces, "Commendable! Were we not all witnesses to such purity of aggression? Truly, it is beyond belief! Have we further spectacles of fighting spirit?"