

GEO3-05

DEBTS PAST DUE

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK[®]

Geoff Regional Adventure

Version 1.0

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A person's past deeds haunt in ways never expected. Can you satisfy the bill collector? A Living Greyhawk adventure set in the Grand Duchy of Geoff for Levels 1-8.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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Introduction

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 and a half 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 three players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than six 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 rulebooks 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. Complete the RPGA scoring grid with names and RPGA numbers only, and the event information at the top. RPGA no longer uses voting for any reported events. 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 sidebar 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.
3. Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
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

Mundane Animals Effect on APL		# of Animals			
		1	2	3	4
CR of Animal	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	6	7	8
	5	5	7	8	9
	6	6	8	9	10
	7	7	9	10	11

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.

5. Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
6. 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 a standard one-round Core adventure. Characters pay two Time Units per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit.

Judge's Background

This adventure is set in the autumn of CY 593. At this point in time, the Army of Liberation and its allies are laying siege to Gorna. Calisse Skotti, wife of Grand Duke Owen, has given birth to a baby boy.

Before the invasion of Geoff, Thulis Shadowcaster was a rogue who adventured with a company known colloquially as “the Fringe Element” or simply “the Fringe”. A poor, misfit and of adventurers brought together by their common station in society. The group was active during the invasion of Geoff a decade ago, and lost more than half their number fighting the giants. Those members of the company, who did survive the siege of Gorna, include Cuthalion Strongbow, Waylan Crabtree, and Thulis Shadowcaster.

During the giant invasion, many branded Thulis a coward and a traitor, because he demanded payment from Grand Duke Owen himself (during a public address) for mercenary services rendered. He even went so far as to have his friend, the dewin (*dew-en*, tr. mage) Waylan Crabtree scribe an official “bill” for Grand Duke Owen to pay. He never got his money. When the giants took Gorna, he was the first to escape the doomed city, leaving his fellow companions to their fates.

In the subsequent years, Cuthalion and Waylan continued to help the refugees of the war, and founded a safe haven in the southern Dim Forest, Argel ys Aberva, for the orphans of Geoff. Thulis, on the other hand, formed a band of brigands who robbed, burgled, and had a hand in the wartime black market.

Though a scoundrel, Thulis was not a cold-blooded murderer. If his victims cooperated, no one got hurt. During a caravan raid, one of his new lieutenants and also a doppelganger in disguise, Cethin (*kay-thin*), killed a man who had already surrendered. Thulis was infuriated by this and humiliated Cethin in front of the others by beating him in a duel, giving him a scar across his face, and kicking him out of the gang. It was an affront that the vengeful Cethin would not forget. Soon afterwards, Thulis moved his operations out of Geoff, though he has returned on occasion when “business” has warranted.

Since his expulsion from Thulis’ band, Cethin has taken advantage of the situation in Geoff and has intermittently recruited the worst criminal element from the desperate masses of refugees and mercenaries around Hochoch for robberies, and other crimes. Recently, Cethin learned the route of a pay box caravan headed to Army of Liberation troops in the west. One of his hirelings (Ogwen) even infiltrated the ranks of the army, and is the ‘inside man’ on the robbery.

Coincidentally, a few days ago, Cethin spotted his former boss, Thulis, in Hochoch and he could not let the opportunity for retribution pass him by. Cethin has come up with an idea to further taint the name of Shadowcaster, and use him as a scapegoat for his crimes.

For this robbery, he has chosen to take on the identity of Thulis Shadowcaster, in hopes that a manhunt for his former leader ensues. His recruits do not know any different, and believe they are working for Thulis.

Notes on Spellcasting in Geoff

There are limitations in place to magical travel and information gathering within the borders of Geoff:

- No astral travel spells (teleport, dimension door, et alia) work within ten miles of Hochoch.
- No astral travel spells work within twenty miles of Gorna.
- No teleport spells work in the northwest quadrant of Geoff.
- PCs cannot scry on important NPCs such as Owen the Brenin, the Grand Duchess Calisse, Archdruid Gwenillian, the Sakhut, King Brodde, King Mogthrasir or the leaders of either the Giant or the Geoff armies.

Adventure Summary

Encounter 1: An Army of Liberation pay box/supply caravan from Hochoch is attacked on the way to Preston and the army encampments beyond. The PCs are the only witnesses to the criminals leaving the scene.

Encounter 2: Reporting the robbery to the army, they are asked to find the man they saw

leaving the scene, which apparently is Thulis Shadowcaster: infamous traitor of Geoff and coward of Gorna.

Encounter 3: To find him, the PCs must use a letter they found at the crime scene that names the rogue's former adventuring companions, one of whom is a readily recognizable member of the Army of Liberation: the First Ward of the Rangers.

Encounter 4: On their way to meet with the First Ward and another former adventuring companion, they run across a giant army patrol.

Encounter 5: Eventually meeting with the alleged criminal's companions, they soon confront Shadowcaster himself. After some questioning, they come to realize that someone from his former gang is trying to set him up, and are soon on the trail of the real criminal.

Encounter 6: Visiting the brother of the suspect, they find that he is a shady merchant, who only gives up the location of the accused for a price.

Encounter 7: They are off to the bandit's hideout near the hamlet of Daufforth. There they find Cethin, and fight the villain, eventually discovering the pay box amongst other things.

DM Note: Towards the end of the adventure, Cethin uses his *detect thoughts* and shapechange ability. Have each player pre-roll three Will saves and three Spot checks each at the beginning of the module and use the results for the final encounter.

Introduction

Have the players explain why their characters are en route to Preston, from Hochoch. If they have no coherent story, assume they are merely traveling together from Hochoch to Preston. It is likely they could be going there to find work or join the army's efforts in Gorna. Anything will do, so long as they are along a dirt road in the morning hours.

Word has it that there is adventure to be had in Preston and beyond. Gathering your gear and your companions, you set out early this morning along the west road to see what fortune may bring. You have been traveling the dirt road along the rolling and misty countryside for over an hour now. The earth-

hugging fog has made the hills around you barely discernable, and has reduced your visibility to less than a dozen strides or so. The chill air that accompanies the fog this morning is particularly cold, and all is quiet save for your footfalls and occasional conversation.

This is a good time to get in some interaction going on between the players if they are so inclined. It would also be a good time to get a "marching order" from the players as they make their way on the road. For effect, the following text can be read as an "interrupt" to their conversation.

Encounter One: Enter the Villain

The relative quiet abruptly turns into the nay of a horse and the sounds of hoof beats on the soft earth and they are rapidly getting closer. Suddenly, riders on horseback break the fog directly in front of you. The dark shapes of the horses rear at the obstruction in their path, and the riders look about for the source of their mount's unease.

You catch a glimpse of the lead rider, a striking black haired man wrapped in a voluminous dark cloak, and your gazes lock. There is a pause as you momentarily exchange looks. Another rider interrupts your silent exchange as he canters his horse past the man.

"Let us make haste, Master Thulis," says the baritone voice of a half-orc, momentarily following the dark man's gaze in your direction. He seems to consider something and then rides off a second later behind the man he called 'Master', as the latter spurs his stallion into a gallop. The other four riders spur their mounts around your party and follow the lead of the black-haired man.

At this point, a successful Spot check (DC 10+APL) notices a horse being led by the last rider. If the same check succeeds a (DC 15+APL), the PC also spots a red armband he wears on his shield arm.

Also at this point, they all hear the following; the highest successful Listen check (DC 10) determines who hears it first:

As the galloping rhythm fades into the mist, you can just make out the sound of a yelping and whining dog, coming from the other side of the hill, in the direction you were heading.

Anyone who has any ranks in Handle Animal or Wild Empathy knows that the dog is in distress.

As you crest the hill, you can make out a dog over a prone body. It looks up as you approach and whines pitifully. Arriving on the scene, you can now see the silhouette of a wagon a dozen yards off, and shapes on the ground discernible as bodies, many with arrows protruding from them. You can hear a soft moan coming from the man on the ground before you. The man is clad in a bloodied tabard and leather armor, and bears a red armband.

A successful Knowledge (royalty and nobility) or a Knowledge (Local -Sheldomar Valley) check (DC 12) reveals the insignia on the armband to be that of a Rhyfelwri Corforrol (rhee-vel-or-ee cor-vor-roll, tr. warrior corporal) of Fox Braich in Geoff's Army of Liberation. A successful Heal check (DC 10) reveals that the injured man is very near death.

The old soldier looks up at you, fear and pain in his eyes. He has been gravely wounded in the belly, and grips his bloodied right hand, which is missing a couple of fingers.

"Shadowcaster..." (coughing up blood) is all the man can say as he looks in the direction from which you just came.

If prompted, the soldier describes the dark haired man you saw minutes earlier, in between labored breaths.

"He and his men ambushed us. Come from ... out of the mist they did. Took the pay box ..." (more coughing).

The corporal, Madoc, passes out after the last coughing fit. At this point, the PCs have several options.

The PCs Inspect the Scene

There is a small tree lying across the dirt road, just in front of the wagon (and just big enough to keep it from passing). The wagon was traveling

west from Hochoch. The bodies of nine other Gyri infantrymen are scattered near the wagon. A few of them were shot with arrows, some stabbed, and the soldier in the coach seat has had his throat cut. They all wear red armbands identifying them as rhyfelwri of Fox Braich. The reins that once held the horses to the wagon have been cut. The wagon carried other dry goods, and weapons and it appears that some of those were taken as well.

Whoever exceeds a Spot Check (DC 10) notices a piece of parchment stuck to the side of the wagon with a dagger. Give the players **Player's Handout #1: Notice of Debt**.

If the PCs are curious about the names on the letter, have them roll a Knowledge (Local Sheldomar Valley), Knowledge (History) or a Bardic Lore check. The DCs are the same for each skill.

- (DC 7) *Cuthalion Strongbow* is the current First Ward of the Olwythi gan Gyruff (ol-weeth-ee gan geer-uff, tr. Rangers of Geoff). He used to be an adventurer, and lost many of his friends during the giant invasion. He lives in a hidden settlement in the Dim Forest, where he trains young rangers.
- (DC 11) *Thulis Shadowcaster* is known as a coward and a traitor. He demanded payment from the Grand Duke for defending Geoff during the invasion a decade ago. When he did not get it, he deserted his companions in Gorna just after the giants broke the defenses. It is said he pushed aside women and children during his escape.
- (DC 13) *Waylan Crabtree* used to be one of the most powerful dewini (dew-en-ee, tr. wizards) in Geoff, second only to Aedan of the Russet Tower. He was known to adventure with Cuthalion Strongbow amongst others, and also survived the sack of Gorna. He has not been seen much around town in the past decade or so, though word is that he lives in the Dim Forest with the First Ward at Argel ys Aberva. The place is a refugee settlement that is hidden with magics and guarded by Rangers.

- (DC 15) *Gardan of the Crystalmists* was a half-orc barbarian from the mountains. His fighting prowess was legendary, and bards' tales claim that during the invasion of Gorna, he slew six giants while holding a narrow street, before being overwhelmed.
- (DC 18) *Tamm Rockbender* was a mighty dwarven cleric of Moradin sent to Gorna from the halls of Deepholm. Without his healing and his hammer, his fellow defenders would not have lasted half as long as they did in the streets of Gorna. He died defending the city.
- (DC 20) *Ser Falabor Raewyn* was the only noble known to ride with the motley adventuring company known colloquially as 'The Fringe Element'. He died heroically defending the elven city of Derelion.
- (DC 20) *Inxa* was a formidable warrior and tracker who were always by Ser Falabor's side. She also died defending Derelion from the Shadow Dragon.

The same information can be garnered by the PCs with a Gather Information check (same DCs as above) if they spend time asking questions once they get to Hochoch or the Army of Liberation camp.

If the PCs are able to save Madoc, he can only tell the PCs that Thulis Shadowcaster was the coward who demanded payment from Grand Duke Owen for defending Geoff during the invasion all those years ago.

The PCs Heal Madoc

If the PCs try to tend to Madoc, there is a good chance they can save him. He is currently at -1 hp. A successful Heal check (DC 15) stabilizes him. If the party heals him, he lives, though he is very weak, and conversation is a chore. If they ask him about his assailants, he says he saw Thulis Shadowcaster. He is old enough to remember the war councils a decade ago, and knows Shadowcaster's reputation (as per the information gathering result below).

The dog, Scraps, belongs to him, and has been slightly injured. It follows the party until it gets

back to the army camp. If Madoc dies, the dog follows any PC who has treated it well.

He needs to see all of the bodies, but finally concludes that private Ogwen is missing.

The PCs Try to Follow the Gang

The thick fog provides total concealment for the gang once they are beyond 30 feet from the party. This concealment extends for miles. They are riding their horses at a full run (Spd 240 ft) for as long as they can. Beyond that, Cethin/Thulis casts *ghost sound* (APLs 4-8) to mimic riders going off in another direction, and *pass without trace* (APLs 6-8) on his light war horse if he suspects the PCs are following them.

As per their modus operandi, the gang tries to avoid combat and splits up further down the way (to lose any possible pursuers) in order to meet up later. They all know nearby streams and creeks that they use to foil tracking attempts, and *locate creature* attempts. If he spots any pursuers (humanoid, animal or otherwise), Cethin/Thulis also uses his tanglefoot bags to stop them. As a last ditch effort, he dismounts quietly and attempts to hide and move silently away. Failing that, he attacks.

Development: If by some chance the PCs were able to catch any of the gang, the bandits do not know much other than the fact that they were hired by Thulis Shadowcaster to rob this caravan. If asked where they were hired, they give various answers (including the Boar's Knuckle and the Giant's Hearth). They say that they were supposed to meet back at the Giant's Hearth Inn and await further instructions. Ogwen is the only one of the current gang who has been to the hideout as of yet.

Leads from the Ambush

At this point, the PCs should have the parchment with Thulis Shadowcaster's "notice", scribed, witnessed and sealed by one Waylan Crabtree.

It is common knowledge that the Army of Liberation has made camp just north of Hochoch. If Corforrol Madoc is alive and with them, he suggests that they go to his commanding officer right away to tell him about the ambush. If Madoc died, and they return to

Hochoch (instead of the Army encampment) with his body, the town watch questions them, and eventually escorts them to the army encampment.

If one of the PCs is a member of the Olwythi, and recognizes the name of Cuthalion Strongbow on the parchment, they may decide to go straight to the Olwythi tent, in which case, skip to **Encounter Three**. Otherwise, continue with **Encounter Two**. The PCs should not be able to go to Argel ys Aberva at this point. It isn't called the "Hidden Haven" for nothing.

Encounter Two: At the Army Camp

You arrive at the Army of Liberation's encampment in the fields just west of Hochoch. There several sentries at the break in the picket line that surrounds the camp. They might not have the spit and polish of the Gran March military, but they do their job well enough. They hail you as you approach and ask your business.

Assuming that the PCs relate the story of events at the ambush, a few sentries escort them to the Fox Braich command tent. The wagon, it's cargo, and the men assigned to it, were under the charge of Braichdyn (break-din, tr. captain) Berwyn ap Dylan, of the Fox Braich of the Rhyfelwri. He is the man that the PCs will ultimately be directed to with regards to the attack on the soldiers.

If the PCs have Corforrol Madoc (dead or alive), he is taken to the infirmary (or temple), as are the rest of the bodies if the party was able to bring them. Flan PCs may have burned the bodies as per tradition, which is fine. If the PCs did not bring the bodies back, the army sends riders to the ambush to bring the bodies in.

The camp is divided by braich, and you soon find a banner depicting a Fox rampant on a red field, similar to the red armbands of the troops who were ambushed. The banner flies above a canvas tent, whose entrance is guarded by a single Rhyfelwri.

If any of the PCs holds rank, especially officer rank, in the Army of Liberation, modify NPC reactions in the camp accordingly.

The guard asks them their business with the Braichdyn. Upon hearing the news (assuming the party tells him their real reason for being there), the soldier disappears into the tent, and quickly returns opening the flap for the PCs.

The inside of the tent is spartan yet adequate. Before you stands a middle-aged man, Flan by the look of him, wearing a leather cuirass, and a red armband displaying a fox in an argent circle flanked by two white bands on either side. The man steps forward:

"I am Braichdyn Berwyn ap Dylan, of Fox Braich. I am told you have some information regarding an attack on my men?"

He is very interested to hear the PCs story, and after they are done reporting, he speaks:

"It appears that you are the only ones who witnessed this crime then." He pauses, looking each of you over, "The Army of Liberation cannot spare men, in these times, to hunt down robbers and cutthroats, and bring them to the Brenin's justice. You however, appear to be a stalwart bunch, and you are the only ones who know what the brigands look like. Would you track down these killers for the Brenin?"

If the party shows him, or asks him about the names on the parchment, he immediately recognizes the name of Cuthalion Strongbow, the First Ward of the Rangers of Geoff (Braichdyn of the Olwythi gan Gyruff).

Though he does not know much about the First Ward beyond his work for the army, he can tell them where the Olywythi command tent is located in the encampment.

If the party asks him about any of the other names on the notice, roll a Knowledge: History, or Knowledge (Local – Sheldomar Valley) for Braichdyn Berwyn, and use the table in **Encounter 2** to determine how much he knows.

If the party asks him about the stolen items, he tells them that the wagon contained provisions, some new weapons, letters (army business as well as personal), and the pay box for Fox Company. If asked, he describes the lockbox, and tells them that it contained 600 golden lions.

If they agree, he draws up a writ, with the names of the PCs on it, stating that the party is pursuing a "bounty" on the bandits, in the name of the Army of Liberation. Although he cannot offer them any bounty-money or other assistance at the moment, he tells them that they are entitled to keep whatever possessions the bandits have, other than the property of the Army of course. What he can do for them is provide them with a packhorse to carry whatever they retrieve.

Braichdyn Berwyn ap Dylan: Knowledge (Local – Sheldomar Valley) +4, Knowledge (History) +3.

Continue to **Encounter Three**.

Encounter Three: Looking for the First Ward

If the PCs go to the Olwythi command tent to find Cuthalion Strongbow, they find only one Ranger at the camp, and that is Davyth Longshanks. Davyth is the Cyntaf Dwrthdyn (First Sergeant) of the Olwythi gan Gyrudd. He is in command at the camp while the First Ward is away. He is very busy at the time (with a table full of maps and parchments), but curtly informs the party that the First Ward is not there. If the party asks where he can be found, he replies that the First Ward comes and goes as he pleases. If asked where Cuthalion lives, he tells them that he resides at Argel ys Aberva, a settlement hidden in the Dim Forest. If asked about the location of Argel ys Aberva, he tells them that that information is reserved for Olwythi and those who make a home at the "hidden haven".

If they make an impassioned plea for more information (possibly using the letter from Braichdyn Berwyn), Davyth tells them how to "ask" for an audience at Argel. Alternatively, they can roll a Diplomacy check (DC 10+APL). PCs in the Olwythi or PCs of sergeant rank and above in the Army of Liberation receive a +5 bonus to the check.

"Very well, as it seems you have pressing business with First Ward Strongbow, I will tell you how to ask for safe passage to Argel. At the edge of the Dim Forest, there is a large and ancient white oak tree. It's roots kiss the Anniben Dwr as it is called in Common.

Place a note with your request in the knot of that tree, and you will be answered. Oh, and be certain your parchment is rolled and tied securely."

If the PCs ask for further directions, Davyth simply tells them to follow the Anniben Dwr (aka the Realstream) to the northeast.

He has no more information for them, and soon is too busy to give the PCs any more time, as a scout comes into the tent with important business. The party is asked to leave.

DM note: If there is a PC who is in the Olwythi, they may know of Argel ys Aberva, but they also know that the 'path' to get there is ever changing, due to *plant growth* and other nature magics. Only Cuthalion Strongbow and a handful of his senior Olwythi know the way there at all times. All who have ever been there have been sworn to keep the location a secret, and know they must ask for permission before bringing 'outsiders' to the hidden haven.

Proceed to **Encounter Four**.

Encounter Four: Big Trouble

The party should, at this point, write a note explaining their intentions, and set off to find the white oak.

The daylong journey alongside the Realstream has been fairly unremarkable, and the edge of the Dim Forest now looms just ahead. After a bit of looking, you easily spot the white oak along the river's edge. Although an immense specimen, it's branches reach no higher than the other trees around it, as the Dim Forest is home to the oldest and largest trees in Geoff. The thick forest canopy blocks most sunlight, even just a few yards in, giving the mossy ground a dappled appearance. On the north side of the tree, there is a large, but shallow knot at eye level.

If PCs leave the message in the knot, they have to wait for some time (1d3 hours) before it is answered. If they try to Track in the vicinity, they find only animal tracks, going various directions. After some time though, Cuthalion's messenger arrives. Assuming they remain close to the tree, they notice following.

As you sit waiting, unsure exactly what it is you are waiting for, you notice a squirrel furtively make its way down the white oak. It stops at the knot, and looks around, cocking its head in your direction. Then, grabbing the message with its mouth, it bounds back up the tree, and is soon out of site.

If the PCs kill, capture, or detain the squirrel, no one else comes for the note for many hours. Also, they do not see Cuthalion immediately after the upcoming fight, and have to wait even longer before an irate Cuthalion Strongbow finds them.

After the squirrel takes the message, the party must wait for another 2d3 hours before something happens. However, if it was nearly dark, when the PCs arrived at the tree, the following does not take place until the next morning just after dawn.

The squirrel has been gone for some time, and you are beginning to wonder whether he was the messenger at all, when you suddenly hear a distant roar, and the sounds of a skirmish in the woods beyond.

If the PCs investigate:

Making your way through the dark forest towards the sound, you crest a mossy hill and witness a frightening site. Two huge brown bears are fighting a squad of goblin riders and an ogre!

The smaller of the bears is down and barely moving, it's fur matted with blood. Numerous javelins protrude from it's back. The other grizzly is holding it's ground as the goblin riders circle it, trying to get a better shot. Although it looks around, bearing it's teeth, and growling back at the wolves, most of it's attention is focused on defending itself from the weapon of the hulking ogre. A number of goblins and their mounts lie dead about the scene, and the disemboweled body of another ogre lies sprawled against a nearby tree.

DM note: At APL 8, instead of an ogre, the party now faces the raiding party leader: T'gaznaa - an ogre mage. When the party arrives at the battle, he is hovering out of Fredegar's reach and tormenting the bear with

his huge greatsword. See description in Appendix A.

The two bears are Fryda and Fredegar, animal companions to Cuthalion Strongbow (however there is no way for the PCs to know this at this time). Fryda is disabled (0 hp remaining), and Fredegar is down to less than half of his hit points. They have been fighting a running battle with a giant army patrol that was scouting into the southern Dim Forest.

The darkness of the forest here gives the enemies concealment (20% miss chance), unless the party has some sort of light. The goblins and ogres have darkvision, and therefore do not suffer the penalty.

Fredegar's main objective is to protect his wounded mate. He does not leave her side. In game effects: as long as the ogre (or wolf riders) is within easy reach of her (20 feet), Fredegar stays with her. He has a readied action to attack anyone threatening Fryda.

The encounter begins with the party on a hillock in the forest, 80 feet from the nearest combatant.

If the PCs do nothing: The battle continues. There is a stand off in the round following the description above. After that round, play out one round of combat. If Fryda dies, Fredegar continues to fight to the death. If the ogre is killed, the goblin riders ride off into the woods. If neither is the case, you can play out the battle if there is time, or simply roll percentile dice (40% chance that the bears win, and 60% chance that the Giant Army patrol wins).

If the PCs aid the bears in battle: Roll initiative for the combat between the giant patrol, and the bears first. Because the player characters are a 'third party' joining a combat in progress, they act first, and all of them have the opportunity to go before the highest initiative (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* p. 62).

Fredegar's priority is protecting Fryda from the ogre, and he keeps himself between her and the enemy. If the party finds that they are overwhelmed, Fredegar may join the fight. He does this *only* if Fryda is safe. Use your best judgment.

APL 2 (EL 5)

Ogre: hp 13 (injured); See *Monster Manual* p. 144.

Goblin riders (4): hp 5,5,4,4; see *Monster Manual* p. 107.

Wolf mounts (4): hp 13,11,11,9; see *Monster Manual* p. 205.

Tactics: Upon spotting the PCs, the ogre sends the goblin riders to dispatch the newcomers. He stays to battle the bear, though he attacks the PCs if they attack him, or if they dispatch all of the goblin riders and wolves.

At this APL, Fredegar attacks the ogre if all other threats to Fryda have been neutralized.

APL 4 (EL 7)

Ogre: hp 26; See *Monster Manual* page 144.

Goblin cavalry (4): hp 5,5,6,6; see *Monster Manual* p. 107-8.

Worg mounts (4): hp 30 each; see *Monster Manual* p. 184.

Tactics: Upon spotting the PCs, the ogre orders one of the goblins to harry the bears, while he attacks the party with the remaining goblin cavalry. If the battle goes badly for him, he orders the remaining goblin rider to attack the party. The worg mounts are intelligent, speak goblin and common, and attack even if their riders are killed.

APL 6 (EL 9)

Grak: male ogre Bbn1/Ftr1; hp 50; see **Appendix A**

Goblin cavalry (4): male goblin Ftr2; hp 18 each; see **Appendix A**.

Worg mounts (4): hp 30 each; see *Monster Manual* p. 184.

Tactics: Same as APL 4 tactics, however, the goblin elite cavalry charge the PCs with their light lances attempting to use their Spirited Charge feat if possible. In addition, Grak rages immediately upon engaging the PCs.

APL 8 (EL 11)

T'gaznaa: male ogre mage; hp 41; see **Appendix A**.

Goblin elite cavalry (4): male goblin Ftr4; hp 32 each; see **Appendix A**.

Worg mounts (4): hp 35 each; see *Monster Manual* p. 184.

Tactics: Upon spotting the PCs, T'gaznaa takes up a good tactical position in the air, casts *cone of cold* at the party, and then orders the goblin cavalry to charge. The following round, he casts *invisibility* on himself, and discerns who is the biggest threat. If there is a particularly effective fighter, he casts *charm person* on him to try to remove them from the battle. He then engages the party from the air, using his reach to his advantage. Feel free to change his strategy according to the party's actions.

If the goblins have an opportunity, they loose their javelins, and then couch their lances as they ride. They then charge the party making the best use out of their mounted combat feats (i.e. Spirited Charge).

After the battle is over, the larger bear ambles over to it's fallen companion. If Fryda is dead, he begins wailing into the air. He lets no one approach her, until Cuthalion arrives on the scene.

If Fryda survived the encounter, then Fredegar merely sits near his companion, licking her wounds and whimpering. She does not move, though her eyes are barely open and looking around. If a PC approaches to help her, they must roll an Wild Empathy skill check (DC 15) (as per the description in the *Player's Handbook* page 47) on Fredegar, to get near her. Otherwise, the male bear blocks the way. If their intention is to heal the bear, one PC can make the Wild Empathy check and distract Fredegar, while another heals Fryda.

If they are able and willing to do so, give the PCs enough time to tend to the bears before Cuthalion Strongbow arrives. Cuthalion has been able to observe the goings on for one round, just before he makes his appearance.

If there is a PC right next to the bears, give him a chance, Spot check (DC 25), to see Cuthalion stepping from out of the tree next to the bears.

As you tend to the wounded, you are startled by the sudden appearance of a figure just next to the bears. You are not quite sure where he came from, but he nods in your direction, sets aside his bow, and kneels to attend the severely injured bear. Laying his hands upon the matted fur, you hear a prayer under his breath, and the wounds begin to close. The bear begins licking his face and is soon walking around, nuzzling the other grizzly.

Smiling, the man turns his attention to you. His long braided hair is tied back, revealing his half-elven heritage, and he wears a dark cuirass made of leather scales. On his left arm, you see a green armband, embroidered with a white oak leaf, flanked by two white bars on either side.

He holds up your note in one hand, "Does this belong to you?"

Cuthalion's reaction to the party depends heavily on how they acted towards the bears in distress. If in doubt about their actions, he speaks with the bears and/or the plants to find out the truth.

The PCs did nothing and merely watched the fight:

Cuthalion is angry with them, especially if one or both of the bears died. He listens to them, but is not very helpful. He tells them that ***'they will have to find Thulis on their own'***, and that ***'if he sees him first, he will inform him that he knows of a party of cowards that would like to join him.'*** At this point he walks away, and disappears behind a tree. Try as they might, the party would have to succeed at a Track skill check (DC 35) multiple times in succession, to find their way to Argel. The module is effectively over, unless they can find another way to get to the final encounter.

The PCs aided the bears in battle, but did not try to aide them with healing:

Cuthalion thanks them, introduces them to Fryda and Fredegar, and tells the party that the bears thank them for their help as well. If one of the bears died, he is very saddened. He listens to the PCs, answers relevant questions, and takes them to Argel, but he is reluctant to talk to them about much else until they get there.

The PCs helped the bears in battle, and tried to aide his ursine friends with healing aid of any kind (magic, potions, or skill):

Cuthalion is very grateful. He tells them that the bears thank them as well. They have earned the Favor of Cuthalion Strongbow (as per the AR), and he is willing to help them out in any way he can.

After hearing their story, First Ward Strongbow tells them that although Thulis is a thief and a coward, killing in cold blood does not sound like his style. He tells them that he does not keep up with his former companion at arms. He has not talked to him in years, and does not know where to find him. He does offer that the dewin Waylan might know something, as he was closer to the rogue, and still keeps in contact with him. If they want to speak with Waylan, he guides them to Argel ys Aberva,

If they show him the note that was found at the ambush site, he **is** surprised to see the old "invoice". He confirms its authenticity. Although his name is on it, he tells them that he (as well as most of the party) voluntarily forfeited his share of the reimbursement before it was ever presented to Grand Duke Owen. It was Thulis who pressed Owen for the money during the war councils.

Proceed to **Encounter Five**.

Encounter Five: The Hidden Haven

First Ward Strongbow leads you through the dark maze of the Dim Forest. He deliberately moves at a quick pace through the rolling terrain of the forest floor, and slows only occasionally to make an abstruse hand gesture, or a particular birdcall. You keep up this pace for a few miles before he begins to slow down a bit.

You do not know what it is, but this area of the Dim seems more preternatural than when you first entered the woods. The change is barely discernible, but it is there. The light that does pierce the canopy here, seems more brilliant than before, the bubbling sound of the small brooks that riddle the area more clear, and the greens seem somehow greener.

After a while, the ranger begins hiking a steep, boulder-pocked hill. The path is only wide enough for one person at a time, and you instinctively look at your feet to keep from slipping down the rocky ravine.

Nearing the top of the rise, your progress is blocked by a thick tangle of roots hanging from the tree on top of the hill. However, as the ranger approaches it, the roots move aside revealing a small cave mouth, which you could not have seen from the forest floor.

"Thank you, Rhisglbrith," says Cuthalion as he passes, petting the roots. Glancing upwards, you can see a pair of eyes in the gnarled bark of the tree looking back at you.

Stooping to enter the cave, you are lead into a dark, narrow and winding tunnel, which soon opens up into a larger antechamber. The First Ward speaks a word, and the chamber is lit with a soft amber glow, revealing an ironbound door set into the rock on the far wall.

"Welcome to Argel." Cuthalion Strongbow says, as he opens the door for you.

Going through, you find yourselves in another chamber, only this one was not shaped by nature. Its smooth, stone walls are perfectly flat, and four doors lead from it. Following the First Ward to the door across the room, you swear you can hear the voices of children whispering behind one of the other doors.

Finally, you reach another room, candlelit, and appointed with simple, yet comfortable furnishings. It appears to be a study of some kind, and looking up from a desk as you enter is a nondescript man with graying hair, wearing an earth colored robe. A staff topped with a glistening gem is propped next to him.

"Waylan," says Cuthalion, "It seems that Thulis' reputation has followed us even here."

Cuthalion motions to the party member who holds the "notice of debt", and nod towards the wizard. He encourages the party to tell their tale.

Waylan reads the notice, and listens intently to what the PCs have to say. Upon hearing the allegations against Thulis, the dewin looks most perturbed, especially if they are able to describe the rogue in detail.

Waylan opens his mouth to say something, but it is another voice that speaks, a voice coming from the darkness in the rear of the room, behind the wizard.

"It was not me." It says simply, as a cloaked figure steps from the shadows.

In an instant, the ranger's swords leap from their scabbards, and he crouches in a defensive stance facing the dark figure.

"Now, now 'Thalion, is that any way to greet an old friend." The man says as he steps into the light, and folds back his hood.

You immediately recognize his sharp features, and black hair. It is the man you saw on horseback the day of the ambush, the man now known to you as Thulis Shadowcaster.

Cuthalion Strongbow relaxes his stance, though he does not sheath his swords. "What is he doing here?" he asks the wizard tersely.

"I just thought I'd visit some familiar faces while I was in this gods-forsaken country." interrupts the rogue, "It has been, what, a decade since I last saw my old troupe...at least those who survived Gorna that is."

You can see Cuthalion bristle at that last part, and the tension between the two is palpable. Waylan finally speaks up, breaking the uncomfortable moment.

"Is this the man you saw that day?" He says looking back and forth between you and the rogue.

If the PCs accuse him or ask him directly about the incident and the note: Thulis answers:

"Someone is obviously trying to sully my good name." Thulis says smiling, "I broke up my gang years ago, and as far as that (he

points to the notice of debt), I thought I'd lost it a while back. No, it wasn't me you saw that day, but I am a bit curious as to who it could have been."

If the PC's ask him where he was the morning of the ambush: He says that he was with Waylan on that morning, and Waylan confirms this.

If the PCs ask him how long he has been in Geoff: Thulis says he arrived a week ago, and passed through Hochoch once. He thought he had been careful, but maybe someone noticed him. He did not speak with anyone in town of import, though he did visit an old contact, a merchant in town by the name of Caswir to catch up on the latest happenings.

If the party asks him if he has any enemies who would want to frame him, and had access to his belongings: He says that he rode with his gang for a couple of years, and made lots of enemies along the way. Mostly those they stole from. He says he only noticed the old "invoice" was missing after he disbanded his gang, and only his gang would have had access to his belongings. They all knew about the letter, as he sometimes joked about one day 'collecting from the Duke'.

If the PCs suggest that one of his former gang could be involved: Thulis thinks about this, and says:

"Come to think of it, there is one who just may have the brass ones to do something like this. His name is Cethin and I kicked him out of the gang just before I decided to go solo. He was good, the best, at what he did, but too bloodthirsty. One day, against my orders, he killed a helpless merchant for no reason, after the poor bastard had already surrendered his coin purse. So I made an example of him. You could say we didn't part on the best of terms."

"I don't know where he is nowadays, but his brother would. They joined my gang together, and Caswir stayed on after his brother left. He keeps rooms at the Giant's Hearth Inn."

If the party asks him more about Caswir: Thulis tells them that he was the opposite of his brother. He was his best confidence man, had a

pendant for 'business' matters, and never resorted to violence. He is a well-to-do merchant now, and keeps rooms at the new inn, the Giant's Hearth.

If the party asks him more about Cethin: Thulis tells them that he was a great infiltrator, and all around sneak thief. If something had to be done right, Cethin was the one he sent. He could get into places no one else could. Also, he had a presence about him, and a way of looking at people that just made your hairs stand on end. He was feared by most in the gang, mean bastard that he was, and that is part of the reason Thulis kept him on as long as he did.

He got along with his brother, and they worked well together, but they did not have what one would call a 'loving' relationship.

Beyond providing them with information, Thulis does not actively assist the party. Waylan believes Thulis' story, as does First Ward Strongbow. Any attempts to Sense Motive or discern lies reveal the Thulis is telling the truth.

If a PC tries to "apprehend" Thulis, Waylan tells them that while he is in Argel, Thulis has sanctuary. He does not allow any fighting in his home, and if the PCs anger the normally calm dewin by pressing to hard, he warns them only once. Waylan is a high level wizard, and wields a *staff of power* amongst other things. If they overstep their bounds, they might find themselves waking up at the edge of the Dim Forest (if they are lucky).

After they are done questioning Thulis Shadowcaster, Cuthalion escorts them to the edge of the Dim, and wishes them luck. If they were polite and friendly to him, and if they came to the aid of his animal companions, Cuthalion gives them a Quaal's Feather Token (hound).

At this point, their strongest lead involves speaking with Caswir. If the PCs don't come to this conclusion, Cuthalion suggests it to them.

Unbeknownst to the party, Thulis begins to follow them after they leave the Dim Forest. He keeps a safe distance, and should never be seen by the party. He is curious to see how everything turns out, and does not make his presence known until the end of **Encounter Seven**.

Proceed to **Encounter Six**.

Encounter Six: Deal with a Monger

Once the party is back in Hochoch, and making their way to the Giant's Hearth Inn, read the following:

Walking uphill into the Market Ward, you easily locate the Giant's Hearth Inn off of Pelt Street, as it is the largest building in the vicinity. The two-story stone and wood caravansary is as large as a small keep, and overshadows the more common wattle and daub structures around it.

The courtyard in the front is filled with various wagons attended by servants who linger near their charges throwing dice, drinking, or chatting amongst one another.

Entering the inn, you cannot help but notice its namesake. In the middle of the common room, is the largest hearth you have ever seen. The immense structure is made of over-sized bricks and houses four fireplaces, each the height and breadth of a man. A spitted roast boar is being turned slowly over a fire on the hob nearest you.

To the left side of the hearth, stands an anvil or rather what used to be an anvil, nearly as tall as a man. Iron has been scraped off in various areas, making it awkwardly lopsided.

Round tables (though few in number for such a large room) surround the hearth; and booths, separated by thick wooden partitions, line two of the walls. It is obvious that most of the wood interior is relatively new. You also notice that most of the patrons wear the style of clothing associated with affluent artisans and merchants. They are a diverse mix of Flan, Oeridian, Suel, and everything in between, and your guess is that most of them are definitely from out of town. You see very few other races.

The place is abuzz with conversation, and from your right you hear a voice pipe up: "May I be of service?" says a tired looking, older man as he gets up from a stool and table next to the front entrance.

If asked his name, he tells them it is Elis, and that he is the innkeeper here. If asked about Caswir, the man asks who is calling, and then politely asks the party to wait a moment. He then goes to the corner booth and speaks to a man sitting there. Returning, he directs the PCs to that booth.

DM note: If any of the PCs *specifically* say they are actively looking in the taproom for any of the bandits, a successful Spot check (DC 26) allows them to notice a man who is actively avoiding eye contact. This is Ogwen, and if the PCs approach him to get a better look, he tries to escape them. Skip to the latter part of this encounter.

Approaching the corner booth, you see a slender, pale man wearing a finely tailored indigo outfit. He slowly swirls a ceramic mug on the table, and eyes you with a hint of a grin as you near. Standing up from the seat across from him, and momentarily blocking your view of the man, is a much larger, thick-browed fellow. This one wears black leather armor, and fingers a mace at his belt. The brute stands aside, yet still within inches of his seated companion, and eyes all of you with a stone face.

"Is there something I can help you with?" says the seated man, but something in his tone tells you he already knows the answer to that question.

Caswir has access to magical defenses, as well as mundane. He has the spell *detect thoughts* (DC 15) up from the moment he is informed of the party's presence. He cannot be charmed (for reasons not revealed here), and is also wearing a *ring of counterspells* (the spell *suggestion* is currently stored in it). If they try to detect evil on him, he does not detect as evil.

Caswir politely listens to the PCs, all the while grinning (or rather smirking) slightly. After they ask him for help in finding Cethin, he asks them for the whole story if they have not given it already. Once he knows all they have to tell him (or even as they tell him), he subtly mocks their efforts, their loyalties, and Grand Duke Owen's woes, with remarks like:

"Hmm, so you are errand boys for Owen then, and unpaid ones at that. Seems to be a trend with him."

“The Army has this much trouble with a band of brigands, and they are supposed to drive the giants from Geoff? Perhaps they should just cede the rest of the piddley Duchy, and save us all the time and taxes”

“Why bring mortal danger upon yourselves for this “Grand” Duke? What has he done for you of late?”

Use your imagination, but remember that subtle, yet caustic, sarcastic, and inflammatory language is Caswir’s weapon of choice. He never says anything overtly slanderous or threatening. He merely makes a sport out of goading those he considers weaker minded into losing their tempers. Should they prove to be smart enough to play his word games with him (or patient enough to let his comments pass), rather than resort to outright insults or violence, he respects them for their control (and wit), and tells them what they need to know -- for a price.

If they threaten to tell about his past with the gang: He reminds them that they have no proof of this, and adds that his reputation is not dependant on the popularity of his past deeds, but rather the business he brings to the economically fragile Grand Duchy now.

If they lose their tempers, and insult or threaten him outright: He informs them that the price for his information just went up by 100 gp. He now only helps them in exchange for coinage.

If they resort to violence or spells: Heth (his bodyguard), has a readied action to attack anyone attacking Caswir physically or magically. He gets between the assailants and his master, while Caswir uses his abilities to get out of harm’s way. Caswir also has another bodyguard, sitting in the taproom. Other employees of the inn come to his aid, trying to detain the PCs until the Town Watch arrives.

Use the sample 5th level fighter stats on p. 117 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide* for Caswir’s other bodyguard and for the Town Watch. Just treat them as humans instead of hobgoblins.

After the PCs have amused Caswir long enough, he offers to help them. Before he tells them anything though, there is the matter of his price:

“Very well then, I will tell you what you want to know. However, I am a businessman, and as with any commodity, information has its price. I would say this is worth at least ____ gold lions. Unless you can offer another equitable trade.”

Caswir’s asking price is the APL x 50 gp (total). If the PCs suggest owing him a service instead, he agrees. If the PCs are unwilling to pay gold, or try to bargain him down, he suggests:

“If you cannot afford this, well, then you can owe me a service instead, which I will collect on at a later date.”

This he gets in writing. Once the PCs agree to one of the above payment options, he tells them:

“Cethin’s gang have taken to hiding in an abandoned steading. It lies in a copse of trees, in a dell to the south of Daufforth, just a few miles off the road. Most of the place was destroyed by giants years ago. It shouldn’t be too much trouble to find... though... it may be simpler to ask that man, as he is likely going there now...”

He says the last word pointing to a man that is headed for the front door. Upon seeing Caswir point him out, the man begins to run.

The man, Ogwen, is one of Cethin’s men, and is on his way to the steading to tell Cethin about the party visiting with Caswir. If any of the party members saw the brigand wearing the red armband in **Encounter One**, then they recognize Ogwen as that man.

APL 2 (EL 2)

Ogwen, male human Rgr1/Rog1: hp 16; see **Appendix A**.

APL 4 (EL 4)

Ogwen, male human Rgr2/Rog2: hp 24; see **Appendix A**.

APL 6 (EL 6)

Ogwen, male human Rgr2/Rog4: hp 42; see **Appendix A**.

APL 8 (EL 8)

Ogwen, male human Rgr3/Rogue5: hp 55; see **Appendix A**.

He is approximately 30-40 feet from the closed front door of the inn, and the PCs have a good chance of catching him if they give chase right away.

Tactics: Ogwen's motive is escape, and he avoids getting into a fight if at all possible. He may go for the stables where his horse is kept, or try to lose the party in town before heading to the hideout, depending on the circumstances. If he can get beyond the courtyard of the inn, he tries to lose the party by ducking into alleys, and hiding and moving silently in the surrounding buildings and streets. The ground in Hochoch is muddy, and heavily traveled, considerably slowing down any attempts at tracking. If the PCs are not able to spot him in the first few rounds (assuming they pursue him), consider him "escaped", and headed to the hideout.

Ogwen is in town with the other members of Cethin's gang spending their share of the loot. At present, the others are in the Boar's Knuckle tavern and various establishments throughout Hochoch getting liquored up and spending their gold on women, new gear, weapons, etc. They are all staying the night in town, and leaving for the hideout the next day.

It just so happens that Ogwen was securing lodging for the night from the Giant's Hearth innkeeper, as the gang wanted to splurge and stay at the newest and most expensive place in town. He was enjoying a cider when he noticed the PCs talking to Caswir and recognized them from **Encounter One**. He was just leaving to inform Cethin/Thulis of the coincidence

If the party tries to apprehend Ogwen, one of the nearby commoners alerts a Town Watch patrol which comes to investigate. Give the party a total of four or five rounds to catch and interrogate Ogwen, before the Watch intervenes. If the party overwhelms him from the start, or blocks off his avenues of escape, or if he's faced with the PCs *and* the Town Watch, Ogwen surrenders. A successful Intimidate check (DC 10 + Ogwen's level + 3 circumstance bonus due to his fear of Cethin/Thulis' wrath) is required to get any information out of him. If the PCs explain their story to the Watch (and show the writ from the Braichdyn) the Watch arrests Ogwen. If Ogwen's reason for being at the Giant's Hearth Inn gets out, they take care of detaining the others for questioning when they

arrive at the inn. The Town Watch does not leave Hochoch.

Development: The final encounter is based on whether Ogwen gets away (in which case Cethin is ready and waiting for the party), or whether he is captured, (in which case Cethin is not expecting the party).

If, and only if, Ogwen is interrogated successfully, *charmed* or otherwise magically compelled to cooperate, he answers their questions. He is a coward at heart, but fears Thulis (Cethin) more than anything (except maybe a determined party). He knows the location of the steading hideout, and has been there a handful of times. The whole gang was there last night. Thulis has told him it is riddled with traps (although this was a lie on Thulis'/Cethin's part). He is not sure where Thulis has stashed the loot. He also tells the party that Thulis hires new men all the time, and the steading is likely to have guards aside from the robbers (another lie told to him by Thulis/Cethin).

Proceed to **Encounter Seven**.

Encounter Seven: To Catch a Thief

DM note: There is a chance in this encounter, that a PC will be 'taken out' and replaced by Cethin. His goal is to replace one of the PCs without anyone noticing. If this opportunity arises during game play, pass a note or somehow give notice to the player in question, and let him know what is happening. Conduct Cethin's attack in secret, perhaps pre-roll some attacks and Bluff checks. Maybe even have the player make some rolls, and use those as Cethin's attack rolls. If a player is 'taken out' and replaced by the doppelganger, tell him/her to continue playing as normal, and try to look for (or create) an opportune moment to strike the other party members (at which time you should take control of Cethin's attack rolls). To help avoid the other players getting suspicious, perhaps pass a note to everyone, so as not to single out that one player.

Stepping off the road to Daufforth, you and your companions scan the terrain as you go until you spot a dell between three hills. There is a large copse of trees in the vale,

and you can just make out the wall of a steading overgrown with vines. The place looks long abandoned.

The Abandoned Steading: A steading is a Gyrlic farm with a palisade wall around it to guard against raiders and beasts. The gate of this steading has been destroyed, and the wall has been bashed-in in one corner. The remaining palisade wall is 12' tall. The ruined buildings have been almost completely demolished and contain nothing of interest. This is evident at a glance. The small portions of the ruined buildings walls that do remain afford 50% cover. The 'home' of the steading is the only building that is fairly intact. It is constructed in a 'log cabin' fashion, and therefore sturdier than the other buildings were.

The house consists of two floors. The ground floor has a reinforced wooden front door, and contains a long table and a fireplace. The second floor is essentially a loft, and is open on the side facing the fireplace. The wall on that side of the bedrooms is only three feet tall, affording a view of the floor below. The easternmost bedroom has a gaping hole in the wall to the outside. (10 feet from ground level), and a boulder lies in the corner. All of the windows are shuttered with sturdy wooden panels, and barred from the inside.

Cethin has used this hideout in the past. The pay box (with the half of the gold that remains) has been stashed in a hole under some loose flagstones in the hearth floor (Search DC 15). The space under the stones is lined with lead sheeting (to block *locate object* divinations), and the underside edges of the stones have been coated with poison which the PCs touch when they lift the stone unless they search for traps and wipe the poison off (disable device). The stolen weapons, gear, and other sundries are being kept upstairs in the large bedroom.

APL 2 (EL 1)

Stone Smeared with Contact Poison; CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); manual reset; poison (carrion crawler brain juice, DC 13 Fortitude save resists; paralysis/0); Search DC 19; Disable Device DC 16.

APL 4 (EL 3)

Stone Smeared with Contact Poison; CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); manual reset; poison (sassone leaf residue, DC 16

Fortitude save resists; 2d12 hp/1d6 Con); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 19.

APL 6 (EL 5)

Stone Smeared with Contact Poison; CR 5; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); manual reset; poison (nitharit, DC 16 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Dex/2d6 Dex); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 19.

APL 8 (EL 7)

Stone Smeared with Contact Poison; CR 7; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); manual reset; poison (dragon bile, DC 26 Fortitude save resists; 3d6 Str/0); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 16.

If the PCs did not catch Ogwen in the last encounter, there is a chance that he escaped and beat the PCs here to warn Cethin. He is only willing and able to warn Cethin if he was able to escape on horseback with no pursuers in sight. If he gets to Cethin before the party, Cethin tells him to leave before the PCs arrive. He does not want Ogwen realizing what he really is, and furthermore, he wants to keep the rest of the loot for himself (after he defeats the party). Ogwen, not wanting to anger Cethin, does as he is told. He hides away from the steading watching from afar, and leaves if the party defeats Cethin. They may see Ogwen again...

Tactics: Cethin believes himself to be very cunning, and sees this encounter as a challenging game. He is also an unstable, bloodthirsty sadist. Depending on the mood he is in, he either tries to kill the PCs when he has a chance, or, (in APLs 4-8) he tries to paralyze them using his poison or 'death attack'. Three of his darts are always coated carrion crawler brain juice poison. Depending on the situation, he has a 50/50 chance to either go for the outright kill, or paralyze them (to save the victims for later torture and a slower death). If the 'waiting game' tactics take too long, he finally snaps and attacks the nearest target.

At APLs 6-8, Cethin casts the spell *undetectable alignment* on himself every day as added security against nosy spellcasters.

If Cethin has been warned, he takes his time to hide outside the home, and applies poison to his rapier. Once he spots the PCs, he drinks a *potion of misdirection* to throw off any divinations

attempted on him, and possibly a *potion of non-detection*. He casts any preparatory spells (dependent on the APL) that might come in handy during a fight (i.e. *spider climb*). He waits for the PCs to enter before attacking any lone PC left outside. His strategy is to eliminate a party member, and take his place without the others noticing. If a good opportunity does not present itself, he reads the surface thoughts of the party while hiding, and changes his form into that of Cuthalion Strongbow, or another ally the party recognizes, before approaching them. He then suggests that the party set up to ambush the bandits, and he joins the party in an attempt to get another character alone during the 'stake-out'.

If Cethin is caught unawares, then he is inside when the PCs arrive, though it is nigh impossible to surprise him while he is in the house. He is almost always facing the front door, and his *detect thoughts* ability is always active while he is at the stading. When he notices strangers approaching, he begins to read their thoughts while moving to the loft area. Use the Will saves rolled by the PCs at the beginning of the module, and keep in mind that the range of his ability is 60 feet, and it takes him 3 rounds to actually read the surface thoughts of the PCs.

He goes to the larger bedroom, drinks a *potion of misdirection*, and possibly a *potion of non-detection*. He casts any spells that may come in handy (i.e. *spider climb*), and if he has time, he coats his rapier in poison (full round action). Most importantly, he assumes the form of a simple, Gyri country girl named Lona that the gang "kidnapped" from the hamlet of Daufforth. What is left of her clothes are torn, and she is badly bruised. She (he) sobbingly tells them that the black haired man and his gang left some time ago, and that they should all leave, as the "bad men" will be back soon. If asked why she did not leave, she tells them that he (Thulis) threatened to kill her parents if she tried to run away. If asked why she was taken, she implies that her father has a lot of money (owns a big farm etc.). Once he has lulled them into a false sense of security, he seeks the perfect opportunity to attack. Ideally he tries to get a party member alone.

DM note: At APL 8, Cethin/Lona is wearing a ring of mind shielding. If the characters detect magic on her, it may register even if he drank a potion to throw off divinations. If so, it detects as

Abjuration magic, and she plays it off as 'a present from her dad to keep her from harm'.

If Cethin is detected, he may know the gig is up (via his *detect thoughts* ability). Failing that, roll his Sense Motive for him to gather that the party is on to him. At this point, he transforms into Thulis (if he has time to do so) and tells the party that they stand no chance against him. He tries to Bluff his way out of this, and tries to tempt them with gold and offers to join his gang. If he does not have time, and the PCs engage him in combat, he fights them in whatever form he is in currently. He fights to the best of his ability, using the stading 'landscape' to his advantage, and springing after spellcasters first if he can. If he is being overwhelmed, he tries to flee given the opportunity.

The real Thulis Shadowcaster has trailed the party to this point, and remains in hiding. He reveals himself at the end of the encounter.

If and when a final blow is dealt to Cethin (resulting in death or unconsciousness), read the following:

The body of _____ collapses to the ground, disbelief and anger etched on its face. It convulses and begins to rapidly transform, changing shape from one second to the next. One moment you see the face of Thulis Shadowcaster, the next moment that of a little girl, and then one who resembles Caswir, and a dozen others, before it settles on a gray skinned, featureless face set with unblinking white eyes.

As you look down at this curiosity, applause from a single pair of hands breaks the silence, and a familiar voice speaks up nearby, "Well, that certainly explains a lot." Says the voice you recognize as Shadowcaster's. "He always had an uncanny knack for disguises, and now I know why."

"Well done adventurers, though don't expect any reward for your efforts, at least not from the 'Grand' Duke. Speaking of which, if you see Owen, tell him not to spend all of my money on this ill-fated war. I'll be collecting it from him soon enough."

"But me, I pay my debts. You've cleared my name. That should be worth something. Find me sometime and we'll talk." The last is

said with an amused chuckle that fades away.

If the party tries to look for Thulis, it is in vain. He has the Hide in Plain Site ability, and his Hide and Move Silently skills are in the 30s. If he is tracked, he has the ability to go to the ethereal plane if need be.

Conclusion

If the party defeats Cethin, and searches the homestead thoroughly, they find the strongbox (under the fireplace flagstones as described above). It is clearly identifiable as the one from the army caravan, as it has both the seal of Fox Company and that of the Grand Duke on it. It is only half full (300gp), as the other half went to the members of the gang. The other sundries that were stolen from the wagon are kept in the bedroom upstairs. Two horses can be found tied to a tree in the woods behind the lodge (both stolen, as evident by the Teulu cavalry brand on them).

A search of the steading bedrooms reveals nothing else of import in the lodge. The building itself was abandoned a decade ago when the giants invaded, and the gang only recently claimed it as a hideout.

Upon returning the Army property, Braichdyn Berwyn thanks them, and asks that they keep this as confidential as possible. He also offers them an opportunity to join the Army of Liberation if they are not already members, because as the braichdyn puts it: ***"We could use some good folk such as yourselves"***.

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 role-playing) to each character.

Encounter One: Enter the Villain

Finding the clues at the ambush

APL 2	40 xp;
APL 4	60 xp;
APL 6	80 xp;
APL 8	100 xp.

Encounter Four: Big Trouble

Defeating the Giant Army scouting/raiding party

APL 2	150 xp;
APL 4	210 xp;
APL 6	270 xp;
APL 8	330 xp.

Encounter Five: The Hidden Haven

Speaking with Thulis and learning of Cethin and Caswir

APL 2	150 xp;
APL 4	210 xp;
APL 6	270 xp;
APL 8	330 xp.

Encounter Six: Deal with a Monger

Capturing/defeating Ogwen

APL 2	60 xp;
APL 4	120 xp;
APL 6	180 xp;
APL 8	240 xp.

Encounter Seven: To Catch a Thief

Defeating Cethin and recovering stolen items

APL 2	150 xp;
APL 4	210 xp;
APL 6	270 xp;
APL 8	330 xp.

Defeating the trap

APL 2	30 xp;
APL 4	90 xp;
APL 6	150 xp;
APL 8	210 xp.

Total possible experience

APL 2	450 xp;
APL 4	675 xp;
APL 6	900 xp;
APL 8	1125 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.

L = Looted gear from enemy; C = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; M = Magic Items.

L: Looted gear from enemy

C: Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables

M: Magic Items (sell value)

Encounter 4: Big Trouble

Defeat Giant Army patrol and strip their gear.

APL 2: L: 88 gp; C: 0; M: 0

APL 4: L: 88 gp; C: 0; M: 0

APL 6: L: 456 gp; C: 0; M: 0

APL 8: L: 302 gp; C: 0; M: 0

Encounter 5: The Hidden Haven

Were polite and friendly to Cuthalion.

APL 2: L: 0; C: 0; M: Quaal's Feather Token (hound) (Value 30 gps per character)

APL 4: L: 0; C: 0; M: Quaal's Feather Token (hound) (Value 30 gps per character)

APL 6: L: 0; C: 0; M: Quaal's Feather Token (hound) (Value 30 gps per character)

APL 8: L: 0; C: 0; M: Quaal's Feather Token (hound) (Value 30 gps per character)

Encounter 6: Deal with a Monger

Capture and strip Ogwen of his gear (watch will allow it if shown writ from Braichdyn)

APL 2: L: 228 gp; C: 0; M: 0

APL 4: L: 178 gp; C: 0; M: +1 chain shirt (Value: 104gp per character)

APL 6: L: 178 gp; C: 0; M: +1 chain shirt (Value: 104 gp per character)

APL 8: L: 178 gp; C: 0; M: +1 chain shirt (Value: 104 gp per character)

Encounter 7: To Catch a Thief

Defeat and strip Cethin of his gear, as well as loot the stading.

APL 2: L: 350 gp; C: 0; M: *potion of misdirection* (x2) (Value: 50 gp per character gp), *bag of holding* (Type 1) (Value: 208 gp per character), *potion of undetectable alignment* (Value: 25 gp per character)

APL 4: L: 450 gp; C 0 gp: 0; M: *potion of misdirection* (x2) (Value: 50 gp per character), *bag of holding* (Type 1) (Value: 208 gp per character), *cloak of resistance* +1 (Value: 83 gp per character), *potion of non-detection* (Value: 63 gp per character)

APL 6: L: 450 gp; C 0 gp: 0; M: *potion of misdirection* (x2) (Value: 50 gp per character), *bag of holding* (Type 1) (Value: 208 gp per character), *cloak of resistance* +2 (Value: 333 gp per character), *potion of non-detection* (Value: 63 gp per character)

APL 8: L: 365 gp; C 0 gp: 0; M: *potion of misdirection* (x2) (Value: 50 gp per character); +1 rapier (Value: 193 gp per character), *bag of holding* (Type 1) (Value: 208 gp per character), *cloak of resistance* +2 (Value: 333 gp per character), *ring of mind shielding* (Value: 667 gp per character)

Total Possible Treasure

APL 2	400 gp;
APL 4	600 gp;
APL 6	800 gp;
APL 8	1250 gp.

Special

Characters may earn one of more of the following rewards during the adventure. Note

which ones, if any, they receive on the adventure certificate.

- **Favor of Cuthalion Strongbow:** You helped rescue Fredegar and Fryda, animal companions to First Ward Cuthalion Strongbow. Cuthalion will speak on your behalf if you ever desire to join, or be promoted in, the Olwythi gan Gyruff or the Army of Liberation. If you are a member of the Olywthi, you may chose to serve at Argel. If you spend 1 TU per year instructing/patrolling at the hidden haven, you may lodge there anytime, and standard upkeep costs you nothing in Geoff. Also, you may exchange this favor for access to *Quaal's Feathered Headband*. (Favor Level C)
- **Favor of Thulis Shadowcaster** (value 0 gps, frequency: adventure): You have helped Thulis protect his "good" name, which he finds amusing. You may exchange this favor for access to one of the following feats: Arterial Strike, Flick of the Wrist, or Hamstring. (Favor Level D).
- **Quaal's Feathered Headband:** (value 500 gps, frequency: special) This woolen headband is decorated with swirling Flan tribal markings. Tales say it was crafted by the legendary Great Druid Quaal. The headband holds any number of Quaal's Feather tokens either

in an upright or downward position (but not both at the same time). To retrieve a feather token from the headband is a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The headband fills the head slot. You may only gain access to this item through the Favor of Cuthalion Strongbow.

- **Quaal's Feather Token (hound):** (value 300 gps, frequency: adventure) A token that can takes the form of a hound that can track using scent with a +5 bonus to Survival checks. The dog lasts for up to one day. It does nothing else but track it's quarry, and it disappears if dealt any damage.
- **Service Owed to Caswir the Monger:** In lieu of paying for information, you owe Caswir a service, and he's got that in writing.
- **Enmity of Caswir the Monger:** You attacked Caswir, and he did not appreciate it. He uses his influence to make things difficult for you. Special and superior items bought in Hochoch cost you 20% more than the listed price for the next year.

Appendix A

Encounters

APL2

Encounter Four: Big Trouble (EL 5)

Ogre: hp 13 (injured); See *Monster Manual* page 144

Goblin riders (4): hp 5,5,4,4; see *Monster Manual* page 107.

Wolf mounts (4): hp 13,11,11,9; see *Monster Manual* page 205.

Fryda & Fredegar (brown bears): CR 4; Large Animals; HD 6d8+24; HP 57 and 60 (currently wounded at 0 hp and 26 hp respectively); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40ft; AC 15 (-1size, +1Dex, +5natural); Atks +11 melee (1d8+8 [x2], claws), +6 melee (2d8+4, bite); Face/Reach 5ft by 10ft/5ft; SA improved grab; SQ scent (detects creatures within 30 ft.); AL N; SV Fort+9, Ref+6, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen+4, Spot+7, Swim +14

Fredegar and Fryda should not be fought by the party and are therefore not included in the EL of this encounter. They merely defend themselves from perceived NPC and PC threats.

At this APL, Fredegar attacks the ogre if all other threats to Fryda have been neutralized.

Encounter Six: Deal with a Monger (EL 2)

Ogwen, male human 1Rgr/1Rog: CR 2: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall), HD 1d10+1d6+4; hp 16; Init +3; Spd 30ft.; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +4 chain shirt armor), Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/18-20, MW rapier); +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); or melee +1 (1d6*subdual, sap); SA Rog sneak attack +1d6; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Appraise+2, Bluff +3, Diplomacy+4, Disable Device+4, Disguise+4, Forgery+4, Hide+6, Knowledge: local +3, Move Silently +5, Listen+3, Open Locks+6, Pick Pockets+5, Ride +4, Search+2, Sense

Motive+2, Spot +0, Tumble+4, Use Rope+5, Wilderness Lore+1. Feats: Dodge, Quick Draw.

Possessions: chain shirt, MW rapier, MW sap, light crossbow, 10 arrows, and coin purse, 30 gp.

Heth the Bodyguard, male human Bbn4/Ftr4/Gld4: CR 12: Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 8d10+4d12+36; hp 116; Init +2; Spd 40 ft; AC 20 (+5 +3 *studded leather* armor, +2 Dex); Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+6, MW heavy mace); AL CN; SV Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Bluff +7, Climb +9, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +7, Jump +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Perform +4, Ride +10, Spot +4, Tumble +5, Wilderness Lore +0. Blind-Fight, Iron Will, Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Weapon Focus (Heavy Mace), Close-Quarters Fighting, Dirty Fighting

Possessions: +3 *studded leather armor*, masterwork heavy mace, leather bag

Heth is not included in the EL of this encounter because the party should not fight him, unless they attack Caswir, who is a non-combatant.

Encounter Seven: To Catch a Thief (EL 5)

Cethin the Cruel, male doppelganger Rog2: CR5; Medium Shapechanger (5ft. 8in. tall); HD 4d8+2d6+6; hp 37; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 21 (+4 natural, +3 Dex; +3 *studded leather* armor, +1 buckler), Atks +5 (slams 1d6+1 [x2]), or +6 melee (1d6+1/18-20, MW rapier) or +7 ranged (1d4+1); SA Detect Thoughts, sneak attack +1d6; SQ Alter self, immunities, darkvision 60 ft., evasion; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +13*, Disguise +13*, Forgery +2, Hide +6, Intimidate +7, Listen +13, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +4, Search +2, Sense Motive +6, Spot +10, Tumble +3; Alertness, Dodge, Mobility

Detect Thoughts (Su): A doppelganger can continuously detect thoughts as the spell cast by an 18th level sorcerer (save DC 15*). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. *Cethin has a better *detect thoughts* save DC than most of his kind due to his high Charisma.

Alter Self (Su): As the alter self spell cast by 18th level sorcerer. Change in shape is a standard action. Can assume the shape of any Small or Medium-size humanoid. This works like the *alter self* spell, as if cast by an 18th-level sorcerer. The doppelganger can keep one shape indefinitely, and changing shape is a standard action. This gives it a +10 circumstance bonus to Disguise checks, in addition to racial bonuses.

Immunities (Ex): Doppelgangers are immune to sleep and charm effects.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Retains Dexterity bonus to AC even if flat-footed or unable to see opponent.

Evasion (Ex): On a successful Reflex save against a magical attack, you take no damage

Sneak Attack: Any time someone you attack is denied his or her Dexterity bonus to AC, or you are flanking him or her, you inflict extra damage. Ranged attacks must be within 30 feet to gain this, and this extra damage is not increased on a critical hit. Creatures that are immune to critical hits ignore this damage, as do creatures with concealment.

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, dagger, 6 darts, buckler, studded leather armor, 2 smokesticks, 6 tanglefoot bags, 2 *potions of misdirection*, *potion of undetectable alignment*, *bag of holding (Type 1)*.

APL 4

Encounter Four: Big Trouble (EL 7)

Ogre: hp 26; See *Monster Manual* page 144.

Goblin cavalry (4): hp 5,5,6,6; see *Monster Manual* page 107-108.

Worg mounts (4): hp 30 each; see *Monster Manual* page 184.

Fryda & Fredegar (brown bears): CR 4; Large Animals; HD 6d8+24; HP 57 and 60 (currently wounded at 0 hp and 26 hp respectively); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40ft; AC 15 (-1size, +1Dex, +5natural); Atks +11 melee (1d8+8 [x2], claws), +6 melee (2d8+4, bite); Face/Reach 5ft by 10ft/5ft; SA improved grab; SQ scent (detects creatures within 30 ft.); AL N; SV Fort+9, Ref+6, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen+4, Spot+7, Swim +14

Fredegar and Fryda should not be fought by the party and are therefore not included in the EL of this encounter. They merely defend themselves from perceived NPC and PC threats.

Encounter Six: Deal with a Monger (EL 4)

Ogwen, male human Rgr2/Rog2: CR 4: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 8 in tall); HD 2d6+2d10+8; hp 24; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+5 +1 *chain shirt* armor, +3 Dex); Atk +3 melee (primary) (1d6+1, 18-20/x2, MW rapier), +3 melee (secondary) (1d6 §, MW sap), or +7 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Rog sneak attack +1d6; SQ Rog evasion; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills & Feats: Appraise +2, Bluff +3, Disable Device +4, Disguise +4, Forgery +4, Hide +7, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Pick Pocket +7, Ride +4, Search +7, Sense Motive +3, Tumble +8, Use Rope +6, Wilderness Lore +1.
Dodge, Mobility, Quick Draw

Possessions: +1 *chain shirt*, MW rapier, MW sap, light crossbow, 10 arrows, coin purse, 30gp.

Heth the Bodyguard, male human Bbn4/Ftr4/Gld4: CR 12: Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 8d10+4d12+36; hp 116; Init +2;

Spd 40 ft; AC 18 (+6 +3 *studded leather* armor, +2 Dex); Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+6, MW heavy mace); AL CN; SV Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Bluff +7, Climb +9, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +7, Jump +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Perform +4, Ride +10, Spot +4, Tumble +5, Wilderness Lore +0. Blind-Fight, Iron Will, Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Weapon Focus (Heavy Mace), Close-Quarters Fighting, Dirty Fighting

Possessions: +3 *studded leather* armor, masterwork heavy mace, leather bag

Heth is not included in the EL of this encounter because he is not to be fought by the party, unless they attack Caswir, who is a non-combatant.

Encounter Seven: To Catch a Thief (EL 7)

Cethin the Cruel, male doppelganger Rog3/Asn1: CR7; Medium Shapechanger (5ft. 8in. tall); HD 4d8+4d6+8; Hp 47; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 21 (+4 natural, +3 Dex; +3 *studded leather* armor, +1 buckler), Atks +6 melee (slams 1d6+1 [x2]), or +7 melee (1d6+1/18-20, MW rapier), or +8 ranged (1d4+1); SA Detect thoughts, sneak attack +3d6, death attack; SQ Alter self, immunities, darkvision 60 ft, evasion; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +13, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +13*, Disguise +13*, Forgery +4, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Listen +13, Move Silent +10, Open Lock +4, Perform +6, Pick Pocket +5, Search +3, Sense Motive +6, Spot +10, Tumble +6, Use Rope +4; Alertness, Dodge, Mobility

Detect Thoughts (Su): A doppelganger can continuously detect thoughts as the spell cast by an 18th level sorcerer (save DC 15*). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. *Cethin has a better *detect thoughts* save DC than most of his kind due to his high Charisma.

Alter Self (Su): As the alter self spell cast by 18th level sorcerer. Change in shape is a standard action. Can assume the shape of any Small or Medium-size humanoid. This works like the *alter self* spell, as if cast by an 18th-level sorcerer. The doppelganger can keep one shape indefinitely, and changing shape is a standard action. This gives it a +10 circumstance bonus to Disguise checks, in addition to racial bonuses.

Immunities (Ex): Doppelgangers are immune to sleep and charm effects.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Retains Dexterity bonus to AC even if flat-footed or unable to see opponent.

Evasion (Ex): On a successful Reflex save against a magical attack, you take no damage.

Sneak Attack: Any time someone you attack is denied his or her Dexterity bonus to AC, or you are flanking him or her, you inflict extra damage. Ranged attacks must be within 30 feet to gain this, and this extra damage is not increased on a critical hit. Creatures that are immune to critical hits ignore this damage, as do creatures with concealment

Death Attack: If you study your victim for 3 rounds, and then attack that target within another 3 rounds using a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, you can paralyze or kill the target if they fail a Fortitude save (DC 15).

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, dagger, 6 darts, buckler, studded leather armor, 2 smokesticks, 6 tanglefoot bags, 2 *potions of misdirection*, vial of poison: carrion crawler brain juice (DC 13), *bag of holding* (Type 1), *cloak of resistance* +1, *potion of non-detection*

Spells Known: (1; base DC 12 + spell level); 1st – *ghost sound*, *sleep*.

APL 6

Encounter Four: Big Trouble (EL 9)

Grak: Male ogre 1Bbn/1Ftr; CR 4; Large Giant; HD4d8+1d12+1d10+12 (50hp); Init -1; Spd 40ft; AC 18 (-1size, -1dex, +5 natural, +5 chainmail); Atk +12 two-handed melee (2d6+8, MW greatclub) or +1 ranged (2d6+6/x3, longspear); Face/Reach 5ft/10ft (15-20ft with longspear); AL CE; SV Fort+10, Ref+0, Will+1; Str 22, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills & Feats: Climb+6, Listen +2, Spot+2; Swim +7, Wilderness Lore +2; Weapon Focus (greatclub), Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave.

Possessions: Chainmail armor, MW greatclub, dagger, map of southern Dim Forest.

Goblin elite cavalry, male goblin Ftr2 (4): CR 2; Small Humanoid; HD 2d10+2; hp 18; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; AC 18 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 size); Atk +3 melee (1d8, Morningstar), or +3 melee (1d6/x3, light lance), or +6 ranged (1d6, Javelin); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Hide +8, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Ride +8, Spot +3; Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge.

Possessions: Chain shirt, Morningstar, 5 javelins

Worg mounts (4): hp 30 each; see *Monster Manual* page 184.

Fryda & Fredegar (brown bears): CR 4; Large Animals; HD 6d8+24; HP 57 and 60 (currently wounded at 0 hp and 26 hp respectively); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40ft; AC 15 (-1size, +1Dex, +5natural); Atks +11 melee (1d8+8 [x2], claws), +6 melee (2d8+4, bite); Face/Reach 5ft by 10ft/5ft; SA improved grab; SQ scent (detects creatures within 30 ft.); AL N; SV Fort+9, Ref+6, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen+4, Spot+7, Swim +14

Fredegar and Fryda should not be fought by the party and are therefore not included in the EL of this encounter. They merely defend themselves from perceived NPC and PC threats.

Encounter Six: Deal with a Monger (EL 6)

Ogwen, male human Rgr2/Rog4: CR 6: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 4d6+2d10+12; hp 42; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+5 +1 chain shirt armor, +3 Dex); Atk +5 melee (primary) (1d6+1/18-20, MW rapier), +5 (secondary) (1d6 \$, Masterwork sap), or +8 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Rog sneak attack +2d6; SQ Rog evasion, Uncanny Dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills & Feats: Appraise +2, Bluff +3, Disable Device +4, Disguise +4, Forgery +4, Hide +8, Intimidate +2, Jump +5, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +8, Pick Pocket +8, Read Lips +4, Ride +4, Search +7, Sense Motive +5, Swim +1, Tumble +10, Use Rope +6, Wilderness Lore +1. Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, And Quick Draw.

Possessions: +1 chain shirt, MW rapier, MW sap, light crossbow, 10 arrows, coin purse, 30gp.

Heth the Bodyguard, male human Bbn4/Ftr4/Gld4: CR 12: Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 8d10+4d12+36; hp 116; Init +2; Spd 40 ft; AC 20 (+5 +3 studded leather armor, +2 Dex); Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+6, MW heavy mace); AL CN; SV Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Bluff +7, Climb +9, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +7, Jump +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Perform +4, Ride +10, Spot +4, Tumble +5, Wilderness Lore +0. Blind-Fight, Iron Will, Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Weapon Focus (Heavy Mace), Close-Quarters Fighting, Dirty Fighting

Possessions: +3 studded leather armor, masterwork heavy mace, leather bag

Heth is not included in the EL of this encounter because the party should not fight him, unless they attack Caswir, who is a non-combatant.

Encounter Seven: To Catch a Thief (EL 9)

Cethin the Cruel, male doppelganger Rog3/Asn3: CR9; Size: Medium (5ft 8in. tall); HD 4d8+6d6+10; Hp 57; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 21 (+4 natural, +3 Dex; +3 studded leather armor, +1 buckler), Atks +8/+3 melee (slams 1d6+2 [x2]), or +9/+4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, MW rapier), or +10/+5 ranged (1d4+1); SA Detect thoughts, sneak attack +4d6, death attack, poison use; SQ Alter self, immunities, darkvision

60 ft, evasion, poison resistance, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +14, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +15*, Disguise +13*, Forgery +4, Hide +12, Intimidate +8, Listen +13, Move Silent +12, Open Lock +4, Perform +8, Pick Pocket +5, Sense Motive +6, Spot +10, Search +4, Tumble +8, Use Rope +4; Alertness, Dodge, Mobility, Combat Reflexes

Detect Thoughts (Su): A doppelganger can continuously detect thoughts as the spell cast by an 18th level sorcerer (save DC 15*). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. *Cethin has a better *detect thoughts* save DC than most of his kind due to his high Charisma.

Alter Self (Su): As the alter self spell cast by 18th level sorcerer. Change in shape is a standard action. Can assume the shape of any Small or Medium-size humanoid. This works like the *alter self* spell, as if cast by an 18th-level sorcerer. The doppelganger can keep one shape indefinitely, and changing shape is a standard action. This gives it a +10 circumstance bonus to Disguise checks, in addition to racial bonuses.

Immunities (Ex): Doppelgangers are immune to sleep and charm effects.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Retains Dexterity bonus to AC even if flat-footed or unable to see opponent.

Evasion (Ex): On a successful Reflex save against a magical attack, you take no damage

Sneak Attack: Any time someone you attack is denied his or her Dexterity bonus to AC, or you are flanking him or her, you inflict extra damage. Ranged attacks must be within 30 feet to gain this, and this extra damage is not increased on a critical hit. Creatures that are immune to critical hits ignore this damage, as do creatures with concealment.

Death Attack: If you study your victim for 3 rounds, and then attack that target within another 3 rounds using a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, you can paralyze or kill the target if they fail a Fortitude save (DC 15).

Poison Resistance: You have a +1 bonus/every 2 levels to all saving throws against poison.

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, dagger, 6 darts, buckler, studded leather armor, 2 smokesticks, 6 tanglefoot bags, 2 *potions of misdirection*, vial of poison: carrion crawler brain

juice (DC 13), *bag of holding* (Type 1), *cloak of resistance* +2, *potion of non-detection*

Spells Known: (3/1; base DC 12 + spell level); 1st – *ghost sound*, *obscuring mist*, *sleep*.; 2nd – *pass without trace*, *undetectable alignment*.

APL 8

Encounter Four: Big Trouble (EL 11)

T'gaznaa, male ogre mage: CR 8; Large Giant (10 ft. tall); HD 5d8+15; hp 41; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 18 (-1 size, +5 natural, +4 chain shirt), Atk +7 melee (3d6+7/19-20, greatsword) or +2 ranged (2d6/x3, longbow); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5ft./10 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, SQ Darkvision 90 ft., flight, regeneration 5, spell resistance 19; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Listen +10, Spellcraft +10, Spot +10; Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative.

Flight (Su): The ogre mage can cease or resume flight as a free action. While using *gaseous form*, it can fly at its normal speed.

Regeneration (Ex): The ogre mage regenerates damage from all sources save fire and acid.

Spell-like abilities: At will – *darkness*, *invisibility*, 1/day – *charm person* (DC 14), *cone of cold* (DC 18), *gaseous form*, *polymorph self*, *sleep* (DC 14).

Possessions: greatsword, longbow, chain shirt, map of southern Dim Forest, map of Arweth Cantrev.

Goblin elite cavalry, male goblins Ftr4 (4): CR 4; Small Humanoid; HD 4d10+4; hp 32; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; AC 18 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 size); Atk +7 melee (1d8+1, Morningstar), or +7 melee (1d6+1/x3, light lance), or +8 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 12(+1), Dex 16(+3), Con 12(+1), Int 10(+0), Wis 11(+0), Cha 8(-1).

Skills & Feats: Handle Animal +1, Hide +8, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Ride +10, Spot +3. Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (Morningstar)

Possessions: Chain shirt, Morningstar, 5 javelins

Worg mounts (4): hp 35 each; see Monster Manual page 184.

Fryda & Fredegar (brown bears): CR 4; Large Animals; HD 6d8+24; HP 57 and 60 (currently wounded at 0 hp and 26 hp respectively); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40ft; AC 15 (-1size, +1Dex, +5natural); Atks +11 melee (1d8+8 [x2], claws),

+6 melee (2d8+4, bite); Face/Reach 5ft by 10ft/5ft; SA improved grab; SQ scent (detects creatures within 30 ft.); AL N; SV Fort+9, Ref+6, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen+4, Spot+7, Swim +14

Fredegar and Fryda should not be fought by the party and are therefore not included in the EL of this encounter. They merely defend themselves from perceived NPC and PC threats.

Encounter Six: Deal with a Monger (EL 8)

Ogwen, male human Rgr3/Rog5: CR 8: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 5d6+3d10+18; hp 55; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+5 +1 *chain shirt* armor, +4 Dex); Atk +6/+1 melee (primary) (1d6+1/18-20, Masterwork rapier), +6 (secondary) (1d6 §, Masterwork sap), or +9/+4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Rog sneak attack +3d6; SQ Rog evasion, Uncanny Dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills & Feats: Appraise +3, Bluff +7, Disable Device +4, Disguise +5, Forgery +4, Hide +15, Innuendo +1, Intimidate +4, Intuit Direction +1, Jump +5, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +8, Pick Pocket +10, Read Lips +6, Ride +6, Search +7, Sense Motive +6, Swim +2, Tumble +15, Use Rope +7, Wilderness Lore +2. Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Quick Draw, and Hamstring.

Possessions: +1 *chain shirt*, MW rapier, MW sap, light crossbow, 10 arrows, coin purse, 30gp.

Heth the Bodyguard, male human Bbn4/Ftr4/Gld4: CR 12: Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 8d10+4d12+36; hp 116; Init +2; Spd 40 ft; AC 20 (+5 +3 *studded leather* armor, +2 Dex); Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+6, MW heavy mace); AL CN; SV Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Bluff +7, Climb +9, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +7, Jump +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Perform +4, Ride +10, Spot +4, Tumble +5, Wilderness Lore +0. Blind-Fight, Iron Will, Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Weapon Focus (Heavy Mace), Close-Quarters Fighting, Dirty Fighting

Possessions: +3 *studded leather armor*, masterwork heavy mace, leather bag

Heth is not included in the EL of this encounter because the party should not fight him, unless they attack Caswir, who is a non-combatant.

Encounter Seven: To Catch a Thief (EL 11)

Cethin the Cruel, male doppelganger
Rog3/Ass4/Shd1: CR11; Medium Shapechanger; HD 5d8+7d6+12; Hp 68; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 22 (+4 natural, +4 Dex, +3 MW studded leather armor, +1 buckler), Atks +9/+4 melee (slams 1d6+2 [x2]), or +10/+5 melee (1d6+2/18-20, +1 rapier), or +11/+6 ranged (1d4+1); SA Detect thoughts, sneak attack +4d6, death attack, poison use; SQ Alter self, immunities, darkvision 60 ft., evasion, poison resistance, uncanny dodge, hide in plain site; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +18, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +15*, Disguise +15*, Forgery +4, Hide +14, Intimidate +8, Listen +13, Move Silent +10, Open Lock +5, Perform +8, Pick Pocket +5, Sense Motive +6, Spot +10, Search +5, Tumble +10, Use Rope +4; Alertness, Dodge, Combat Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack

Detect Thoughts (Su): A doppelganger can continuously detect thoughts as the spell cast by an 18th level sorcerer (save DC 15*). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. *Cethin has a better *detect thoughts* save DC than most of his kind due to his high Charisma.

Alter Self (Su): As the alter self spell cast by 18th level sorcerer. Change in shape is a standard action. Can assume the shape of any Small or Medium-size humanoid. This works like the *alter self* spell, as if cast by an 18th-level sorcerer. The doppelganger can keep one shape indefinitely, and changing shape is a standard action. This gives it a +10 circumstance bonus to Disguise checks, in addition to racial bonuses.

Immunities (Ex): Doppelgangers are immune to sleep and charm effects.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Retains Dexterity bonus to AC even if flat-footed or unable to see opponent.

Evasion (Ex): On a successful Reflex save against a magical attack, you take no damage

Sneak Attack: Any time someone you attack is denied his or her Dexterity bonus to AC, or you are flanking him or her, you inflict extra damage. Ranged attacks must be within

30 feet to gain this, and this extra damage is not increased on a critical hit. Creatures that are immune to critical hits ignore this damage, as do creatures with concealment

Death Attack: If you study your victim for 3 rounds, and then attack that target within another 3 rounds using a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, you can paralyze or kill the target if they fail a Fortitude save (DC 15).

Poison Resistance: You have a +1 bonus/every 2 levels to all saving throws against poison

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): As long as there are shadows within 10 feet (not including your own), you can hide without actually having something to hide behind

Possessions: +1 rapier, dagger, 6 darts, buckler, MW studded leather armor, 2 smokesticks, 6 tanglefoot bags, 2 *potions of misdirection*, vial of poison: carrion crawler brain juice (DC 13), *bag of holding* (Type 1), *cloak of resistance* +2, *ring of mind shielding*,

Spells Known: (4/2; base DC 12 + spell level); 1st – *ghost sound*, *obscuring mist*, *sleep*, *true strike*.; 2nd – *pass without trace*, *spider climb*, *undetectable alignment*.

Appendix B

NPCs

Cethin the Cruel: Unbeknownst to all around him, Cethin is actually an evil and particularly murderous doppelganger. Joining Thulis' rogue band for protection, he killed whenever he had the chance, and justified it to Thulis as self-defense. He was feared by all in the gang and Shadowcaster kept him around, despite his borderline behavior, in part because of that quality. The day he overstepped his bounds and broke Thulis' orders by killing an unarmed man, Thulis made an example of him. He humiliated him in the subsequent duel, and scarred him badly on the face, kicking him out of the gang. Since that day, Cethin has longed to exact vengeance on his former captain, and has been waiting for him to show himself in Geoff again.

Cuthalion Strongbow: First Ward of the Olwythi, the ranger was a former adventuring companion of the alleged criminal, Thulis Shadowcaster. His relationship with Thulis was always just a bit strained, but when it came down to it, they worked well together, and he never really had a problem with the rogue's ways. That changed at Gorna. When Thulis refused to fight at Gorna, Cuthalion understood, but did not approve. He regards Thulis as a coward, and an opportunist. Nowadays he rarely thinks of his former companion, but he is aware that Waylan keeps in touch with him. Strongbow lives in the hidden haven called Argel ys Aberva in the Dim Forest. See also description in the Geoff Gazetteer.

Waylan Crabtree: The dewin Waylan is one of three survivors, along with Thulis and Cuthalion, of the same adventuring company. Once a prominent wizard, and the second most powerful transmuter in all of Geoff, he is now a recluse who has not been seen in public (to anyone's knowledge) since the fall of Gorna. Waylan was able to assist in saving many lives during that battle, including the Lady Sierra Blackblade, and continues to help young Gyri with his "orphanage" in the woods. He made contact with Thulis a couple of times in the past decade, and holds no grudge against him for leaving Gorna. In fact, he almost sees him as one of his orphans who has lost his way, and naively hopes that he returns to

Geoff someday as a redeemed and respectable man. This is the fifth occasion in ten years that he has invited Thulis into Argel without informing Cuthalion, for he fears Cuthalion would not approve.

Thulis Shadowcaster: The rogue Shadowcaster has always been a scoundrel. After demanding payment from the Duke during a public address (just before the attack on Gorna), he was booed and called a traitor by the gathered patriots. At Gorna, he was one of the first ones out the city gate, pushing women and children aside to get there, and leaving his companions to their fates. Half of his remaining adventuring company died that day. In the following years, he formed a band of thieves, and had a hand in all of the wartime black markets throughout the region (especially Hochoch once it was liberated). To his credit, he tried to avoid killing unnecessarily as it was "bad for business". When the brothers Cethin and Caswir joined his band, they quickly proved themselves most capable, and were considered only second to Thulis in the gang hierarchy. The day Thulis was forced to kick Cethin out of the band for his murderous streak, he saw it as an omen. He changed the modus operandi of his organization from a gang, to a network of trusted informants, and moved out of Geoff. Thulis has not been back to Hochoch proper in five years (since he disbanded the gang).

Caswir Uradowc: Unlike his twin "brother", Caswir is not evil, nor murderous. Where his brother would use force, Caswir preferred to use finesse. After he and his brother joined Thulis' gang, Caswir became the gang's best gatherer of information. He had a penchant for business matters, and also handled the gang's "legal" procurements. He respected Thulis for his deviousness and his pragmatism. When his brother was kicked out of the gang, Caswir felt no compunction to join him. He had warned his sibling before, on many occasions, and felt no obligation to go down with him. After the gang was disbanded, Caswir remained a part of Thulis' network, and traveled around the surrounding

realms building a small fortune as a mongering merchant.

Returning to Geoff last year, Caswir purchased a large building in Hochoch (used as a forge by the giants during their occupation), and turned it into a caravansary called the "Giant's Hearth" (named after the immense fireplace/furnace built by the giants). Merchants visiting Geoff use the inn almost exclusively, and due to this fact, Caswir is

becoming the primary importer of goods into Hochoch. Few know he is the true owner, as the present innkeeper was told to say that it is his. From here (and the Boar's Knuckle) he keeps an ear on the people of Geoff, and takes great pleasure in the reactions he gets from them with his caustic words.

Appendix C

Argel ys Aberva

After the giant invasion, many scattered groups of Geoffites sought refuge in parts of the Dim Forest. During this time, two prominent survivors of Gorna established a secret haven for Gyruff's orphaned children inside those dark woods. Located a few miles into the southernmost part of the forest, Argel ys Aberva, is a sanctuary and school for the future of Gyruff.

Although the haven itself (Argel) is relatively new, it is located inside an area of the forest (Aberva), which once had significance to the ancient druids and olvenfolk of old. The full name translates as 'the secret place in the haven'. According to legend, the vicinity of Aberva was an ancient center of mystical energy. Although abandoned, and for the most part forgotten for many decades, the place is no longer either. The natural power of the locality has waned over the years, though those who pass there can still sense a barely discernible change in the surrounding environment as they near the haven. The woods take on an almost preternatural aspect, and it is as if the greens of the woods become greener, the waters of the brook clearer, and the sunlight piercing the thick canopy somehow more brilliant.

Without a guide, most would pass right by Argel, and be none the wiser. The only way into the haven proper (of which most are aware) is a deceptively small cave mouth that can be reached with some difficulty, as it is located on the side of a steep and stony hill in the forest. Due to the incline, the entrance cannot be seen from the forest floor, and various landmarks must be used to know where to climb the hillside. Once through the cramped entrance, the small cave opens up into a large unnaturally round antechamber, and from here four doors lead further into the complex. The majority of the interior, from the excavated rooms, to the ever-luminous lights that are found throughout, was constructed through the magical arts of Waylan Crabtree.

Apart from being home to First Ward Cuthalion Strongbow and his longtime friend Waylan the Transmuter, Argel serves as an orphanage and a school for young, displaced Gyri. The First Ward, and some of his Rangers, instructs the next generation of young liberators in the ways of woodland survival as well as Gyric and olven fighting tactics. The most capable students are selected to join the ranks of the Olwythi gan Gyruff. The dewin Waylan teaches the orphans letters, history, and has even taken an apprentice or two. There are only a few very young children left at Argel, as it has been many years since the invasion, and many have grown old enough to join the fight against the giants and their thralls. Nonetheless, Argel is still home to nearly three score youngsters and a handful of courageous caretakers.

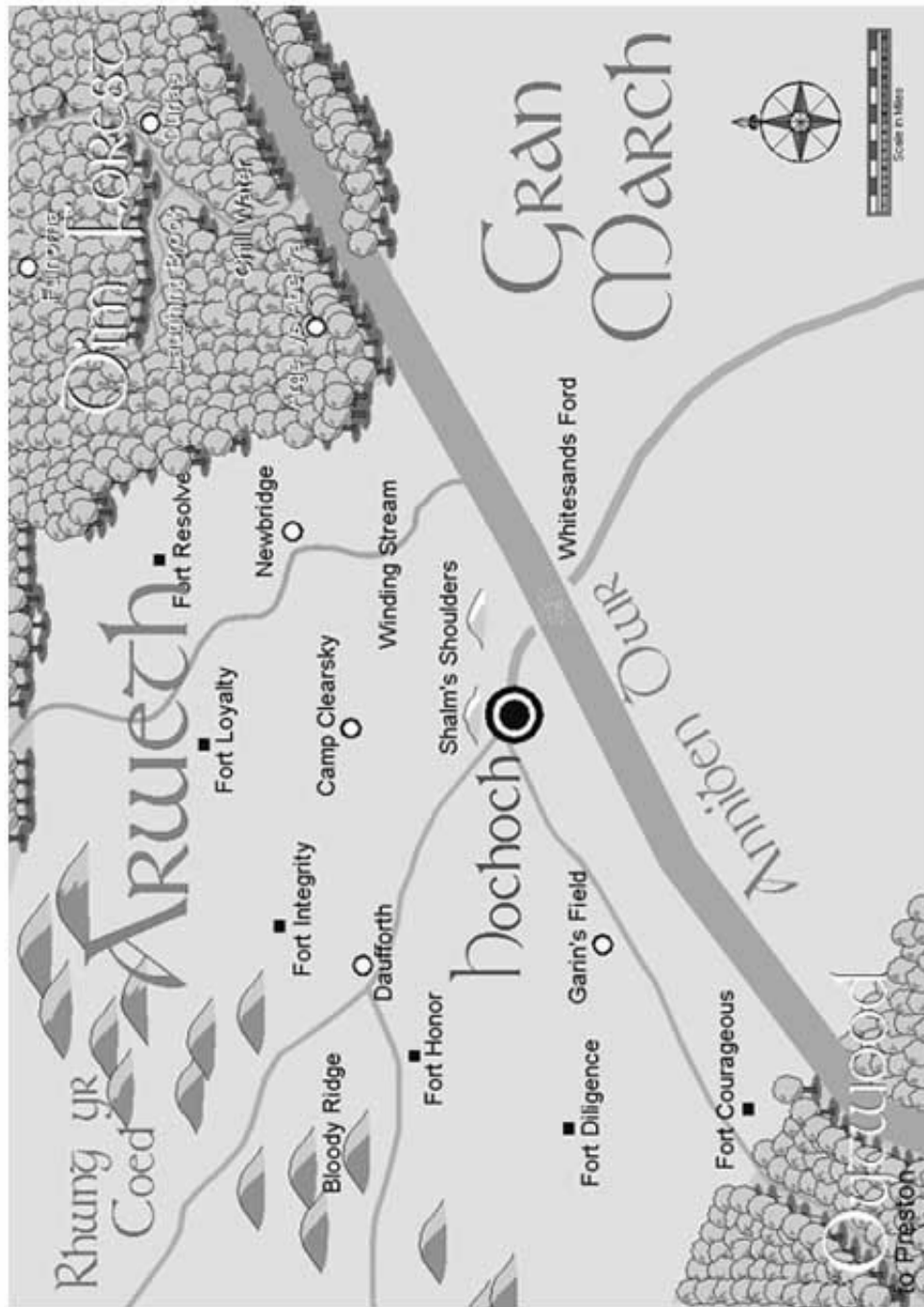
The two founders of Argel are still very wary of the situation in Geoff, and very much enjoy their seclusion. To this end, they have only shared the secret of Argel's location with a few individuals, and have taken measures to ensure that no unwanted visitors learn its location. Aside from the many wards and other magical (as well as mundane) protections that riddle the vicinity, an elder treant also guards the area. Rhisglbrith, as he is known, is a long time friend of Cuthalion and his elven family, as well as the hereditary guardian of Aberfa. It was he who acceded to the building of Argel and has since accepted the haven as part of his charge.

During the last few years of the Brenin's absence, the First Ward Strongbow used Argel as his base of operations for Olwythi raids, and was rarely seen by any other than his friends and fellow Rangers. Since the return of the Duke, the First Ward has been a more visible presence, and has even been spotted in the town of Hochoch proper on occasion.

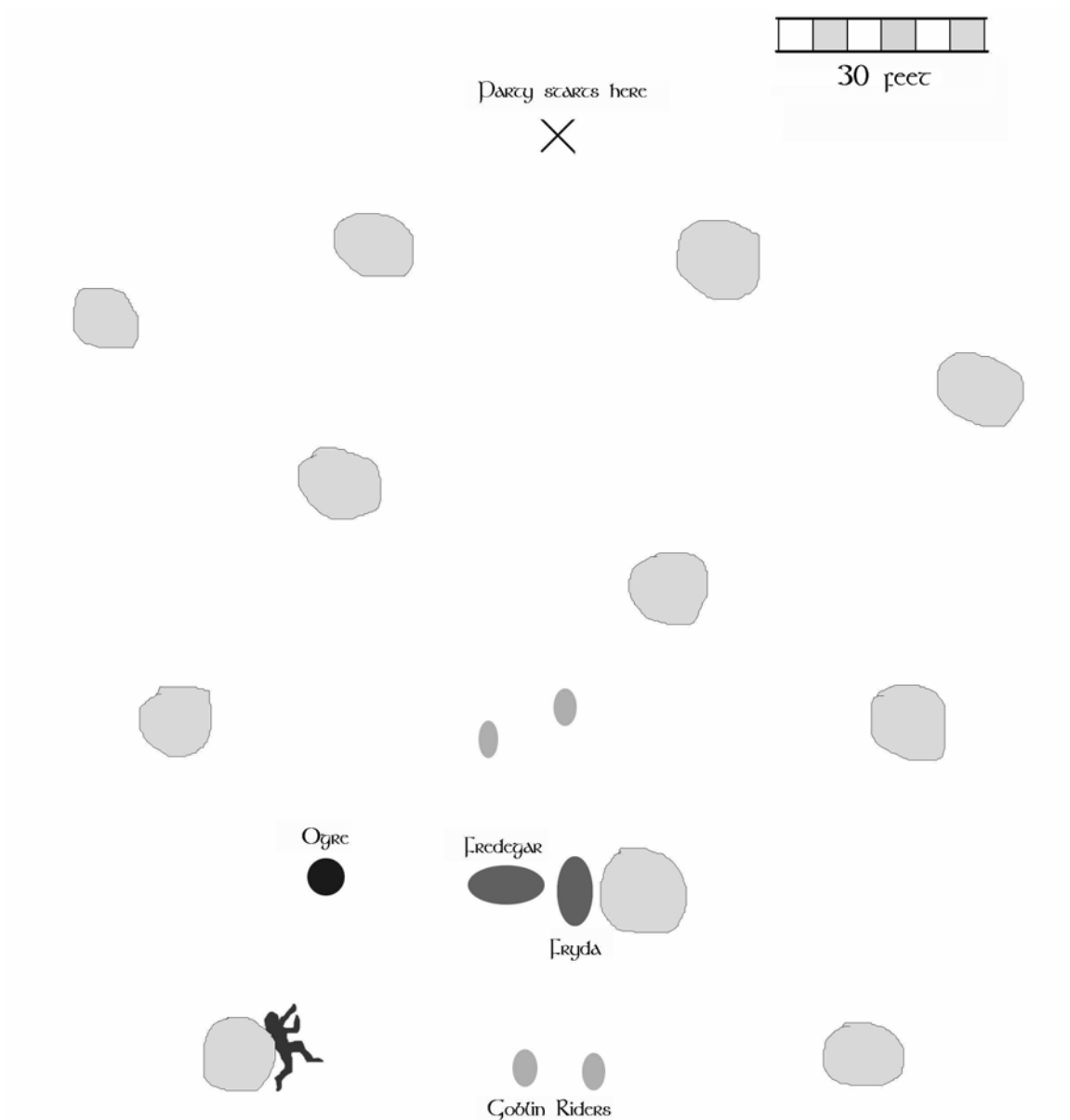
Appendix D

DM's Map #1

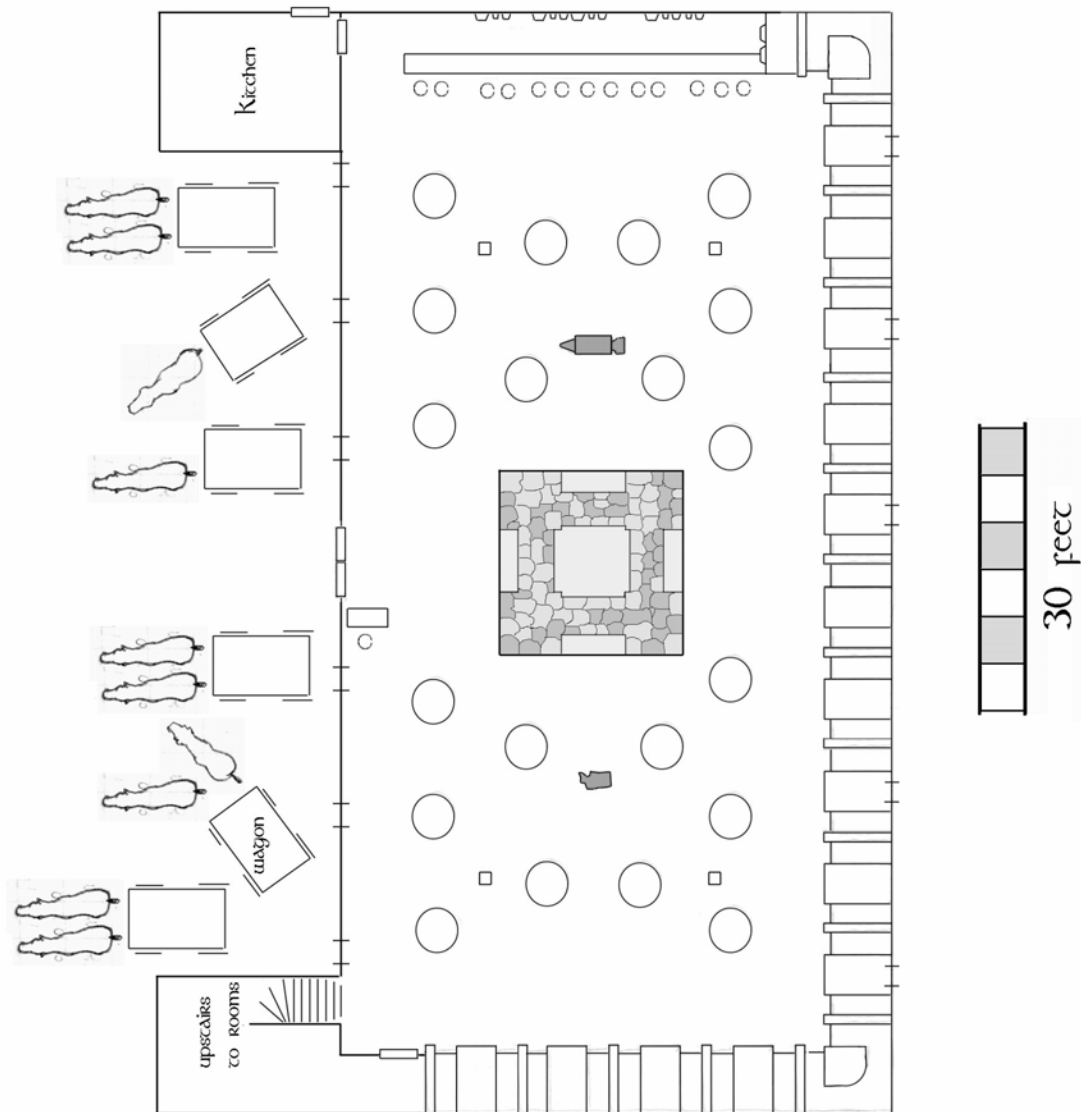
The Cantrev of Arweth



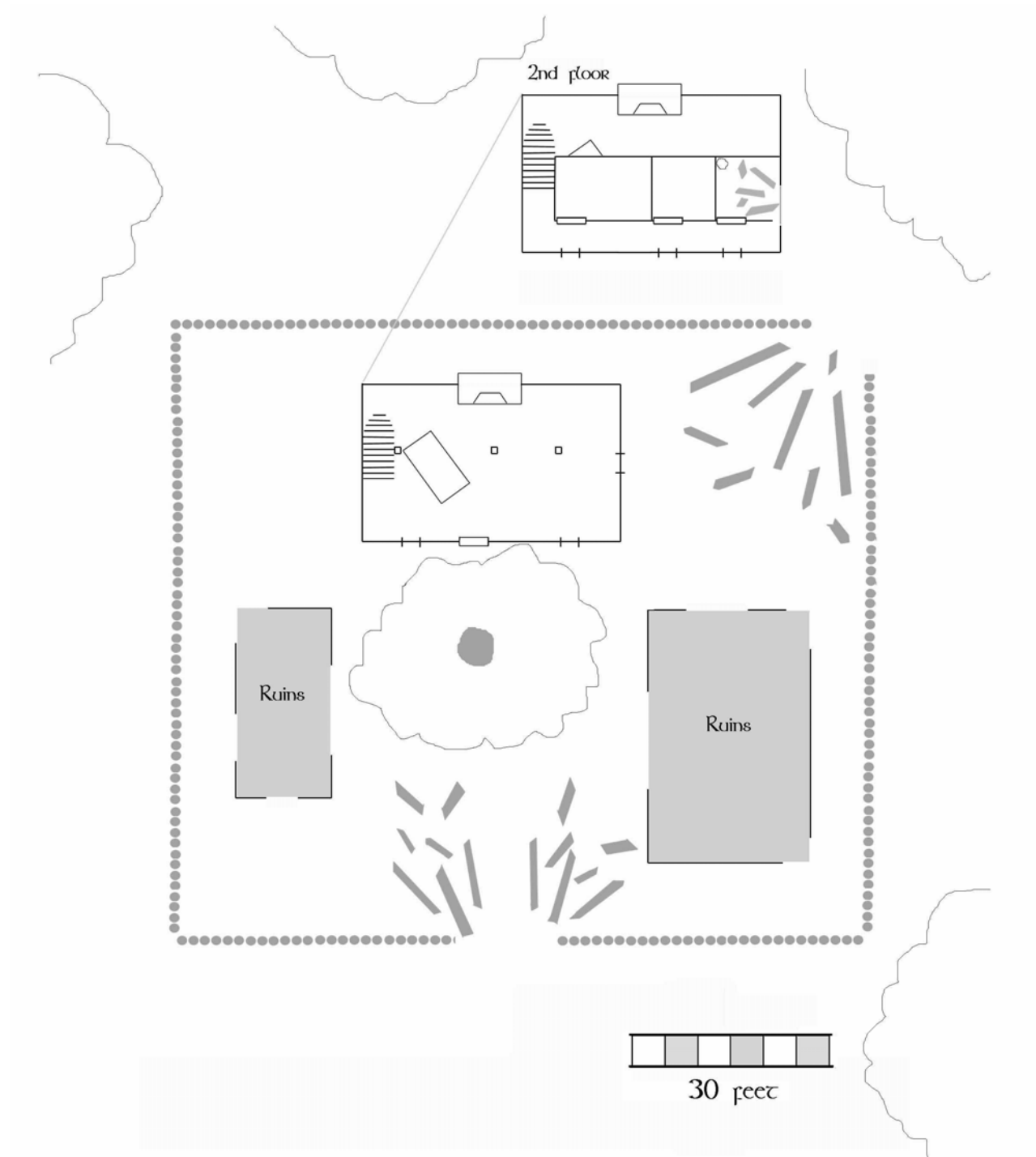
DM's Map #2
Trouble in the Dim Forest



DM's Map #3
The Giant's Hearth Inn



DM's Map #4
Abandoned Steading



Player's Handout #1

Notice of Debt

The following is a summary of debt owed by Grand Duke Owen to the adventuring company known as the "Fringe Element", for services rendered at his request, and for losses incurred during those missions.

The members of named company are: Thulis Shadowcaster, Gardan of the Crystalmists, Waylan Crabtree, Cuthalion Strongbow, Tamm Rockbender, Ser Falabor Raewyn, and Inxa the Rangeress.

Scouting the "Demon Men"

Clerical costs for raising four companions from the dead - 950 gp each	3800 gp
Scouting/Slaying services - 500 gp per person	3500 gp
40 arrows - 1 gp/20	2 gp
1 Chain shirt (lost at death) - 100 gp	100 gp
1 Breastplate (lost at death) - 200 gp	200 gp
1 Suit of full plate armor (lost at death) - 1500 gp	1500 gp

Scouting through the Mountain Complex

Scouting/Slaying services - 500 gp per person	3500 gp
Bounty pay - Vital information on the enemy - 100 gp per person	700 gp

Destruction of the Monolith

40 arrows - 1 gp/20	2 gp
Scouting/Slaying services - 500 gp per person	3500 gp
Unordinary hazard compensation - 100 gp per person	700 gp

Dwarven Halls and Derelion Missions

Scouting/Slaying services - 500 gp per person	3500 gp
Unordinary hazard compensation - 100 gp per person (Derelion)	500 gp

Total	21,504 gp
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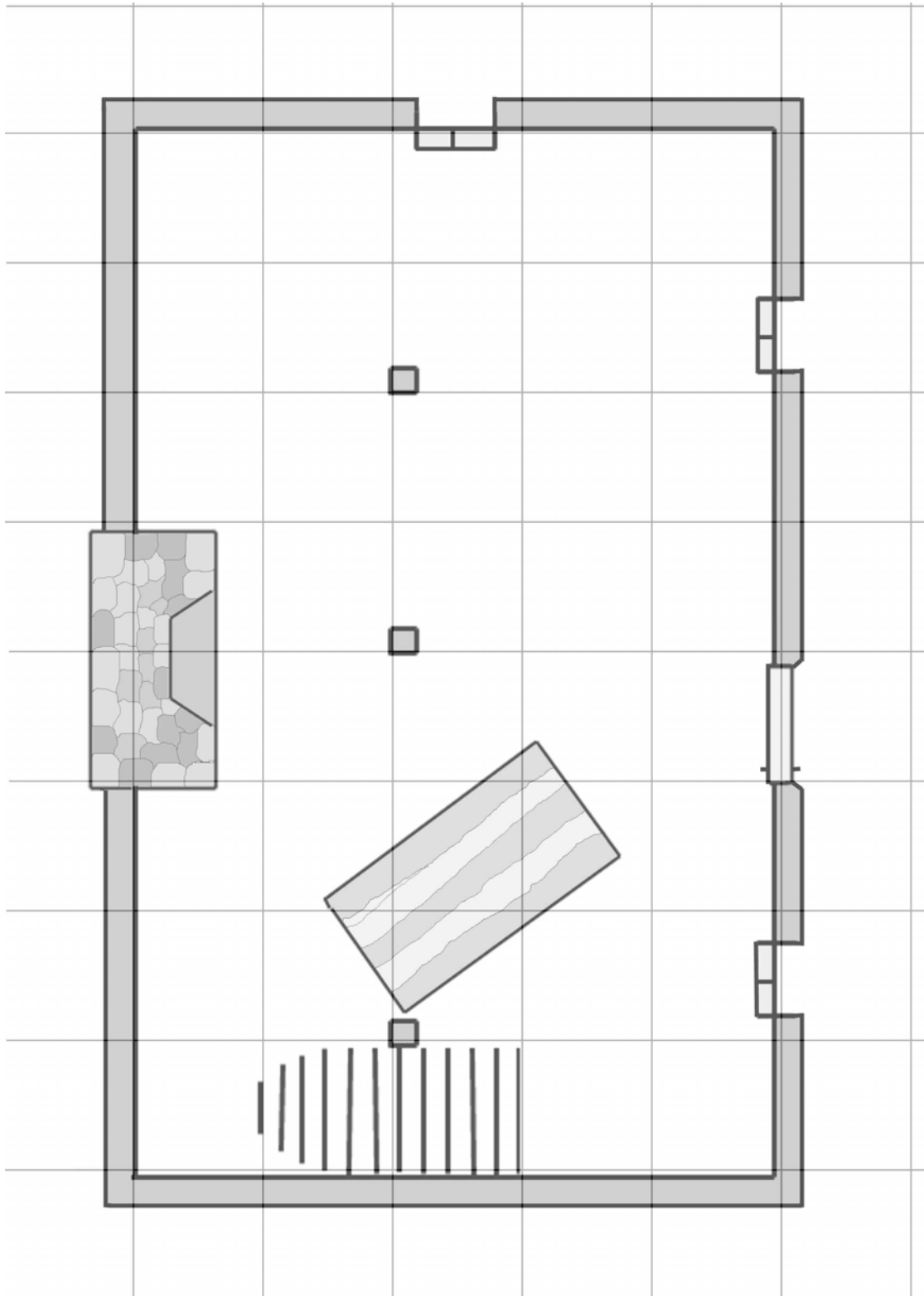
Scribed by Waylan Crabtree on behalf of Thulis Shadowcaster, 7th day of Patchwall, CY 583



THE TIME HAS COME TO COLLECT ON THIS DEBT DUKE OWEN. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT A MODEST USURY ACCUMULATED OVER A DECADE, THE TOTAL TODAY COMES TO 43,000 GOLD. AS YOU HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO PAY IN THE PAST, I HAVE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF STARTING COLLECTION. CONSIDER THIS THE FIRST PAYMENT. YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT, THULIS SHADOWCASTER

Player's Handout #2

Steading House First Floor



Player's Handout #3

Steading House Second Floor

