

HIGA-03

A Path Less Wandered

**A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK[®]
Highfolk Introductory Regional Adventure**

Version 1.0

Round One

by Greg Marks

Based on a Scenario by Jason Bulmahn

With the Harvest Festival fast approaching, the town of Highfolk is preparing for its annual race of heroes. Glory goes to the fastest team. Can you stand up to the test, and win fame and fortune. An introductory regional module set in Highfolk for first level PCs only. Those players that have played HIG1-01 A Path Less Traveled may not play this scenario.

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This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

Preparation

First you should print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided will work as well. There is enough room along the inside margin to bind the adventure, if you desire.

Read this entire adventure at least once before you run your game. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

When you run an RPGA D&D adventure we assume that you have access to the following books: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. We also assume that you have a set of dice (at least one d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20), some scrap paper, a pencil, an RPGA scoring packet, and your sense of fun. It is also a good idea to have a way to track movement during combat. This can be as simple as a pad of graph paper and a pencil, as handy as a vinyl grid map and chits, or as elaborate as resin dungeon walls and miniatures.

Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described in the introduction.

Keep in mind that you must have at least four players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than seven players participating in the game.

Once you are ready to play, it is handy to instruct each player to place a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rule books during certain times of play. For example, the players are

not free to consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Scoring

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. The RPGA has three ways to score its games. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use for this scenario:

1. No-vote scoring: The players write their names and RPGA numbers on the scoring packet grid. You fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. Partial scoring: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. Voting: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the "best" amongst the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

When using voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities. It's a good idea to have the players vote while you determine treasure and experience awards for the scenario.

After voting, give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a LIVING adventure it is expected that players bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, and a character sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin. Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK *Gazetteer*.

Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportioned to the average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine the Average Party Level (APL):

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely being war horses, dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (i.e. animal companions, familiars, paladin's mounts, etc) use the following chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

CR	1	2	3	4
1/4 & 1/6	0	0	0	1
1/3 & 1/2	0	0	1	1
1	1	1	2	3
2	2	3	4	5
3	3	4	5	6
4	4	5	6	7

3. Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure – round up.
4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

By following these four steps, you will have determined the APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs will face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of the adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL this adventure is being played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Note: LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Three or four, or sometimes even five 1st-level characters may find difficulty with the challenges in a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure. If your group is APL 1 there are three things that you can do to help even the score.

1. Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

Time Units and Upkeep

This is an introductory one-round Regional adventure, set in Highfolk. Characters native to Highfolk pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per round. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per round. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per round.

Judge Introduction

NOTE: This is introductory module for the region of Highfolk for first-level characters only. Only first level characters may participate. As this module is an introductory module for first level PCs, it is primarily designed as a role-playing introduction to the town of Highfolk. Much of the outcome of the module is left to the imagination and adjudication of the DM. Reasonable plans should be offered a good chance of success.

The town of Highfolk is a bustling trade center on the road between Furyondy to the southeast and Perrenland to the northwest. Just south of the great Vesve forest, it is never far from the conflicts created by luz's massive empire of evil to the northeast. Despite this fact, life still flourishes in this moderately sized town of nearly ten thousand.

The diverse people of Highfolk are often in need of diverse entertainment and competition. To fit this need, an annual competition is held for all those who wish to participate. Known as the Race of Heroes, the spectacle draws much anticipation, gambling, and celebration. Every year, at the end of the midsummer festival know as Richfest, young heroes gather from around the countryside to form teams for the year's competition. Every year the teams head forth into the Vesve, in search of the special berries needed to make the harvest wines. The fastest teams always make the best wines, as they have had the most time to ferment. The victors are announced at Brewfest, three months later, marking the beginning of autumn, and the final great celebration of the year. Past winners included famed adventuring companies such as The Blades of Vengeance and the notorious Black Bottom Clan.

Every year something tends to go awry and the teams always seem to take longer than expected. This year will be no different.

Adventure Synopsis

Throughout the town of Highfolk, the word begins to spread of the upcoming competition. All interested in competing this year must go to the Gilded Cow tavern on the last day of Richfest to sign up.

The vintner of this year's competition is a man by the name of Antus Bralain. Antus's job is to sign up all those interested, organize teams if anyone does not have one, and to make the wine from the berries upon the teams return. A

committee decides upon the winner of the competition.

Once the players are organized into teams, they are given the night to prepare and celebrate. The contest begins the next morning. The players are given a map as to the location of the berries and sent upon their way. Their path leads them deep into the Vesve to find the needed berries. This is where the chase begins. Ysette, a druid of Ehlonna, guards the berries and refuses to hand them over unless the PCs retrieve her staff that she loaned to some passing halflings who needed protection. These halflings have since returned home, to their small village in the Highvale known as Stoutstump. After deciding which path to take, the players make their way to Stoutstump.

The halfling village is just to the south of the town of Verbeeg Hill and upon arriving; the PCs have little trouble finding the halflings that they seek. Logan Wood and his small band do not have the staff however, as they were robbed on their way home by a bunch of human bandits called the Reavers. Logan is very angry with this and does not willingly give much information to any band containing "tall folk". The trail leads on to the location of the attack just east of the village. Upon investigating the scene of the crime, it is easy for the PCs to determine that the thieves have headed north towards Verbeeg Hill.

On the trail to Verbeeg Hill, the same bandits who took the staff from Logan and his men attack the players. Upon defeating the bandits the PCs discover that the staff has been sold to a shop in Verbeeg Hill. The shop is easy to find, but getting the staff back is not so simple. The gnome, Berilac Knotwise, who bought the staff refuses to just hand it over but will instead offer to turn it over in return for a small favor. Berilac needs a message delivered to Elrenn Walthair, the Lord Marshall of the Vesve, who resides in Quaalsten. If the players agree to deliver the message, Berilac will give them the staff upon their return.

The road to Quaalsten is an easy one, but upon arriving, the PCs learn that the Lord Marshall is "out on the hunt", patrolling the Vesve. If they wish to find him quickly, the players will have to go after him. They are given many choices to explore, but will eventually find the Lord Marshall, who is fighting for his very life against the forest itself. Once the battle is over, the players can deliver their message, retrieve the staff and get the berries they need. All the while racing as quickly as possible to win the competition.

The DM must keep track of the amount of time spent traveling on **Appendix A**, as this will

determine the reward given for completing the contest.

Player Introduction

The following is to be read to the players once everyone is ready to begin.

A warm breeze blows across your brow, reminding you that the summer is far from over. The people of Highfolk do not appear to mind however, at least not while the midsummer week of Richfest is in full swing. All the markets in town are a bustle with activity but close early so that the festivities can commence and run deep into the night. It is a time of celebration for all to enjoy, a time of relaxation after long months of work in the fields.

The town is awash with strangers as people from around the countryside and beyond visit for the festival week. No one seems to mind though as the town seems to bare its splendor for all to enjoy. As the week draws to a close, the excitement does not appear to lessen in any way. In fact it appears to increase as everyone prepares for the upcoming Race of Heroes. Throughout the city, the people are talking about who will win this year's race.

At this point allow the characters to decide what they are doing during the festival and why they are in town, if they are not from the Highfolk region. Anyone inquiring about the race can easily find someone who will tell them all about it and undoubtedly ask if they plan to compete. The following pieces of information are easily obtained from any merchant, tavern owner, or street urchin. In addition, any character from Highfolk receives a Knowledge: Local skill check, DC 10, to gain this knowledge.

- The race of heroes is an annual event that begins on Freeday, the last day of Richfest.
- The race entails going into the Vesve to retrieve a bushel of special Ilymirth berries and bring them back to Highfolk as quickly as possible.
- The berries are only found in a few secret places within the Vesve, each team is sent to a different place.
- All competitors should meet at the Gilded Cow Tavern today, Earthday, the day before the last day of the Richfest week, to register.

- The berries will be used to make the prized Ilymirth wine, which will be tasted at Brewfest, in three months.
- In past years, the fastest team has taken anywhere from four days to nearly two months.
- The prize for the fastest team is to be crowned heroes for a year, and a bottle of the fine Ilymirth wine.
- This year's vintner is Antus Bralain, who will make the berries into wine.
- The team that everyone is betting on this year is known as the Elven Shadows, who supposedly know all of the Vesve very well. The Elven Shadows won three years ago before The Blades of Vengeance and the Black Bottom Clan, both of whom are not expected to compete.

Encounter 1 – A Night in Highfolk

When the players go to the Gilded Cow, read or paraphrase the following.

Before you stands the Gilded Cow, a local tavern that hosts to adventurers. Many say that the place holds magic and treasure aplenty for those with the coin to pay for it. Others just seem to laugh at the notion. A long line stretches out the front door of the tavern coming to an end right before you.

The Gilded Cow is easy to find, and the heroes can get there in plenty of time to register for the event. Outside the Gilded Cow is a line of people waiting to register. The PCs must wait about half an hour before they can get in. Anyone who attempts to skip ahead in line is immediately put to the end of it by a large member of the city guard. Inside the Gilded Cow are **Antus Bralain** (male human Exp4; Profession: Vintner +9) and a clerk of the city, **Triell** (male human Exp2; Profession: Scribe +5), who fills out all the paper work. Antus is a stout man who looks to be no stranger to luxury; his tunic and vest are both embroidered with a fine golden grapevine pattern. His hair is a dark well-kept black even though he is over fifty. Antus will ask them their names and if they have a party formed. There is no registration fee. Conveniently the PCs are the last people to register and if they have not already formed as a team they are put together now. After asking them for a team name, Antus will tell them to enjoy the evening and meet back here first thing in the morning prepared to travel.

The PCs may wish to purchase horses for use in the race. They are easily found for the price listed in the *Player's Handbook*. Character with less money may wish to see if they can merely loan a horse for the race. Many of the stables in town will do this for the purpose of the race as it gives them a bit of fame if their horses carry home the winning team. These stables will rent out their horses for 5 sp per day, so long as the character is willing to ride while bearing the standard of the stables. The players have a choice between three stables, The Leaping Stallion, Old Shoe Horses, and The Vale's Pride. Players not willing to bear the standard must pay 1 gp per day to rent.

The Gilded Cow Inn

The players may wish to spend the evening in the Gilded Cow. A common room costs about 1 gp per night and the special adventurers suites cost 5 gp per night. The suites are full of trophy heads; show weapons and suites of armor; they also come with free meals. In addition to the rooms the Gilded Cow has many other special goods for sale. It is known to sell obviously fake magical rings, potions and weapons to the gullible. This is an opportunity to lighten the characters purses if they are foolish enough to believe the claims of the barkeep, Witley Goldkeep, who will say just about anything to make a sale. Potions range anywhere from 10 to 25 gp, rings are usually 20 to 50 gp, and weapons are about four times the normal value. Only the potions radiate faint magic if checked. With the exception of the potions, rings and weapons have fancy glass jewels and other ornamentation. They are worth about half the purchase price as a decoration. The weapons are functional, but have a -1 to all damage rolls. The potions are actually very diluted magical potions, which Witley mixes with strong ale. Currently Witley has two each of the following in stock.

- Diluted *potion of cure light wounds* – this potion will restore 1d3 hit points when consumed. Cost – 10 gp
- Diluted *potion of enlarge* – this potion will enlarge the imbiber 10%, as per the spell for 2d4 rounds. Cost – 25 gp
- Diluted *potion of swimming* – this will grant the user a +2 to any Swimming proficiency check for 2d4 minutes – 15 gp

Any potion purchased will lose any magical properties in 2d10 days or at the end of the adventure, whichever comes first. PCs may request to make an Appraise skill check, DC 15, to realize the rings or weapons for what they really

are. A similar Alchemy skill check, DC 15 will do the same for the potions. No refunds are given.

Encounter 2 – Into the Vesve

The next morning, when the players meet at the Gilded Cow and are ready to go, read the following out loud.

Standing outside the Gilded Cow are almost half a dozen teams, ready to begin the race. Over two hundred spectators, in turn, surround them. Antus spots your team and heads your way. "Here is your map, and here is your basket", he says as he hands them off to you. "You may leave as soon as I give the signal. I wish you the best of luck". Antus quickly heads off, spotting another team that has just arrived. Only a few minutes later, Antus addresses you all. "Good people, let this years race of heroes begin." The crowd roars as the race begins and Antus shatters the ceremonial bottle of wine to signify the beginning of the contest.

Hand the players **Player Handout 1**, which is a map to the location of their berry bushes. The PCs also receive a large basket to carry the berries in. The basket is large enough to hold anything that might fit inside a normal backpack.

Leaving the city, the heroes are soon by themselves as the other teams are heading to different locations throughout the Vesve. Following the map the players will have little trouble finding the trail leading off towards their bushes. It is about 60 miles to the Vesve and the bushes are located about 20 miles within wood. The chart below indicates the time spent reaching the bushes. Note that the party only moves as fast as the slowest character and that moves of 50 and 60 feet can only be gotten with horses; 40 only by a horse or barbarian.

Travel Time Chart – Encounter 2	
Movement	Days Spent
15'	6.5 days
20'	5 days
30'	3.5 days
40' - Pony or heavy warhorse	2.5 days
50' - Draft horse	2 days
60' - Riding horse or light warhorse	1.5 days

Record the time spent under Encounter 2 on **Appendix A**. The players will have to camp at

least once on this journey, however the camp is undisturbed for the entire trip. Don't tell them this, and ask them for their watches and marching order.

The Druid

The spot marked on the map is deep inside the Vesve. The path they must follow is a wide game trail. In most places it is wide enough for two mounted players to travel abreast of one another. When the players arrive at point A on the map read the following to them.

Warm days and cool refreshing nights have accompanied you on your journey. Passing through the fertile farmlands surrounding Highfolk, across the great Veverdyva River and into the great woods known as the Vesve, your map has led you to this spot. Before you is a small pond only a couple of hundred feet wide. In the center of this pond lies a small island covered with berry bushes. Only the calm water of the pond, reflecting the forest around you, stands in the way of your goal.

To reach the island will require the PCs to swim or use some magical means. To swim to the island requires a **Swim** skill check, DC 10. Be sure that the players include any armor check penalty they may have. Failure indicates that the PC has gone under. See the DMG page 85 for rules on drowning. Note that any trained swimmer, or anyone using the diluted *Potion of Swimming* can take 10 and easily get across.

The berries are the Ilymirth berries the PCs have been sent to retrieve. As soon as anyone goes to pick the berries, a large falcon comes down from the sky landing before the adventurers and shapeshifts into a beautiful elven maiden. Be sure to explain the spectacle of the transformation, as it is more than likely the first time the characters have seen it happen. The maiden is in reality a druid of Ehlonna (in elven, Ehlenestra) named Ysette Maplewood of Clan Seldorian (an elven clan with many deeply religious members). Ysette in her elven form is of average build and quite tan from all the time spent outdoors. Her hair is a light blond and her eyes as green as the Vesve around her. Ysette will not allow the PCs to pick any of her berries without permission, as she sees this as a violation of her grove. Ysette does have a dilemma that needs to be solved and if the PCs can help her with it she will gladly give them the all the berries that they need.

If the PCs ask to know more about this problem, Ysette will tell them the following.

One week ago, a small band of halflings passed through my sacred grove. Many of them were injured and one had no life left within him. I took pity on these poor souls and offered my help for it was obvious to me that some outside force had done this to them. A rather short fellow named Logan Wood led the band. It was Logan who told me of their tale. It appears that they were beset upon by a band of vicious orcs while traveling through the woods. Although they defeated the defilers, many of them were injured and one had been slain. I tended their wounds and sent them on their way home. To ensure their safety I lent them a magical staff on the grounds that I would come pick it up when next I might need it. Unfortunately that time has come all too soon. Many strange things are afoot deep within this humble wood and I fear that I may need my staff in the months to come. However I cannot simply go to retrieve it myself, too many in this area rely upon my protection for me to simply wander off. I would ask that you go to retrieve my staff. It is a simple task and in exchange I shall give you all the berries that you need.

If the heroes agree, Ysette will tell them that the halflings hail from a small village known as Stoutstump, about a days ride south of Verbeeg Hill. At this point Ysette will draw upon the PCs map, indicating the two best means of travel to Stoutstump and mark the village for them. One path leads down a small road going through the Vesve towards Verbeeg hill. The other leads down a hunting trail, it will be difficult to follow but, will be faster than the road. The DM should draw this information onto the PCs map (**Players Handout A**) using the DM map (**Appendix B**) as a guide.

The players may have other questions, some of which Ysette answers below.

- *What does the Staff look like?*

“My staff is about 5 feet long with stout silver bands made of the heartwood of an Oak. There are ancient carvings along one side.”

- *What are the strange things in the forest that you speak of?*

“It is nothing you need to worry yourselves about yet, but I would keep both eyes fully open anywhere in the Vesve.”

- *What are the powers of the Staff?*

“Do not worry of such things; you will not need them I am sure. Brave heroes such as you have no need for its protection.”

- *Why don't we stay behind and watch things for you while you go retrieve the staff?*

“That will simply not do. Many of the things, which must be attended to, are very personal to me and nothing you need be involved in.”

Development: Some players may wish to attempt to steal the berries, although this is possible; Ysette keeps a constant vigil around her area of the Vesve. Such a theft will not go unnoticed and will lead to a confrontation between Ysette and the PCs before they leave the Vesve. Although she should be willing to give the PCs a second chance, if they refuse she will retrieve them by force. She is not above teaching the players a harsh lesson about the ways of the Vesve if it should come to that.

Creatures: While not intending to fight the PCs, Ysette will not shrink from the defense of her grove.

Ysette: female, wood elfen, Drd 6.

Encounter 3 – A Path Less Traveled

The PCs now have a choice to make. The druid has shown them two routes they could take to Stoutstump. Referring to **Appendix B** as a guide, path A is a road and while it leads to Stoutstump; it is the longer of the two choices. If the players chose path A, they experience Encounter 3A. The other path, path B, is a smaller game trail. It is shorter than path A but less reliable. If the player chose path B, lead them through Encounter 3B. Encounter 3C deals with the players if they leave either path or get lost as a result of Encounter 3B.

Encounter 3A – Forest Road

This encounter is only to be used if the players chose to go on path A, the forest road. This path leads more or less on toward Verbeeg Hill, and because of this it is a longer journey. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

The path you have chosen leads deep into the Vesve on toward Verbeeg Hill. It is a longer

journey but sure to be a safer one. The tranquility of the forest surrounds you on your journey and it is not until the second morning of your trip that you encounter another living soul. Ahead of you, on the path, is a man, clad in exquisite brown and green leather armor. He stands, watching your approach carefully, with a longbow in hand and an arrow knocked, but not raised.

The man on the path is **Sir Oslen Oakbough** (male half elf Rgr8), a Knight of the High Forest, guardian of the Vesve, Highvale and Highfolk region. His current assignment has led him down this path on his way to Flameflower, the hidden city of the elves. As they approach, Oslen will not raise his bow at the PCs unless they draw their weapons. If this occurs he will call out to them, telling them travelers in the Vesve would do well not to draw weapons on a Knight of the High Forest. He is willing to show his insignia, a small pair of golden stag horns on a green background, to prove his position. If this does not convince them, he simply moves away into the woods, heading off to fulfill his current assignment. If the players blindly attack Oslen, his Stat block is included in **Appendix C**. If a conversation is struck up, Oslen has the following to say.

- Oslen dislikes the Race of Heroes, as he believes the Vesve to be too dangerous of a place to hold “games”.
- The PCs should be wary. There have been some troubles in the deep parts of the great forest as of late. Evil humanoids seem to be raiding with increased frequency and organization and there are armies on the march from the East.
- Many of the knights have gone in search of answers to this dilemma. Oslen is on his way to Flameflower to ask some questions of any that may be there.
- Bandit raids along the royal highway (the road that leads to the town of Highfolk from Furyondy) have increased as well and many knights have gone to investigate this.
- Oslen knows little of the berries they seek, and grumbles something about it being just a waste of time.
- If asked about the halflings they seek, Oslen has never heard of them, he does not operate in that region.

After having a short conversation, Oslen politely informs the players that he must be going and heads down the path, on his way to Flameflower. The trail leads on without further incident on their

way to Stoutstump. If the players stray from the path for some reason a successful **Tracking** skill check (base DC 10) will return them to it. If this roll fails, the players go through encounter 3C. If they attempt to leave this trail and make for the game trail (path B), it will require 3 **Intuit Direction** skill checks, (DC 15). As above, if any of these fail, the players go through encounter 3C.

Below is a chart to calculate the players travel time to Stoutstump if they use path A. The journey is 140 miles long. Note that the party only moves as fast as the slowest character and that moves of 50 and 60 feet can only be gotten with horses; 40 only by a horse or barbarian.

Travel Time Chart – Encounter 3A	
Movement	Days Spent
15'	11.5 days
20'	9 days
30'	6 days
40' - Pony or heavy warhorse	4.5 days
50' - Draft horse	3.5 days
60' - Riding horse or light warhorse	3 days

Record the time spent under Encounter 3 on **Appendix A**. The players will have to camp at least twice on this journey, however the camp is undisturbed for the entire trip, save some harmless squirrels or rabbits to keep the PCs on their toes. The players should now proceed to encounter 4.

Encounter 3B - The Game Trail

This encounter is only to be used if the players chose to go on path B, the game trail. This path leads straight on toward Stoutstump, and because of this it is the shorter of the two paths. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

The path you have chose is little more than a game trail. Although the heavy underbrush and occasional stream have forced you to side trek many times, this path leads straight on toward Stoutstump and is sure to be the fastest choice. However, it is easy to become lost in the immense forest that is the Vesve.

This would be the point to ask for tracking skill checks. The game trail is on soft ground, but has not been used in seven days by a small hunting group of four elves. The DC for this roll will be a 16. This is a Wis based skill and can be made by the unskilled at a penalty of 4 (making the DC 20) however, only the PC leading the group can make

the check. If the heroes make three successful checks then proceed to encounter 4. If any of these checks fail, anyone in the party may make an **Intuit Direction** skill check (DC 15) to relocate the trail. In addition, any PC with **Knowledge: Nature** or **Wilderness Lore** may make also make a skill check (DC 15) to find the trail through natural signs. Please note that Intuit Direction and Knowledge: Nature cannot be used unskilled and if no one in the party possesses these skills or the checks are failed the party becomes lost and should be run through encounter 3C.

Below is a chart to calculate the players travel time to Stoutstump if they use path B. The journey is 80 miles long. Note that the party only moves as fast as the slowest character and that moves of 50 and 60 feet can only be gotten with horses; 40 only by a horse or barbarian. Note that these times are slower because of the dense forest that must be traversed

Travel Time Chart – Encounter 3B	
Movement	Days Spent
15'	9 days
20'	6.5 days
30'	4.5 days
40' - Pony or heavy warhorse	3.5 days
50' - Draft horse	2.5 days
60' - Riding horse or light warhorse	2 days

Record the time spent under Encounter 3 on **Appendix A**. The players will have to camp at least twice on this journey, however the camp is undisturbed for the entire trip, save some harmless squirrels or rabbits to keep the PCs on their toes. The players should now proceed to encounter 4.

Encounter 3C – Lost in the Vesve

This encounter is only to be used if the players become lost at any point within the Vesve. This encounter deals with lost time and finding the way out. If the players become lost please read the following to them.

Heavy underbrush and a dense canopy have turned your journey into a gloomy nightmare, as no sign to your location is forthcoming. The great wood seems to be a maze to those unfamiliar to it and no matter the direction you take, it seems as if you are always in the middle of it.

Players who become lost in the Vesve may make an **Intuit Direction** skill check (DC 15) to relocate the trail they were using. This adds a day to the travel time indicated on the chart for the trail that they were using. In addition, any PC with **Knowledge: Nature** or **Wilderness Lore** may also make a skill check (DC 15) to find the trail through natural signs, although this also adds a day to their travel time. Please note that Intuit Direction and Knowledge: Nature cannot be used unskilled and if no one in the party possesses these skills or the checks are failed the party remains lost for another day and may retry the next day. Also note that the Knowledge: Nature skill may only be attempted once and if failed may not be attempted again until additional ranks in the skill are purchased, however Intuit Direction may be used once per day.

The PCs can be lost in the Vesve for up to seven days. After this time, they stumble out in the vicinity of Highfolk and must travel to Stoutstump from there. Use the following chart to calculate the players travel time only if they have been lost in the Vesve for seven days. Note that the party only moves as fast as the slowest character and that moves of 50 and 60 feet can only be gotten with horses; 40 only by a horse or barbarian.

Travel Time Chart – Encounter 3C	
Movement	Days Spent
15'	13.5 days
20'	12 days
30'	10.5 days
40' - Pony or heavy warhorse	9.5 days
50' - Draft horse	9 days
60' - Riding horse or light warhorse	8.5 days

Record the time spent under Encounter 3 on **Appendix A**. The heroes will have to camp at least seven on this journey, however the camp is undisturbed for the entire trip, save some strange noises and ominous lights off in the distance to keep the PCs on their toes. The heroes should now proceed to encounter 4.

Encounter 4 – Stoutstump

Stoutstump is a small halfling village about 70 miles south of Verbeeg Hill along the Highvale road. No matter the time spent getting there, the PCs arrive there in the early afternoon. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

With the hot noonday sun beating down upon you, the village of Stoutstump slowly comes into view. Not a large village, Stoutstump looks to only contain about twenty or so buildings. Some of which are made of wood, others appear to be built into the side of the small hills that cover the landscape. Many halflings can be seen going about their daily business, working in small gardens, tending to their homes or just relaxing in the shade provided by some of the small trees that are scattered about.

Stoutstump is a small village comprised entirely of halflings. The stoutfolk are mainly self sufficient and only need outside goods from time to time. When they do, they trade some of their expert woodcarvings for any supplies that are required from merchants passing down the Highvale road. When the PCs approach, read to them the following. If the party contains only gnomes and halflings omit the word tall from the passage.

As you approach, a halfling, dressed in simple browns and bearing no weapons gets up from his rest beside a tree and approaches. “Why hullo there tall folk” he says looking up at you. “Welcome to the village of Stoutstump. Is there anything I can help you tall strangers with this fine hot afternoon.” A small badge pinned to his tunic identifies him a Welmot the town greeter.

Welmot is a bit rustic but altogether cheerful and happy to give the PCs any help they might need. Unfortunately, Welmot knows nothing about the staff. He does however know where Logan Wood lives. He will direct them to go through center of the village, past the great stump and just to the left. He reassures the players that they cannot miss Logan’s hill, as it is the one with the new moat. Once the PCs head toward Logan’s hill read the following.

Welmot’s directions lead you through the center of the small village and past its namesake, a rather large tree stump about ten feet wide. Beyond this you see the hill that must belong to Logan Wood. Surrounding the hill is a four feet deep moat, putting the door almost six feet above the floor of it. Luckily the moat has not been filled yet, making it easy to simply walk down into the moat and knock on the door.

Logan Wood’s house is built into a small hill surrounded by a recently dug moat. Logan

decided to dig the moat after being robbed twice by tall folk on his recent trip into the Vesve to visit his cousin. He has not yet filled the moat because he has not built a gangplank yet to get out with out having to walk into the moat. PCs wishing to knock on Logan's door must either climb into the moat or throw something at the door (or use some form of magic, which is just as rude). Logan's reaction to this depend on their actions and who the PCs are. The term small folk refers to gnomes and halflings

- **If the PCs knock and are all small folk -**

Logan looks down at them, throws them a rope and invites them in for tea. He gladly discusses all the things that have happened to him and offers help in whatever way he can.

- **If the PCs knock and are not all small folk -**

Logan does not invite them in and treats them with open resentment. He will give them the information about the staff and the direction of the bandits but little else.

- **If the PCs throw something at the door and are all small folk -**

Logan will scold them for their lack of manners but invite them in anyway. He gladly discusses all the things that have happened to him and offers to help in whatever way he can.

- **If the PCs throw something at the door and are not all small folk -**

Logan will open the door, see the rude tall folk and slam it shut. He will not open it again until the PCs knock personally. Even then he will treat them with open resentment. He will give them the information about the staff and the direction of the bandits but little else.

Logan Wood

Depending on the disposition of Logan, his story may be quite difficult to obtain but, with persistence, the players can get the information they need from him.

Three weeks ago, Logan left the Village of Stoutstump with his brother, Dogan, and two friends, Kilbroy Hillbrand and Liveall Redreed, on a trip to visit Logan's cousin Engert Wood who lives deep within the Vesve. The trip there was quite pleasant for the four but the trip back was a nightmare. After spending a relaxing week at Engert's cottage the group left for home, taking the same path they had used to get there. Not a day

after leaving, Logan accidentally led the group down the wrong path and got horribly lost. Making camp after a long day of searching, they were beset upon by a group of five orcs. The nasty beasts were intent on having a delicious halfling stew. The ensuing battle was quick and dirty but by its end three of the orcs were dead and the other two had fled. There was another casualty however, Logan's brother Dogan had also fallen during the fight. The next morning, with grief heavy in their hearts and a maze of trees around them, they continued in their search for the trail that would lead them home.

Another day passed with no hope in sight for the remaining trio. That evening they were lucky enough to find a small pond to rest by and refill their empty skins. This is when they met Ysette. Ysette helped them recovered for their wounds and showed them the way out of the Vesve and on toward home. To ensure their safety on the remaining journey, Ysette lent them a staff with some magic powers. Powers she said would protect their camp at night and watch over them as they traveled. Ysette could not have known that her need to help those in her land would be seen as pity, making Logan feel quite the fool and responsible for all the trouble. They left the next morning without saying much thanks.

The remainder of their journey through the Vesve was a peaceful one. On the last day of their journey, they camped just outside the Vesve, in a small copse of apple trees; unaware of the trouble they would soon be in. The powers of the staff did not extend outside the Vesve, and not having known this, they all fell asleep without much thought to their safety. Later on that night, a group of bandits calling themselves the Reavers happened upon the poor sleeping halflings. They were quickly tied up and robbed. Even the body of Logan's brother, Dogan, was pillaged. The bandits took everything, including Ysette's staff. Logan and his band spent the whole night and half of the next day bound to each other before a halfling woodcutter happened upon them and set them free.

Logan has spent the past three days mourning for his brother and fortifying his home from "tallies" (anybody who is not a gnome or halfling), which he now thoroughly distrusts. He feels quite betrayed by Ysette, who forgot to tell him of the staff's limitations, and angry with himself for actually believing that an elf might help him.

Aside from his story, which only a party of all gnomes and halflings should get all of, Logan has specific pieces of information that he will share, leading the PCs on toward finding the missing staff. The PCs should be able to get this

information no matter Logan's disposition towards them.

- The staff was taken by a group of bandits calling themselves the Reavers.
- There were four bandits, all human, one was a woman, and all wearing polished black leather armor.
- They spoke very little but Logan did pick one of their names, a man by the name of Brell.
- They rode off to the north, straight toward Verbeeg Hill.
- One of them smelled horribly like eel jelly.
- The sight of the attack is due east of Stoutstump, just outside the Vesve forest. (Logan will mark it on the player map.)

Logan knows little else of his attackers as it was very dark and he was woken out of a deep sleep. If asked about the eel jelly, Logan will mention the only place to get any of that around here is up in Verbeeg Hill. Kilbroy and Liveal are also hiding out inside of Logan's home, but they know even less than Logan. Kilbroy was knocked out and Liveal fainted. This information should lead them into encounter 5.

If the PC group is all short folk, Logan will go a step further, offering them to join a militia he is forming to deal with nasty "tallies". Take down the names of all of the players and their characters that accept the offer and contact the Highfolk Triad (skerrit@wi.rr.com, Greg Marks POC). Logan says that he will contact them soon.

Creatures: Logan Wood, the paranoid halfling, is horrified that the "tallies" are out to get him. It is unlikely but possible to start a confrontation with Logan. If the PCs do so, Kilbroy and Liveal hide, or attempt to summon the Stoutstump watch for aid.

Logan Wood: male, halfling, Com4.

Encounter 5 – *The Bandits*

The PCs will have one or two choices as to the location of this encounter. They may choose to investigate the site of the attack or they may proceed directly to Verbeeg Hill. In either case, they will encounter the same bandits that robbed poor Logan and his friends.

The bandits, known as the Reavers, consist of four rogues. The leader of the group is a human male called Brell, who is by far the most intelligent of the group. Oweine and Imayne are brothers, both big and neither very bright. Anora is the only one with true talent in the group but Brell keeps

her under close scrutiny because of her compassion.

After robbing the halflings of all their possessions, the Reavers went on to Verbeeg Hill to celebrate and cash in their loot. They sold the staff to a merchant there named Berilac Knotwise. After selling all of their ill-gotten goods, they promptly spent most of the money in the Smiling Halls of Good Fortune (the temple of Norebo). Following many bad rolls of the dice, Brell decided to take his troupe back on the road to refill his coffer.

• **If the players head strait toward Verbeeg Hill.**

PCs that head to Verbeeg Hill will have to spend at least a day and a half traveling there (see the Travel Time Chart for encounter five located at the end of this encounter) and hence will have to camp once. The Reavers have just left Verbeeg Hill, having spent nearly all of their money gotten from looting the halflings. They will notice the PCs down the road in the mid afternoon of the second day and will set an ambush, see The Ambush below.

• **If the players investigate the robbery site.**

The site where Logan and his two friends were robbed is easy to find. The small copse of apple trees located just half a mile from the Vesve. It unfortunately provides few clues as to the whereabouts of the bandits, just some old tracks heading north, and some halfling sized tracks leading toward Stoutstump. This side trek does add one day to their journey to Verbeeg Hill however (see the Time Chart for encounter five located at the end of this encounter). As the PCs leave the site they are spotted by the very same bandits that robbed the halflings, who will lay an ambush on their path, see The Ambush below.

The Ambush

The bandit's plan is to split into two groups, about 40 feet apart, and lie in wait along side the road, hiding in the underbrush. Brell and Imayne plan to jump out ahead of the group while Oweine and Anora sneak up from behind once the PCs have past. At this point, the DM should make a **Hide** skill check for both Oweine and Anora, note that they both receive a +2 modifier to the roll for being 20 feet from the road. The lower of the two becomes the DC for **Spot** skill checks that the PCs receive to notice the two and not wander into the trap. If the PCs notice the two, Brell and Imayne immediately step from hiding announce

their intentions (see the **read-aloud text** below). If the PCs do not notice the two bandits, Brell and Imayne step from hiding once they are past the two and announce their intentions, which is the cue for Anora and Oweine to move into a sneak attack position should a fight erupt. In either case, once Brell steps forward, read the following to the players.

Two men, clad in polished black leather armor, step out of the brush in front of you. One of them brandishes a short sword. The other is a taller man with raven black hair and a loaded crossbow. He looks to you and says, "Good afternoon to you fine folk. I am sorry to inform you that the Reavers have waylaid you. If you would be so kind as to give up all of your possessions, none of you needs to die."

The players have two choices at this point, give up everything they own, save their clothing, or fight the Reavers. If the players give the bandits everything, including horses, the Reavers promptly tie them up and head back to Verbeeg Hill for more fun. If they fight, Brell and Imayne fight in front, while Anora and Oweine sneak up from behind if they have not been noticed. If Anora and Oweine have been spotted, they attack from either side.

APL 2 (EL 4)

Brell Blackbow: hp 10, See Appendix C.

Imayne Glenshade: hp 7, See Appendix C.

Oweine Glenshade: hp 6, See Appendix C.

Anora Helonis: hp 4, See Appendix C.

Tactics: Brell will begin the combat by firing his crossbow at the lead PC. At this point, Imayne will move in to attack while Anora and Oweine move in for sneak attacks on rear PCs (if they have not been discovered). Anora however, dislikes killing for profit and will attempt a sneak attack using her sap to render PCs unconscious. Anora only uses her shortbow if the sneak attack fails or one of her comrades is put down.

The bandits will fight until Brell is knocked out, killed or calls for a retreat. Brell will call a retreat is any of his other two comrades are out or he himself is down to 1 or 2 hps.

If all of the PCs are knocked out, Anora will ransack the bodies, but at the same time use her Heal skill to ensure that they live. The PCs will awaken later on that night to find all of their possessions gone.

Treasure: The Reavers do not carry much, but what they have can be taken by the PCs. Treasure is listed per PC.

APL 2 – loot - (22 gp), coin - (16 gp).

Development: Many things could happen in the fight. Some or all of the Reavers could be killed or captured. All of the PCs could be knocked out. Some or all of the bandits could get away. It is important to note that the adventure is not over no matter the outcome of the battle.

If the PCs kill all of the Reavers, a quick search of the bodies will reveal that they do not possess the staff. However all of them do have a number of coins on them minted in Verbeeg Hill. This is there only clue to go look for the staff there.

If the PCs managed to capture one of the Reavers, threatening justice is a big enough incentive to get them to talk. Anyone of them will tell the PCs that the staff was sold to Berilac Knotwise, owner of Gnomish Curios and Oddities, a shop in Verbeeg Hill. Captured Reavers can be turned in to the sheriff of Verbeeg Hill, left out in the wild, or set free.

If all of the Reavers manage to escape, the only course of action is to follow them back toward Verbeeg Hill. A Wilderness Lore (tracking) check, DC 10, clearly shows the Reavers left Northwest toward the road to Verbeeg Hill. This may lead to another battle once the PCs catch up with them. Note that unless they are stolen from the PCs, none of the Reavers owns a horse and must move at the same travel times as the PCs. However, once in Verbeeg Hill the PCs may wander across the staff in Berilac's shop.

If all of the PCs are knocked out or killed, all of their possessions are taken, but as noted above, Anora attempts to keep any of them from dying. Having pity in her heart, Anora leaves them her only two remaining gold pieces on one of the PCs. Both of these coins were minted in Verbeeg Hill. PCs may go to Verbeeg Hill in search of their gear and the staff. Another run in with the Reavers will undoubtedly follow.

The Road to Verbeeg Hill

Use the following chart to calculate the players travel time to Verbeeg Hill, a journey of 70 miles from Stoutstump. Note that the party only moves as fast as the slowest character and that moves of 50 and 60 feet can only be gotten with horses; 40 only by a horse or barbarian.

Travel Time Chart – Encounter 5	
Movement	Days Spent

15'	6 days
20'	4.5 days
30'	3 days
40' - Pony or heavy warhorse	2.5 days
50' - Draft horse	2 days
60' - Riding horse or light warhorse	1.5 days

Please add one day to the time spent if the PCs investigate the site where Logan was attacked. Record the time spent under Encounter 5 on **Appendix A**. The players will have to camp at least once on this journey, however the camp is undisturbed for the entire trip. The players should now proceed to encounter 6.

Encounter 6 – Verbeeg Hill

Upon arriving in Verbeeg Hill, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

Cresting a steep rise, you see the small town of Verbeeg Hill. Barely one hundred buildings stand within its borders. Stories tell that the town strives on trade as its only business. All of the kingdoms that sit upon the wide blue Volverdyva and the gnomish mines to the north use Verbeeg Hill as a focal point for trade. Many boats are docked at the town's port and many more still are in the open water, going about their business.

A light breeze carries the scent of the town's famous eel jelly up to you. Although not entirely offensive, it is a smell unlike any other.

Verbeeg Hill is a town of about 500 people of all races. Its only resources are trade and eel jelly. The latter of which is made from the boiled eel, which are caught from the Volverdyva every day. Traders from all around Perrenland, Furyondy, Highfolk, the Vesve, and beyond use Verbeeg Hill as a sort of neutral ground for business deals. No one in the city minds however, as the traders bring good business to the cities many inns, taverns and gambling halls. Anything that is sought after can be found in Verbeeg Hill eventually for the right price.

The PCs will be looking for the staff and have many avenues of exploration in which to find it. All of their options will depend upon what they learned from the bandits and maybe a bit of dumb luck. Listed below are some of the possibilities the PCs may explore. Surely ingenious players will

come up with others ideas, whose chance of success must be decided upon by the DM.

If the players did not find out that the bandits sold the staff or did not learn whom they sold it to, PCs may attempt to backtrack the bandit's trail. If the players ask around town, they easily find out that the Reavers were often times seen at a tavern called The Eel's Escape, a small one-room bar with battered tables and a small kitchen behind the bar. The Eel's Escape is located near the docks. PCs investigating there can make an **Information Gathering** skill checks (DC 20) to learn that the Reavers often sold their "trade goods" at Berilac's shop. This roll receives a +1 modifier for every gp spent on drinks. The roll may be made only once per evening.

If some or all of the Reavers escape capture, the PCs may attempt to track them down in Verbeeg Hill. Once again, they can ask around to find out that they are often seen at The Eel's Escape. Details of a second combat between the Reavers and the PCs are left up to the ingenuity of the DM and the plans of the players. This may or may not lead them to discovering the whereabouts of the staff.

Desperate PCs may attempt to search the entire town in hopes of running across the staff. This requires a **Spot** skill check (DC 15). Note the check uses Spot instead of Search as seeing the staff in a town this large is more luck than skill. This check may be made twice for every day spent searching. PC groups that split up have a much better chance of finding the staff than ones that stick together. Another approach to this method is to ask around if anyone has seen the staff. This requires an Information Gathering skill check (DC 20) to successfully locate the staff. This check may be made once every two hours spent asking around.

Please note any time spent looking for the staff under encounter 6 on **Appendix A**.

Berilac Knotwise

Through one means or another, the PCs will end up at Gnomish Curios and Oddities, the shop owned by Berilac Knotwise (male gnome Wiz7) that purchased Ysette's staff from the Reavers.

Upon a squat stone building at the edge of town, a wooden sign swings lazily in the wind. It reads Gnomish Curios and Oddities in both the common and gnomish tongue. A large window in the front displays some of the wares to be found inside, including an oak-wood staff with silver bands.

If the PCs enter the shop Berilac will jump up to greet them and ask them if there is anything he can help them with. Berilac is a member of the town council in Verbeeg Hill and runs a clean honest shop. He is also a member of the Gnomish Consortium of Merchants, Moneylenders, Miners, and Gemcutters out of Gildenhand (a guild devoted to promoting fair trade in the region). He had no idea that the staff was stolen, and paid almost 500 gp for it. His shop specializes in rare and unique goods and the staff fit the bill. All around his shop are strange and wonderful things, left to the DMs imagination, but all are well out of the PCs price range. Berilac is looking to fetch 10,000 gp for the staff alone.

If the PCs actually have the gold, they can purchase it and return to Ysette to retrieve their berries. Refer to Travel Time Chart 3A to calculate the time it takes to get there. Record this time under encounter 6 on **Appendix A**. Then proceed to the **Conclusion**.

More than likely the PCs do not have the money necessary to purchase the staff. Berilac is a fair man however and will give them the staff for free if they perform one small task for him. Berilac needs a letter delivered to the Lord Marshal of the Vesve, head ranger Elrenn Walthair. If the players agree to deliver the message, Berilac promises to give them the staff upon their return and hands them the letter to be deliver to the Lord Marshal. He tells them to deliver the letter only to the Lord Marshal; no one else is to see it. Berilac also will draw upon their map and give them directions to Quaalsten, home of the Lord Marshal. The DM should draw this upon **Player Handout 1** using **Appendix B** as a guide.

Before they go, Berilac asks them not to open the letter, just to deliver it. Nothing bad befalls the PCs if they open the letter; Berilac just likes to keep his personal business personal. If the PCs do open the letter, hand them **Players Handout 2**.

Questionable players may attempt to steal the staff. This will get them nowhere however, as the staff in the window is just a duplicate with *Nystul's Magical Aura* cast upon it. The real staff is kept in a stone vault located underneath Berilac's home next door. PCs attempting this should be caught and put in jail for seven days, then released with no hope of retrieving the staff, as Berilac does not deal with known criminals.

Encounter 7 – Quaalsten

The road to Quaalsten is the longest leg of the heroe's journey. The path that Berilac has laid out for them is over 250 miles in length. Use the following chart to calculate the players travel time

to Quaalsten. Note that the party only moves as fast as the slowest character and that moves of 50 and 60 feet can only be gotten with horses; 40 only by a horse or barbarian.

Travel Time Chart – Encounter 5	
Movement	Days Spent
15'	21 days
20'	15.5 days
30'	10.5 days
40' - Pony or heavy warhorse	8 days
50' - Draft horse	6 days
60' - Riding horse or light warhorse	5 days

Record the time spent under Encounter 7 on **Appendix A**. The players will have to camp at least four times on this journey, however the camp is undisturbed for the entire trip.

Upon arriving in Quaalsten, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

The trail that Berilac drew upon your map was a long one, almost 250 miles in length. That road is now behind you however as Quaalsten, home to the Rangers of the Vesve, stands before you.

Quaalsten is a walled forest community, a place that the rangers use as their base of operation. Recently the church of Ehlonna built a high temple within the cities walls as well. The roofs of many buildings show themselves over the wooden palisade and thin vines of smoke rise from their chimneys. The crisp scent of wood smoke wafts over your nostrils, as a man clad in supple brown leather armor calls to you from a tower next to the main gate.

“Ho there fair travelers, what has brought you to Quaalsten?”

The man is Owane Feldard (male human Rgr2), a gate guard. If the players ask to see the Lord Marshal with an urgent message, they will be allowed in to speak with Almeric Wilstone, the chief forest captain under Elrenn. If for some reason the players are covert about their mission, they will not be turned away from the town. They will however quickly learn that Elrenn is currently “Out on the Hunt” and not in the settlement.

Almeric Wilstone (male half elf Rgr9) is a half-elf in his late 40's. His position within Quaalsten is to oversee the day-to-day activities while Elrenn is away or engaged in other activities. This is a job that Almeric takes very seriously. If

the players are sent to see him bearing a message for the Lord Marshal, Almeric does not doubt their claim. Unfortunately the Lord Marshal is not in Quaalsten; he is out patrolling the Vesve. He will not take the note from the PCs, instead insisting they either wait for Elrenn to return or go in search of him. If they wish to know more, Elrenn has the following points to share with them.

- Elrenn Walthair, the Lord Marshal, has gone “Out on the Hunt”, which means that he is about patrolling the Vesve. He is traveling alone.
- He left to the east, probably checking all of the guard stations in that region. There are five stations in the region. Elrenn would not spend more than a two or three days at each one.
- Elrenn would not visit the same station twice in one trip, preferring to visit them all quickly and then return to Quaalsten
- Elrenn left ten days ago and may not return for another ten. PCs are welcome to stay until he returns.

The PCs may decide to wait for Elrenn to return. If this is the case they must wait 10 days, which should be recorded under encounter 8 on **Appendix A**. During that time, they are welcome to explore the town, visit the Hearth of the Unicorn’s Heart (temple to Ehlonna) and watch the rangers at work. Nothing much exciting happens during this time. Once the Lord Marshal returns, he looks over the letter, gives the PC his signet ring and sends them back to Berilac. The DM should skip **encounter 8** if the players decide to wait for the Lord Marshal to return.

If the heroes decide to venture forth and find the Elrenn, Almeric will draw the location of the five small outposts on the players map. The DM should sketch this information onto the players map (**Players Handout 1**) using the DM map (**Appendix B**) as a guide. Almeric will also point out that Elrenn left heading toward outpost C and most likely went there first. This leads them to encounter 8.

Encounter 8 – Out on the Hunt

By the time the player leave Quaalsten; Elrenn has already visited three of the five outposts. His path has led him from Quaalsten to outpost C, where he spent three days. From there he went on to spend two days at outpost E. He left outpost E and went on to Outpost D. After spending two

days at outpost D, Elrenn has just left on his way to outpost B.

The players must travel from post to post looking for the Lord Marshal. A timeline is included below to indicate where Elrenn is on any given day. To travel from post to post requires one day no matter the distance and speed of the party. Keep track of any time spent by the PCs and record this under encounter 8 on **Appendix B**. A ranger, who will gladly tell the party if they have seen the Lord Marshal and how many days ago it was, mans each outpost. Once the PCs find the Marshal, refer to **Saving the Lord Marshal** below for the rest of the encounter.

Lord Marshal’s Timeline

Day	Event
1	Elrenn leaves Quaalsten and travels to outpost C.
2-4	Elrenn inspects outpost C.
5	Elrenn leaves outpost C and travels to outpost E.
6-7	Elrenn inspects outpost E.
8	Elrenn leaves outpost E and travels to outpost D.
9-10	Elrenn inspects outpost D.
11	Elrenn leaves outpost D and travels to outpost B. PCs leave Quaalsten
12-14	Elrenn inspect outpost B.
15	Elrenn leaves outpost B and travels to outpost A.
16-19	Elrenn inspects outpost A.
20	Elrenn returns to Quaalsten

Saving the Marshal

Once the PCs have finally tracked down the Elrenn, the Lord Marshal of the Vesve read aloud the following.

The path you have been traveling on has opened up into a small clearing. Across the way is a man, dressed in shimmering chainmail wielding a flaming spear, apparently sparring violently against a trio of trees. The trees seem to take offense at this however, as they batter the man with their long branches, knocking him to the ground. As he falls hard, the blue sash about his shoulder clearly becomes visible, marking him a ranger of the Vesve.

The lord marshal is locked in combat with three young Dirtwraiths, a kind of fungus that inhabits the plants. The three Dirtwraiths use the plant’s

body to attack anyone within reach. The tree that the Dirtwraith inhabits can withstand an amount of damage equal to the Dirtwraith's hit points before dying. This does not kill the fungus however. To kill the fungus, the Dirtwraith must be exhumed or PCs must wait 2d6x10 minutes for the Dirtwraith to extract itself in an attempt to search for a new host.

Creatures: When the combat begins Elrenn has been knocked of his feet and is being held down by the largest tree. Both of his arms are pinned and he is taking 2d4 points of damage per combat round. Every round Elrenn can attempt to break free but this requires a Str check (DC 20). That tree will not attack any other players while it has Elrenn and will only release him upon death. The players begin 30 ft. away, across the circular clearing. After the three trees have been beaten. Elrenn motions them to move away and lie in wait until the Dirtwraiths exhume themselves. During this time, Elrenn identifies himself, talks to the PCs and explains the creature that they are fighting. His plan, once the Dirtwraiths are out of the ground, is to attack them with ranged weapons until they use their spore clouds, then close in for the kill before they can bury themselves again. If any PC gets too close and is hit with a spore cloud, Elrenn will treat them with his *neutralize poison* spell.

APL 2 (EL 5)

Elrenn Walthair: hp 160, See Appendix C.

Dirtwraiths (3): hp 11 (each), See Appendix C.

Animated Trees (3): hp 11 (each), See Appendix C.

Development: After the battle, assuming that Elrenn is alive, the PCs can deliver their message. Elrenn is quite thankful for the PCs help in the fight and wishes to show his gratitude. He offers each PC 200 gp. After looking over Berilac's letter, Elrenn will give the PCs his signet ring, to give to Berilac on their way home. This not only proves that the PCs visited Elrenn, but it also is a message to Berilac. At this point the PCs can start the journey home.

Treasure: Each PC involved in saving the Lord High Marshal is offered 200 gp. If a PC does not participate in freeing the Lord High Marshal, they do not receive this reward.

APL 2 – coin - (200 gp).

Conclusion – *The Final Lap*

Before reading the conclusion to the players, the DM must calculate the final travel time, from Quaalsten to Verbeeg Hill, back to Ysette and finally on to Highfolk. This is a journey of almost 460 miles. Use the following chart to calculate the heroes travel time back to Highfolk. Note that the party only moves as fast as the slowest character and that moves of 50 and 60 feet can only be gotten with horses; 40 only by a horse or barbarian.

Travel Time Chart – Encounter 5	
Movement	Days Spent
15'	38.5 days
20'	29 days
30'	19 days
40' - Pony or heavy warhorse	14.5 days
50' - Draft horse	11.5 days
60' - Riding horse or light warhorse	9.5 days

Record the time spent under Conclusion on **Appendix A**. The players will have to camp at least seven times on this journey, however the camp is undisturbed for the entire trip.

Once the PCs begin their journey home read the following to them.

Rushing out of the Vesve, you team races back to Verbeeg Hill. Berilac is nervously awaiting your arrival and runs outside to meet you upon your return. Once he sees the ring his worried face lights up with joy. Berilac rushes inside to fetch your staff and sends you on your way.

The journey back to Ysette is a pleasant one. It has been over ten days since you promised to return her staff. She too appears to be awaiting your return as you come upon her pond. She takes the staff and asks about your journey. Ysette had feared that something terrible had happened to you. After hearing your tale she presents you a basket full of Ilymirth berries along with a few coins for your efforts. Following a bit of rest, Ysette sees you off, accompanying you as bird until you reach the boarder of the Vesve

The last leg of your journey is the trip back to Highfolk. As you cross through the city gates, crowds of people are there to welcome you. Antus Bralain is there as well. He approaches your well-traveled team and says...

Treasure: The basket contains 240 gp in addition to the berries.

APL 2 – coin - (40 gp).

At this point the DM should check the total time spent by the party by summing up the numbers recorded on **Appendix A**. The results should be compared with the chart on the bottom of **Appendix A** to determine how well the characters fared. This will determine the reaction of Antus and the wine award given to the heroes. Read the appropriate reaction from the choices below.

- **If the team earns a gold ribbon**

“Congratulations, you are one of the first teams to return. Your speed and courage are a lesson to us all. You may even be crowned heroes of the year. Please come with me to the Gilded Cow, a celebration is to be held in your honor brave adventurers.”

- **If the team earns a silver ribbon**

“Welcome back. Although you are not the first team to return you deserve great praise for completing the race. Surely you will be honored alongside all of the other heroes of the contest. Come, let us go celebrate your return, the Gilded Cow awaits.”

- **If the team earns a copper ribbon**

“Ahh, I see that you have finally returned many of the other teams have already come in. I hope that your trip was not too dangerous; we had begun to get worried that you might not return. Come let us celebrate you completion of the race at the Gilded Cow and you can tell me all about your journey.”

Treasure: The value of the bottle of wine the PCs are given depends on what place the party took.

Gold Ribbon:

APL 2 – loot - (30 gp)

-or-

Silver Ribbon

APL 2 – loot - (20 gp)

-or-

Copper Ribbon

APL 2 – loot - (10 gp)

The End

Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter Two

Getting to the berries

APL 2 – 20 xp

Agreeing to retrieve the staff

APL 2 – 20 xp

Encounter Three

Speaking with the Knight

APL 2 – 20 xp

-or-

Taking path B and not getting lost

APL 2 – 20 xp

Encounter Four

Dealing with Logan

APL 2 – 60 xp

Encounter Five

Defeating the Reavers

APL 2 – 120 xp

Questioning the Reavers

APL 2 – 20 xp

Encounter Six

Agreeing to help Berilac

APL 2 – 20 xp

Encounter Eight

Finding the Elrenn within 3 days

APL 2 – 20 xp

Defeating the dirtwraiths

APL 2 – 150 xp

Total possible experience:

APL 2 – 450 xp.

Treasure Summary

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a “treasure” section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter’s treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the

characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify*, *analyze dweomer* or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

Copper Ribbon
APL 2 – loot - (10 gp)

Adventure Maximums
APL 2 – 308 gp

Encounter Five

Defeat the Reavers

APL 2 – loot (22 gp), coin - (16 gp)

Encounter Eight

Rescue the Lord High Marshal

APL 2 – coin - (200 gp)

Conclusion

Return the staff to Ysette

APL 2 – coin - (40 gp)

Finish the Race

Gold Ribbon:

APL 2 – loot - (30 gp)

-or-

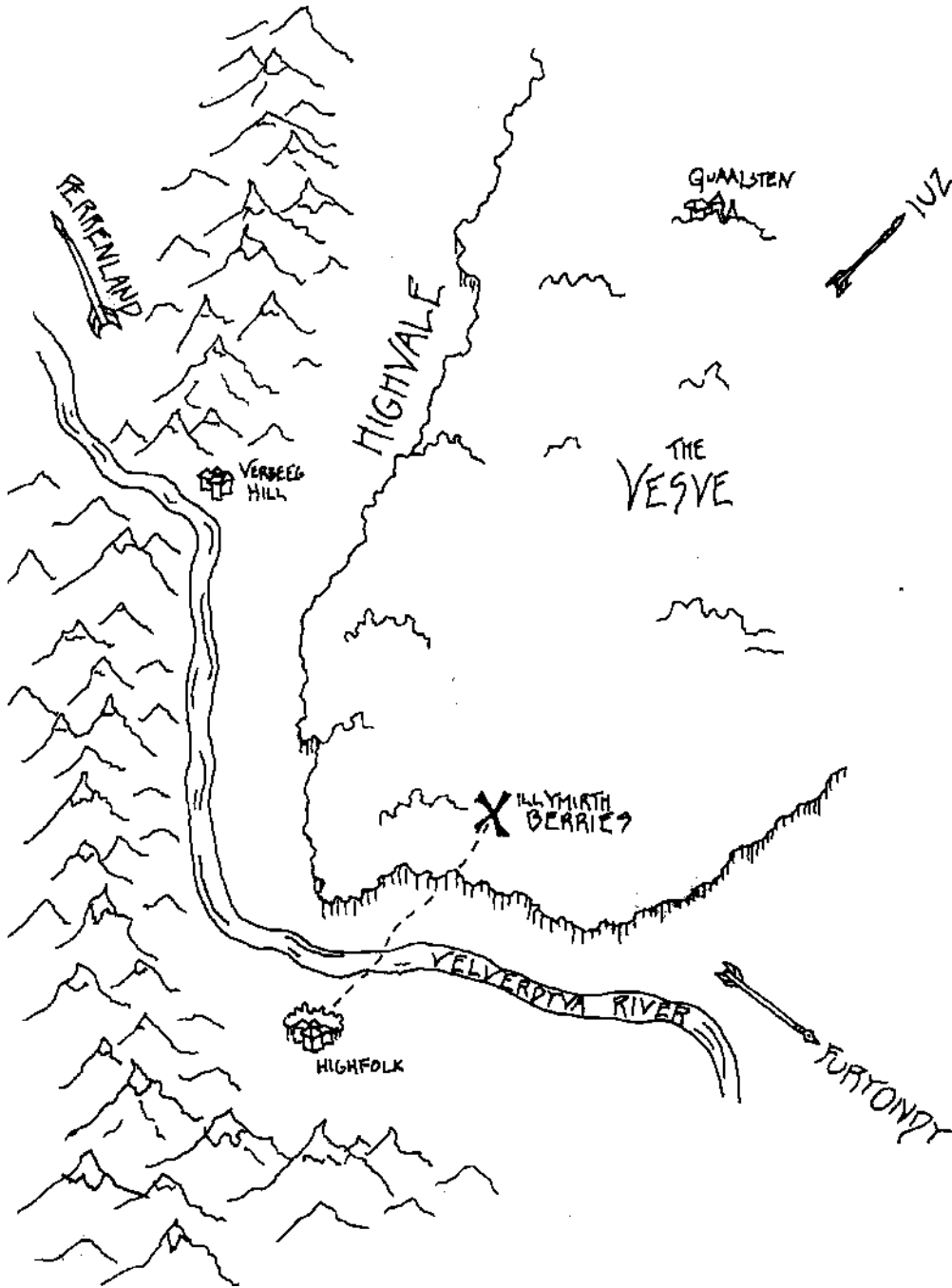
Silver Ribbon

APL 2 – loot - (20 gp)

-or-

Player Handout 1

PLAYERS MAP



Player Handout 2

A LETTER SENT TO ELRENN WALTHAIR

To Elrenn Walthair, the Lord Marshal of the Vesve,

All too recently I have heard disturbing news from the Great Wood under your protection, bands of orcs pillaging all that they find, malevolent creatures hunting men in the night and horrible undead wandering about with a craving for blood. The town council here in Verbeeg Hill is greatly concerned about these developments. I thank you for your recent decision allowing us stout folk within your ranks, as these are dangerous times.

The time has come to consider stationing more of our sons and daughters closer to home. I fear that these problems will overwhelm our local guardsmen.

Berilac Knotwise
High Councilman of Verbeeg Hill

Appendix A: Travel Time Calculation Sheet

ENCOUNTER 2 _____ DAYS

ENCOUNTER 3A _____ DAYS

3B _____ DAYS

3C _____ DAYS

ENCOUNTER 5 _____ DAYS

ENCOUNTER 6 _____ DAYS

ENCOUNTER 7 _____ DAYS

ENCOUNTER 8 _____ DAYS

CONCLUSION _____ DAYS

TOTAL DAYS

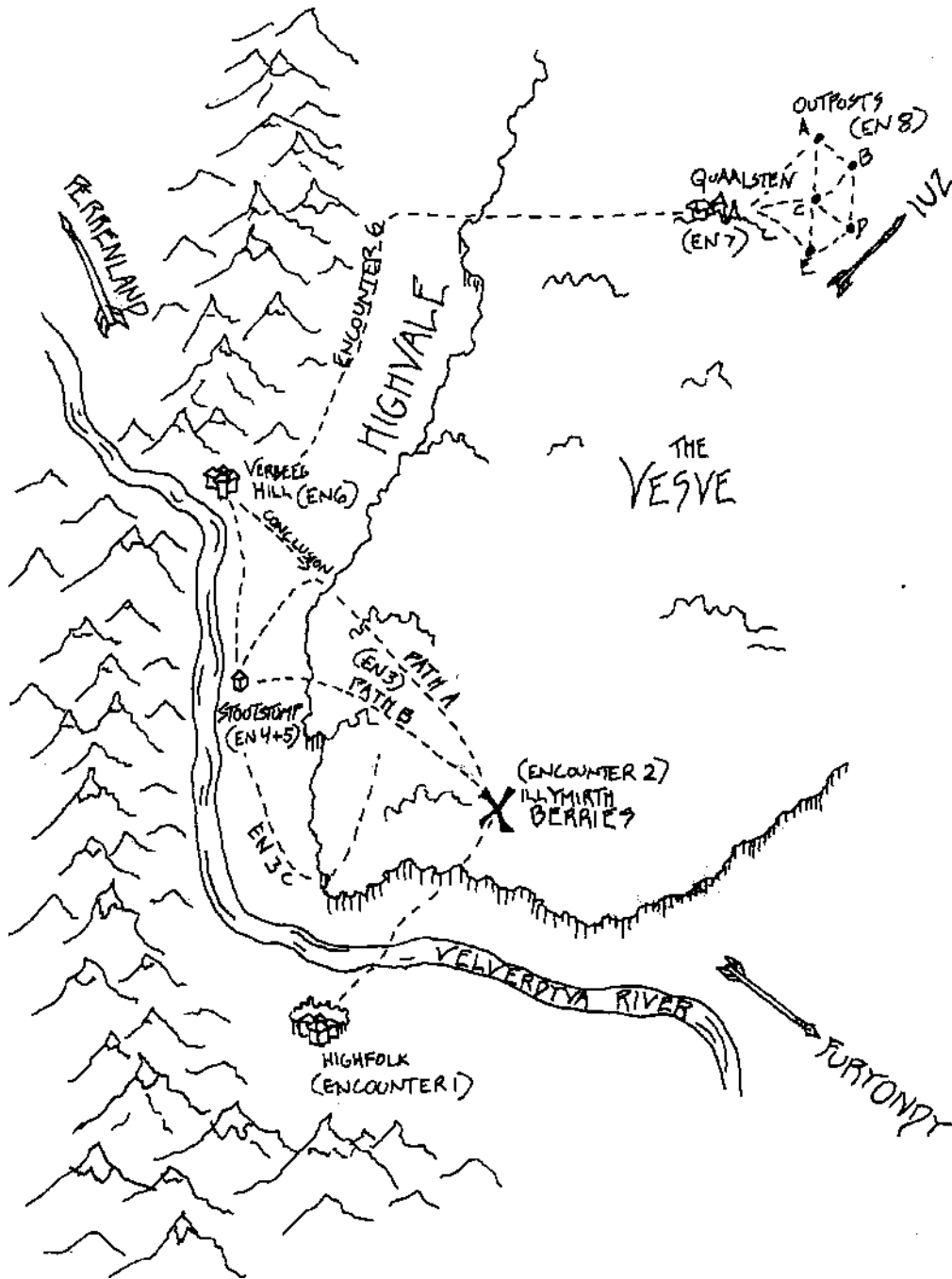
TRAVEL TIME REWARDS SCALE

21.5 – 25 DAYS Gold Ribbon Award

25.5 – 50 DAYS Silver Ribbon Award

50 + DAYS Copper Ribbon Award

Appendix B: DM Map



Appendix C: NPC/ Monster Reference Sheets

Encounter 2

Ysette, female wood elven Drd 6: Medium humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 6d8+6; hp 41; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 dex); Atks +4 melee (1d6 (crit 18-20), scimitar), or +6 ranged (1d4, sling); SD Wild shape, Trackless step; AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +8.

Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 13.

Skills: Animal Empathy +6, Concentration +4, Handle Animal +4, Intuit Direction +5, Knowledge: Vesve +9, Spot +6, Swim +4, Wilderness Lore +7; **Feats:** Dodge, Run, Silent Spell

Spells (5/4/4/3): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, know direction, light*; 1st—*calm animals, cure light wounds, entangle, summon nature's ally I*; 2nd—*barkskin, charm person, hold animal, speak with animals*; 3rd—*meld into stone, protection from elements, summon nature's ally III*.

Personality: Ysette is strong-willed, not to be bullied by anyone within her domain. She is caring and kind to those she finds deserving. A bit aloof as well.

Encounter 4

Logan Wood, male halfling Com4: Small Humanoid (3 ft. 1 in. tall); HD 4d4+4; hp 16; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20; AC 14 (+3 Dex, +1 Size); Atks +2 melee (1d4 (crit 19-20), dagger), or +5 ranged (1d4, darts); AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +0.

Str 10, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills: Craft: Woodcarving +3, Listen +3 Ride +4, Spot +2 **Feats:** Simple Weapon Proficiency, Alertness

Equipment: dagger, 6 hand carved darts, pouch containing 2 sp.

Personality: Logan is very angry, at the world and at himself. He is downright resentful of all the tall people in the world. He is likely to fly off the handle at anyone who calls him shorty or some other diminutive name.

Encounter 5

Brell Blackbow, male human Rog1: Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 1 in. tall); HD 1d6+4; hp 10 (+3 Toughness); Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative);

Spd 30; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex); Atks +1 melee (1d6+1 (crit 19-20), short sword) or +2 ranged (1d8 (crit 19-20), light crossbow); SA Rog sneak attack; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +1.

Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +5, Climb +3, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +4, Hide +3, Intimidate +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Open Locks +5, Pick Pockets +6, Ride +4, Spot +1, Use Rope +4; **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Toughness.

Equipment: short sword, light crossbow, 10 light crossbow bolts, leather armor, thieves tools, pouch containing 85 gp minted in Verbeeg Hill.

Personality: Brell is cruel and vindictive, not really caring for any other human life. A spiteful man that would turn on anyone if the price was right.

Imayne Glenshade, male half elf Rog1: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 1d6+2; hp 7; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 13 (+2 leather armor, +1 Dex); Atks +3 melee (1d6+3 (crit 19-20), short sword); SA Rog sneak attack; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0.

Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills: Hide +3, Intimidate +3, Jump +4, Listen +3, Move Silent +4, Open Locks +2, Pick Pockets +3, Ride +3, Search +2, Spot +5, Use Rope +3. **Feats:** Blind-Fight

Equipment: short sword, leather armor, 50 ft. of silk rope, pouch containing 8 gp and 3 sp minted in Verbeeg Hill.

Personality: Just a big dumb bully.

Oweine Glenshade, male half elf Rog1: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 1d6+1; hp 6; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 15 (+2 leather armor, +3 Dex); Atks +2 melee (1d6+2 (crit 19-20), short sword); SA Rog sneak attack; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will -1.

Str 15, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +3, Jump +5, Listen +3, Move Silent +7, Open Locks +7, Ride +4, Search +3, Use Rope +4; **Feats:** Dodge.

Equipment: short sword, leather armor, 50 ft. of silk rope, thieves tools, pouch containing 7 sp minted in Verbeeg Hill.

Personality: Just like his brother.

Anora Helonis, female human Rog1: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 1d6; hp 4; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 16 (+2 leather armor, +4 Dex); Atks +1 melee (1d6+1 (subdual), sap), or +4 ranged (1d6 (crit x3), shortbow); SA Rog sneak attack; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +2.

Str 12, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Disable Device +2, Escape Artist +7, Heal +4 (+6 when using the healer's kit), Hide +6, Jump +4, Listen +5, Move Silent +8, Open Locks +6, Ride +6, Search +4, Spot +5; **Feats:** Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Equipment: sap, leather armor, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, healer's kit, pouch containing 2gp minted in Verbeeg Hill.

Personality: Cool under fire, but compassionate on the inside. Anora is a bandit only because it suits her, she is not in it for the killing.

Encounter 8

Elrenn Walthair, male human Rgr16: Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 1 in. tall); HD 16d10+64; hp 160 (currently 110); Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30; AC 23 (+9 *elven chainmail* +4, +2 *cloak of protection* +2, +2 Dex); Atks +20/+15/+10/+5 melee (1d8+4 (crit x3), shortspear *flametongue* +1); SA Rgr Favored Enemy; AL CG; SV Fort +14, Ref +8, Will +10.

Str 16, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 15.

Skills: Animal Empathy +7, Climb +7, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +4, Handle Animal +7, Heal +10, Hide +10, Intuit Direction +8, Jump +8, Knowledge: Vesve +12, Listen +12, Move Silent +12, Ride +9, Search +7, Spot +10, Swim +8, Track +11, Use Rope +8, Wilderness Lore +13; **Feats:** Ambidexterity, Dodge, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Whirlwind Attack.

SA – **Rgr Favored Enemy.** +4 vs. Goblins, +3 vs. Beasts, +2 vs. Plants, +1 vs. Undead.

Equipment: *elven chainmail* +4, *cloak of protection* +2, *shortspear* +1 *flametongue*, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, signet ring, sash of the rangers, holy symbol of Ehlonna, pouch containing 10 gp.

Spells (3/3/2/1): 1st – *alarm*, *pass without trace*, *speak with animals*; 2nd – *cure light wounds*, *hold animal*, *speak with plants*; 3rd – *neutralize poison*, *plant growth*; 4th – *polymorph self*.

Personality: A leader to the bone. Cool, calculating, intelligent, caring and personable.

Dirtwraiths (3): CR 5; small plant (3 ft. wide); HD 2d8+2; hp 11 (each); Init –3 (Dex); Spd 2; AC 11 (+4 natural, -3 Dex); Atks none; SA Animate Plants, Spore Cloud; SD Immunities; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref –3, Will +1.

Str 5, Dex 4, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 10.

SA – **Animate Plants.** The Dirtwraith may inhabit animate any plant it inhabits the roots of. It may use this plant to attack foes (see **Animated Trees** below). **Spore Cloud.** Once per day the Dirtwraith may emit a spore cloud. This requires a ranged touch attack at +2. If hit a PC will choke for 2d4 minutes, during which no action can be taken.

SD – Dirtwraiths are immune to fire, all mind affecting magic and blunt weapons.

Animated Trees (3): large plant (15 ft. tall); HD 2d8+2; hp 11 (each); Init –1 (Dex); Spd 0; AC 13 (+4 natural, -1 Dex); Atks +3 melee (2d4+1, branch); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 10 ft./15 ft.; SD Immunities; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref –1, Will +1.

Str 13, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 0, Wis 0, Cha 0.

SD – Animated Trees are immune to poison, sleep, stunning, paralyzation, and polymorph.