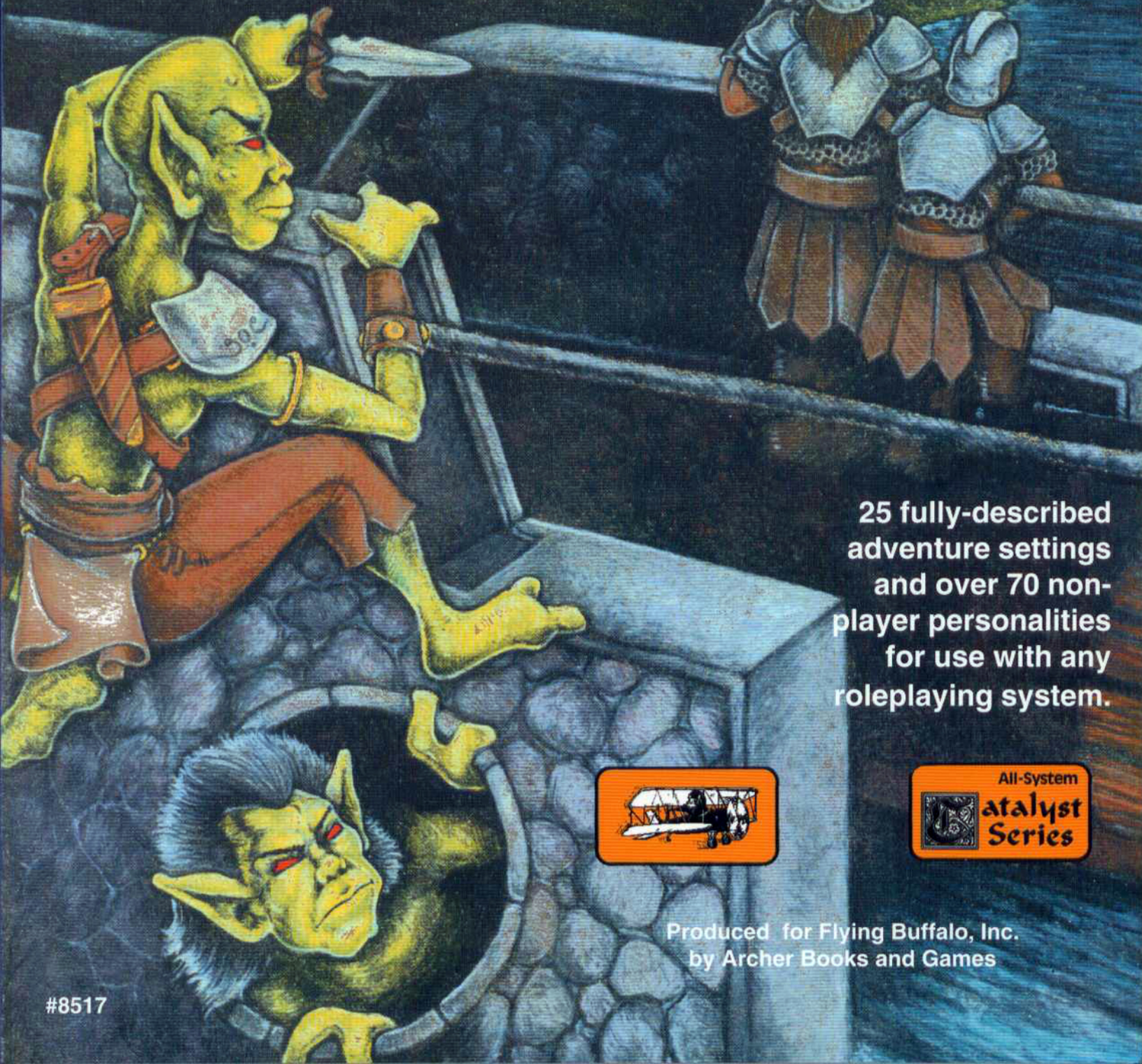


CITYBOOK™ VII

King's River Bridge

a gamemaster's aid for
all roleplaying systems



25 fully-described
adventure settings
and over 70 non-
player personalities
for use with any
roleplaying system.



Produced for Flying Buffalo, Inc.
by Archer Books and Games

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King's River Bridge

a game-master's aid for
all roleplaying systems

Edited by Debora Kerr

25

*fully-described businesses, organizations
and cultural establishments for use with any
roleplaying system, including over 70 completely
developed non-player personalities to interact with
your players' characters in City adventures.*

Credits

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Dedication: To all who have
visited the City, and enriched its
history with adventures from
their own imaginations.

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ON THE COVER:

Two City guardsmen are unaware of the peril that stalks them this night on King's River Bridge.

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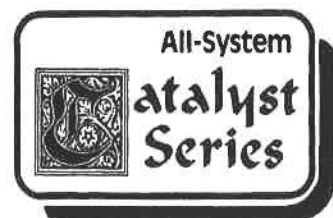
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A Catalyst Product

— a catalyst to spark your Imagination —

Introduction

King's River Bridge, a great wall of a crossing, spans an impressive river that snakes between the open countryside and the outlying districts of the City. The bridge has a colorful history, steeped in bloodshed and revolt. Some believe ghosts of the City's unsettled past still walk the span. But rather than spirits, most visitors will be haunted by the enticing sights, sounds, and tastes available from the bridge's purveyors of goods, entertainment and refreshment.

Spend a morning visiting the cart vendors, an afternoon discovering a number of unusual shops, and an evening enjoying theatrical entertainment under the soft glow of the lamplighter's globes. You'll find taverns, restaurants, goods new and used, physicians, artisans, and strangers from all corners of the City. The bridge is a rendezvous point for conspirators and lovers, a place where travelers say hello and farewell.

From its simple utilitarian beginnings, the bridge has grown to accommodate a building-boom driven by the ambition of merchants and sustained by a steady stream of travelers. On some sections of the bridge, the clusters of storefronts could fool one into believing he was snug in the center of a downtown street — but the sound of the rushing river water is never too distant. Some in the community complain that the bridge is too big, perhaps even unsafe. And look at the kindreds who have settled in — halflings, dwarves, even *trolls*.

Topped with commerce and based on mystery, this intriguing crossing provides more than just a jumping off point for adventures! In fact, it bridges a number of *CityBooks*, both by scenario links to earlier volumes and repeat appearances by talented writers and artists. There are also a number of *CityBook* debuts by first-time contributors, with new visions of the City we all share.

Getting Around King's River Bridge

If this is your first stop in the world of the City, you'll notice that there are no game-specific stats or mechanics for the characters or magic. The settings and personalities of King's River Bridge await the

attention of you, the Game Master, to bestow those rankings upon them. Review the section entitled *GM Guidelines* for an overview of our coding system. There you'll find tips for tailoring the *CityBook*[™] features to your adventure world. For those of you who have visited the City before, you'll find King's River Bridge a convenient way in or out of town, with a wide assortment of new establishments to add to your City campaigns.

As in previous books, the bridge's locations are grouped into general categories. *Community Services* include businesses that support the entire bridge community. *Food and Entertainment* focuses on stops that serve those hungry for sustenance and diversion. Shops that cater to a variety of individual interests are listed under *Personal Services*. *Undercurrents* describes mysterious establishments unique to King's River Bridge.

Lastly, you never know whom you'll encounter on the busy bridge. To reflect these chance meetings, peppered between establishments are wandering characters. These *Bridge Encounters* can occur anywhere, anytime, as a surprise for your players.

Remember, the City exists to morph itself to your fantasy world's needs. If your monarchy-free universe wouldn't have a "King's" river or a "Royal Tax Collector," rename the waterway and appoint Terial Skyone Sheth head of a merchants' guild. Likewise, if your world is more primitive or eons advanced from the model presented here, simply drop or adapt settings and characters as needed.

For a basic orientation to King's River Bridge, refer to the *Overhead View* on page 6. You will note that there is plenty of unassigned real estate available where you may insert establishments from other *CityBooks* or your own campaigns. Additional background information about life on the bridge may be found in *Bridge Themes* on page 8, *The Bridge Guard* on page 39, and *The Cornerstone Ghost* on page 106.

GM Guidelines

Since *CityBook™ VII: King's River Bridge* is a generic roleplaying aid, no game-specific statistics for NPCs or monsters are given. However, as an aid to the GM who must convert our descriptions into game mechanics, we have provided the following guidelines to help you adapt *CityBook VII: King's River Bridge* to your favorite game system. Keep in mind that this is now your book; if you wish to change anything, go ahead!

General Attributes

It isn't necessary to give each non-player character (NPC) in *CityBook VII: King's River Bridge* complete attributes such as Power, Luck, Wisdom and so forth. However, should you choose to do so, you will note in the character descriptions such phrases as "very strong," "quick," "stupid," "beautiful," etc. By noting these phrases and reflecting them in the NPC's attributes, you should come out with a fairly accurate set of statistics for the person in question.

Fighting Prowess

At times, player adventurers will probably get into fights with nonplayer characters. We have provided a seven-level coding system to describe how well a particular *CityBook VII* NPC can fight. In some cases, the combat ability of an NPC is given in terms of a specific weapon or weapons (e.g., Malok Uzki of *The Royal Tax Collector* is Good with club and mace, Fair with sword and dagger). In other cases, the Fighting Prowess is overall (e.g., Garand Helani of *Helani's's Fine Timepieces* is Poor overall).

There are two ways to randomize for the fighting prowess of an NPC. You can roll 1d6 for the attribute (6 means the character is an Excellent fighter) or you can roll 1d100 and use the percentages given after the ratings to determine the NPC's skill level. Remember, the percentages refer to how well that NPC stacks up in relation to all other fighters in your average world. Therefore, a "Poor" Fighting Prowess would account for about 40% of all fighters met, and an "Excellent" prowess would only fit about 4% of the fighters. If you put a "Poor" fighter into your campaign, we expect that 60% of the rest of the fighters in your world can soundly thrash him.

These are the codes for Fighting Prowess:

- Poor.** Unfamiliar with combat arts; can be easily wounded or killed. (01 - 40%)
- Average.** A run-of-the-mill type, but certainly no mistaking him for a hero. (41 - 59%)
- Fair.** Better than average and will acquit himself adequately. (60 - 74%)

- Good.** Can go one-on-one with seasoned veteran fighters. (75 - 84%)
- Very Good.** This person can cause a lot of trouble in combat. (85 - 95%)
- Excellent.** If blood is spilled it's not likely to come from this character . . . (96 - 100%)
- Legendary.** This character's skill with weapons goes beyond mortal limits. Bards will sing tales of his or her fighting prowess for generations to come. (101%+)

Magic Ability

To determine the expertise with which an NPC uses magic power, *CityBook VII: King's River Bridge* employs a seven-level system similar to the one for Fighting Prowess. This is listed in the NPC descriptions as "Magic Ability," and will be followed by a listing of the particular areas in which the magic-user might be competent (see "The Eight C's of Magic" below).

The codes for Magic Ability are:

- Poor.** A hedge wizard or apprentice. Might very well turn himself into a frog. (01 - 40%)
- Average.** Competent, but hardly a world-shaker. Only a few spells at his command. (41 - 59%)
- Fair.** Possesses a wider range of spells. Effective, but not powerful. (60 - 74%)
- Good.** Knows numerous spells in many categories, and is versatile in their use. (75 - 84%)
- Very Good.** Knows powerful spells in most of the Eight C's. Formidable. (85 - 95%)
- Excellent.** Not a person to cross. Can easily command almost all the known spells, and might be able to turn the party into anchovy paste with a single gesture. (96 - 100%)
- Legendary.** Skills may exceed mortal limits. Found only in god-like beings or heroes out of mythology. Spells? Who needs mere spells with power like this? (101%+)

Given the diversity of magic systems in fantasy gaming, it is impossible to assign specific spells or powers to any magic-using NPC in this or any other *CityBook*. However, spells or powers can be broken down into categories of magic, regardless of what game system you use. Thanks to Michael A. Stackpole, *CityBook* has the "Eight C's System" to give some idea of what type of magic a particular NPC might wield.

- C1. Combat Magic.** Any spell used primarily in an offensive/defensive manner in combat.
- C2. Curative Magic.** Any spell used to heal wounds, cure diseases, stop poison damage, etc.
- C3. Clairvoyant Magic.** Any spell used to detect things: secret doors, magic, hidden or trapped items, etc.
- C4. Conveyance Magic.** Teleportation, levitation, flying, telekinesis spells, etc.
- C5. Communication Magic.** Any spell used to communicate or convey information, including: telepathy, translation, hypnosis, magic reading spells, etc.
- C6. Construction Magic.** Any spell which uses matter or energy to “build”: wall spells, protective fields, stone-shaping spells, etc.
- C7. Concealment Magic.** Any spell which serves to hide or misdirect: invisibility, illusion, shape-shifting spells, etc.
- C8. Conjunction Magic.** Any spell which produces a condition or entity: light spells, weather control, demon-summoning spells, etc.

Keep in mind that a character with Magic Ability need not always be a sorcerer. An NPC could possess certain magic abilities as a result of owning some device or from some form of supernatural intervention. You can also use the Magic Ability Chart randomly by rolling either 1d6 or 1d100 (as was suggested for the Fighting Prowess chart) to judge the level of a magic-using character, and 1d8 to determine the areas on the “Eight C’s” list in which the character may be competent.

Locks

The folk of the City conscientiously safeguard their belongings — after all, anyone could wander onto *King’s River Bridge* with a bit of larceny in mind. To help the GM deal with those types, *CityBook* uses a system to code the difficulty of any locks encountered. These codes appear in the text when a reference is made to a chest, door or similar locked item (e.g., “locked”), which means the lock is “Fair”).

The codes for locks are as follows:

- 1. Poor.** An orphan with a hat-pin could open this lock. (01 - 40%)
- 2. Average.** A little tougher to jimmy this open; just adequate. (41 - 59%)
- 3. Fair.** Takes some effort to open. (60 - 74%)
- 4. Good.** Particularly tough. Probably will require special tools to open. (75 - 84%)
- 5. Very Good.** Will take even a master thief a long time to open. (85 - 95%)
- 6. Excellent.** Could require magic or a howitzer to open easily — unless you have the key. (96 - 100%)
- 7. Legendary.** Assume that a god or someone with like powers wanted this thing locked up. Definitely has some kind of magical component or defenses built in. (101%+)

Again, the percentages here refer to what percentage of such locks exist in an average cross-section. Many locks fall into the “poor” category, and there are only a few truly “excellent” locks, and “legendary” locks are found only in legendary situations. Worth noting is that most doors are not locked at all.

You could also use the percentages to indicate how many thieves could jimmy the lock. For example, at least 60% of all thieves could jimmy a “poor” lock, while 4% or less could undo an “excellent” lock. The GM will have to determine how well a particular thief character does when confronted with a certain level of lock (i.e., a very poor thief would have lots of trouble with even a “fair” lock). Once again, a GM can randomize on this lock system to learn the nature of any lock.

Money and Time

Prices in *CityBook* are usually given in overall terms (i.e., “low”, “reasonable”, and “expensive”). You should use common sense regarding these terms; a reasonable price for a broadsword would be outrageous when applied to a single arrow. Where prices are actually listed, *CityBook* assumes this standard: 10 copper pieces = 1 silver piece, 10 silver pieces = 1 gold piece; a gold piece represents approximately \$1 in U.S. Currency. This currency system obviously must be altered to fit your own economic system.

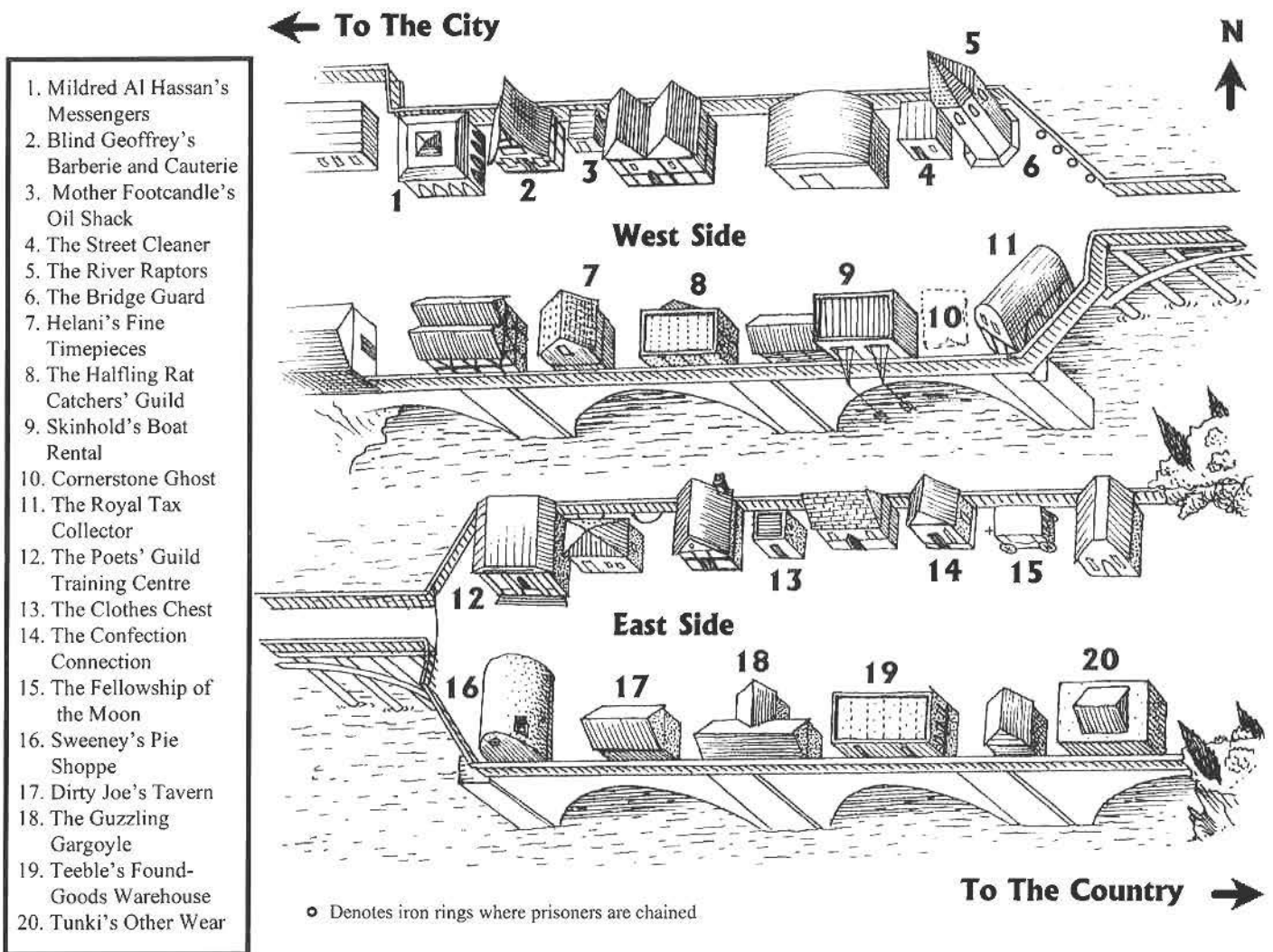
CityBook uses a standard 24-hour day as its time frame. If your world operates under a different system, alter the times given to fit it.

Races and History

CityBook VII: King’s River Bridge is a typical *CityBook*. Most *CityBooks* deal with human establishments and have human (or near human) proprietors. For color, we’ve included some non-humans and a few oddities. If it doesn’t fit into your campaign to have a goblin shaman or a troll bridge guard, feel free to adapt them to a more human equivalent.

Several of the establishments in this *CityBook* mention events that took place long ago, far away or some combination thereof. While most of the details are hazy enough to slip them into any campaign as rumors, some of the events might conflict with established campaign history. In this case, the GM should change the historical events to something parallel in his or her own world or slowly let the players “discover” these new facts as needed.

Overhead View



Explanation of Maps

The multitude of symbols on the next page shouldn't panic you. You will find most to be self-explanatory in conjunction with the text. The maps are intended to show both what the room would look like, and what the room contains. The views are taken as though you were looking down on the building with the roof removed; if there is more than one floor, each is provided on a separate map.

The key will provide you with the meanings for the various symbols used to indicate a room's contents and furnishings. Most objects are shown by reasonable facsimile of their actual shape. However, certain items have been stylized for easy recognition.

For instance, a bed in a fantasy world does not necessarily look like the symbol used to represent a bed on the map — but when you look at the symbol, you know it's a bed.

In simplest terms: read the text and look at the map which accompanies it. You should find it reasonably clear and easy to understand. If you still have trouble figuring out part of it, check back here for the key.

An explanation of symbols unique to a particular establishment is provided with each map. Different scales have been used, and each map has its scale noted on it for easy reference.

Key to All Maps



Bridge Themes

An interesting theme of King's River Bridge to explore is the role of the bridge in the City's defense. The bridge environment may be used as a staging area for river battles, or as a last line of defense for the City beyond. A rotating central span (see *The Bridge Guard*, page 39) may trap adventurers on one side or the other during a conflict.

The bridge can also contain any number of secrets, as this scenario contributed by Wayne West suggests:

Down The Rabbit Hole

Just past one of the bridge's central pylons is something rarely encountered: a thief's hidey-hole. Not just any hiding place, this one was commissioned by a master thief who was also a part-time assassin. It is quite remarkable in that it is a creation of tremendous magic. The magic is two-fold. First, the portal is only accessible at the stroke of the hour, and only during the night. Second, the portal, which is the entrance to a downward-spiraling staircase, has the effect of shrinking the person descending until they reach the bottom and a height of between 2 and 3 inches. The spell is reversed by ascending the staircase; when the top is reached, normal height is achieved. The only tip-off to the presence of this magic is the person being processed feels rather warm while traveling on the staircase.

The only way to get back to your proper height is to climb the staircase. So what happens if you exit the hidey-hole through another passage?

Editorial:

Debora Kerr, whose last CityBook contribution was "Macauley's Gambling House" for *CityBook II: Port O' Call*, returns to the City as editor and art director. Debora has been involved with a number of Flying Buffalo, Inc. products over the years, most recently the *Maps* series and *Grimtooth's Traps Bazaar*. Her company, Archer Books and Games, produces comic books and other game accessories.

Cover and Interior Illustration:

Chris Wood. Human LG, 17 15 14 16 16 17, Ht. 6'6" Wt. 224 Age 21. Armor: Ephesians 6:11-17. Weapon Proficiencies: Art, Basketball, Music - Drums, Juggling. Raised in the wilds of Mesa, Arizona, Chris's devotion to clerical studies and spiritual matters gives him an edge in surviving the campaigns of a 90's existence. A seasoned adventurer from his childhood, he has journeyed to a myriad of worlds and back again.

Interior Illustration:

Elizabeth T. Danforth brings her vision to yet another *CityBook*. Her art is currently featured in the card games *Magic: The Gathering*® by Wizards of the Coast and *Middle Earth*™ by Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc.

Jeff Menges lives and works on the north shore of Long Island, NY. He's been involved with gaming since 1980, and has worked in the field since 1987. His work has been seen in products for TSR, Inc., White Wolf, West End Games, Atlas, and is most visible today in the card game market, where he has worked on *M:TG*® and *Mythos*™, among others.

Tonia Walden is an illustrator from Australia, who is interested in comics and cartoons as well as RPGs. Her work has appeared in books by

Perhaps the delver whom you wish to torture has had a hard night drinking. As he staggers across the bridge, a wagon rushes by, forcing him to the side and into the wall, just as the clock strikes and opens the portal. To anyone accompanying the victim, it appears as if they either vanished or fell over the railing. A search reveals nothing, as the hour has passed and the portal has sealed.

The delver falls head over heels down the staircase. He finds himself in a sparsely appointed room stocked with food and a bed. A bit of searching reveals some hidden loot stashed by the owner. However, there is no trace of the stairs; a wall hides them and is only passable at one minute before the hour.

But not to despair. Our intrepid and resourceful delver, being strongly led by the gamemaster, notices a crack in the wall. The weather has worn away the surface, leaving the plaster weak enough to break through. Our hero (or heroine) now overlooks a huge gorge with a raging river beneath, and towering sheer cliffs to all sides and above.

Good climbers, with luck, will manage to get back on the bridge only to learn their true predicament. Will they be able to find their friends now that they are the size of a finger? They had best watch out for the goshawks of Khasekemui Horgraeb [see *The River Raptors*] that would find them a tasty snack; or the flying feet of the message runners [see *Mildred Al Hassan's Messengers*]; and heaven forbid they take a tumble through a drainage grate to face the goblins, rats, and albino alligators [see *The Halfling Rat Catchers' Guild*].

White Wolf, Grey Ghost Games, Atlas Games, as well as in SHADIS and *Australian Realms* magazines. Tonia lives with an assortment of terriers and cats, and spends far too much time on the Internet. For a look at some of Tonia's other art, visit her webpage at <http://www.powerup.com.au/~twalden/index.html>.

Steven S. Crompton did map designs and illustrations in *CityBook I & II*. In the Catalyst™ line, he has also done illustrations in all the *Grimtooth's TRAPS* books, the *Lejentia Campaign* books, *Wilderness Encounters*, *Maps 1* and *Maps 2*. Also for Flying Buffalo, Steve did the art for most of the Nuclear War card games, the *Lost Worlds* cards and three T&T Solos. He spends most of his time these days working on his *Demi the Demoness* comic books for several different publishers. His email address is sacrompton@aol.

Paula Schricker of Tucson, Arizona has produced illustrative work for a number of science fiction and fantasy venues including Maelstrom Hobbies' *Breeder Compendium* and Anime House's *Anime House Presents*.

Miguel Heredia is a Brooklyn-based videographics artist who has produced numerous pieces for the New York City underground music scene. His editorial and illustrative work includes art for magazines such as *Eulogy*, *White Knuckles*, *Free Spirit* and *Abberation Magazine*. Miguel reports that his most creative ideas come to him as he watches the mad-pounding pros of wrestling!

Eric Schock of Tempe, Arizona makes his *CityBook* debut. His previous work includes murals, comic strips, and the mini-comic *Spleenzine*.

Community Services

Settlements, towns, and especially great Cities offer services to their citizens in the name of the common good. King's River Bridge provides the best of these civilized advances. *The Bridge Guard* enforce the peace. *The Halfling Rat Catchers' Guild* keeps a watchful eye out for vermin on the bridge. The falconer in charge of *The River Raptors*, from the vantage point of his high turret, is vigilant for intruders that fly. Tending to the problem of basic, everyday dirt, *The Street Cleaner* keeps the bridge tidier than many other parts of the City. *Mother Footcandle's Oil Shack* provides nighttime illumination, and *Mildred Al Hassan's Messengers* keep the community abreast of important news. For intellectuals, *The Poets' Guild* brings literature and letters to those willing to follow their muse. While these community services are laudable and attractive to new settlers, it should be remembered that *The Royal Tax Collector* dips deeply into all pockets to pay for them!



The Royal Tax Collector



*Open your purses
and uncover your cargo.
The Royal Tax Collector
is making his rounds.*

An all-too-familiar sight that greets travelers entering the City is the office of the Royal Tax Collector on King's River Bridge. The tax collector's job is to assay incoming goods and persons, collect any taxes due, and assess, record and forward to the royal treasury any rent or other usage fees for shops located on the bridge. Although there are several tax collectors employed throughout the City, the position of tax collector on King's River Bridge is considered something of a plum position, for the bridge tax collector not only taxes local citizens and merchants, but gains added revenue potential by levying taxes on goods entering and leaving the City via the bridge. The bridge's tax collector is often one of the first official representatives to greet visiting dignitaries, and his office, though the public waiting room is spartan, includes a relatively opulent lounge for special visitors. The white marble facing of the office, accentuated with finely wrought royal seals, is easily the most impressive edifice among the bridge shops.

In the person of Terial Skyone-Sheth, the King has found the ideal tax collector. Terial's childhood, spent in the company of nobility, left him educated in worldly matters as well as courtly manners. He also enjoyed a successful, if unimaginative, career

as an officer in the royal cavalry. By the King's request, Terial resigned his commission and accepted the appointment as tax collector for the King's River Bridge, and for the past ten years has executed his office faithfully.

Terial makes sure that not a single copper piece is unaccounted for in the bridge tax office. No shop escapes official attention, regardless of size or status. Even the cart vendors are assessed.

By royal decree, no person who fails to pay all usage fees, taxes, and rent due is permitted to remain on the bridge. Terial takes this edict quite literally, and the few who cannot pay their taxes, or who are caught attempting to cheat the Crown of its due, unfailingly find themselves swimming in the river. If luck is with them, they merely forfeit their shop and all contents to the Crown. Those unlucky souls caught in particularly grievous acts of tax fraud are relieved of not only their properties, but their heads as well. These heads are then placed with great care upon iron stakes near the bridge entrance alongside the blackened, rotting heads and grinning skulls of others who have run afoul of royal justice. From this vantage point, they may watch as their lifeless bodies are swept downriver, while serving as a warning to all who enter the bridge to pay their taxes.

One final factor which raises the prestige of the tax collector's office is the King's own pragmatic approach to the handling of royal income. Terial, after having personally collected the royal taxes, and withholding a specified percentage for his own compensation, reports directly to no less a person than His Majesty. Being an officer who reports directly to the King and regularly handles potentially large sums of money, the position of tax collector for King's River Bridge is one looked on with envy by those who would enjoy setting their own private tax rates, assessing additional fees and tariffs, and generally lining their pockets with the Royal Guard to back them up. Many intrigues surround the office, but Terial is solidly in the King's favor, nearly immune to any political machinations, a fact which causes much wailing and gnashing of teeth among the more

In the waning days of 1962, Joseph Formichella breathed his first lungful of Earth air. Things haven't been the same since. After traversing a long and winding path involving a number of educational institutions and professions, he finally settled into a somewhat stable career teaching Biology to humans of high school age, and a somewhat less stable career involving writing. He now resides in Tempe, Arizona with his wife and three cats. His email address is josephf@goodnet.com.

relentlessly ambitious of the Court.

Terial is scrupulously honest and meticulously fair in the application of royal tax law. He does, however, honor traditional and historical commitments of bribes paid to his office, for to refuse such an ingrained part of "business as usual" would cause a great disruption in the City's commercial health, in his opinion at least. Thus, Terial tolerates, with disdain, a certain amount of chicanery and bending of the rules, viewing these expedients as a necessary evil. Attempted bribery from any new source will, however, misfire seriously.

Many times in the past, the tax office has been occupied by persons of a more conniving nature, and the iron spikes at the entrance to the bridge have seen their share of heads removed from just such corrupt tax collectors. Terial fulfills his duties well, and collects taxes, rents, and various official fees and licensing charges in a manner which is efficient, fair, and thorough.

Services

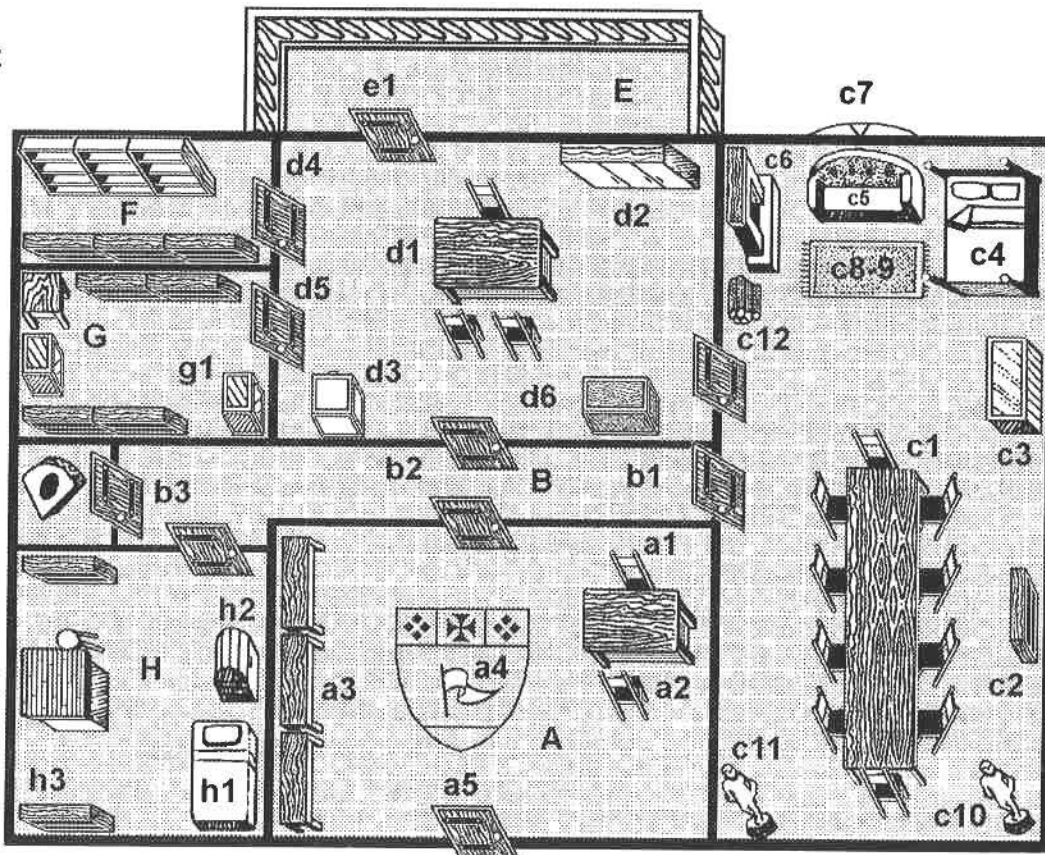
Persons entering or departing the City with goods to sell, or in need of any special license or permit, or having any other business regarding royal taxes, are required to visit the offices of the King's River Bridge tax collector. Upon entering the office, visitors are often impressed with the rather spartan interior, which bespeaks an efficiency often lacking in a government office, and the imposing presence of a member of the Royal Guard, who

remains posted here during regular business hours. They are typically greeted by Malok Uzki, Terial's no-nonsense secretary and assistant. Upon ascertaining the visitor's business, Malok will either conclude the required transaction himself, or direct the matter to the attention of Terial. Most routine matters, such as purchase of any required licenses, fees, or permits, are dealt with at this level. Terial will become personally involved with nearly any other matter, particularly if significant sums are involved.

Terial may simply need to sign a document, which will be carried to him by Malok. The visitors will not see him under these circumstances, though Terial will be quite aware of them and their business. In matters of some importance, particularly incoming caravans of notable wealth, Malok will show the visitors into Terial's office after delaying them for an appropriate period of time. In these instances, Terial will appear businesslike and concise, insisting on personally inspecting all goods, and will conclude all transactions in short order.

Visiting dignitaries and other persons deemed to be of great importance are immediately ushered into the lounge, a plush waiting room complete with velvet chairs, a fireplace, a selection of fine wines, and a view of the river below. Normally they will be joined after a short time by Terial, congenial in his best robes, ready to play the part of royal host while a message is sent to the King. They will find him an excellent host, courteous and civil, and not at all curt or even businesslike, though this can change in an instant should circumstances demand it.

1 sq = 1 ft



Hours of Operation

The tax collection office is open every business day, but closes early on Friday for internal accounting purposes. At this time, all monies received during the week are counted and packaged for Terial's personal delivery to the King. An armed contingent of Royal Guards accompanies Terial at these times.

Rents for bridge establishments are due every Friday morning in advance for the following week. These monies are counted with the other taxes collected on shipments of goods so that a full accounting of bridge business may be presented to the King. If a merchant fails to appear with rent in hand, two brawny guards will visit the offender, to inquire into his tardy payment and extract a late fee. If the rent cannot be paid, the merchant is given until morning to vacate the bridge.

Layout

A. Waiting Room. (11' x 16') This smallish room is the main entrance to the tax collection offices, and is the only part that the vast majority of citizens ever see. The floor and walls are of polished granite, with a royal crest inlay of marble and colored tiles in the center of the floor. Terial has purposely kept this room plain, and approves of the businesslike feel this room conveys. All furnishings in this room are wooden, with no hint of comfort or luxury.

A1. Malok's Desk. Locked². This wooden desk is where all routine transactions take place. Malok carries the key on a string around his neck. The desk contains paper, sealing wax, writing implements, and various forms for minor licenses and other tax related matters. A small cashbox, used for making change, rests in the top drawer. It contains various coins totaling 50 gold pieces.

A2. Wooden Chair. This is the chair where Malok's clients sit while transacting their business with him. It is sturdy and not too comfortable, and radiates very faint magic. The seat of this chair has been enchanted with a low level truth detecting spell. Anyone sitting on this chair who tells a lie will instantly feel an uncomfortable sensation of heat radiating from the seat. This spell is totally harmless, but the expression of any unprepared, untruthful client provides much of the humor in Malok's rather serious life.

A3. Wooden Bench. Those waiting to speak to Malok or Terial may park their hips on this sitting device. It is unremarkable except for a faint inscription in orcish scratched on the bottom rear of the bench which reads "*Eschew Obfuscation.*" Rubbing at this inscription will cause the letters to shift, to read "*Stop That!*" There is nothing of value about this bench.

A4. Royal Crest. Tile and marble are skillfully inlaid into the granite floor to form the Royal Crest, signifying that this business

operates under the authority of the King.

A5. Front Door. This heavy, ironbound oak door is locked⁵ except during normal business hours. Terial carries a key on his person at all times, as does Malok.

B. Corridor. (3' x 22') This is the narrow, central corridor which connects the Waiting Room at location A with Terial's Office at D, the Lounge at C, and Malok's quarters at H. Doors at B1 and B2 are normally locked³, and made of solid hardwood of moderate strength. A privy is at the end of the hallway at B3.

C. Lounge. (12' x 25') This is by far the most luxuriously appointed room in the entire office. Designed to impress important visitors and accommodate royal guests in a manner to which they have become accustomed, this room also contains much of the building's treasure, which a superb thief may aspire to remove. Tapestries glorifying the City hang on the walls, and all the furniture and other fixtures are first rate.

C1. Meeting Table. This large (3' x 10') table is the first feature noticed by those entering the Lounge. It is constructed of a dark wood, and features an elaborate inlay of gold, freshwater pearls, and colorful shells depicting the river through the four seasons. The inlay is quite beautiful, and if dismantled would yield 25 gold pieces worth of gold, and 20 matching pearls worth 20 gold pieces each. Twelve chairs made of the same dark wood sit around this table, each encrusted with 10 freshwater pearls worth 25 gold pieces each. The table itself is worth 5,000 gold pieces, if it could be removed intact. The dark wood also possesses a high degree of resistance to fire, and even if broken the wood could fetch a healthy price.

C2. Credenza. Locked². A selection of fine wines and liquors (20 or more in bottles) is stored in this cabinet. Each bottle can be sold on the black market for prices ranging from 10-50 gold pieces. Three of the bottles are highly distinctive, and their contents noteworthy. First, a blood-red wine in a ruby-red glass bottle has been dosed with a strong narcotic. Any character drinking from this bottle will soon become drowsy, and will sleep for 6-8 hours. Second, a pale blue liquor in a bottle decorated with silver and rhinestones is deadly nightshade wine, and will kill anyone who drinks it within minutes. The last bottle of note is made of polished ebony, and contains the antidote to the nightshade wine. Terial has found these wines useful on more than one occasion.

C3. Cabinet. Locked³. An exquisite set of 24 gold goblets rests in this cabinet. Individually, each would be worth 200 gold pieces, but sold as a set they would bring up to 5,000 gold pieces to a shrewd bargainer. The cabinet also contains a tarnished silver goblet decorated with an etching of a dead serpent with a dead scorpion in its mouth. It has been enchanted to neutralize any poison poured into it. The silver goblet is worth 1,000 gold pieces.

C4. Divan. This is a quite luxurious resting place, covered in velvet and silk. It is designed to serve either as a couch or a comfortable bed. It, like all other furniture in the room, is made of dark wood. A small envelope containing a deed to a country estate is sewn into the stuffing of the divan. Anyone familiar with the geography of the local area will notice that the location described on the deed would place the estate in the middle of a nearby swamp. It could be sold to the unwary, however, for a tidy profit.

C5. Couch. This couch matches the Divan at C4. Several pillows of exotic decor rest on this deeply cushioned sofa. A search of the cushions will yield assorted small change totaling about 5 copper pieces and a few stale jelly candies, which will induce fits of vomiting if ingested.

C6. Fireplace. This is an ordinary fireplace, though well crafted and highly decorated as befits the tone of the lounge. Occasionally, a search of the ashes may yield tantalizing pieces of unburned parchment, containing bits of whatever information some careless person with a secret wanted to hide forever.

C7. Window. This large picture window affords a grand view of commerce on the river below. The glass is quite thick and would be difficult to break. It is also enchanted to afford complete privacy to all inside the room. Viewed from the outside, the window appears dark. Sections of the window may be opened for ventilation purposes, but will not open far enough to allow a normal-sized human either in or out.

C8-9. Eastern Rug/Floor Safe. On the floor at this location is a small (2' x 4'), heavy rug from some exotic region far to the east. The rug is an awkward prize, but if stolen would bring a price of up to 250 gold pieces. Beneath this rug lies an iron door set in the floor. The door is camouflaged with an illusion spell to appear to be merely a part of the floor, but rubbing the floor will shatter the spell. This door, which is locked⁶, covers the small floor safe, where visitors' valuables may be stored during their stay in the City. It may at any time contain everything from jewels to diplomatic documents. If the door is opened by any means other than the key, the statues located at C10 and C11 will animate and attack the person or persons responsible. The key is carried by Terial, and a copy is kept in his desk drawer.

C10 and C11. Imp Statues. These matching "statues" stand watch over the floor safe located at C9. They are actually two winged imps held in a stasis spell. The imps are armed with wicked claws about equal to daggers, and are approximately three feet tall. If anyone opens the safe at C9 by any means other than the proper key, the stasis spell will be broken and the imps will immediately fly to and attack those responsible.

C12. Door. Locked³. This door leads directly to Terial's office. It is constructed of hardwood of moderate strength.

D. Terial's Office. (11' x 16') From this office, Terial accounts for all the royal revenues generated by legitimate commerce on King's River Bridge. It is designed primarily as an efficient workplace, but many touches have been added to make the office seem impressive to the visitor in need of an audience with Terial. Locked³ hardwood doors of moderate strength at D4 and D5 lead to Record Storage and the Store Room, respectively.

D1. Terial's Desk. This large desk contains three drawers, all of which are normally kept locked³ when Terial is out of the room.

D1a. First Drawer. Parchment and other minor office supplies are kept here, along with a petty cash bag with 100 gold pieces in it. A silver ring set with a small blue jewel rests here. The jewel is Terial's last line of defense, and once per day it is capable of shooting a medium-sized lightning bolt, which would fry an unprotected human.

D1b. Second Drawer. This contains various permits, writs and decrees all bearing the seal of the King. Occasionally, orders of execution or other interesting documents find their way to this drawer. A copy of the key to the safe in the Lounge is kept here.

D1c. Third Drawer. A bottle of very fine wine and two silver goblets fill this drawer. Terial uses this spirit to celebrate when the occasion arises, and it is only shared with close confidantes. The wine and goblets could be sold for 300 gold pieces.

D2. Files. This cabinet contains all current files needed in the normal function of the office. A complete copy of the tax code is located here.

D3. Large safe. Locked⁶ and magically protected. This iron safe contains all items deemed to be of significant value by Terial, including all collected taxes that have yet to be forwarded to the King. In times of prosperity, the sums stored here often exceed 10,000 gold pieces. The safe also contains Terial's official seal, and a large supply of the special wax used to certify goods as having all taxes paid. The seal and wax are very valuable, and a wily adventurer could sell them for a small fortune. An even wiler adventurer could make a not-so-small fortune selling counterfeit tax stamps for black market goods.

The safe is protected by a set of traps. Only the key, carried at all times on the person of Terial, will safely open it. First, anyone touching the safe receives a moderate electrical shock, two or three of which could be fatal. Next, anyone attempting to open the safe with anything other than the proper key triggers the release of a cloud of toxic gas, which quickly fills the office and kills anyone breathing it in a matter of minutes. Finally, when actually opened by illegitimate means, the safe erupts with a cloud of needle-sharp ice crystals, causing both physical and cold damage. In the event that the ice trap is sprung, an alarm spell is triggered, causing a very loud shrieking alarm to sound, alerting the nearby Bridge Guard to the foul deed.

D6. Wardrobe. This cabinet contains three sets of official robes which Terial wears while on duty. Two of the robes are standard issue, but one is of obvious fine quality and exceptional color. Terial wears this last robe when engaged in important diplomatic duties.

E. Terrace. (3' x 15') This terrace attaches to Terial's office, and provides a respite from the work environment in the interior of the building. From this vantage point, ships and other happenings may be observed on the river. In addition to relaxation, Terial uses this vantage to keep close track of river traffic, making particular note of any unauthorized shipping activities designed to circumvent any current tariff situation.

E1. Patio Door. Locked^d. This glass door leads directly into Terial's office. It is made of very thick, very tough glass, and would be nearly impossible to break without making enough noise to bring guards rushing in.

F. Record Storage. (4' x 9') This is the main storage room for any tax records generated by the normal activities of Terial's office. Usually the records found in here are from years gone by. Nothing else of value is kept in this room.

G. Store Room. (6' x 9') This store room contains miscellaneous office supplies and other goods useful to the profession of tax collecting. In one of the files, located at G1, are notes and receipts in Malok's hand detailing the recent security measures taken to protect the safe in Terial's office.

H. Malok's Quarters. (9' x 10') Here Malok rests when his day is done. He sleeps very lightly, particularly when there is a substantial sum kept in the safe in Terial's office. Terial himself will occasionally sleep here when important guests are staying overnight in the Lounge, or if anything particularly delicate or important is being kept on the premises. During such occasions, Terial sleeps in Malok's bed at H1, and Malok is forced to sleep on the bench in the Waiting Room.

H1. Malok's Bed. This simple bed is functional, though not overly comfortable. Malok is saving for a rainy day, and a search of the bed will reveal the tidy sum of 1,200 gold pieces hidden in the mattress.

H2. Chest. This is a large chest containing most of Malok's possessions. Among the many odd knickknacks and clothing is a small, leather-bound journal. Malok has kept a journal of break-ins, with colorful descriptions of the ways the would-be thieves were foiled. This also gives anyone who reads the journal a good idea of some of the protections centered around the safes in the Lounge and Terial's Office. The chest has a false bottom, which conceals a small bag of polished stones of various colors and a key ring. Magic radiates from the stones. The magic is a beacon, and if the chest is taken, the spell will lead Malok (or anyone who knows the spell) directly to the stones. The key



Terial Skyone-Sheth

ring contains keys that will open every lock on the premises *except* for the two safes.

H3. Bookshelf. This shelf contains a dozen odd books on accounting practices, minor magical essays, methods of poisoning, and public relations.

Personalities

Terial Skyone-Sheth. *Human male. Ht: 6'1", Wt: 160#, Age: 43.* *Fighting Prowess: Very Good with fencing foil and dagger, Good with heavier swords and simple magic items, Fair with all other.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Terial is a serious, businesslike figure. Typically, his manner is brief, and he displays great impatience with those who would waste his time. His father was one of the King's most trusted knights, and he has enjoyed a close association with royalty all his life. Educated by the best tutors, more than a few of whom also served to educate the royal family, and trained in all the social graces, Terial displayed a quick grasp of the sciences, geography, and mathematics in particular. A dedicated and capable student, Terial was lacking only in imagination, which is hardly a deficit given his current occupation.

Terial also served, like his father, in the royal cavalry, and proved to be as capable and honest an officer as he was a student. Though lacking brilliance, his career was noted for its better-

than-average delivery of goods and services to troops in his charge. Under Terial's reliable maintenance of supplies, which he personally inspected on a regular basis, the troops ate well and wore boots that both fit and were of good quality. Their morale was, likewise, superior.

His responsible, meticulous nature and unquestioned loyalty to the Crown recommended him highly for the office of bridge tax collector when his predecessor, Salesk DeLealeux, did not survive a royal audit. The King wholeheartedly approved of Terial's induction to the ranks of City service. Terial has proven an excellent royal servant, both honest and accurate in monetary matters, and cordial and unflappable when representing His Majesty to visiting dignitaries.

Malok Uzki. *Human (?) male. Ht: 5'10", Wt: 145#, Age: 38.* *Fighting Prowess: Good with club and mace, Fair with sword and dagger, Poor with all other.* *Magic Ability: None.*

A relative newcomer to the City, Malok has served as able and efficient assistant to Terial for the past five years. Malok is a somewhat gaunt figure, with pinched features and a prominent nose that suggest mixed human ancestry, though mixed with what is not certain. An owl or some predatory bird might be a good candidate for one of his ancestors, though Malok never discusses matters of a personal nature, even on pain of death (should such a circumstance arise). He seems to have no particular vices, nor even a social life. He spends his days in the waiting room, and



Malok Uzki

his nights in his quarters.

The Royal Guards. *Human males of assorted sizes and ages.* *Fighting Prowess: All Fair to Good with sword. 20% are also Fair with Crossbow.* *Magic Ability: Generally none, though there is a 5% chance that particular guards may wear magically protective armor.*

Not to be confused with the Bridge Guard, these sentinels are solely tasked with protecting the tax revenues destined for the King's coffers. At least one stands watch inside the tax offices during all business hours. On Fridays, a squad numbering from four to eight will be present to escort Terial and the week's receipts to the royal treasury.

It is unlikely that these guardsmen will address any local matters of law and order unless the tax office is threatened or Terial is somehow involved. However, as part of the City, King's River Bridge does fall under their jurisdiction should any civil insurrection or warfare occur.

Scenario Suggestions

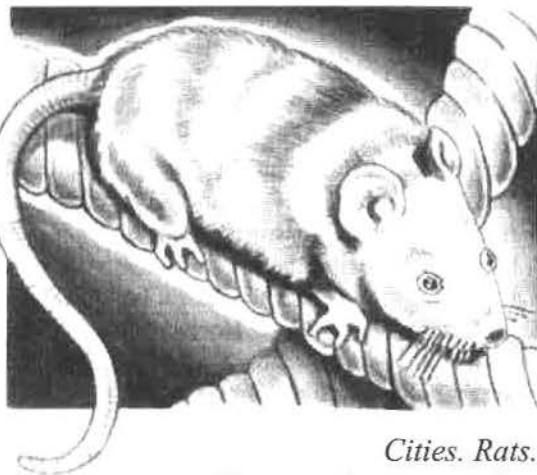
Scenario 1: Stamp Collection. A party of adventurers is hired to steal (or make a copy of) the royal tax stamp by a wealthy merchant with a large inventory of bootleg goods he desires to avoid paying taxes on.

Scenario 2: Paperwork. A visiting diplomat is carrying secret documents which one of the King's advisors wishes to have a look at. On a pretext, the diplomat has been detained at the tax office, and will sleep there overnight. The party is hired to break into the Lounge and steal the contents of the floor safe there, or otherwise obtain the documents. Intelligence (possibly inaccurate) as to the defenses surrounding the safe is provided to the party. If caught, however, they are on their own!

Scenario 3: Robin Hoods. While visiting the bridge, the adventurers encounter many people who are suffering under the high fees imposed on them by the tax collector. It is suggested to the party, perhaps by the persuasive Don or Ron [see *Ron & Don's Chat & Chew*, page 57], that a few heroes could easily overpower the guardsmen when Terial is making his rounds and redistribute the wealth.

If the group agrees to the plan, and succeeds, they will become outlaws to the crown and saviors to the populace. However, their criminal notoriety will severely hamper any future plans they have in the City, as all the guardsmen will be alerted to their past transgression.

The Halfling Rat Catchers' Guild



*Cities. Rats.
They used to go together.
Then the Halfling Rat
Catchers' Guild set up shop.*

One of the busier establishments on the bridge is the guild hall of the Halfling Rat Catchers. Located in a small box-style house near the first pylon, the Guild Hall is a base for the rat catchers to pick up assignments, report on operations, and turn in pay vouchers. Of course, like the fabled iceberg, the Guild Hall is the tip of the monster, in a very literal way.

History of the Guild

The Halfling Rat Catchers' Guild had its start with a halfling called Standfast Underfoot. As the family history goes, the Underfoots, Brushfires, Baconcrunchers, and several other halfling families had lived for years in a remote part of the forest in the foothills of the Weeping Dragon Mountains. About thirty years ago, an influx of trolls caused the halfling community to uproot and head for the City, where they settled to find a living as best they could. Being without money and of a decidedly rural tendency, most settled in as servants and unskilled laborers. The Underfoots took to rat catching like otters to water, primarily because they had been hunters in the mountains, and hunting is, after all, hunting.

For many years, Standfast and the others made a living of sorts by whatever means came to hand. When opportunity

James Walker was born in 1956, over 100 years after his ancestors came to Arizona from Missouri and Texas. His early years were spent in the shadows of the Graham Mountains, where he learned all about fairies, fearsome critters, lumberjacks, cowboys, Indians and ghosts at his great-grandmother's knee. He hopes that you can forgive any strangeness in his work; it seems inevitable that some should be present.

knocked, however, the Underfoots, Brushfires, and Baconcrunchers were not slow to answer the door.

The same trolls who chased the halflings out of the hills also displaced many other people, including the goblin tribe then ruled over by a sturdy little warrior by the name of Broketooth.

Broketooth and his band found a way into the City's sewer system. Soon, they became a plague on the City, erupting into households through the middens and wreaking holy terror on whomever was so unlucky as to be "on the throne." After several such attacks, the City hired the former rat catchers' guild to rid it of the goblin problem.

The old guild was manned by men, dwarves, and the odd orc. These "biggies" were less than successful, as they were not used to dealing with thinking foes. Rats, albino alligators, even water trolls they could deal with. But the goblins simply took to tunnels the rat catchers could not fit into, ambushing left and right, fore and aft, and sometimes in the middle.

After taking heavy losses, the guild gave up and Standfast entered the fray. Vowing to rid the City of the goblin menace for a quite reasonable fee (only twice that charged by the other guild), Standfast guaranteed his results.

What the City did not know was that Standfast had already done the work. Under cover of darkness, he and a picked band of Underfoots, Baconcrunchers and Brushfires had entered the sewers and made their way into the heart of the goblin's encampment. There, they negotiated a classic deal with Broketooth.

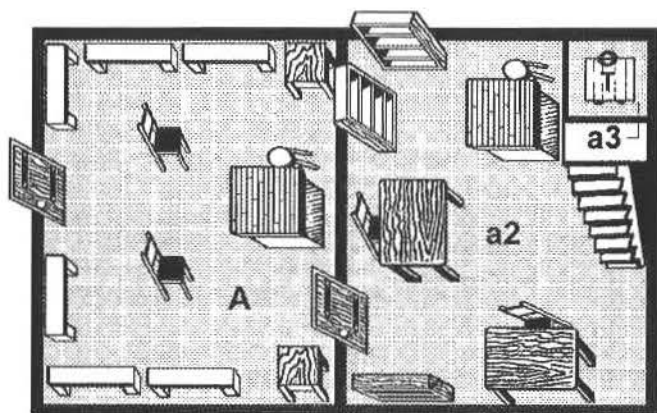
Simply put, the goblins would cease their depredations, and the halflings would give them treasure to do their work for them, namely, ridding the city of pests. The City would stop trying to kill the goblins, and the goblin chief and his major henchmen would share in the profits. Broketooth, being smarter than the average goblin, agreed, and the Halfling Rat Catchers' Guild was born. The goblin chiefs who followed Broketooth have continued the unusual partnership.

Layout

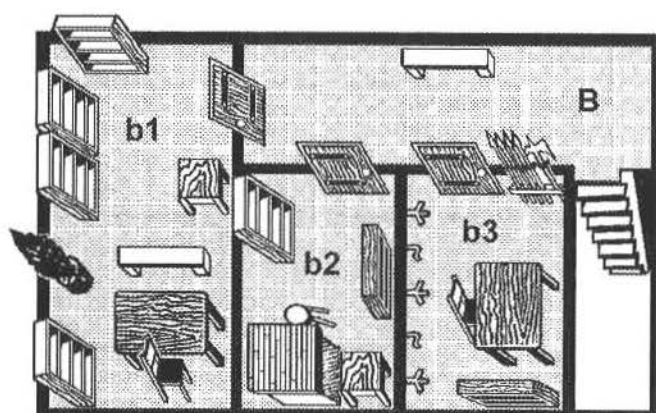
The first floor of the guild hall has two important rooms and one closet, situated in a very simple format:

A1. Reception Room. (10' x 13') This room has a desk, several benches, and a couple of chairs suitable for "biggies" in it. The desk is manned during business hours by a receptionist, Constance Brushfire, niece of Burnfast Brushfire. On any given business day you will find several halfling rat catchers waiting for clients, and no small number of those same clients, ranging from human innkeepers to dwarven metalsmiths.

A2. Records Room. (10' x 13') The halflings have always maintained careful records of the jobs they undertake, which is one of the keys to their success at this unlikely vocation. This room is filled with files, cubbies, and boxes of records. Three desks are occupied by the guild's paymaster Seldom Underfoot, chief record keeper Samson Baconcruncher, and the office gofer



1 sq = 1 ft



Clovis Treehugger.

Naturally, the most important function of all this record keeping is to conceal the comings and goings of the current goblin chief Bogwhomper and his henchmen. Most of these happenings originate in an adjacent secret room, accessible by a door disguised by the wall paneling. The latch is near the floor.

A3. Secret Room. (3' x 3') This small room appears to be an empty closet. However, closer inspection will reveal a trap door in the floor which opens to a stairway leading to the underside of the bridge. In the closet, the trap door can be opened by working a latch concealed under a loose floor board near the opening. From the stairwell, the trap door can be opened by working a latch hidden in the eighth newel post up from the bottom of the stair.

The small chamber is used to hide goblin runners, treasure taken out of the sewers by both legitimate and illegal means, and the occasional missing person.

B. Second Floor Landing. (5' x 13') A bench furnishes this hallway outside the offices of Fallfast Underfoot, Hamfisted Baconcruncher, and Burnfast Brushfire.

B1. Fallfast's Office. (6' x 13') Very opulently furnished, this office shows the wealth and prestige that Fallfast and his father Standfast have built for this guild. Not generally considered one of the premiere guilds of any city, the business acumen shown by Standfast Underfoot and his son Fallfast has done much to scrub the patina of grunge from the rat catchers' guild and replace it with a veneer of respectability.

B2. Burnfast's Office. (5' x 8') Entering this office can be likened unto entering a tomb which has been looted by robbers not much interested in paper or books. Every surface is literally covered over with scrolls, books, and sheets of paper. Every corner boasts its own set of ledgers, files and portfolios. The desk is dwarfed by a cyclopean mound of documents.

So cluttered is this room that its diminutive master is the only man, or halfling, for that matter, who can negotiate its

labyrinthine passages without danger of overturning these mounds of paperwork.

Needless to say, Burnfast contends that he knows every inch of the office, and can lay hand to any document in mere minutes.

He has been known to threaten the life of any halfling who so much as mentions in passing an urge to straighten his office. At this point, no one can be found who would be willing to undertake the task without a troll bodyguard and a team of dwarven miners.

B3. Hamfisted's Office. (5' x 8') As spartan as Fallfast's office is opulent, Hamfisted keeps his walls covered with the rusted and dented weapons and armor (or teeth and claws) of his defeated foes.

In another age, Hamfisted might have become a professional soldier or sailor, but in this age of peace, he has instead become a guild policeman, handling many of the guild's sensitive security problems. He is the main go-between with the goblins that live under the bridge.

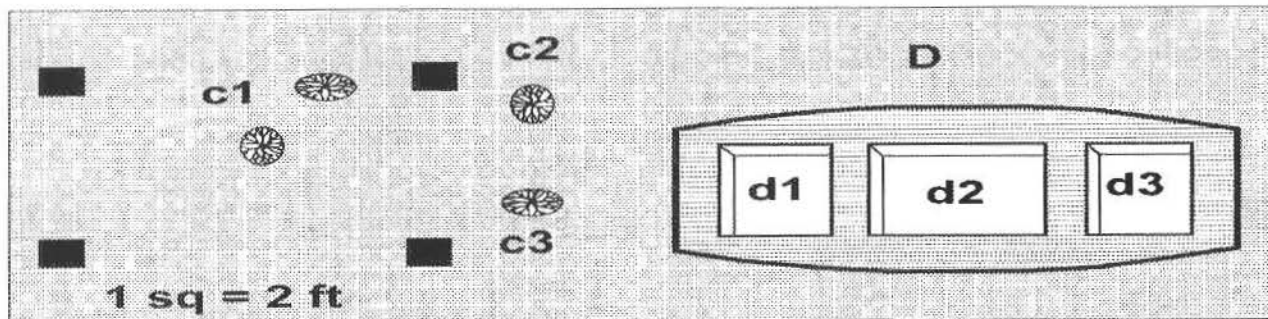
Secrets

Like all good mysteries, what is left out is the meat of the matter. In order to delve into this mystery it is necessary to look beneath the surface, in this case, beneath the bridge.

Nestled about the pylons of the bridge, barely noticeable, are several small knobs or islands which have the look of beaver lodges. These are the homes of the goblins who live and work with the halfling rat catchers in the City's sewers.

Running from goblin lodge to goblin lodge are rickety foot bridges. So ramshackle are these crossings that they appear to be mere river debris: sticks, reeds and the odd length of ratty rope caught among the bridge's footings. The crossings terminate in the reed-filled, marshy bank of the river near a large barge moored to a stone pier.

C1. The Goblin Lodges. The general layout of a goblin lodge is that of an open dome with the entrance located at the apex. The goblin simply climbs the outside of the dome and drops through the entrance hole into the single room. Bedding, food



storage, and furnishings are little more than rushes and discarded rags, all spread about the single room in a hodge podge fashion.

Each lodge will house between 10 and 12 goblins of which 2 or 3 will be spratlings. The only exceptions to this living arrangement are the lodges inhabited by the goblin chief Bogwhomper, and the goblin shaman, Pokeneye.

C2. Bogwhomper's Lodge. This lodge is by far the largest and boasts a ladder down into the main room. Further, it contains a vast treasure hoard collected over the years Bogwhomper has been in the City. This treasure is piled about the room in haphazard abandon, a fine rug here, a funereal vase there, a satin covered pillow in the corner, and all belonging to the Chief.

Bogwhomper's greatest possession, a throne of the finest oak inlaid with lapis and enamel, sits against one wall, dominating the chamber.

C3. Pokeneye's Lodge. The goblin shaman lives in austere simplicity, sleeping in a pile of moss and reeds, keeping his fabled magic wand in an elephant foot umbrella stand and his bag of Big Ju-Ju in a cedar hope chest. A small brazier sits in the center of the lodge, kept burning day and night.

D. Barge. A barge owned by the rat catchers' guild is permanently moored at a stone jetty by the side of the bridge. It is divided into three sections, each with a different use.

D1. The Cock Fighting Pit. (8' x 10') This pit features trained roosters contesting one against the other for the amusement and wagering of the viewers. Men, dwarves, and other kindreds come from miles around to join in the action.

D2. The Bear-Dog-Man Fighting Pit. (8' x 14') Here wagers are cast on the outcome of single combats between a number of different opponents, most commonly bears and dogs. These fights are generally to the death, and are commonly known as bear baiting, a sport which is a favorite among dock workers, dwarves and orcs.

Sometimes the action is varied by staging fights between two bears, bears and albino alligators (which infest the sewers of the City), and bears and man-kindreds.

Bear baiting is illegal in most parts of the City. However, on the waterfront a nod and a few gold under the table will allow

many things that would be quelled in other localities.

When the goblin population grows large enough to threaten the secret relationship between the goblins and the halflings, extraneous goblins will find themselves thrown into the pit to live or die for the amusement of the the goblin chief. Bogwhomper reserves this fate for those who are the greatest threat to his chiefdom. These bouts are held as secretly as possible.

D3. The Dog-Rat Fighting Pit. (8' x 10') In this arena, bets are laid on the outcome of fights between terriers and rats or pit bulls and rats. Occasionally stoats, minks or feral cats are pitted against rats, each other, or the odd baby albino alligator.

Personalities

Fallfast Underfoot. *Halfling male. Ht: 3' 2", Wt: 75#, Age: 85.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Fallfast is a halfling of early middle age, good health and average build. His hair is black, curly, and thick. His beard is cut in a short fringe along his jaw line and he sports a heavy growth of mutton chop whiskers. He has no mustache.

His clothing consists of a fine wool shirt and a pair of well made leather breeches. He wears a stylish black hat with a long plume while out of doors. His ensemble is completed by a heavy walking stick which towers two feet above his own height. This walking stick also functions as his staff of office, and bears the symbol of the rat catchers' guild at its apex, a rat head in gold with ruby eyes.

Fallfast is the very image of a modern business halfling. His piercing gaze and stern look have been called "very unhalfling like", an accusation which Fallfast considers more in the way of a compliment than a criticism.

Burnfast Brushfire. *Halfling male. Ht: 3' 6", Wt: 90#, Age: 70.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Burnfast is a small, ferret-like halfling with sharp features and thin, straight brown hair. He always wears huge wire-rimmed spectacles, and is never without several quill pens thrust into various pockets, behind his ears, or even in his hat brim. Ink



Burnfast Brushfire

smudges his hands, face, and clothing all the time, even when he is fresh from the bath. While out of doors (a seldom-seen event), Burnfast wears a voluminous cloak and a huge floppy straw hat which effectively hides him from the light of day and the sight of any prying eyes.

A true bibliophile, Burnfast is seldom without at least one book or scroll in his hands or about his person. This halfling is not a warrior.

Burnfast is not a social animal. He is most comfortable around books, and seldom leaves his office, often sleeping under his desk. He has no wife, and hates children. He does have one pet, a neutered house cat, from which he is inseparable and over which he dotes outrageously.

In his capacity as the secretary-treasurer of the guild, he excels; however, this is not his first or foremost contribution to his brother halflings. Over the years, he has become an expert in the flora and fauna which grow in the sewers of the City. This expertise has resulted in a lucrative trade in rare spores, molds, fungi, algae, and mosses useful to many different clients. Further sales in rare animals like albino turtles, walking cat fish, and fire-spitting newts round out Burnfast's contribution to the coffers of the Guild.

Hamfisted Baconcruncher. *Halfling male. Ht: 3' 9", Wt: 110#, Age: 55.* *Fighting Prowess: Fair, by Human standards.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Hamfisted is a large halfling, tall with a huge barrel chest and arms as thick around as a man's thighs. His hands are hard and calloused from heavy work. He is weighty for a halfling, but his bulk is solid muscle. At 55 years old, he is the youngest

of the guild's leaders.

A jagged scar runs down the left side of his face, the mark of combat with an albino alligator encountered in the City's sewers.

He wears a chain mail shirt and a steel pot helm with a chain fringe hanging down the back to protect his neck. His weapons are the traditional ones of the rat catcher, the Rat Gig, or short trident, the dagger, and the wrist rocket, though his are of higher quality than is normally carried.

Of all the halflings in the rat catchers' guild, he is the most powerful warrior. Strong among his own race, and average by human standards, his considerable expertise as a warrior gives him a distinct advantage. Hamfisted Baconcruncher is a warrior born, a rip-roaring, fighting, drinking, carousing kind of halfling. He spends most of his time gambling on the barge or drinking in Dirty Joe's Tavern.

To most everyone he is a congenial fellow, laughing, smiling, and quick with the clever repartee. To a few close friends he is known as a shrewd tactician, a talented fighter, and a leader of halflings and men alike. These impressions are not far shy of the truth.

One personal failing, if it can be counted as such, is his willingness to get "down and dirty" with the goblins. He counts Bogwhomper as a friend, and passes many a night drinking in the goblin chief's lodge, regaling all and sundry with stories of his personal battle prowess.

Bogwhomper. *Goblin male. Ht: 3' 1", Wt: 75#, Age: 17.* *Fighting Prowess: Good, among Goblins.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Bogwhomper is large for a goblin, a trait shared by virtually all of the goblin chiefs there ever were. His head is large, covered with shaggy red hair, and his eyes are small, squinty, and set close together. Of his nose, suffice to say that it would look handsome on a beagle, but is somewhat out of place on a goblin. His ears flap in the wind and can be seen over the tops of tall reeds by the water's edge whenever Bogwhomper answers the call of nature. His teeth are long and sharp, with one broken fang on the left side of his lower jaw. His skin is warty, green and somewhat wrinkled from being in the water so much. His feet and hands are large and webbed, with short but sharp claws. His chest is sunken, his stomach protuberant, and his legs bandy. In short, Bogwhomper can generously be called a goblin Adonis.

Being a goblin has not affected Bogwhomper's personality overly much. Had he been an elf, he would have been an overbearing, pompous, violent, loud, and bullying elf. As it is, he is a fairly passable goblin, clever, sneaking, back stabbing, bushwhacking, claim jumping and prevaricating, yet possessed of a charming bloodthirstiness which has made him a close companion to Hamfisted Baconcruncher.

Among his fellow goblins, Bogwhomper is the uncontested god of the tribe for the moment. However, this could turn on a chance head cold, unlucky sword thrust, or infected toe-nail, for he will be uncontested leader only as long as he proves himself to be the strongest and meanest goblin in the tribe.



Pokeneye

Pokeneye. *Goblin male. Ht: 3' 9", Wt: 40#, Age: 24.*
 Fighting Prowess: Poor. *Magic Ability: Average.*

Pokeneye is scrawny and statuesque for a goblin. So cadaverous is he that some have mistaken him for dead as he slept. His hair is nonexistent, his skin is sallow and blotchy, and his teeth are stubby and broken, with only three fangs showing through his thin lips. His ears show wear beyond his years, being much ripped and torn while he was a spratling. His belly gives him the appearance of having swallowed a soccer ball, and his chest could be used as a cubby for storage. His eyes are large and round, showing great intelligence.

Pokeneye is clever, sneaking, and driven to gain through magic what respect he could never achieve through physical intimidation. As a shaman, he is of middling power, skilled enough to ensure his tribe's survival, but not a threat to the men of the City. He sees his association with the halflings as a positive thing, giving him access to magical knowledge he would normally be denied. Nevertheless, if he were to gain the power to do so, he would use spells to bend the halflings to *his* will, rather than remain under *their* control.

Scenarios

Scenario 1: The Ghost of the Bridge. The goblins have taken to worshipping the bridge's resident ghost as a god [see *The*

Cornerstone Ghost, page 106], a situation which the ghost uses to his advantage when the player characters' ship blunders into one of the bridge footings, damaging it. The goblins prove to be a ready source of manpower for the ghost's use in the punishment of the miscreant sailors. Investigating the source of the goblin problem could lead to the exposure of the Guild's secret deal.

Scenario 2: The Pie Caper. For quite some time, Sweeney's Pie Shoppe [see page 43] has been dropping tasty tidbits onto Bogwhomper's lodge through a trap door. When the scraps suddenly stop coming, the goblin chief demands to know the reason why and sends his henchmen to investigate.

What they find is that thieves have taken over the pie shop and are holding the Bromsons prisoner. When this is reported to Bogwhomper, he leads a war party to liberate the bakers. Should the adventurers stumble into this situation, whom will they assume are the villains? The thieves or the goblins?

Scenario 3: The Stolen Swag Bag. While in the sewers, the goblins stumble upon a bag of old clothing, shoes, and belts which is sold through the halflings to The Clothes Chest [see page 94]. Over the next few weeks, havoc stalks the adventurers who have bought these odd bits of clothing, for whatever they bought is cursed in odd and usually embarrassing ways. Investigation will reveal that the only way to break the curse is to return the bag to where it was found — a feat depending on the memory and honesty of a goblin!

Scenario 4: The Thieves' Guild — Rat Catchers' Guild War. As can be inferred, the Rat Catcher's Guild is not adverse to a little larceny when the occasion arises. This leads them into direct competition with the City's Thieves' Guild. The Rat Catchers' Guild decides to hire the adventurers to protect its barge, which has become a target for the local thief boss.

Scenario 5: Snuffing The Flame. Chief Bogwhomper warns Fallfast that a number of the younger goblins are unsatisfied with both their meager pay and the living conditions in the City's sewers. One rabblouser called BlackEar is at the root of the movement. Although BlackEar has not yet challenged Bogwhomper, his confidence is growing. Bogwhomper hesitates to take on BlackEar directly, as there is a fair chance that the younger warrior would defeat him, gain control of the tribe, and ruin the deal with the rat catchers forever. Bogwhomper asks Fallfast to hire assassins to deal with his foe. Fallfast then offers the adventurers the job. However, he will twist the facts as necessary to keep the standing deal with the goblins a secret.

Scenario 6: Breaking The Deal. A new kingpin has overthrown Bogwhomper and seized control of the tribe. As the new chief, he has stirred resentment among the goblins over the restrictions imposed upon them by the halflings. Aided by the shaman Pokeneye's magic, the chief prepares an attack on the guildhouse of the halfling rat catchers. The adventurers are in the reception room when the goblins try to take control.

Mildred Al Hassan's Messengers



Did you hear about the messenger who was murdered? The sister of my cobbler's apprentice knew his second cousin, and she says . . .

One of the first things noticed on the bridge is the teenagers running by in bright yellow smocks. When asked their business, each will tout "Mildred Al Hassan's Messengers: Spreading the Word for 50 Years." There are other messenger services in the City, but none as fast or reliable. It's also hard not to notice the *slowest* flying carpet in existence taking an elderly woman home from work. It may be many days before you hear about the "Messenger That Died." Of course, that's just a City legend, right?

Background

A City lives on and through its information. Merchants make or lose fortunes by keeping abreast of their rivals' prices. Funerals, weddings, theater openings, all need an army of criers. For years, people would just collar the nearest kid they could find, press a gold piece in his or her hand, and hope that the message would be delivered. But Mildred Al Hassan began her service based on three principles — reliability, speed, and confidentiality. If you gave her runners a message, it got through.

Don Webb has had over 200 stories, articles, and poems published in seven languages. He is a frequent contributor to *Asimov's* and *Interzone* magazines. Wordcraft of Oregon has just re-released his chapbook, *The Seventh Day and After*. He has written gaming materials for *DRAGON*® and *FASA*. His most recent book, *A Spell for the Fulfillment of Desire*, is a collection of short fiction from Black Ice Books. He contributed "Feats of Clay" for *CityBook VI*. He also has a story in *Black Swan, White Raven*, the fourth of Ellen Datlow's fairy tale anthologies (to be published in the spring of 1997).

A person-to-person message in the City is delivered for three gold pieces. If it has to be delivered instantly — ten gold pieces. If the messenger has to wait for a response, double the fee. Messages may be written down or given orally.

Three times a day, all the messengers on duty cry the news. They tell whatever recent events they know, and yell about anything they've been paid to announce. Ten gold pieces per announcement, and the whole City knows about the new play opening, the sale on magical scrolls, or your engagement.

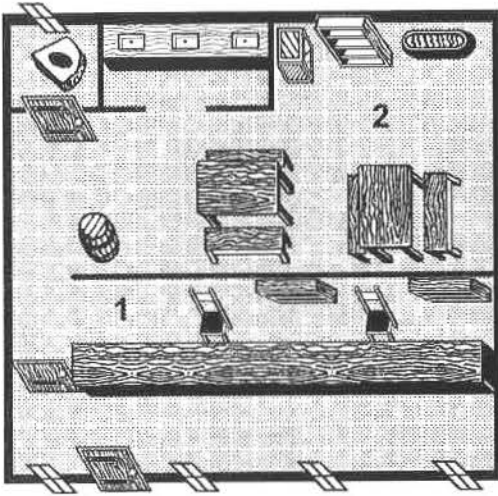
There's a story that one of Mildred's messengers was killed by a thief while on one of his runs. He beheaded the messenger and stole what little money the boy had. The thief then went mad (and his hair, they say, turned white as snow), when the messenger rose from the blood-slick cobbles — carrying his head — to continue running off to deliver the message. When he got to the recipient, he had to write the message in blood since he could not speak. There's probably little truth in the story, but who knows?

Layout

1. Service Counter. (2' x 18') At the front of the messenger service is a long counter open to the public. Here, a big map of the City, the record book, and a manager wait. Money, usually a great deal of it, is kept in a locked^s cash drawer. During the morning (6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) Mildred manages the shop. In the afternoon it's run by Hafeed Nafkir (2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.), and the graveyard shift (10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.) is covered by Lalla Mossian.

2. Back Room. (11' x 20') This is a lounge area for waiting messengers. From 1 to 10 runners will be here at any time, playing chess or darts, reading, or snacking on the food that Mildred has delivered. Commonly, you'll find runners soaking their feet in basins filled with an exotic-smelling blue liquid. Others may be heating the water for the foot baths. A small privy and washroom

1 sq = 1 ft



adjoin this area. At night, the room is lit by a globe from Enfene [see *CityBook V*].

There is nothing of great value here save for the foot bath salts. These are magical. They restore one from tiredness, heal any injuries to the feet, toughen up the feet, and if used daily for six months will double your running speed. All the messengers use the foot baths, but none of them know just how magical they are. Mildred makes the foot baths during each new moon, using costly spices and ground feathers of a Roc.



Mildred Al Hassan

Personalities

Mildred Al Hassan. *Human female. Ht: 5' 2", Wt: 130#, Age: 76.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* *Magic Ability: Very Good C5, Good C2.*

Despite her age, Mildred's hair is still black, her eyes and wits quite sharp. She has outlived two husbands, has eight living children, twenty-three grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild. She's honest, hard working, and immensely curious about everything. She won't endanger her messengers, pass on information she knows to be false, or violate the confidentiality of a message. Two of her daughters and one of her sons run message services in other parts of the City. She dreams of establishing a message system that would eventually cover the planet. If anybody roughs up one of her messengers, she will make sure that they wind up floating in the river. In her heart, the thirty to forty people working for her at any time are her kids. She learned the secret of making the magic foot baths from Azim Al Hassan, her second husband, a doctor from the mysterious east.

Hafed Nakir. *Human male. Ht: 5' 8", Wt: 230#, Age: 56.* *Fighting Prowess: Good with Scimitar.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Hafed is a turbaned man who favors Oriental dress and sports a great curved scimitar. He was a cousin of Azim Al Hassan, and



Hafed Nakir

when he journeyed to the City for Azim's funeral, he decided to stay and help his cousin's widow. He is fiercely protective of Mildred, but does not share her strong moral codes on what type of information to deliver, or the confidentiality of a message. He can be bought, and the criminal elements of the City know it. His goal is to get a djinn lamp. He does own a flying carpet, but not a very good one. It flies about 6 miles an hour, and can only carry four hundred pounds. He and Mildred use the carpet to get from her house in the City to the messenger stand. Occasionally, the carpet will carry special passengers approved by Mildred or Hafed, but it is not rented out or loaned for general use.

Lalla Mossian. *Human female. Ht: 5' 2", Wt: 110#, Age: 32.* *Fighting Prowess: Fair with Scimitar.* *Magic Ability: Very Good C7.*

Lalla came to the City two years ago claiming to be a poor, distant relation of Hafed's. She is strikingly beautiful with dark eyes and hair, and a charming accent of eastern lands. In reality, she was a spy for a powerful Eastern sultan, a spy who knew too much. The vizier decided to have her killed, which she discovered in time to flee her homeland. Lalla now enjoys a relatively quiet life on King's River Bridge. Her night shift at the messenger service can sometimes be dull, compared to her past exploits as a spy. To combat her boredom, she sometimes creates illusions to startle or enchant folks on or near the bridge. She's planning on staying here another year, and then moving on. She loves to hear about foreign lands and will often give free messenger service to people who will tell her about far-away places.

The Messengers. These are Human teenagers who run fast and have good memories. Mildred insists that they all get fighter training, so they are all Fair with short sword.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Let's Play Post Office. Mildred wants to start up postal deliveries between the City and another nearby town. She hires the characters to deliver the mail. The pay is good, the bandits unexpectedly scary.

Scenario 2: I Found You! Abdul Mazerene, an enforcer for the Sultan, has come to kidnap Lalla. He approaches a party member to aid him in this quest.

Scenario 3: It's Not Much Of A Rug, But It Gets Me From Point A To Point B. Mildred or Hafed joke about the rug to a character. She or he offers to let them ride it "once around the bridge." It takes off slowly, until it's several feet away from the bridge. Then it kicks into high gear. It zooms the passenger off to the distant palace of a caliph. Its homing spell finally kicked in! Once it has reached its destination, the rug is worthless. The caliph's attitude toward the guest depends entirely on how charming they can be while explaining their presence.

Meanwhile, the folks back home have to mount a rescue party!

Scenario 4: Are You The Son/Daughter of ... ? Mildred finds a decades-old message stuck under a drawer. It's a message to the deceased father or mother of one of the characters. She tracks the character down and hand delivers the note, apologizing for its lateness. It appears to be a treasure map, with less than helpful notes like "Just as we thought" and "This guy is bigger than other one." No one in the character's family knows anything about it. (This is a good way to use an old dungeon in a new campaign.)

Scenario 5: Help Wanted. Three of Mildred's young messengers have disappeared. All had gone on errands to a certain district of the City on the same day. Understandably, Mildred does not want to risk any of her other runners until the three missing are accounted for.

Mildred puts the word out that a band of experienced adventurers is needed to deliver messages to this district and investigate the disappearances.

This can lead the party into other parts of the City where they can encounter other *CityBook* establishments and discover the fate of the teenagers.

The three major uses of Mildred Al Hassan's Messengers are to provide a way of getting data to and from characters, allowing the characters ways of sending public messages, and inserting "Arabian Nights" material into a campaign that hasn't played with such things before.

Mother Footcandle's Oil Shack



*Some say the oil lamps
make the bridge safer.
Others scoff, blaming their light
for things that lurk in the shadows.*

King's River Bridge is lined with oil-lanterns, their heavy iron frames hanging from hooks, posts and the fronts of shops, shielded from wind and rain. Their reflections swim and blend on the water's surface below. At night, Mother Footcandle keeps them lit.

After sundown, the City is submerged in blackness, and many of her citizens prefer it that way. Several times in the past, motions have been made to provide street-lighting, but each time the motions have failed. "Too expensive!" cry the citizens. "Unnatural!" cry the zealots. Those who travel at night are viewed by decent folk as immoral, and likely criminal, and that's often true.

Except in a few select districts where wizards see fit to provide sorcerer illumination for their streets, those wishing to travel by night must carry a lantern, or hire a linkboy to carry one for them. As often as not, a linkboy is a thief, leading them into an alley full of shining knives and greedy smiles.

By sauteeing a chopped onion, melting plenty of brown sugar over it, and adding cider vinegar, cayenne pepper, tomato paste and dry mustard, S. John Ross's views on the motives of RPG players (simmered for two hours) can be re-created in the form of a barbecue sauce. His approach to game mastering, in particular, can be examined by brushing the sauce onto a few pounds of meaty spareribs and grilling them over a slow fire. When he isn't writing for Steve Jackson Games, Avalon Hill, or White Wolf, or doodling cartoons for *DRAGON*® magazine, he is wrapping slices of bell pepper and sweet onion splashed with lemon juice and tarragon in foil, and grilling them along with the ribs, to be eaten as a hot salad. His two upcoming books, *GURPS™ Warehouse 23* and *GURPS™ Medieval Russia*, are best served with french bread and strong coffee. He frequently appears at SF and gaming conventions on the East Coast, and strikes most fans as cheerful and well-fed.

King's River Bridge is different. River traffic can't always stop at night, and travelers from far places can never plan perfectly their arrival. By mandate of the City government, and mutual agreement of the bridge merchants, there are lamps on the bridge, and a lamplighter to keep them lit.

The lamps themselves are works of art: great iron frames holding beautifully blown orbs of glass, open at the top and pinched at the bottom. The base is filled with water, the lamp is filled with oil, and on top of the oil floats a wick in a wooden floater. A copper crown shields the lamp from the wind, and Mother Footcandle takes care of the rest.

Services

Mother Footcandle's small shop, the "oil shack," occupies her daytime hours, but it is her duty to the lamps that provides her purpose. King's River Bridge has more than twenty outdoor lamps, burning nearly fourteen quarts of oil each night. Every evening, before sundown, "Mother" wanders out onto the bridge, lowers each lamp, checks the wicks and floaters, refills the oil, and rekindles each flame with a taper lit at her fireplace. This keeps the bridge under an orange glow of false moonlight. It's not bright enough to read by, but there's enough light to keep thieves in the shadows where they belong, and to let the riverboats know where to sail. At midnight, Mother snuffs all but six of the lamps to conserve oil. The bridge is plunged into a deep gloom; there are just enough flames for the boats to see the bridge, and the denizens of the night regain their cloak of blackness.

At daybreak, the lamps burn their last in the morning fog, and Mother is there, snuffing the flames and cleaning the smoky residue from the fine glass.

Within her shop, she takes tea with the youngsters running through her doors, and sells light to passersby.

Oils: Mother Footcandle sells four general varieties of oil.

Lard Oil is the cheapest, at 3 gold pieces per quart. It is

rendered down from scraps discarded by the City's butchers. It burns very slowly (a quart will burn a single wick for 75 hours), but smokes nastily and must be tended regularly or it will extinguish itself. It also takes a lot of care to light in the first place. Delvers attempting to light a grease lamp in the middle of a subterranean melee won't have much luck!

Fish Oil is the highest grade of oil that Mother Footcandle makes herself, extracting it from local "throwaway-grade" fish in her press. The price is 5 gold pieces per quart. Fish oil lights quickly, burns without maintenance and provides good light, but the smoke smells offensive to some, and the oil itself can putrefy and stink to high heaven. A quart is good for 12 hours on a single wick. This is the oil most commonly used in the outdoor bridge lighting.

Whale Oil is rare, prized for its "clean" smoke (relative to fish oil) and distinctive white flame, but otherwise is much like fish oil (including the tendency to putrefy). Mother Footcandle only has it when someone has bagged a whale and sold her the scraps. The cost is 8 gold pieces per quart.

Olive and Seed Oil are very similar to one another, high-grade vegetable oils brought to the City by merchants sailing up the coast from warmer southern climes. A quart is good for 24 hours of light on a single wick, and the price is 10 gold pieces. The smoke is constant but not unpleasant, provided it isn't allowed to gather in great quantities. If stored sealed, the oil keeps for a very long time. These oils are highly prized for indoor lighting, where the smell of fish oil might drive away sensitive evening guests or a deep-pocketed temple congregation. These oils are available more frequently than Whale Oil, but are scarce during the winter months.

Candles: Mother Footcandle isn't a chandler, but she buys candles from craftsmen within the City and sells them at inflated "convenience" prices to travelers on the bridge. Tallow candles are 25 silver pieces per half-dozen (one pound of candles, good for 30 minutes of light each). Beeswax candles are 75 silver pieces per half-dozen (the same, but good for 40 minutes each). Tallow candles, in addition to being smellier, must be "snuffed" regularly (trimming the wick) with shears or a knife. Cruder folk use their fingers. Individual candles can be had for 5 silver pieces (tallow) or 15 silver pieces (wax).

Lamps: Like her candles, most of Mother's lamps and lanterns are being resold at inflated prices, including most of the lantern-styles common to delvers' equipment lists. In addition to these, she sells copper indoor lamps (Betty Lamps or Cruises) for 5-20 gold pieces each. These are small teapot-like affairs that hold a single wick and a pint of oil. Her custom-made street globes aren't normally for sale; they cost 200 gold pieces each at the glassblower (and one gets broken every month or so).

Wicks: Made of spun and woven wool, Mother Footcandle's fine wicks can be had for a price of one silver piece each (a bundle of 25 for two gold pieces). Each is good for about 100 hours of light.

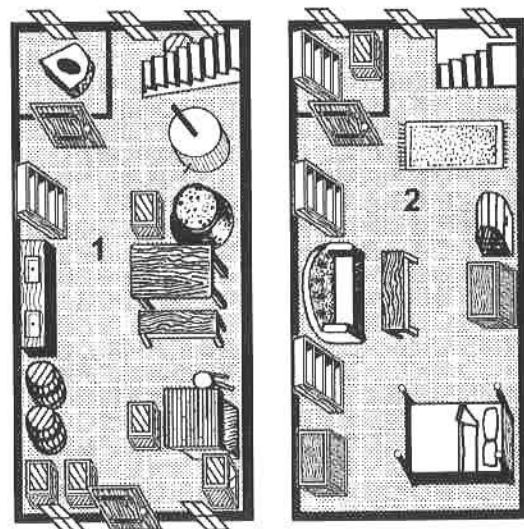
Linkboys: Mother Footcandle keeps company with the young rogues and children that frequent the bridge, and one or two can often be found at the oil shack, swapping stories with Mother or having lunch. When a traveler planning to enter the City at night requires someone to light his way, Mother Footcandle will give one of "her boys" a lantern and hire him out, with stern instructions not to rob the traveler, lest her own good reputation be harmed. The boys respect Mother Footcandle and rarely disappoint her, and she splits the fee with them fifty-fifty. Two gold pieces for a single evening is typical, but Mother will haggle for more if the traveler looks especially wealthy.

Layout

Mother Footcandle's Oil Shack is a simple two-story structure, consisting of two rectangular rooms.

1. Ground Floor. (10' x 20') Over the front door (locked³ at night, wide open during most of the day), hangs one of Mother's custom streetlamps, and a small sign painted with the word "Lucidarye." Beyond it, the customer will find himself in a long, open room with windows at the back overlooking the river. The room contains a heavy work table (doubles as an eating table) and benches, a large stone press for extracting oil from fish, a wide fireplace with a small cooking-pot and a broader, large pot (used for rendering animal fat), several heavy wooden casks, clay bottles, Mother's tools, boxes of candles and lampwicks, racks of lamps, and personal bric-a-brac.

Here also will be Mother Footcandle herself, sweeping up, rendering fat at the fire, or pressing a hundred pounds of raw fish scraps at a time to extract the oil. Each pressing yields from 6-17 quarts of fresh fish oil, depending on the quality of the batch and the type of fish. At least eight pressings every week are necessary just to provide oil for her streetlamps. Extra oil is kept in the casks. If anyone were so crass as to rob Mother Footcandle, no more than 15 or 16 gold pieces would be found in her cashbox (locked¹) on a normal day.



1 sq = 1 ft

There will also be a single large barrel of fish-scraps waiting to be pressed, or fish pulp that has already been squeezed of its oil. Men from the local fisheries resupply mother every day. The squeezed pulp is given to the trolls [see *The Bridge Guard*, page 39].

2. Upstairs. (12' x 20') Here is a simple bedroom, consisting of a large comfortable wooden bed, Mother's wardrobe, and chests and shelves full of personal belongings. A single brass lamp hangs from the ceiling, lighting her upstairs window at night. Mother's own lamp always burns aromatic olive oil; her private stash is kept on the floor of the wardrobe.

Personalities

Mother Footcandle. *Human female. Ht: 5'1", Wt: 125#, Age 35.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Catharine Footcandle earned her nickname "Mother" from the ragamuffins and urchins of the bridge, and from the children of other merchants in the vicinity. She is their friend, often the only adult who doesn't assume thievery or roguery from them. Mother Footcandle is a widow (her husband died nearly twenty years ago when the bridge came under attack from a water demon), and she sees the children as her own extended family. She carries her nickname proudly, and even the Bridge Guard



Mother Footcandle

use it when they greet her each night and morning, as she tends the oversized lamps used to mark the pivoting span at night.

Mother is short, slim and energetic. She wears simple, light dresses suited to her work, and (with all the fish-oil and soot) finds her clothing frustratingly difficult to "keep nice." She is happy with her work, and aware of her own genuine importance to both the bridge and the safety of the river traffic. Many a stormy night has found her braving wind and rain to keep her lamps lit, cursing a smoking taper under her soaked wool cape. She is brave, intelligent, and often very lonely. On the rare days when she allows her sentiment to show, the village children hear stories of her late husband, who was a brave, swashbuckling swordsman. They took on the oil shack as a means to safe retirement, but his natural heroism took him from her.

Strangers will be privy to little of this, meeting only a smiling, vigorous merchant and dutiful public servant.

Toby. *Human male. Ht: 5', Wt: 90#, Age 13.* *Fighting Prowess: Fair.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Toby is a thirteen-year old orphan and thief, living on the streets of the City, moving between gangs of children and fending for himself. He is a newcomer to the bridge area, and over the past few months has become Mother Footcandle's best friend. Every evening, Mother gives him a few silvers to get them each some bread and stew from the bridge vendors, and she brews a pot of tea for them. Toby would never steal from Mother, but he does lie to her, claiming that his parents are tailors working on the other side of the City. He likes to wander about exploring once he has finished his morning chores.

Mother Footcandle believed Toby's stories for about a month, but has been aware of the truth for some time. She gets work for him as a linkboy when he's around in the evenings, and pays him to clean up the press and fireplace for her. She really very much wants to confront him about the truth, but is afraid to do so, fearing that he would persist in lying, or run away for fear of being taken to an orphan asylum.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Stormy Weather. On one terrible night, the storm gets a little too intense, even for Mother Footcandle. Mother herself, and possibly a guard or two, are swept into the muddy waters of the river. Meanwhile, a riverboat is heading blindly in the darkness toward the bridge. The lamps are dark, the citizens are desperately trying to light torches, and people are drowning. The PCs are there.

Scenario 2: Shutdown. The price of keeping the bridge lit is nearly 14,000 gold pieces every year, and it's that cheap because Mother gives the City a good deal on the price of oil and repairs, all of which she must produce or oversee. What if someone decided that it wasn't worth it any more? What if a wizard offered to enchant the lamps to shine forever, with no maintenance

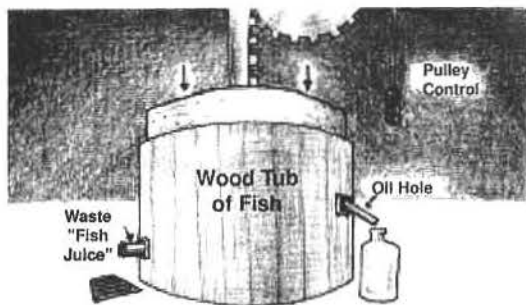
MOTHER FOOTCANDLE'S

needed? Lamplighters aren't common enough to have their own guild for that kind of protection, so Mother would have to appeal to the oil makers, who resent small-timers like her. One "special interest group" that would fight constant magical lighting are the bridge's thieves and smugglers, who like it dark after midnight! A complicated caper could be cooked up to prove that Mother knows best; the PCs could be the cooks.

Mother Footcandle's Oil Press

The oil-press is a large cylindrical tub, built of wood, with two holes in it. One hole, about halfway up the side, is the spout for draining the oil from the tub. The second hole, at the bottom, lets the waste "fish juice" sluice into a drain to the river. Above the tub hangs a large stone disk suspended by ropes and pulleys from the bolted ceiling.

Mother Footcandle loads fish into the cylinder, and then releases the rope holding the stone in the air. Splat. The heavy stone presses all the fluid out of the fish. The stone is then lifted again (because of the pulley-system, even tiny Mother Footcandle doesn't find the job a strain, but it does take time). Mother allows the fluid to settle, and the oil floats to the top while the fish and juice stays on the bottom.



If Mother has estimated the oil content properly, then the level of the oil will be at the middle hole. By unplugging it, the oil spills out, and the juice stays in. The second hole is the used to drain the juice. If Mother ever misjudges the oil content, she either gets juice in her oil (she has to separate it from the flasks, then, or it will putrefy more quickly), or she must put something in the tub to bring the oil up to the hole. The latter is less trouble, so when she gets it wrong, she is more likely to undershoot than overshoot.

All of Mother Footcandle's oil is "extra virgin." That is, she doesn't do a second pressing on the same batch of guts, like many less scrupulous oil-makers.

Bridge Encounter

Zachary Smythe. Human male. Ht: 5'9", Wt: 138#, Age 22. Fighting Prowess: Fair. Magic Ability: None.

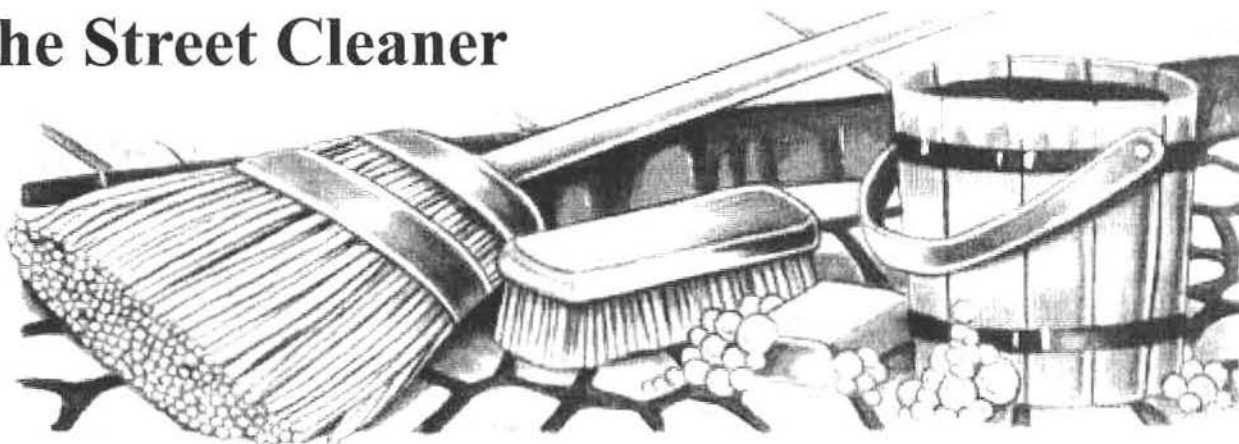
Light haired and slight of build, Zachary wears a well-worn ankle length coat even on the hottest of days. The coat conceals his shop of wares which are mostly purloined from unsuspecting individuals. Zachary is primarily a pickpocket, although he does have other means of procuring items for resale, a few of which



are even legal. He will often accost a traveler with a ware, extolling its virtues as a means of sizing up the customer. If he feels the circumstance is right, he will make an offer of a more refined item which has come into his possession. As an experienced teller of tales, he will always have an explanation for his possession of 'such a fine piece' and will almost always be able to lay any suspicions to rest.

There are times when Zachary will have obtained an article which he is unable to sell or unwilling to offer due to the risk involved with an open sale. On these occasions, he is likely to visit Clanghollow Teeble at the Found-Goods Warehouse [see page 97] and offer his goods for sale or trade. Because of Clanghollow's special ability, he may determine that Zachary is the perfect vehicle to return a "needful thing" to its rightful owner. Invariably, Zachary will find himself compelled to sell particular items to particular people. In these instances, Zachary will progress through a number of stages, if necessary, to close the deal. First, he will extol the item's many virtues and barter for the sale. Next, he will make up a story of his compelling need to sell to try and entice the character into buying. Then he will rant about the character taking advantage of his situation and offer a 'rock bottom' price. Finally, if the character will still not purchase the item, he will fall to his knees with a scream and confess that he has been charged to give away this dear and sentimental item by his religious leader to absolve him of his sins. He will forcibly press it into a character's hands and whimper that he had only hoped to buy some bit of food for his starving children now that their mother is no longer with them. If he is paid for the item, he will thank the character profusely while mentally patting himself on the back for his great ability to sell anything to anyone at anytime. It never occurs to Zachary that some magical compulsion is at the root of his selling obsession. If he is not paid, he will surreptitiously follow the character with the intent of stealing something of greater value from them.

The Street Cleaner



*All cities have one thing in common — dirt.
Dirt roads, fireplace soot, river mud,
horse droppings and other refuse
don't exactly boost civic pride.
Someone has to step in (so to speak)
and try to keep things under control.
But why would anyone want
to be a street cleaner?*

At first, no one on the bridge cared much about street cleaning, since there wasn't much of a bridge nor much of a street. It wasn't until the bridge had filled with shops that the community admitted something should be done. After all, traffic was growing as people traveled back and forth to the City. If the bridge was pleasant, the merchants would make more money since people would be more likely to linger.

However, no one wanted to be street cleaner. After all, there were much easier (and less smelly) ways of earning a living. So it was decided to kill multiple birds with the proverbial single stone. Rather than having perpetrators of minor crimes sit in jail, they were forced to work off their sentence as street cleaner. It worked — too well. After serving a few weeks as street cleaner, people made a concerted effort to avoid brawling or to simply get drunk rather than drunk and disorderly. So a great system nearly failed, until . . .

One day a man named Gav wandered into town. Well, limped would be more accurate, since he was afflicted with skazy¹. He rested a day before heading to the City where he hoped one of its well-known physicians could cure him. A few days later he

returned, still afflicted and totally hopeless. Having nowhere else to go after giving the physician the last of his money, he begged for coins from passersby. Eventually, he told questioners that he had no family and the superstitious folk from his former town threw him out for fear of catching skazy, even though it wasn't contagious. At a loss for what to do with him, he was charged with vagrancy and sentenced to street cleaning.

Services

Unlike everyone else, Gav didn't mind street cleaning. If anything, his unfortunate condition helped since he didn't mind being dirty. It also hadn't affected his strength. He easily handled heavy barrels of waste and never complained about the smell. So a deal was struck. Gav kept the streets clean and the City paid him a small salary for food and necessities. Since Gav's needs are simple and the job gives him something to do, he doesn't mind. If anything, he's finally found a place where he can belong, even if his appearance and smell prevent him from being truly popular.

Gav tends to keep to himself. Years of being shunned and ostracized tend to make a person solitary. He shuffles through the day, easily handling the heavier aspects of his job and often muttering to himself about how the current weather just makes his job harder. When it rains, he mumbles about the mud. When it's clear, he mumbles that it's too dusty or that the heat makes the smell worse, though no one knows how he can tell considering how bad it normally smells.

Besides the usual street debris, Gav also deals with the bridge's sanitation "system." Being so close to the river makes a proper sewage system difficult. Most residents empty their chamber

¹Skazy is a hideous, but not contagious, skin disease. Skin thickens and falls off, leaving discolored patches. Blisters, sores and lesions erupt and eventually form scar tissue. Veins swell, not unlike varicose veins, but the appearance is much worse. Skazy is not fatal nor does it affect one's internal organs. Since loss of feeling is not one of the symptoms, the incidents that can cause lepers to lose fingers are much less likely. The disease is painful and causes its victims to be shunned, but does not affect their ability to work (depending upon the work) or their appetite. People can live very long with skazy. They are unattractive, but functional.

Beth Hannan-Rimmels used *CityBook I* and *CityBook II* to flesh out her City-based campaign. After years of writing for newspapers, she's glad to finally be working in the gaming industry and inflicting her devious ideas on even more unsuspecting players (you didn't imagine that sinister cackle floating in the wind). Now if she could just (1) break into the comic book industry, (2) sell her quote book and (3) finish her SF novel, she'd finally break the record for sleep deprivation.

pots into covered barrels tucked away in alleys between the buildings. Gav empties the barrels and takes the refuse to the dumping area outside of town. Some of the waste (such as horse droppings) is available for fertilizer if anyone wishes. He also collects the food scraps and brings them to the local hog farmer for the pigs' feed.

Gav lives in a hut on the edge of the bridge. Originally it was little more than a closet to store the shovels, brooms, and buckets for street cleaning. Eventually, Gav was allowed to expand it. It's now one small room with a cot, a small, worn chest, a table and chair, and a small stove. Weather permitting, Gav usually gets meals at the local inn, but eats them outside, knowing that his presence does little for most people's appetites. In bad weather he'll take the meals back to his hut. As he always brings back the plate or bowl clean and in perfect condition, the innkeepers make this exception. He does occasionally cook for himself, but not often.

While most people traveling over the bridge ignore Gav, occasionally someone will pick on him out of meanness or because he's an easy target. The locals frown on this and will intercede, particularly the troll bridge guards. They really like Gav. He has a morbid sense of humor the trolls appreciate and their unusual eating habits and questionable hygiene don't bother him. Anyone trying to hurt Gav could find themselves visiting Blind Geoffrey to have bones broken by the trolls set [see *Blind Geoffrey's Barberie and Cauterie*, page 82].

The Truth

Gav does not have skazy. In reality, he's in perfect health and not bad looking. In fact, he's not Gav. His real name is Malwin.

Malwin is a member of the Grey Path, a shadowy group few have heard of and fewer believe exists. That opinion is one the group appreciates. The Gray Path are watchers. What they're watching for is unknown. All of their members are well-trained at spying and fighting. They have on occasion both killed and protected people. Their motives are as elusive as they are.

Malwin is pretending to be Gav because it gives him the perfect opportunity to watch who enters and exits the City by the bridge. No one pays attention to someone who looks like him. Street cleaning gives him the perfect excuse to be almost anywhere, to talk to everyone and to overhear anything. At least one more member of the Grey Path is permanently stationed in the great City, maybe more. The game master can decide how much Gav knows about his counterpart. For security's sake, they might only leave messages for each other. Or they might know each other's disguises and perhaps their real identities.

Malwin's relationship with the troll bridge guards serves three purposes. First, hanging out with them gives him easy access to everything crossing the bridge, which makes note passing or any other smuggling easier. Second, anyone trying to cause him trouble either as Gav or because they suspect his real identity will have a much more difficult time doing anything about it. Third, using the disguise of a diseased outcast has made Malwin

much more sympathetic to anyone who is looked down on by society. After all, while people may hire trolls for heavy labor, no human, elf, dwarf, etc. would want their daughter marrying one.

Malwin has also developed something of a soft spot for the bridge people. While his appearance is disturbing — he designed it specifically to make people cringe and look away — he has been treated better here than most people in the same situation. He also has little patience for those who are selfish or abuse the weak. One arrogant traveler who tried to grope Sherry Lee [see *Confection Connection*, page 60] just happened to "trip" on Gav's shovel and land where a horse relieved himself. Acting properly humble, Malwin apologized profusely, if not quite sincerely. The traveler was about to refuse the apology with his fists, until he noticed one of the troll guards about to intercede. Malwin is very good at causing minor accidents such as these at opportune moments. As the same people are rarely around for each one, no one really suspects anything. At best, one or two of the most observant simply think he takes advantage of circumstances.

To maintain his speed and flexibility, particularly after walking around hunched over all day, Malwin performs a series of silent exercises similar to yoga and tai chi. Some of the movements also double as a sword practice, but Malwin prefers hand-to-hand fighting when possible. The heavier aspects of his job have only served to make Malwin stronger, and he was fairly robust to start. In addition to the simple latch lock on his hut, Malwin has a way of firmly barring the door from the inside to ensure privacy for his exercises. If anyone tries to get in during this period, Malwin explains that something is accidentally jamming the door while he resumes his disguise.

The small chest in the hut contains items that are appropriate to Gav's persona, and virtually all have been found or given to him. Under the floor, however, a large trunk is concealed. Inside, he hides the make-up and compounds that make him appear to have skazy, as well as his weapons, some very nice, expensive clothing, a bag of gold pieces, a few small gems and various official-looking traveling papers in case he needs to leave under another identity.

Personalities

Gav/Malwin. *Human male. Ht: appears about 5'6" — really 6', Wt: Due to how he dresses and carries himself, it's hard to discern anything other than average build by just looking at him — really 190# of solid muscle, Age: (tough to tell due to skin "lesions" and "scars") appears 40ish — really 31.* *Fighting Prowess: Excellent in hand-to-hand combat. Very Good to Excellent with knives, swords, clubs and mace.* *Magic Ability: None.*

The best way to describe Malwin when he is disguised as Gav is that a close look at his face will turn your stomach. That, of course, is his intent. He has patches of discolored skin. These



Gav

are the sickly looking pink of raw skin or darkened with lesions, blisters, scars, or scabs. Other sections look as if the veins beneath have moved closer to the surface, thickening and turning the blue, purple, and green of severe bruises.

These marks that appear to be the ravages of skazy disease are make-up, though now Malwin wears less than he originally did. When he first came to the City, he made sure that everyone got a good look at the blisters, scars and lesions that come with skazy. Since his normal attire consists of ragged clothing that covers most of his body, he doesn't need to apply as much make-up now. He wears ragged knit gloves with worn out finger tips to cover his hands. The dirt from his job does the rest. The sun sensitivity characteristic of the disease gives Malwin cause to wear a hood that covers most of his face. Various bandages disguise the rest.

As Gav, Malwin also stoops over and straps various props to his body that make him appear hunchbacked and crippled. He has perfected this to the point that if absolutely necessary, he could fight while wearing the hunchback equipment with only a slight impairment to his normal abilities.

The odor he picks up from his job also helps to keep people from approaching to examine him closely. One negative side effect of his disguise is that the work has damaged his sense of smell. Malwin doesn't realize quite how much his senses have deteriorated. Something would have to smell fairly strong for him to notice, which could be a liability considering his true profession.

While Malwin has no natural skill in using magic, the Grey Path tries to train their operatives for any possibility. As such,

Malwin might be able to guess the type of magic (combat, curative, etc.) if he sees it cast, but couldn't identify the particular spell, nor could he duplicate it.

The biggest threat to exposing Malwin's operation is the kindness of many on the bridge, or the charity of those who meet him on their way to the City. Many feel duty bound to refer Gav to a bright new doctor for further medical treatment, or to a new order of priests for a holy cleansing. Initially, Gav's humble refusal of these offers of money and assistance was enough to forestall the charity. But after a time, Gav had to take a stronger approach. To avoid creating suspicion about his refusal of treatment, especially *free* treatment, he added a large dose of bitterness to his public persona. Whenever he sees a doctor or priest, he will rant and rave. "All physicians are crooks! Priests are hypocrites who can't cure a hangnail!" Needless to say, this doesn't endear him to Blind Geoffrey. Malwin doesn't know how lucky he is that Geoffrey has ignored him; the wizard's second sight would surely expose Gav's normal health.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Working For The Other Side. Enemies of the Grey Path suspect that Gav is one of the watchers, and hire the adventurers to investigate the street cleaner. If Malwin is unable to divert or diffuse their attention, he will call upon his friends the troll bridge guards to get rid of them. The players may end up chained to the bridge, awaiting sentence to a City dungeon.

Scenario 2: Holy Quest. One of the adventurers who is a cleric has been charged by the highest order of his priesthood to seek out and cure the unfortunate outcast who cleans the streets on King's River Bridge. The cleric has been promised an advancement in his holy order, not to mention a gain in notoriety among the lay population of the City, if successful. Armed with specially blessed healing paraphernalia, the player character will be duty bound to treat Gav. Gav, of course, will take every action to avoid the cleric, from staging embarrassing pratfalls in the street to more serious combat if the adventurers persist. If indeed Gav is subdued and treated, the cures will of course prove ineffectual. Will the cleric doubt his faith, or discover the truth?

Scenario 3: The Shunning. A plague with symptoms similar to skazy is raging through the countryside. This disease is highly contagious and usually fatal. Under orders from the City rulers, King's River Bridge is closed to prevent country people from spreading the sickness into town. When the center span is rotated, the adventurers find themselves stuck on the plague side of the bridge, along with Gav. Panic and fear lead some of the stranded travelers to suspect that Gav really has the plague. The doomsday prophecies of Keelat Angelo [see *Bridge Encounter*, page 93] incite the mob to kill the street cleaner. The merchants on that side rally to Gav's defense, trying to explain that he has been this way for years with no harm to anyone. With whom will the adventurers side?

THE STREET CLEANER

Scenario 4: A Marriage of Inconvenience. On their way to the City, the players escort a woman traveling to King's River Bridge to meet her future husband, Hafed Nakir [see *Mildred Al Hassan's Messengers*, page 21]. She seems terribly sad, though resigned to her fate. If one of the characters (or an NPC) can get her talking, she will eventually admit that she has no affection for her future husband, and that her family has sold her for the bridal price. Worse, she's still in love with a man named Malwin from her past, who was last seen in the City beyond the bridge. The adventurers might offer their help in dissuading Hafed from the marriage, or in locating Malwin. It would be particularly amusing for the game master to lead the players to approach the messenger service for help, and to role play Gav's reaction to runners flying back and forth across the bridge yelling "Message For Malwin!"

Meanwhile, Hafed Nakir has paid good money for his bride and will not be dissuaded. Unless, of course, the adventurers can supply him with a better bride, or substantial monetary compensation! Malwin, too, is still in love. Years ago, his training in the Grey Path took him away from her. Malwin should be sorely tempted to find a way to contact her and renew the relationship. He may even allow the adventurer's efforts in finding him to succeed, so strong is his love. Yet how can he blow his cover and continue his assignment for the Grey Path? This scenario could go in a number of directions, but fundamentally it will put the player characters in a series of tough spots. Making one person happy will bring the wrath of another down upon their heads.

Scenario 5: The Big Stink. After a festival, the bridge is dirtier than usual. The adventurers, who were detained for minor crimes during the festivities, are put on street cleaning duty with Gav. He will not be pleased about this, since an important contact in his organization is due to arrive and meet with him that very day. Though Gav is cautious, one of the adventurers will notice the unusual exchange. The game master could use this encounter to clue the player characters in to something big that's afoot.

Note to Game Masters

The motives and description of the Grey Path have been left deliberately vague. Depending upon your campaign, the Grey Path could be the ultimate assassin's league, manipulating governments and engineering coups. Or, they could be a secret society determined to protect the world from tyrants, evil organizations, etc. Their secrecy could be their shield from retribution since evil can't destroy what it can't find. Or, they could be truly grey in intent: spies who sell their information to the highest bidder and kill for a price. Or, perhaps they are people with good intentions but questionable motives. The game master can explore what the Grey Path is really up to. Does it conflict with the goals of the players?

Bridge Encounter

Chaunce Teller. *Human male. Ht: 5'8", Wt: 140#, Age: 27.* *Fighting Prowess: Fair.*
 Magic Ability: Fair C3 and C5, Good C7.

Chaunce is a purveyor of possibilities. He has practiced the art of magic and become proficient as a prestidigitator, showman and illusionist. Chaunce has discovered the propensity for greed in most human hearts and taken to a profession that capitalizes on this character flaw. He offers his "Games of Chaunce", which he will play with anyone for a few coins, always giving the player the advantage by wagering more money on the outcome than the player bets—thus enticing his mark to bet more and play again. He calls his method of betting the "more than even wager", or sometimes just "Evens" for short.



Chaunce is red-haired and ruddy-faced. He hawks his wares daily on the King's River Bridge on a table top which is made to fasten to the bridge railing by two leather straps at one end and a two piece pole for support underneath. This table can be quickly broken down into a rope handled carrying case roughly two foot by two foot. Chaunce often has to make a quick getaway when spotted by the tax collector or bridge guards.

Some of the games offered are:

Match or Cross is a coin tossing game in which the player and Chaunce both flip coins into the air, catch them, and slap them to the table top. While the coins are in the air, the player chooses either Match or Cross by declaring it out loud. The coins are then compared according to their face up sides. If the player has called Match and the sides of the coins match, the player has won. If the player has called Cross and the sides of the coins do not match, the player has won. If the coins do not match the player's declaration, he has lost, the wager being the coin itself.

Find the Sovereign requires the player to place a wagered coin beneath one of three cups. Chaunce moves the cups around the table until satisfied with their arrangement. The player then has one opportunity to decide under which cup his coin lies. Chance will pay whatever he proposed as his 'Evens' wager, if the player is correct. Otherwise, he will reveal the actual location of the coin and pocket it as lost to the player.

The River Raptors



*What kind of a falconer
would choose the confines of
King's River Bridge over the proper
huntlands of the open country?
One with a secret to keep.*

You're walking along the bridge, and suddenly, swoop! Beneath a blur of wings a hawk has killed a mouse, rat, or pigeon with its mighty talons. The fast-flying raptor soars up to the turret of a bridge tower to enjoy its meal. There you glimpse the master of the birds, a tall, thin, dark man. He speaks to the bird in his window, then for a moment turns his red eyes at you. Shuddering, you know how the mouse must feel just before the bird takes it.

Background

Falconry is the art of employing falcons, hawks or even eagles to hunt game. In our world, falconry dates back at least to the time of Sargon II of Assyria (721-705 BCE). Falconers use a variety of hawks with the following rule of thumb: long-winged hawks for open country, short-winged hawks for hedges and close spaces. Khasekemui Horgraeb employs short-winged hawks called goshawks. Goshawks have a wing span of 3.5 to 4 feet with a long tail and rounded wings. They have a black crown and whitish underwings, but are mainly a pale blue gray color. Their flight pattern is several short quick wing beats, followed by a glide. Khasekemui Horgraeb has ten mature goshawks, eight of which are females. He has six or seven immature birds which he is training. Most of Khasekemui's daylight hours are filled with training the new birds, at first by carrying them on his heavily gloved fist, then teaching them where and when they can eat, then getting them to attack pigeon models.

He is paid a small fee from the taxes collected on bridge business for his services, and rents an open-air tower room from the Bridge Guard. Because of his odd appearance, intense

manner, and hermit-like behavior, people on the bridge tend to avoid him. If asked, they will remark that he's some kind of foreigner, and maybe a little spooky, but mainly he does a good job of keeping the pigeons off the bridge.

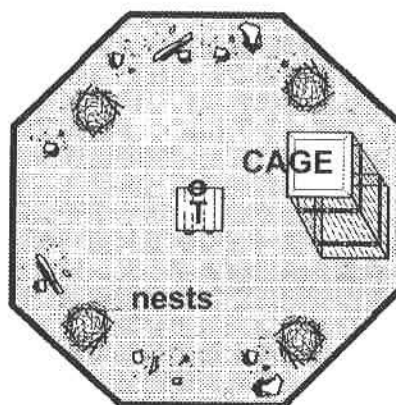
Layout

Khasekemui Horgraeb's lair is a large airy room at the top of a bridge tower. Each of the room's eight sides has a big open window, with a short balcony. Inside there are many nests and many piles of broken or nearly useless magical equipment that is related to the art of flying: flying carpets, flying brooms, flying rings. These are scattered on the filthy floor among feathers and bird droppings. The room is accessed through a trapdoor in its center. There's a rope ladder that Khasekemui always keeps pulled up when he is at home.

Three things command attention among the squalor. Firstly, there is a large bird cage made of some very light silvery metal that two or three people could easily stand in. The cage is ornamented with several silvery birds, and is spotlessly clean. Secondly, there is no place for fires or cooking. Thirdly, there is no sleeping cot or mat.

There are a few gems hidden in the nests of the birds. These can only be found if many, many hours of painstaking search were possible. Normal magic will not detect them, for they are lunar rubies. There is a small pile of money, about a workman's monthly salary, on the floor. Khasekemui uses it for his minimal expenses.

1 sq = 1 ft



Personalities

Khasekemui Horgraeb. Humanoid male, Ht: 7'1", Wt: 175#, Age 49. Fighting Prowess: Poor. Magic Ability: Fair C1, C2, Good C4.

Khasekemui speaks the languages of men and birds. He is a gaunt man who walks with a stoop, each step in great pain.

Khasekemui Horgraeb has maroon eyes and ebon skin. No one on King's River Bridge has ever seen anything like him. Indeed, he comes from a very distant place.

He fell from a magical sailing vessel that passes between the moon and world of the City. Such trade is secret and sorcerous, known only to the most powerful and evil of the City's magicians. Khasekemui Horgraeb was a minor officer on one of the black schooners from the moon. (If your game world has more than one moon, he is from the most mysterious of them.) He has one desire only. He wants to return to the silvery shimmering sands of the moon, where gravity will not make him a cripple. He will buy or he will take any flying device that he can.

Thanks to a package of gems that he carried the day he fell to earth, he has vast resources. From time to time he visits Up Town [see *CityBook VI*] and sells these gems to buy yet another flying device. These he drains of their powers, transferring their magic to a strange cage of aluminum that he has crafted. His only hope to return home is to succeed in creating this magical ship. A few Up Town residents have tried to discover the secret of the beautiful gems sold by Khasekemui, but those who have come too close have had their eyes plucked out by the raptors.

If Khasekemui Horgraeb is pressed into combat, the "special effects" of his spells should be very, very different than those in common use. If any were to touch his mind through magic, they would find a sadness that would make stones weep, a burning desire to return home that would melt iron, and a crippling pain to make saints weep and warriors beg for mercy.

He walks slowly with the aid of an aluminum cane, sometimes with tears of pain in his red eyes. He seldom talks to anyone,



Khasekemui Horgraeb

unless they mention one of his passions, falconry or astronomy. His knowledge in these areas is encyclopedic — in the latter he knows many things that no one else in the City knows.

He never sleeps for more than a few minutes. If not training his birds, he is watching the moon rise and set, or observing travelers on the bridge to see if they have flying items. Like his fellows on the moon, he doesn't eat cooked food. He lives on fish, rats, and pigeons his birds catch for him.

The trained goshawks are swift and deadly fighters. The eight females will fight to the death to protect Khasekemui. They do not know fear.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: You've Got It, I Need It. A character has a device that is good for flying. Khasekemui wants it, and he will buy, beg, borrow (and drain), steal or kill for it.

Scenario 2: Tell Me Where He Gets Those Gems! An Up Town jeweler wants to know where the gems come from, and hires the party to investigate. Khasekemui Horgraeb will defend that secret, since revealing it would leave him open to attack for his only resource — the few gems he has left. He will lie if asked, claiming that he found them in a cave in a far off southern land. If pressed too closely about this, he will send his birds to either blind or rip out the throats of his questioners.

Scenario 3: My Last Request. The adventurers sneak into the bridge tower, hoping to find some of the valuable gems that the falconer is rumored to have hidden there. Instead, they find a seriously ill Khasekemui struggling to climb into his strange cage. Afraid that he is dying, Khasekemui begs the players to assist him. His ship has finally absorbed enough magic to make the trip to the moon, but now he is too weak to board it. He reveals the command words that will start the cage on its voyage to the heavens, then loses consciousness. If the players decide to go on a flying adventure without Khasekemui, they will be in dire trouble when the cage leaves the atmosphere! If they conscientiously bring the sleeping alien along, they will be able to successfully revive him in time for him to cast the protective spells that make interplanetary travel survivable, and the party will be off to a fabulous adventure on another world.

Scenario 4: On A Silvery Night. The players see the magical cage emerge from a window of the bridge tower, carrying Khasekemui Horgraeb upward into the heavens. If they investigate the tower, they will find a number of gems that Khasekemui left behind. The next day, an evil sorcerer arrives on the bridge. When he cannot find Khasekemui, he is directed to the adventurers who have been telling the tale of the cage that flew out of the tower. Khasekemui had left those gems behind for the sorcerer, and he's perfectly willing to kill to claim them.

The Poets' Guild Training Centre



*"Into the Abyss, stare I —
To leap, perchance to scream."*

The Poets' Guild Training Centres are few and far between. Many say the poet should be heard but rarely seen. With a scarcity of facilities, the center situated on King's River Bridge is a veritable hub for professional and aspiring poets. Here dwell the followers of Calliope, Euterpe, Erato, and Polyhymnia. Of course, there are occasional invocations of Thalia and Melponeme, with healthy doses of Clio for the beginning students.

The guild is located on the windward side of the bridge. The junior and senior students find this quite handy for the compulsory classes in *Advanced Moody Brooding* and *Pensive Posing*. More popular is the sophomore level course conducted at week's end in The Guzzling Gargoyle or Dirty Joe's Tavern. *Introduction to Brooding* is no beginner's course. The student must already have a fine command of the prerequisite course, *Fashions for the Fop*. And as such fashion may cause strife amongst certain pub's none-too-genteel clientele, one cannot graduate from the freshman program without proficiency of the rapier.

The locals recognize when classes are in field training. Unaware newcomers are favorite targets for poets eager to practice their swordsmanship. A rhyming fop needn't go far to

annoy a tired fighter just in from the campaigns. When the warrior is taunted into a duel, he may find twenty-five rapiers drawn against him in a close space. What ensues is not pretty, but counts for class credit.

The current Headmaster of the Poets' Guild is Lord Bryon the 27th. Each Headmaster assumes the title Lord Bryon, their true name being struck from the scrolls upon their ascendancy. Gaining the title is no mean feat. The office is won, and held, by public challenge. A challenger has but to speak and the assembly is scheduled. At the appointed time, the opponents seat themselves in comfortable chairs on platforms at opposite ends of the ballroom. They then compete in free verse. Neither is allowed to leave their platform until a winner is determined. To leave is an instant forfeit and the loser is subject to immediate death by punning (the blade or ritual defenestration being deemed too quick for such an offense).

The outcome is determined by the participants. Ultimately, a fatal line is delivered, sending the opponent reeling as if struck by a blow. Formal suicide is then permitted the loser, popular forms being disembowelment and slow-acting poison. Both leave the runner-up plenty of time to continue immortalizing himself, pontificating on the cruelty and meaning of life even as it flees. With such consequences for failure, there are few challenges.

Lord Bryon the 27th has held his office for a scant two years. His ascendancy is recorded as one of the fastest and most brutal challenges ever seen. The 26th headmaster was caught flat-footed in only the second hour by a poem that redefined the cosmology of the universe into something that a cat spit up and concluded with a limerick that accused him of an act with a feline that is illegal in some city-states and venerated as a high religion in others. 26 ran screaming from the room and flung himself off the bridge, foregoing the traditional death poem. No one knew that 26 was allergic to cats and couldn't juggle.

Services

The primary mission of the guild is to provide instruction to poetic wordsmiths. Besides the specialized topics, all four years of lyric education have required courses in penmanship, swordsmanship and drinking. Among the freshman level studies

After not winning the Pulitzer Prize for his Bulwer-Lytton entries, Wayne West has contented himself with database programming for an unnamed government agency. Wayne's previous projects include twisted traps for *Grimtooth's Traps Bazaar*. Mr. West is fluent in seven languages, an expert fencer and marksman, a cordon bleu chef, and is wanted in several foreign countries for crimes against public sanity. All of the above is true except for the preceding.

are *Fashions for the Fop*, *Elementary Poison Detection*, and *What Follows Mary's Lamb?* Sophomore instruction centers on *Introduction to Brooding*, *The Care and Feeding of Your Muse*, *Literary Revisionist History of the World*, and *Pursuing Patronage I: Know Your Lords*. Juniors undertake *Advanced Moody Brooding*, *Soliloquizing for Fun and Prophet*, *Gods: How to Avoid Insulting Them (and their High Priests)*, and *Pursuing Patronage II: Advanced Personal Hygiene*. Seniors graduate after mastering *Pensive Posing: The Poet's Friend*, *Pursuing Patronage III: Flattery as an Art Form*, *The Dagger up the Strap: More than an Inconvenience*, and *Collecting Blackmail Material: A Life-Saver*.

All underclassmen participate in the "Stewardship Program." This is a more polite term for slavery. Lower classmen are required to act as servants for the upper classmen, though in an unusual pattern. The freshmen are thralls for the juniors, the sophomores for the seniors. Such assignments are drawn by lot and not subject to appeal.

Application and Tuition

Anyone may apply for the Poets' Guild, but there are a few requirements. First, and perhaps foremost, is functional literacy, closely followed by imagination and some skill at word play. Cleverness in verbal banter is highly regarded.

All applicants must sit for an oral board. A group of senior professors is gathered to interview the applicant. A single interview can last for hours, but a long interview is a good sign, for it shows the professors are interested and believe the applicant shows some promise. The applicant must prove to be quick on his feet with a snappy retort. If he fails, it is simply a temporary rejection; he allowed to reapply next year. No age limits are applied to applicants. Old or young go through the same process.

That's all there is to the application process. Pass the oral boards and you're in. Of course, a well-placed bribe never hurts, and demonstrates initiative in subterfuge on the part of the applicant.

Tuition is determined upon passage of the oral board, and becomes linked to annual dues the student will pay to the guildmasters after graduation. Before formal admittance into the guild, the applicant still has one major hurdle to clear: Chancellor Tightfist. The aspiring poet must be interviewed, or "interrogated", as some who have passed the process would prefer to call it, to establish their financial situation. The system presents the opportunity for a poor person with tremendous potential to be admitted on a pittance, and be assessed heavy dues in the future. A person with strong finances behind them, regardless of potential, will bear the weight of substantial tuition during their education, but may be accorded lighter dues in the future. A poor person who graduates with average marks will not be heavily burdened with dues as it is not expected that their earnings will be too high. However, for that rare talent from humble roots, the guild dues will kick in with a vengeance as his

success builds. Thus, the tuition and dues are entirely variable, and more than a little capricious.

Prior to the tuition interview, the applicant is given a stern word of advice from the chairman of the oral board: "Conceal nothing from Tightfist. He can ferret out the last copper you own." It is given in all seriousness as each member of the board went through such an interview and still has nightmares when it comes time for them to review their annual budgets with the Chancellor.

There are rumors of interviews that lasted in excess of three days, leaving the applicant looking much thinner and nervous and years older, not to mention much poorer. The more you conceal, the more Tightwad takes.

Relationships with Other Guilds

A very strong friendship exists between the Poets' Guild and the Scribes' Guild. Teachers for the penmanship classes are brought over from the Scribes' Guild in exchange for poetry teachers performing dictation for the scribe students. The Musicians' Guild, Troubadour Division offers cross-training. The Assassins' Guild sent a group disguised as students to learn about something called the 'Poisoned Pen', but all their agents either committed suicide or went insane before they could report. The Papermakers' Guild sponsors scholarships.

Layout

The Poets' Guild is one of the older structures on the bridge, and no one is quite sure who allowed it to be built there in the first place. The hall itself is a wood two story structure, with a basement level lying within the stonework of the bridge. The street level is used mainly for receptions and parties, while the upper level contains the apartments of Lord Bryon and Chancellor Tightfist, along with offices needed for guild business. The basement level houses the library, junior and senior students' cells, and classrooms.

Street Level. The entrance to the Poets' Guild Training Centre is under a shaded porch. A double wooden door opens to a foyer.

1. Foyer. (22' x 26') This artfully decorated office greets those inquiring about hiring poets or pursuing their muse through classroom training. A polished wooden desk is attended by various teachers who share this duty through the year. Those with appointments to see the Chancellor or Lord Bryon are escorted upstairs when the nature of their business has been ascertained. Those without appointments must wait until someone makes time to see them. Benches for this purpose line one wall. Behind the reception desk are shelves of bound manuscripts which record the work of available poets with samples of their writings for patrons to peruse or have read to them by the attendant.

In the event of a special party or recitation, the foyer serves as a meeting and greeting area for guests and dignitaries before they are escorted into the ballroom.

2. Stairwell. This double set of stairs leads up to the second floor and down to the basement.

3. Ballroom. (28' x 44') The ballroom is entered through a narrow doorway at the end of the foyer. The small opening serves to make the spacious entertainment area beyond look all the larger. The room is floored with polished wooden planks (kept shining by the efforts of the underclassmen), and is illuminated by three chandeliers lining the center of the ceiling. Depending upon the last use of the room, various arrangements of tables and chairs will be seen within. A raised dias to focus attention on the presenting poet or guest of honor is positioned at the far end of the room.

4a. & 4b. Privies. (6' x 8') At the back corner of the Ballroom are two privies for the comfort of the guests.

5. Storage (12' x 28', 12' x 22') and **Kitchen** (18' x 22'). Ballroom furnishings are stored here when not in use. A full-service kitchen and pantry services the Ballroom.

Second Floor. This level is the domain of Lord Bryon and the Chancellor, only visited by the students in the event they must answer to one of them about some matter regarding their education.

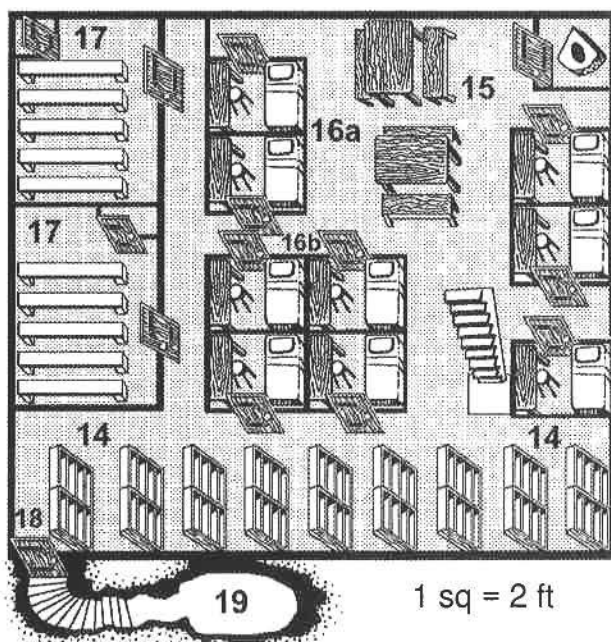
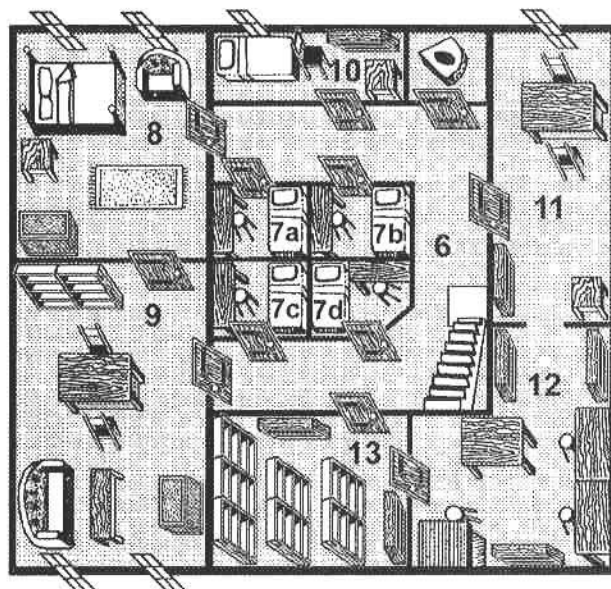
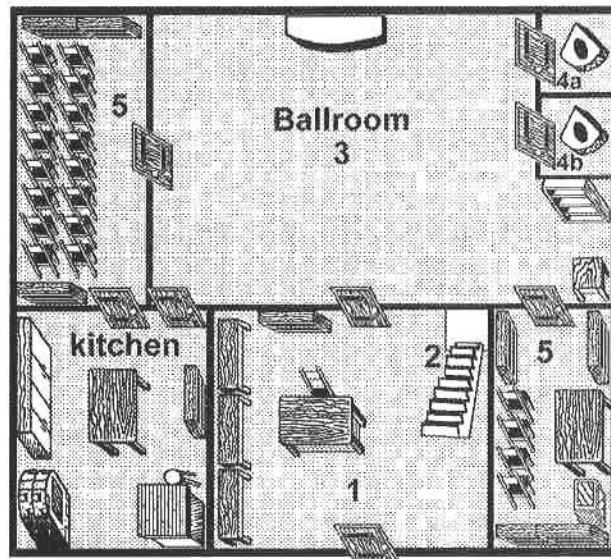
6. Hallway. (6' x 26') This u-shaped hallway allows access to all the chambers on this floor.

7a. - 7d. The Lord's Lackeys. (6' x 8' each) Four exceptional senior students are chosen each year. These students act as Bryon's full-time scribes and must record all masterpieces the Lord composes, see to his daily needs, and generally slave for him. This is supposed to be a great honor. In reality, it is the supreme test of a senior's ability to serve an over-demanding patron. Those who excel in this test of humility are recommended to some of the best positions in the highest courts of the land.

The four simple rooms here house the chosen ones. Each is furnished with a cot, a stool, a small trunk, and a writing desk.

8. Lord Bryon's Apartment. (18' x 22') The decor of Lord Bryon's chamber is excessively dramatic, as befits the changing vision of a poet laureate. The walls are dominated by works of art ranging in theme from the glory of the battlefield to the quiet of a summer morning. Crossed swords, exotic pottery, nude statuary, all are arranged haphazardly about the chamber. After all, who knows what glimpse of decor will trigger the Lord's creativity!

This room is furnished by a bed, wardrobe, reading chair, and night table. Two large windows overlook the river. A connecting door opens to his office.



9. Lord Bryon's Office. (18' x 28') Lord Bryon conducts his official guild business from this office. Compared to his chamber, it is tidy, with only a few odd pieces of bric-a-brac on a small wall shelf behind his desk. Few tools are required for the office, for little work is done here. His chief duty, frankly, is to delegate all work related to the running of the training centre to his senior professors. If they aren't getting the work done, he hires more. The Chancellor scorns this laissez faire approach, but tradition holds that any who have survived the challenge to become a Lord Bryon deserve the freedom to devote all their energies to the art of poetry. The office would be a suitable workplace for composing lyric pieces, but the current Lord is so skilled in improvising verse this function of the room goes unused.

10. The Chancellor's Apartment. (8' x 18') The Chancellor's apartment is a gloomy, dark chamber that is studiously avoided by Lord Bryon's Lackeys and anyone else who has regular business on the second floor. Those who have dared to peek inside on the rare occasions when the door has stood open have seen only the barest of basic furnishings within. The Chancellor seems to prefer candlelight, as his window remains tightly shuttered at all times of the day and night.

11. The Chancellor's Office. (12' x 28') Within this office "Chancellor Tightfist" reviews the guild budgets and determines the prevailing rate for each student's tuition and dues. A simple desk is flanked by a chair for the Chancellor and a second for his visitors. A stack of ledger books and a pot of ink with quill lie upon the desk.

An open passage at the side of the office leads to his assistants' work room.

12. Clerical Office. (20' x 22') The Chancellor employs from three to five clerks during the year to keep all the guild's financial ledgers audited and up-to-date. The clerks who work here are kept busy pulling and refileing student records and professorial budgets for the Chancellor's review. All are excellent scribes with impeccable mathematic skills. The Chancellor does not tolerate mistakes.

The office is furnished with a flat table in the center and three study carels where the clerks post expenditures to the ledgers. In another wall is the doorway to the Records Room.

13. Records Room. (18' x 18) This room is filled with free-standing wooden shelves with narrow walkways between them. On these shelves are ledgers containing details of all financial matters of the poets' guild, past and present. The filing system is meticulously categorized, and any bit of trivial information ranging from the kitchen expenses of two winters' past or the dues rate of the guild's first graduating bard may be accessed by those who understand the system. This room is tightly locked^d after the clerks go home at dusk.

Basement. The stairwell in the Foyer also leads down to the lowest level of the guild training centre. The basement areas in

general are colder and damper than the upper levels of the building.

14. Library. (14' x 56') The library is located in a long room at the bottom of the stairs. The back wall is lined with shelves which reach to the top of the eight foot ceiling. All manner of poetic manuscripts and scrolls are filed here. These are mainly used by the professors as classroom tools, and students are heavily assigned readings from the various titles in the library. Several ladders allow access to the top shelves.

15. Students' Common Room. (18' x 22') This room is a gathering place for study and/or recreational activities. Simply put, it sees whatever use the most influential senior students prefer at any given time. Common group activities occurring here include recitations, rhyming contests and after-hours drinking practice.

16a. & 16b. Junior and Senior Cells. (8' x 10' each) These small dormitory rooms flanking the Students' Common Room house the upperclassmen. Underclassmen are not entitled to rooms of their own. Under the "Stewardship Program", each freshman or sophomore is assigned as a servant to an upperclassman. They have the privilege of sleeping on the floor of their steward's room. Each cell is furnished according to the wealth and style of the individual junior or senior. The guild provides a simple cot, trunk, and nightstand. The rest is left up to each student.

17. Classrooms. (14' x 18' each) The remainder of the basement is filled with classrooms. There are two large rooms here, each with a storage closet for the professors' use in one corner. These closets may contain rare manuscripts too precious to be shelved in the basement library.

The rooms are furnished only with benches. When a class is in session, up to 30 students may be present, as well as a number of professorial observers or patrons of the arts seeking new talent. Many classes are held at various locations about the bridge and City, where the landscape or architecture can set the mood for poetry.

18. Stairs to Sub-Basement. A locked³ wooden door opens to another stairwell. These tightly curving stone steps lead down to what is known in guild lore as the "ritual disemboweling chamber."

19. Sub-Basement. (roughly 6' x 8') This odd, little cellar is round, with a flooring of narrowly spaced iron grating. Supposedly, this cellar is used for ritual suicide by losing contenders for the position of Lord Bryon. However, no one except Chancellor Tightfist remembers such an occasion actually occurring. More often, upperclassmen lock their younger servants in here for "punnishment." There is a 40% chance that an underclassman will be imprisoned here at any time. The percentage rises to 70% during final exam week.

Personalities

Lord Bryon the 27th. *Human male. Ht: 6'3", Wt: 200#, Age: 48.* *Fighting Prowess: Good with Rapier, otherwise Poor.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Lord Bryon is middle-aged, a little taller than average with black hair and brown eyes. He is of a strong build and is quite skilled with a sword, but will avoid violence whenever possible as he prides himself in one skill that has saved his life more times than he can count — abject cowardice. He has no skill in magic. His specialty is epic liar's poetry which he can spin off for hours on end with little provocation. He is followed by a team of full-time scribes to catch his every utterance. This does tend to restrict his social life with the ladies, but it also earns Lord Bryon a small extra stipend from the penny dreadfuls.

Chancellor Tightfist. *Human male. Ht: 6'6", Wt: 150# or less, Age: unknown, at least in his 70's.* *Fighting Prowess: unknown, assumed Poor.* *Magic Ability: Very Good CI, otherwise unknown.*

This fellow's real name has been forgotten, as this notorious tightwad has been controlling the purse strings of the guild for more than 50 years, predating current staff and many Lord



Chancellor Tightfist

Bryons. Rumor has it that he is ageless and has looked like a dried prune since time immemorial. Tightfist is never seen outside of the guild halls. More rumors infer he would burst into flames if exposed to sunlight. It is unknown what combat skills and abilities the Chancellor has, but he is a master accountant whose skills exceed even those of Terial Skyone-Sheth and Malok Uzki [see *The Royal Tax Collector*, page 10].

Tightfist seems to have one special ability: to suck and transfer the life force from anyone who owes him money, but only if they can be convinced (or tricked or threatened or kidnapped) into a meeting. As their resistance weakens, Tightfist's power grows as he seemingly reads the mind of his victim, finding the last hidden amount due him.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Revenge is a Dish Best Served in Iambic Pentameter. The previous guildmaster, Lord Bryon the 26th, didn't perish in his fall from the bridge. Suspecting that his challenger would resort to catty remarks, he scheduled the competition for a dark and stormy night, arranged for some fishermen to string a net beneath a designated point on the bridge, and landed quite safely after flinging himself screaming into the void. He has spent the last two years writing an epic poem that, with luck, will send 27 and his cronies into the ritual disemboweling chamber in the basement. He just can't decide if he wants to get his old number back or go on to be 28.

Scenario 2: Reading Is Fundamental. The adventurers have obtained a map or spell scroll inscribed in an ancient lyric dialect. To cast the spell or use the map, a translation is needed. If the Poets' Guild is approached for help, Lord Bryon the 27th will recommend one of his lackeys for the job. However, the lackey is highly unqualified as a translator. The fellow has fooled Lord Bryon into believing that ancient tongues are his speciality by memorizing a smattering of all-purpose phrases and inserting them into his poems and conversation at any opportunity. Afraid to expose his ignorance to the guild master, the lackey accepts the assignment.

Realizing that his charade is at an end, the lackey convinces the adventurers that he must accompany them on their mission as an excuse to sneak away from the training centre. He may claim that only he can read aloud the spell in the proper accent, or that the map indicates there are additional esoteric clues along the way that will require translation.

If the party believes him, the lackey's bardic skill will be sufficient to stall them until they are safely away from the bridge. At that point, the perfidious poet will seize the first opportunity to abscond. He may even steal the scroll or map and seek his own fortune.

The Bridge Guard



The King's River stands at what was once the outermost border of the City. Back in uncivilized times, the water marked the line of many battles, where armies mustered in defense of the realm. Although the City has now grown large enough to deter most outside threats, there is still the internal peace to be kept, and The Bridge Guard is charged with that duty.

Background

About fifty years ago began the Magi Wars of the Outer Reaches. This conflict raged for three decades, destroying many lands and displacing many peoples. A number of troll tribes forced to flee the borderlands came into contact with the halflings and the goblins of the outlying districts of the City. This, of course, resulted in many conflicts creating much strife for all the inhabitants.

Trolls are not what one would call particularly bright, although they possess an amazing degree of cunning. Nor are they very savory creatures, being somewhat less than fussy about their personal, or any other type of, hygiene. Trolls tend to be, for the most part, relatively slow¹, and tend to prey on that which is easiest to catch. This basic fact, more than any other, is the reason

why trolls attack tribal settlements, towns, and villages. Since herds will roam to other feeding grounds, a nomadic tendency or desire in the stalker or hunter is required, and most beasts will run away if approached in a threatening manner by as massive an antagonist as a troll. On the other hand, most settlements are static, and if their inhabitants lack any well-devised form of fortification they will generally rush forward to defend their way of life. What is easier to catch than something coming straight at you, even if it is a little hazardous?

But even with this strategy, trolls face limited success. Their mere presence in a locale leads to ecological disaster, for their lifestyle and habits (which we need not linger on) ravage the land, poisoning it to the point where even the trolls must move on.

Many battles have been fought in the years since the troll invasion first began, but the City was seldom the object of attack due to its better defensive fortifications and the sheer number of defending inhabitants. However, the poorly-defended residents of villages, towns, and tribal settlements suffered at the hands of the trolls, even as the number of the creatures was surely reduced. The effect on the population was a marked transition from a rural existence to a more urban way of life, as refugees of all creeds and races moved to the protection of the City, creating

¹It is a common misconception that Trolls are lazy. In reality, they just move rather slower than other creatures due to their metabolic rate.

Bill Kerr has contributed locations for both *Maps 1: Cities* and *Maps 2: Places of Legend* by Flying Buffalo, Inc. He is currently working on the digital texturing of art for the comic series *Pantheon* by Archer Books and Games.

within its fortified walls a great cultural diversity, as well as an economic growth previously inexperienced in the age.

As it came to pass, a tribe of trolls eventually moved into an area close to the City. The local king was not oblivious of the fact that the presence of the trolls in the land had been the cause of the increased population base, economic growth, and hence the increased tax base upon which his fortune and position was made. Wishing to avoid any overt conflict with the trolls, he charged his generals to meet with and sue the tribe to enter into a peaceful agreement.

The King knew that troll tribes often fought among themselves for territorial rights. With this in mind, he offered a mutually beneficial agreement to the trolls. He proposed that the trolls defend the City from other troll tribes as a service to the community. In exchange, sustenance would be provided to the entire tribe, as long as they subjected themselves to the laws of the district. Some explanation was required for the trolls to understand the extent of this agreement, and it is still conjectured that a full understanding is lacking, but to the trolls this meant that they didn't have to hunt for food except in the most limited of means and needs; they didn't have to pack up and move again; and they wouldn't have to be concerned about mob retribution for their actions because they wouldn't be acting that way.

The King in all of his cunning was actually protecting the current status of his City. The mere presence of even a benign tribe of trolls relatively close to the City would serve as a reminder that it is not safe in the rural areas of the district; and since many previously rural residents were now a part of the City's financial infrastructure, the reminder would serve to retain the status quo and continue to line the King's pockets with additional taxes. In turn, the King's political power would increase due to the growth and establishment of various powerful Guilds, Merchant Associations, Religious Foundations, etc.

The Troll Encampment

The trolls live in a clearing about a mile beyond King's River Bridge. Because of the arrangement with the City, there has been relatively little thrashing of the forest outside of the immediate area surrounding the troll encampment. The whereabouts of the troll encampment is well known and mostly avoided by the average citizen. The land on which the encampment is based, and the immediate surrounding area, is legally deeded to the troll tribe by the King in exchange for the devoted protection of the City against any other tribe of trolls. The agreement also guaranteed sustenance for the tribe for two hundred years. However, since no other trolls have even been sighted in the district for the past fifteen years, this obligation to provide for the trolls has become a source of vexation to the current King. Even though few in the City would be the least concerned if the trolls were to be killed or chased out of the district, the current King is now saddled with the agreement made by the previous "doddering old fool!", and any attempt to overtly break the agreement without proper justifiable and witnessed cause could be exploited, resulting in a political blow to his career.

Personalities

Bruce. (General stats for any "Bruce") Troll male, Ht: 6'4", Wt: 340#, Age 76. Fighting Prowess: Good. Magic Ability: Poor.

Bob. (General stats for any "Bob") Troll male, Ht: 6'3", Wt: 350#, Age 96. Fighting Prowess: Very Good. Magic Ability: Fair.

Toady. Orc male, Ht: 5'6", Wt: 120#, Age 19. Fighting Prowess: Fair. Magic Ability: None.

Many years have gone by and a lot of water has passed under the bridge; the King's River Bridge that is. Many of the past infractions of the trolls have been forgiven, if not forgotten, since the local King employed the trolls to guard the King's River Bridge. The trolls make an imposing presence at one of the most traversed and visible gates into the City — a presence that brings more than a little respect and political recognition to the current King. Actually, the King didn't so much employ the trolls as he pressed them into service. "After all, they are subjects of the district and wards of the City," were the words used by the magistrate as he promoted the idea to the King. Consequently, there are two troll guards at the King's River Bridge to quell any rabblrouser with a burr in his, or her, trousers.

One of the trolls is called Bruce, as an adopted name, as the other is called Bob. It is difficult to tell one from the other except by calling to them by name. In fact, the trolls themselves are often not sure which is named Bruce and which is named Bob for one very interesting reason. They are never quite the same two trolls. The request from the King to the tribal leader was for the service of two trolls every day. So, two are sent each day — not the same two, necessarily. One is assigned the "Bruce" duty while the other is assigned the "Bob" duty. When called upon by name to perform some task, they typically first have a heated discussion amongst themselves. For anyone fluent in their native language and able to overhear, it would be noted that they are arguing over who is Bruce or who is Bob, whichever has been requested.

Most people tend to avoid the trolls wherever possible, except for Gav the street cleaner [see page 28] who may be seen in their company on many occasions. One of the only other regular contacts for the trolls is Mother FootCandle [see page 24], who gives them all of the fish remains of the day and any old and unusable fish oil with which the tribe makes its favorite daily concoction of fish soup.

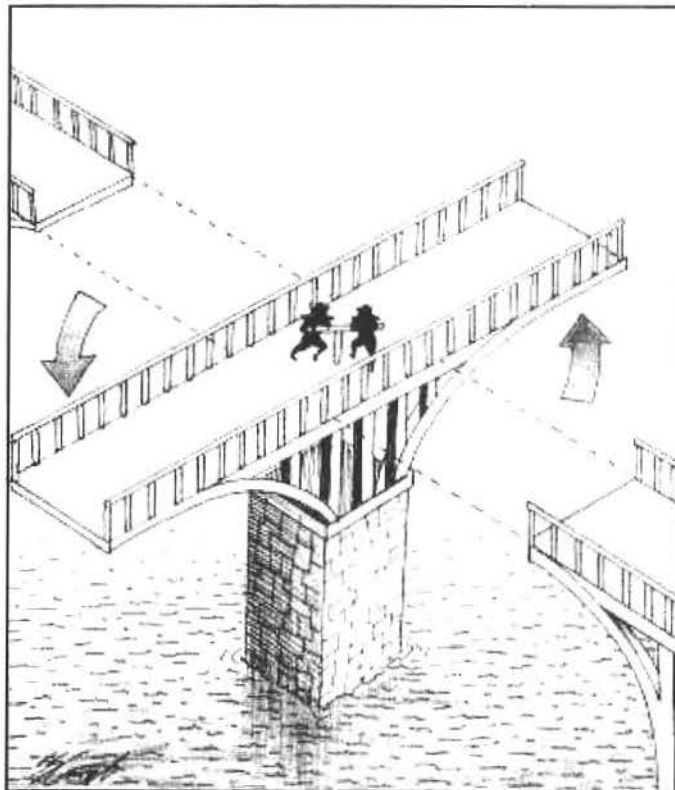
The two trolls are almost always accompanied by an orc named MashFace, though most call him MushFace or more popularly Toady, who has been similarly pressed into service as a kind of taskmaster/gopher/go-between. Terial Skyone-Sheth, the Royal Tax Collector [see page 10], has been given direct charge of the troll guards and is responsible for having pressed Toady into service as an interpreter to explain duties to the trolls, and as an

instrument by which he may avoid their odorous presence, even though it is his assistant Malok Uzki who is often the conveyor of requests. It is Toady's responsibility to see that the trolls carry out their duties. He is well versed in the troll's native language and knows all of the trolls by sight, able to address them by name in their native guttural, belching, dialect. Ultimately however, Toady has no true authority over the trolls, and they do not respect his attempts to dominate them. Often they will slap him around for no real reason. Toady pretends this is just the trolls' way of being friendly, and complains that they have no real understanding of rank and military form.

Toady is actually a sniveling, fawning, bootlicker where it most counts, though he will swagger about and abuse his perceived authority when he believes he can get away with it. Toady considers the King's River Bridge his domain, and will take a dislike to anyone he deems to be the cause of a reprimand for overstepping his boundaries. Such is the case with Orada, the fruit vendor [see page 64], from whom Toady would repeatedly filch his daily snacks as due tribute until the matter was brought the attention of his master, Terial. Toady now has an intense dislike for Orada, and will badmouth her products and business practices at every opportunity. Most of the shopkeepers and vendors don't take Toady too seriously, although the proprietor of Sweeney's Pie Shoppe [see page 43] seems to humor him and is always offering an afternoon meal.

The job of the trolls is more than just standing there looking ugly and snorting derisively at any would-be troublemaker, although there have been noticeably fewer Gate Crashers² since the trolls have been assigned duty at the bridge (probably due more to the mere presence of the trolls rather than their ability to observe and capture any perpetrator). Perhaps their key function is the operation of the Bridge Turnstile. This is the method by which taller ships are allowed to pass by King's River Bridge. Whenever a ship desires passage, and the proper fee has been paid to the Royal Tax Collector for an appropriate Passage Tax Stamp, the trolls must carry a huge metal crosspiece to the center of the bridge and place it into a recessed receptacle. When the piece is properly positioned, it appears that a "T" has been erected into the middle of the Bridge. With the crosspiece firmly in place, the two trolls then each begin to push on the ends of the spars in such a manner as to walk in a circle around the center pylon of the bridge. This has the effect of causing the balanced center span to rotate on the center pillar of the bridge, opening the waterway to two way traffic past the bridge. This action strands anyone on the center span and prevents road traffic from crossing until the bridge has been returned to its normal operating state. This technique can also be used to limit the access of an invading army to the interior of the City.

Another troll duty is to stand in for the Royal Tax Collector every Friday afternoon when he delivers the collected tax monies to the King. In the past, there have been a certain number of tax stamps left with the trolls in order that business may be conducted



Pivoting the central span

in a somewhat normal fashion during Terial's absence, with the proceeds going to the trolls as compensation for this extra service. Whatever the trolls may acquire for the stamps is theirs to keep and share amongst the others of their tribe. It should be noted that no river passage stamps are left with the trolls, and they are at liberty to let anyone pass for whom they are convinced to give passage.

Dealing With Lawbreakers

There is no actual jail on King's River Bridge. Apprehended criminals are destined for the dungeons of the City, and are chained to iron rings mounted in the stone wall of the bridge next to the guard tower until such time as the local magistrate decides to have them rounded up by City guardsmen. Wrongdoers may languish on the sidewalk for many days before they are transferred to the dungeons. Likewise, there exists no guard barracks for the trolls. If the weather is particularly bad, they will shelter in the bottom of the eight-sided guard tower on the City side of King's River Bridge. There is an upper story to this tower which the trolls do not access, being unwilling to expend the energy to climb up the ladder. This upper room has been rented out to Khasekemui Horgraeb [see *The River Raptors*, page 32].

² A Gate Crasher is a merchant caught conducting business in the City without a proper tax stamp.

Food & Entertainment

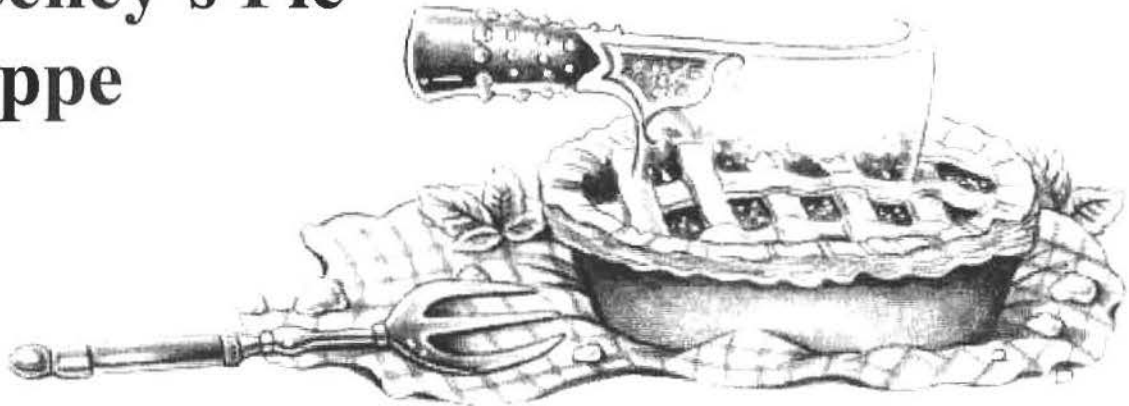
King's River Bridge caters to any passerby with a thirst to slake, a stomach to fill, and eyes and ears to delight with entertainment. Delicious meals are available both day and night, and street entertainers are frequently at hand to trade their talents for a coin or two.

Adventurers in a hurry can grab a snack from a cart vendor like *Orada*, *Adaro*, or *Ron & Don*. The fruits, stews, and breads they sell will please any palate. If they have the time, a sit-down lunch may be had at *Sweeney's Pie Shoppe*. Don't let the rumors about Mistress Bromson put them off; the food is wonderful. Those with a sweet tooth will find a treat at *The Confection Connection*, where candies, including rare and exotic chocolate, may be purchased.



The Guzzling Gargoyle Taproom and Brewery is highly recommended by connoisseurs of ale. If their taste for spirits is (considerably) less refined, a visit to *Dirty Joe's Tavern* may be in order. But don't let them drink up their entire purse. Save a few coins to pay for tonight's performance by *The Fellowship of the Moon*. They may be lucky enough to meet the dashing Adriano or lovely Sigemina.

Sweeney's Pie Shoppe



Travelers seeking tasty meals that are easy to transport will be pleased with the bill of fare at Sweeney's Pie Shoppe.

The savory aroma of cooking pastry has been rising from Sweeney's shop as long as most of the current denizens of the bridge can remember. Located on the south side of the bridge, it is a regular stop for breakfast or lunch. Shopkeepers as well as workmen find it far more convenient, not to mention more tasty, to dine at the comfortable and busy little store than to fetch their lunch from home.

The origin of the name "Sweeney's Pie Shoppe" is lost in the past. Its original owner has long since passed on, and the shop has been through a succession of proprietors. The couple who now own and operate it are the Bromsons. How the business came into their hands is subject to some speculation, but one thing is certain. They are upholding the shop's well deserved reputation.

The activities of the shop begin well before dawn. Before sunrise, the formidable Mistress Bromson heads for the basement to select the animals to slaughter for the day's meat pies. She insists that the freshness of the meat is what makes her pie fillings so special. After cleaning up the abattoir, she begins to cook the various fillings that have been selected for the bill of fare. She has a spice cabinet in her kitchen that would be the envy of any of the more wealthy merchants or even the lords of the City. It is known that she works diligently to obtain fresh herbs whenever they become available.

James "Bear" Peters is a *CityBook* perennial. For nearly every book we've put out, he's been there with a contribution. Look for his story, "Where There's a Wizard, There's a Way" in *Mage's Blood & Old Bones*, from *Flying Buffalo*, a rollicking anthology of fiction set in the Tunnels & Trolls™ universe.

Her husband Tolman prepares the non-meat fillings. Vegetable, fruit, and sweet cream recipes are his specialty. He is also the baker of the duo, and is responsible for the pastry shells that surround the fillings they both create. Sweet cream fillings are only available during the cooler months, as the rich centers tend to curdle in the heat.

Menu

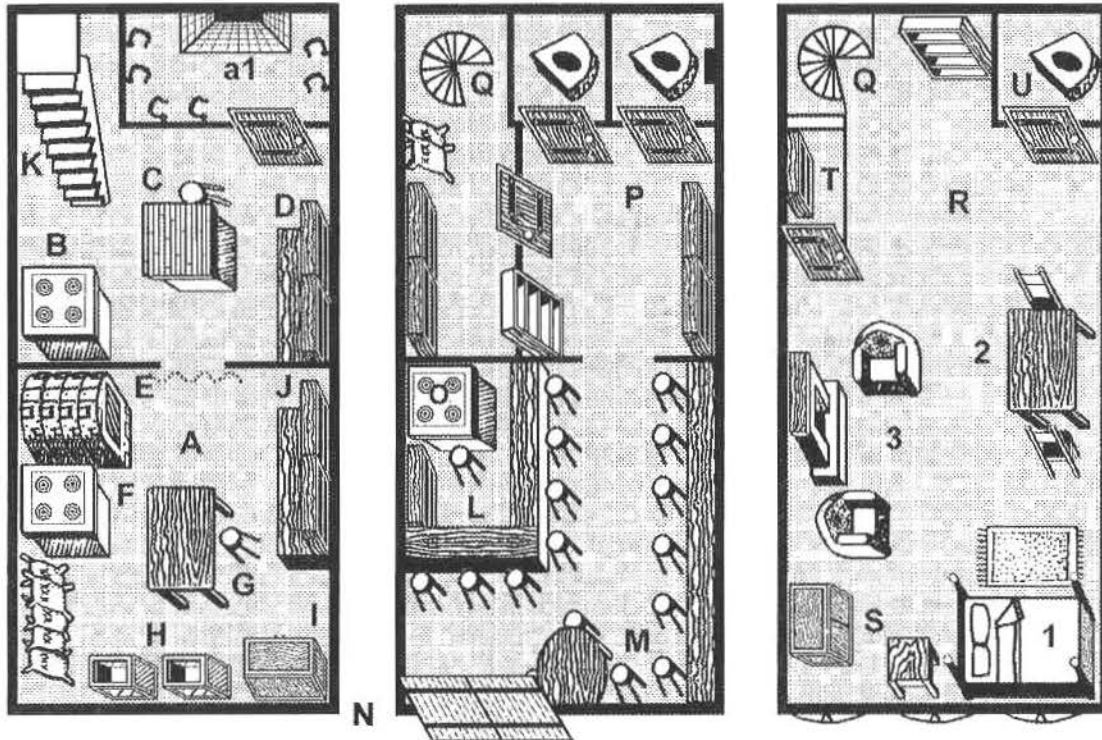
Sweeney's pies are small pastries baked to a golden brown that are filled with thick, stew-like concoctions. They are easy to carry and eat on the run. For those not in a hurry, the shop provides a small dining area. The prices for pies are very reasonable:

Breakfast Meat	1 silver piece (s.p.)
Breakfast Vegetable	7 copper pieces (c.p.)
Breakfast Fruit	1 s.p., 2 c.p.
Lunch Meat	1 s.p., 2 c.p. (Bigger than Breakfast)
Lunch Vegetable	8 c. p. (Bigger than Breakfast)
Lunch Fruit	1 s.p., 5 c.p. (Bigger than Breakfast)
Dinner Meat	1 s.p., 5 c.p. (Bigger than Lunch)
Dinner vegetable	1 s.p. (Bigger than Lunch)
Dinner Fruit	1 s.p., 5 c.p. (Same size as Lunch)

Upon request, the pie shop will make the more conventional deep, round "family sized" dinner pie. These pies must be ordered by lunch in order to be prepared in time for a working person to take home.

Family sized Meat	5 s.p.
Family sized Vegetable	4 s.p.
Family sized Fruit	7 s.p.

The Bromsons can be approached to make up fancy pies for special occasions, but the earlier the better, because the formidable Mistress doesn't like being rushed in her work.



1 sq = 2 ft

Layout

Basement. Sweeney's basement extends all the way to the underside of the bridge.

A. Basement. (20' x 46') The basement is a single great room bisected by a wall. There is a large open door in the wall that is "closed" by a beaded curtain. This curtain is to keep the flies out of the baking section.

This room has several large beams and trusses running across its ceiling from which sturdy iron hooks are suspended. It has a plank floor through which the whistle of the wind passing under the bridge can be heard.

A1. Abattoir. (8' x 14') This is where Mistress Bromson slaughters the meat du jour. There is a tile-lined trough that empties into the drain for the building. The blood and unusable entrails fall in lumps and torrents into the river below. Luckily, this gruesome sight is obscured by the grey light of the predawn hours.

B. Mistress Bromson's Stove. The savory meat recipes are cooked in great pots on this stove. The fillings are left slowly simmering throughout the day. This stove, the baking ovens, and Tolman's stove are all fed by fuel loaded by Tolman into a central firebox.

C. Chopping Block. Large pieces of meat are reduced to small ones here. If only wood could talk!

D. Table. This is the table on which Mistress Bromson prepares the meat fillings. Along its length are a number of blocks containing knives of various sorts. Above it hang the cooking pots.

On the wall above the work table is a large cabinet fastened to the wall. It is solid oak and lined with iron. This is the spice cabinet. Here Mistress Bromson keeps her spice collection.

The spice collection is renowned throughout the City. There are few spices she does not have, and if some new one comes to light she will go to great lengths to obtain it. It is with the help of these spices that she makes the meat pies of Sweeney's the most savory treats to be found on the bridge.

This cabinet is locked^d when the Bromsons are not working here. The lock is a padlock which secures a large wooden drop bar. Keep in mind this cabinet is metal lined. While Mistress Bromson is not above theft to obtain her spices, she will not have those same spices stolen.

E. Baking Ovens. These are the arched and stone-lined baking ovens. Below them, enclosed by three iron doors, is the access to the fire box for the ovens and stoves. Tolman stokes the fires during the predawn time when Mistress Bromson is processing her meat du jour. In these ovens the filled pies bake, laid out on long metal sheets.

F. Tolman's Stove. Tolman prepares the vegetable fillings and any custard or fruit fillings as require cooking at this oven.

G. Bread Table. It upon this table that Tolman kneads, rolls, shapes and cuts the pastry crust for the pies.

H. Storage Bins. These bins serve as wood piles as well as bulk vegetable storage crates.

I. Cabinet. This is a large tin-lined storage cabinet which is also kept locked³. In it is kept the bulk flour and sugar for baking. (This sugar is a prized commodity, for Tolman uses a refined form rather than the raw crystalline type which carries an aftertaste.) This cabinet has a magical spell on it (very low level C1) to keep small insects out of the flour and sugar.

J. Tolman's Work Table. This is Tolman's prep table and accompanying spice rack. On this table he mixes his fruit and vegetable fillings.

K. Stairs. This stairwell leads up to the First Floor.

First Floor. At street level, the front of Sweeney's is open to the street so that customers can walk straight up to the counter and place their orders. The front is closed at night by a lath fencing that is drawn across the front and locked³ in place.

L. Service Counter. (10' x 14') Tolman Bromson mans this counter from dawn until the shop closes. It is fronted by a number of tall stools upon which those customers who wish to dine in may sit.

M. Additional Counter Seating. This 24' counter is built flush to the wall, also fronted by tall stools.

N. Street Tables. When the shop opens in the morning, Tolman places some tables on the street, extending his customer service area. These tables are rather tall so that the same high stools can be used for them. At these tables, many of the local merchants conduct business over lunch in a more relaxed and informal atmosphere than may be found in their shops.

O. Warming Box. A covered warming counter keeps the various pies warm by the updraft from the ovens below. Tolman selects the pies to be sold and alternates them to keep the food as fresh as possible throughout the day.

P. Privies. These are the public privies.

Q. Circular Stair. This leads up to the Bromson's living quarters.

Second Floor. This level houses the private living quarters of the Bromsons. They spend the greatest portion of their days in the business areas of the building, and in the evenings they relax in their upstairs rooms.

R. Bedroom. (20' x 46') This loft-like all-in-one room contains a large, comfortable bed in one corner, next to three glazed windows which overlook the street. (Glazed windows in a medieval society are a sign of prosperity, as most windows were covered with oil-cloth, or merely shuttered open spaces.)

There is a table upon which the Bromsons take their evening meal. Another feature of the bedroom is a fine hearth built especially for this floor. Two comfortable chairs are placed before it. One is normal in size and the other more generously proportioned to accommodate the formidable Mistress Bromson.

About the room are armoires and dressers which contain the Bromson's clothes and personal effects. There are two of note:

S. Oaken Armoire. This is a tall oaken armoire, very heavily constructed and closed with a lock³. Within the confines of this cabinet, the Bromsons keep their valuables (silver candlesticks and flatware) along with the money they maintain for operating the shop.

T. Closet. (4' x 8') This angled closet under the stairs stores the Bromson's clothes, and other household articles. The Bromsons are completely unaware of the only remarkable thing about this storage closet. In the back there is a panel. The panel is cut to fit flush to the back wall, and must be pried away with some care. Behind the panel is a cabinet, metal fronted and lined, built into the back of the closet. It is locked⁴.

U. Privy. (6' x 6') This is the private privy.

Personalities



Mistress Bromson

Mistress Bromson. *Human female. Ht: 6' 1", Wt: 260#, Age 48.* *Fighting Prowess: Very Good with cleavers, knives, and heavy edged weapons.* *Magic Ability: None.*

At some time in the distant past the formidable Mistress Bromson may have been a statuesque beauty, but not any more. It has been said by one customer, "The Mistress's cooking could summon the angels out of the sky with hunger, but one look at her would frighten the feathers off of them." She is a heavily muscled, jowly ogre of a woman, who is more at home chopping up cutlets than greeting customers.

There is no one who thinks of her as anything but "The Formidable Mistress Bromson." She is even called "Mistress Bromson" by Tolman. Her only abiding passion is collecting spices. She will go to any length to obtain a steady supply of the ones she uses on a daily basis. If news comes to her of a newly discovered spice, or a shipment of one that is very rare, she will become obsessed until she obtains a sample.

She is a familiar sight in the meat markets seeking out live animals for future pies. Any suspicion around the pie shop centers on the formidable Mistress. It is to her that the disappearance of the previous owner is ascribed. It is also rumored that she occasionally uses unconventional meats in her fillings. However, no one who tastes one of her savory pies is eager to believe this.

Tolman Bromson. *Human male. Ht: 5'4", Wt: 145#, Age: 42.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor with most things, but Fair with a rolling pin. (This paucity of martial skills may be a ruse. Anyone who has seen Tolman wield a pastry knife may have their doubts! Very Good with knives, if the scenario requires it.)* *Magic Ability: None.*

Tolman is a quiet man with an easy, shy smile. He is almost supernaturally agreeable about most things, and a very good listener, which helps his business at the counter. Tolman's agreeability stiffens if someone tries to cheat him over the cost of his pies. This doesn't happen often, and the malefactor is often shouted down by the regular customers who are fond of both the pies and Tolman.

Tolman is also a superb baker, and a much better than average pastry cook. His vegetable stews are only fair, but edible. The crust is the main attraction.

While Tolman is overshadowed by his wife, he is well aware of what is going on, and has a shrewd mind for business.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Last Meal. That isn't chicken Mistress Bromson is dishing up in those pies, and Tolman's mild mannered guise hides the workings of a skilled assassin. They're disposing of bodies for a secret organization [perhaps the Grey Path; see *The Street Cleaner*, page 28]. The adventurers are called upon to discover where a missing informant has gone. (C'mon! You were suspicious of them from the start!)

Scenario 2: But Really! We're Innocent! A nervous Tolman confides to one of the adventurers that he thinks Sweeney's Pie Shoppe is haunted. He's seen a strange apparition, and noises in his bedroom have kept him awake at night. He thinks it might even be "Red" [see *The Cornerstone Ghost*, page 106]. Mistress Bromson won't even discuss his fears, thinking them ridiculous. If Tolman can enlist the help of the characters, they will discover the haunting is centered around the closet under the stairs; specifically, a skeleton that is sealed within the secret metal cabinet. Is it the body of the previous owner? Did Mistress Bromson do the foul deed? The adventurers must study the clues and separate fact from public opinion to discover the truth.

Scenario 3: Robbery is The Spice of Life. While the player characters are enjoying lunch at Sweeney's, they observe a confrontation between Mistress Bromson and a spice merchant. He accuses her of stealing his paprika; she retorts that she'll cut out his lying tongue if he ever comes back into her shop. Later, on the bridge, the spice merchant begs the adventurers to sneak into the Bromson's shop and retrieve his paprika. He shows them the unique bottles which identify his wares and offers them a tempting reward. How hard can it be to grab a vial of paprika? If the GM is looking for an opportunity for a "pie fight", this is it!

Scenario 4: An Old Family Recipe. Tolman Bromson must have a soft spot in his heart for the orc and troll bridge guards. Every evening, he makes sure to save three meat pies for them, which they pick up without fail just before the pie shop closes. Mistress Bromson does not approve of this charity, but indulges her husband's whim. She's usually extremely rude to the guards, but Bruce and Bob the trolls [see *The Bridge Guard*, page 39] find her attractive and assume she is flirting with them when she fusses about their presence. In fact, many of their simple-minded conversations center on whom Mistress Bromson likes best! This debate usually takes place while the trolls sloppily devour their pies, spewing bits of doughy gravy into each other's faces with every outburst. This makes the discussion both theoretically and visually disgusting. Toady, the orc, often whines to other food purveyors on the bridge that they, too, should "respect" the guards and provide free handouts like Sweeney's does.

Tolman's generosity is rooted in a need to keep the secret ingredient of his pies secret. He knew he had a problem when Toady, Bruce and Bob stopped in one day and asked for a "human pie." Their keen sense of smell had led them straight to one of their traditional foodstuffs!

The guards have promised Tolman that they won't tell, as long as they get free food. Should the adventurers become curious as to why the guards get free pies, and question Toady, who translates for the trolls, they may be able to trick him into revealing the truth. Then the players will have to decide what to do with this tasty tidbit of information!

Dirty Joe's Tavern



*You have to be pretty desperate
to stop at Dirty Joe's.*

Dirty Joe's Tavern is one of least appealing establishments to be found on the bridge. Like all of the others, permanent or not, it is crowded between other buildings. It is a small, two story place, ungenerously called a shack by disgruntled customers, and rightfully called rickety by even its most ardent regulars. The bottom floor houses the bar and a few "tables" (old, mildewed barrels which were probably used to ship salted fish down the river). Most customers prefer the fragrance of dead fish to the bouquet of Dirty Joe's house brew, however. The top floor houses Dirty Joe.

Layout

1. Tavern. (22' x 24') The barroom contains about twenty "tables" (although the number is subject to change based on attrition — fights — and the availability of fish barrels) and numerous wooden boxes which serve as chairs for those who choose to sit to enjoy their afternoon beverages. (It should be noted that most customers choose to down their drinks while standing, which allows for an easier exit.)

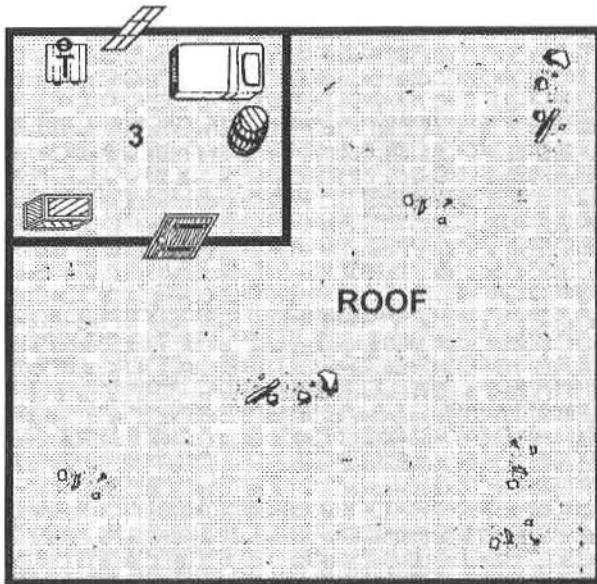
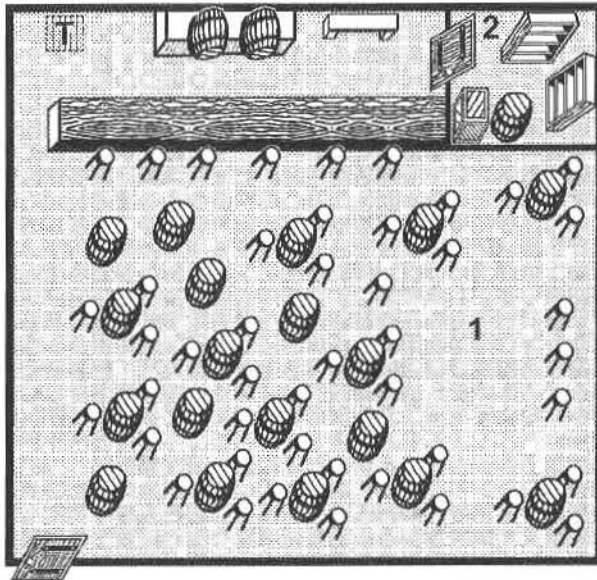
At night, the tavern offers entertainment of sorts. A motley group of four musicians plays to the rough clientele from an

Anita was born to a circus family and trained in knife throwing and bareback riding. After seeing dark warriors destroy her family and the circus, she lived like a shattered wild thing in the forests for several years. Then one day she met Reppel, a half-elf with a gentle heart and an eye for profit. Reppel took Anita in and cared for her. Now they travel the countryside performing a knife act and occasionally sending glimpses of their adventures to Flying Buffalo.

area in the main room that has been cleared of barrels. The group's repertoire consists mainly of bawdy tunes and songs about fighting, drinking, and piracy. The careful observer might begin to notice a strange coincidence: many of the spontaneous fights seem to break out just when the group launches into a rousing fight song. The brawls resolve as, for some unknown reason, couples are drawn together for a different kind of grappling . . . to the tune of a suggestive ditty. Were the observer to reach the conclusion that the music somehow had an effect on the revelers, he would be correct. The magical instruments (pipes, harp, and hand-drum), when played together, exert a subtle control over the listeners, which can be exercised by anyone singing to the music.

The musicians are four young-appearing men, with long, unkempt hair. Their attire is unusual, a combination of tight trousers of elven design and sleeveless leather vests favored by the archers of the ancient forest. Various baubles and metal bands adorn their bodies, often attached through the skin. Their accents are foreign, and subtly unidentifiable. The singer has various exotic tattoos which, according to the very inebriated, seem to come alive and gyrate to the rhythm of the music.

2. Storage. (4' x 6') In the back of the main room is a crudely-built closet, which serves as Dirty Joe's storage room. It can be entered by a door that faces the bar. Two side walls are lined with shelves which are about half-full of bottles and jugs of sour-smelling concoctions, very vaguely reminiscent of the names on their fading labels. The alcohol fumes filling the room lead the observer to the realization that most customers courageous enough to brave the first sip probably never notice how bad the stuff really is. What the casual observer might not realize, however, is that not all of the crockery is filled with sewer-quality liquor. Indistinguishable from the rest of the containers in appearance, a collection of dusty jugs which came to the tavern



1 sq = 1 ft

with its current owner rests on the floor in the right rear corner of the room. Inspection will reveal that these contain various magical elixirs, capable of restoring strength and health, and bestowing certain unnatural abilities, such as essential invisibility, to the consumer.

The bar itself extends from one side of the room to the storage closet. Above and behind the bar is a grimy sign which threatens vague but dire fates for those who do not pay. Several dripping kegs and jugs line the shelf beneath the sign. Below the bar are shelves which house the chipped glasses in which Dirty Joe serves his liquor. The cash box is kept in a shallow drawer on the top shelf at the center of the bar.

Dirty Joe's has no privy. He says that's what the street is for.

3. Upstairs (Dirty Joe's living quarters). (8' x 12') The second floor is reached by a ladder which leads through a trap door near one end of the bar. It consists only of Dirty Joe's living quarters. The furnishings are sparse — a bed which looks as though it had been pulled out of a trash heap. The blankets are threadbare and dingy, and are home to several species of rodents and insects. One of the fish barrels common to the tavern proper serves as a nightstand. A half-burned candle sits on a cracked saucer, and beside that lies a very old, small book, somewhat similar to a diary or journal. On the side of the barrel are the faint outlines of a drawer-like opening.

A rickety wooden box standing against the far wall contains Dirty Joe's wardrobe — a few pairs of the sailor pants he wears and a tunic. On a hook hangs a loop of the rope he uses to tie the pants up, approximately 2 spans long.

Nowhere in Dirty Joe's living quarters is any sign, other than the saucer under the candle, of food or eating utensils.

Personalities

Dirty Joe. *Human male (apparent).* *Ht: (standing straight) 6' 3", Wt: 200#, Age: Appears middle-aged.*

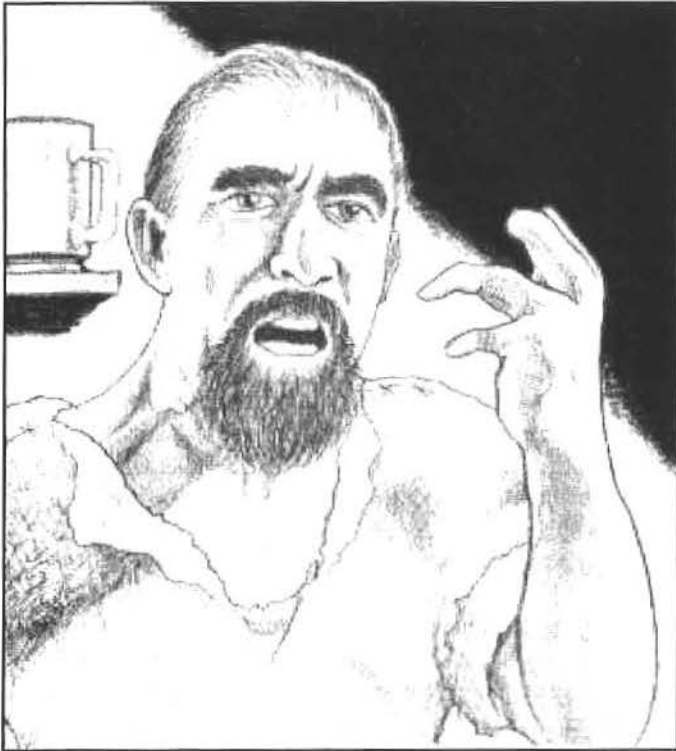
Fighting Prowess: unknown — no one remembers ever having seen Dirty Joe fight. *Magic Ability: unknown — Dirty Joe has never been seen to use magic. (It is possible that he might have abilities in both areas, but does not display them.)*

Dirty Joe has run the tavern on the bridge for as long as any of the residents can remember. In all that time, neither he nor the place have changed much as far as anyone can tell . . . anyone who bothers to think about it, at least, and few do.

Dirty Joe appears to be a middle-aged man, with scraggly black hair that is thinning at the back. His beard looks as though it was made of matted wire, and there has been speculation as to the nature of its possible inhabitants. His eyes are deep, clear green, like the sea when a storm is coming in. His nose is sharply hooked, and his dour, thin-lipped mouth frozen into a perpetual scowl. He is short of words, and does not know the meaning of humor.

If he stood straight, Dirty Joe would probably be a tall man, but his shoulders are bent, and he walks with a limp, making him seem much older. His arms are muscular and covered in the same wiry hair that passes for a beard. His hands are large and callused. The first two fingers of his left hand are missing at the knuckle. Dirty Joe has never been seen to fight, which, if one were to consider his demeanor, seems quite unusual. But he gives the impression that he could go berserk at any time, and that if he did, he would be capable of inflicting serious damage.

Dirty Joe is always dressed in a filthy tunic and faded sailor's pants, tied at the waist with a fraying rope. His boots are scuffed. He is surrounded by a foul miasma that makes customers' eyes water, and gives the curious an idea as to how he came to be known as "Dirty" Joe.



Dirty Joe

Jahn. Human male. Ht: 6' 4" Wt: 150#, Age: 27. Fighting Prowess: Average with a knife and in wrestling-style hand-to-hand combat. Poor swordsman. Magic Ability: Good C5.

Jahn is the leader of the tavern's only entertainment group. The band of four musicians has no name. Jahn claims to come from a poor, seaside town far down the coast. His accent is strange, and his singing voice liltily beautiful. Jahn's lanky appearance suggests possible elven ancestry. He usually sings, but occasionally plays bow-harp. One of his most noticeable features is the bodyart which can be seen through the leather vest he wears. Tattooed on his skin, the pictures seem to move subtly to the music he plays and sings, with hypnotizing effects on anyone watching, especially, for some reason, young, attractive women. Jahn's magic influences people within hearing range through the words of his songs, when sung to the music of the magical instruments of his band. (These skills are not common knowledge. Dirty Joe would go out of business if people knew they were being bewitched while consuming their less-than-pleasant refreshments.) It is Jahn who deals directly with Dirty Joe, and who speaks for the group.

Poll. Human male. Ht: 6', Wt: 145#, Age: 24. Fighting Prowess: Good with an epee. Fast on his feet, and usually prefers to avoid conflict. Magic Ability: Average C5.

Poll also claims to come from a far coastal town. His accent, like Jahn's, sounds exotic to the bridge inhabitants. His hair is long, slightly past shoulder length, and his face is almost cherubic.

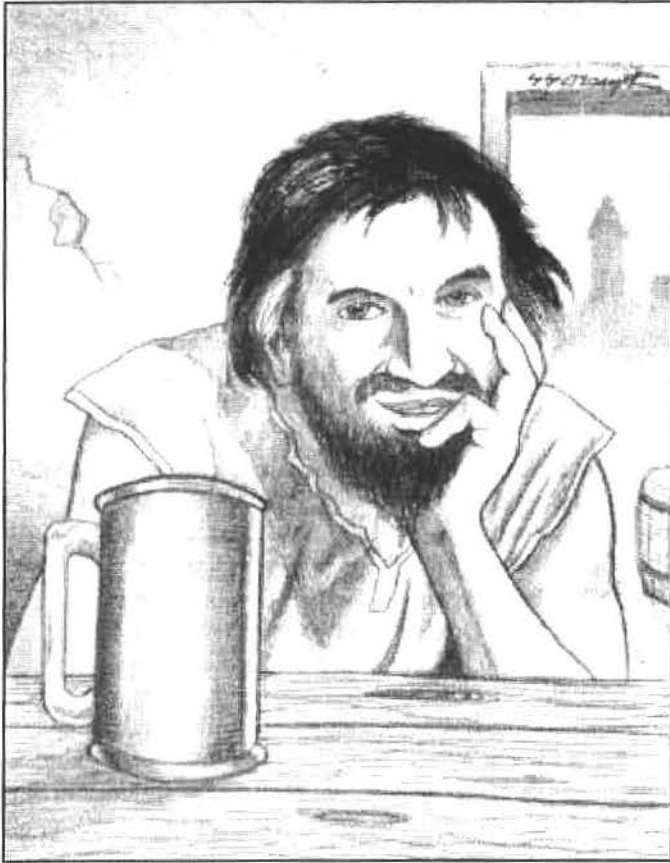
He dresses in the style sported by all in the band — tunic and tight trousers — and also has several metal and jeweled pins and rings piercing his body as decorations. He too is tattooed, though not as extensively as Jahn. Like all of the group members, Poll is quite popular among the young women, although he is not known to indulge in social activities with any of them.

Raff. Human male. Ht: 5'9", Wt: 200#, Age: About 40. Raff has been drinking too long to remember exactly. Fighting Prowess: When sober, Good at hand-to-hand combat. No weapons training (unless you count the fact that, in the tavern, he can be pretty dangerous with boxes and drink glasses). Magic Ability: None.

Raff is a serious drinker. He doesn't even know or care how bad the stuff at Dirty Joe's is — it does what it has to do. It is said that Raff was once a blacksmith. If so, it has been a long time. Arms that may have once been muscular are turning to flab, and his belly protrudes like that of a woman near term. His hair is dark and matted, and his beard flecked with food and who-knows-what-else. It is also said that Raff once loved a woman of the Thieves' Guild, and that the love was not returned. He tried once in desperation to force her to come with him, and in revenge his smithy was burned to the ground as she laughed from the arms of her guildmate. Raff keeps to himself, and nightly sits at a barrel in the darkest corner of the tavern, an occasional tear adding flavor to his watery beer. Raff might be



Jahn



Raff

persuaded to revenge against the Thieves' Guild, if he could be sobered up enough to function.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Musical Accompaniment. Having heard that the tavern's musicians have certain special abilities, the adventurers try to convince them to join their quest to obtain a valuable item from a very public place.

Scenario 2: Hair Of The Dirty Dog. One of the adventurers is wounded in a fight in the City. As the adventurers are now wanted by the authorities there, they escape across the bridge. They stop at the squalid-looking Dirty Joe's Tavern, thinking that they might purchase some alcohol to clean the wounds. The tavern is so offensive that they may decide to move on and take the risk that their companion might bleed to death or die of infection. But if they go in, Dirty Joe may take pity on them and negotiate a trade for some of his healing potions.

Scenario 3: Did You See THAT! Dirty Joe is accosted in an alleyway one dark night. He easily overcomes his attacker. Then, removing the frayed-looking rope from around his waist, he places it around the man's neck and commands it to tighten. The rope tightens itself magically until the man succumbs to death.

Then Joe commands it to loosen. He retrieves the rope and reties it around his own waist.

Joe hefts the body over his shoulder and carries it to the nearby Sweeney's Pie Shoppe [see page 43]. The murderous barkeep taps out a series of knocks on the restaurant door, and the body is received by a dark figure within. Joe then continues on his way, not realizing the incident was witnessed by one of the adventurers.

The party will have a murder to report, and a mystery to solve.

Scenario 4: What Do You Do With A Drunken Blacksmith?

The adventurers awake one morning to find that they have been robbed. They must break into the hideaway of the Thieves' Guild to retrieve their possessions. A customer at Dirty Joe's tells them Raff's story, and suggests he may know a secret way into the robbers' headquarters. If the party can sober Raff up, he will join forces with them and prove himself a formidable ally in dispensing punishment on the thieves.

Scenario 5: Mutineers. The player characters have stopped at Dirty Joe's to experience the local lowlife. Four dangerous-looking sailors suddenly burst into the tavern and attack Dirty Joe.

It is likely that the players will become involved on one side or the other. For the sake of this scenario, the game master should make sure that whoever is losing the battle escapes. Depending on whose side the players have taken, they will hear one of two stories from the victor(s). If Dirty Joe wins, he will report that the sailors are escaped mutinous sailors whose imprisonment was due to his actions. If the sailors win, they will identify themselves as the loyal crew of a captain against whom Dirty Joe rebelled some years past.

In either case, a ship's log book hidden in the secret compartment of the fish barrel in Joe's bedroom will come into play. If the characters helped Joe survive the ambush, he will ask them to safely convey the book and its evidence to the magistrate in the City to assist in the pursuit of the mutineers. If the characters helped the sailors against Dirty Joe, a search will be on for this manuscript which will prove Joe's guilt in the past mutiny.

Very little is known of Dirty Joe.

GMs should develop this man of mystery to suit their own needs.

Does he possess magical items other than his rope? What about those musical instruments the band plays? Is "Joe" a powerful wizard hiding on King's River Bridge? If so, why? And what does he scratch by the light of his candle in the small journal by his bedside?

The Fellowship of the Moon



The moon provides dramatic lighting for this troupe of entertainers who have made the bridge their stage. The Fellowship of the Moon has a dark and powerful sponsor.

In the busy marketplace at the east end of the bridge is an open space occupied only by a pageant wagon. Low, crude scaffolding supports a thatched roof, and patchwork drapery surrounds the wagon's sides and back. Stalls, carts and booths, though sharing the same part of the bridge, keep a respectful distance from the wagon and its immediate vicinity, as if mindful of its place among the many businesses on the bridge. During the hottest part of the day, hawkers make use of the space to peddle their wares. In the evenings, and during the busiest parts of the morning, it bustles with life as crowds throng around the small stage to catch a glimpse of the famous troupe of players called The Fellowship of the Moon.

The Fellowship has only recently arrived here, but has quickly gained popularity among the locals for the bawdy, comic sketches performed in the mornings, and the longer, more saturnine tragedies and romances which unfold during the twilight hours and continue into the middle of the night. Conceived in the mind of Adriano Incantatio, playwright and master of the troupe, the plays have fired the imaginations of the usually pragmatic folk frequenting the markets on the bridge. So much so, that nightly performances are now the order of the day, commanding crowds that teem into the marketplace, bringing patronage to the other businesses on the bridge. It is for this reason that the Fellowship

of the Moon has been so readily accepted into the society of the bridge markets: there are always hungry and thirsty playgoers to feed.

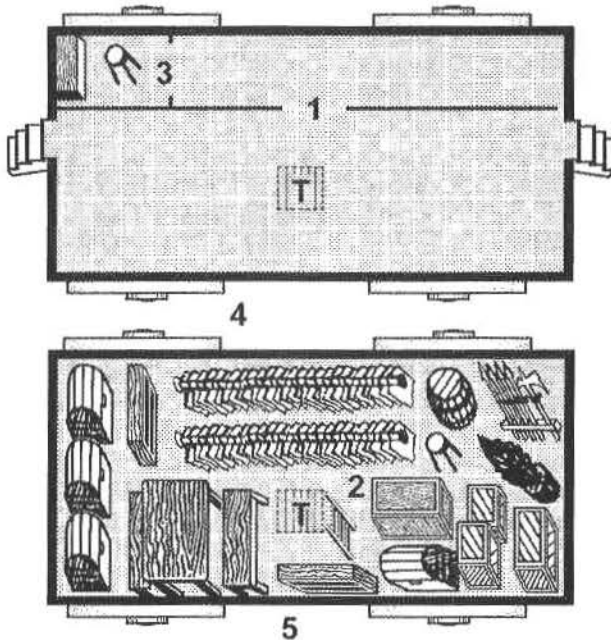
The Fellowship of the Moon — named for their nightly performances — began as a troupe of entertainers making a circuit of country towns and villages, performing at inns and village fairs. They tailored their material to the tastes of their audiences, mostly bawdy jokes and burlesque comedies mingled with the feats of jugglers, acrobats and dancers. Adriano Incantatio, then a playwright employed by the master of that troupe, was ambitious and had his sights set on the glimmering spires of the City and the patronage which only a metropolis could provide. He was dissatisfied with the popular short pieces he had written, and dreamed instead of staging grand romances to rival those of his more sophisticated and urbane peers. Inevitably, this led to creative differences with the troupe leader and Incantatio left with a small following of similarly minded entertainers. He then formed the Fellowship of the Moon and followed much the same route as his previous employer, playing at country inns, coach houses and village gatherings, until enough money was made for the grand journey to the City.

Currently enjoying the patronage of the common classes, Adriano plans to win his way into the hearts of richer and more powerful patrons. He is canny enough to know that he needs to start small and work his way up. With this in mind, Adriano is beginning to write and produce more cerebral plays which he is sure will gain the attention of more sophisticated audiences. His strategy seems to be working. Although nothing more than a simple street theater at present, the Fellowship and their performances have, through word of mouth, attracted the interest of the merchant and aristocratic classes. Commissions and a more lucrative position cannot be far away.

The Fellowship's program includes a morning performance of short, moral plays and comic sketches, punctuated by lighter fare such as gaudily dressed clowns and dancers for variety. This usually takes the entire morning, when the markets are busiest, and shamelessly caters for a particular sort of audience: those simple and earthy in their humor and outlook. The contents of these sketches tend to be bawdy and burlesque, replete with

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1 sq = 1 ft



pie-in-the-face routines. Actors wear half-masks depicting a caricature of their role. Payment comes from appreciative audiences, primarily market folk who have dawdled by to watch a sketch in progress. During the course of the morning, up to half a dozen such sketches may be performed, most of them based on the same themes of unfaithful wives, foolish old husbands and virile young lovers. At times, members of the audience rowdily join in on the joke, even leaping up on the stage to participate in the action. Usually Dubro, the company's resident handyman and laborer, is at hand to deal with such individuals, usually knocking them directly off the stage.

The players break during the afternoon to tend to preparations for the night's performance in their rooms at the local inn. Dubro and his burly apprentice remain on site, making sure that all is ready for the night, and especially to scare away any would-be vandals. At the appointed twilight hour, torches and lanterns are lit around the wagon and the stage is set for the grand performance, usually a tragedy, sometimes a romance. Such performances continue late into the night and are known for drawing great sighs and rivers of tears from the more sensitive members of the audience. The audience pays for the privilege of attending this performance. A small booth is set up nearby to collect money, and stage attendants (ably accompanied by Dubro) circulate among the crowd during performances to make

sure that no one tries to slip in for a free viewing. They also watch out for pilferers who would make off with the pouches of honest and respectable playgoers. It is standing room only, so audiences need to have strong legs; the plays can go on for upwards of two hours on a good night.

Typical of street theater, the Fellowship make minimal use of backdrops or lighting, relying instead on costume and voice to create a sense of time and place. Adriano, however, has a trump card up his sleeve. In his employ is a minor magician, Rashim Varddin, to work illusionary magics if the occasion calls for them. Rashim also doubles as the company's resident special effects man. Versed in some engineering and chemistry, he also produces the smoke pellets and flash powders used in some performances and is able to set up the scaffolding to lift players off stage and make them appear to fly or glide. Such wizardry is usually limited to nightly performances where the crowd is larger and the earning potential greater.

Sixteen individuals make up the core of the Fellowship. Three are musicians, playing the tabor, fife and drum, two are stage hands (Drubo and his apprentice), and the rest, save Rashim Varddin, are full-time entertainers. Adriano sometimes appears in his own productions, usually in important if minor roles: the ghost of a departed king, a dark-souled necromancer, or a divine figure come to show the errant hero the path of righteousness.

Layout

The Fellowship of the Moon hires out space on the bridge from City officials. The wagon is about 20 feet long and 10 feet wide, with the stage platform set 6 feet above the ground. The space underneath this platform is hollow. This is used for storage space when the company is on the road or as dressing rooms by the actors during a performance.

1. Wagon Stage, topside. (6' x 18') The planks that make the stage are of oak about 6 inches thick, sturdy enough to take whatever punishment is meted out by the actors tramping on them. Two step ladders, located at opposite ends of the stage allow the players ingress to the stage. A trapdoor at center stage opens into the space underneath the platform. This is used to effect sudden and magical appearances or disappearances on stage, usually in a great burst of smoke and flash powder. The trapdoor is a recent addition to the pageant wagon and is easily recognized as such. Adriano had it installed when the night performances began to prove a crowd puller and he decided to implement more flamboyant elements in his scripts.

The stage itself is divided into two main areas. The first roughly occupies two thirds of the platform and is the main performance space. The second, separated from the first by a low wicker wall, represents an alternate scene, usually another room or the outdoors. The two are connected by a gap in the wicker wall to suggest a doorway. Stage space is economically used. Props, usually furniture, help set the scene and define positions on stage. These props are kept in the storage space until required for a

performance. Drubo keeps the stage scrupulously clean and in good repair in between performances. If not occupied with other work, he is sweeping the stage or tending to it with his box of tools.

2. Wagon, inside. (9' x 18') Storage space is provided by the inside of the wagon. Props, costumes and other paraphernalia are locked³ in here, stored in trunks, crates and racks. Only Adriano and Drubo have the keys to the lock in the door. The ceiling is about 6 feet high, in the center of which is the trapdoor that opens up to the stage. A step ladder leads to the trapdoor, providing another entry point to the stage. Adriano is thinking of having a winch and tackle installed to physically lift actors from the storage space up to the stage, further enhancing the realism of such scenes. For now, players will have to mount the ladder to make their appearance on stage.

3. Dressing room. (3' x 18') In the span of a performance, an actor might play several roles and costume changes are quite frequent. Two attendants are usually stationed in this long, narrow passage during a performance to tend to the needs of those players who need a quick change. Found here are face paints and cosmetic material, as well as a store of smoke pellets and flash powders concocted by Rashim Varddin.

4. Wagon wheels. Each of these is about 3 feet in diameter and of good, sturdy make. Heavy wedges hold the wheels in place to prevent accidental movement.

5. Audience Space. This encompasses the area immediately around the pageant wagon and is defined by a roughly squarish cluster of market stalls and booths surrounding the wagon. In the mornings, folk stroll around the bridge, occasionally stopping by to watch a comic sketch or a group of singers. At night, it becomes standing room only as any and all who can afford the Fellowship's modest fee crowd into any available space to watch the drama unfolding on stage. Of late, this area has drawn the attention of a number of pickpockets who think to gain some profit pilfering from wealthier playgoers.

Personalities

Adriano Incantatio. *Human male. Ht: 5'10", Wt: 155#, Age: 32.* *Fighting Prowess: Average.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Adriano is almost the quintessential dramatist—a trifle intense, intellectual and eccentric, driven by his love (some say obsession) for his craft. Most of the company know him as their playwright, producer and director, a poet and a lyricist. But there is another side to Adriano, a darker, more sinister aspect to his personality.

Adriano was born Adriano Delbarran, the third son of a wealthy textile merchant. He quickly gained a reputation as the black sheep of the family, a dissolute and wastrel. While his father and



Adriano Incantatio

brothers worked hard at their trade, Adriano was composing songs and plays and trying to inveigle his way into the local group of players. His family frowned on such exploits and it led to many long and burning conflicts. Things finally came to a boil and harsh words and blows were exchanged. In the heat and passion of the moment, Adriano slew his elder brother and had to flee in fear for his life. He left his home, took on another identity, became a vagabond. Thus was born Adriano Incantatio.

It was at a crossroads, near a gibbet which suspended the stiff corpse of a hanged robber, that Adriano met the Ebon Man. The stranger offered him his life's desire in exchange for one boon. He promised to make Adriano the world's greatest playmaker if the young man would work on one masterpiece for him, a play in thirteen acts of such scope and magnificence as to astound Adriano's then naive sensibilities. Adriano agreed to the pact and the Ebon Man told him the story he was to write.

Adriano found that the Ebon Man made good on his promise. Already a talented poet and writer, he found that he could churn out plays as easily as a balladeer could produce senseless ditties. He also secretly began to write the Ebon Man's play, finding himself driven by an irrational need to put the story told to him on that dark, moonless night to paper. Some might say that the young playwright was cursed and had sold his soul to a demon, but Adriano thought differently. Here, finally, was his chance to shine.

Adriano strikes those who do not know him as a vague, distant man, apparently caught in a world of his own. Despite this, he is a charismatic figure, with a commanding presence and power in his voice. He is truly obsessed with his work and this intensity

translates into a cutting, often cruel streak in his personality. He can be a real charmer, or a lovable eccentric, but the real Adriano, the man who made the pact with the Ebon Man, is consumed by a darkness which grows stronger as he proceeds with his secret project. The other members of the Fellowship have noticed his violent outbursts and cold, brooding anger, but have merely chalked it up to pressure or eccentricity. At present, Adriano is four acts into the secret play. He seeks a patron wealthy and powerful enough to fund the final product, and the search has brought him to King's River Bridge and the City.

Adriano is a handsome man with a solemn, sober look in his green eyes. He favors drab or dark clothing that accentuates his pallid complexion. He wears his black hair short and neat, and cultivates a trim beard. He is quiet and polite in his manner, extending all courtesy to strangers, particularly those in positions of wealth and power, thinking that in them is a means by which he might attain his ambition.

The Secret Play: The contents of this playscript is known only to Adriano and the Ebon Man. Whatever it is, it seems to be twisting the young playwright's soul even as he writes it, making Adriano a colder, grimmer person with each passing night. Adriano keeps the manuscript in a large leather-bound book, secured by a lock² and key. He wears the key on a chain around his neck and keeps the book always near him. Adriano writes the play only in the dead of night.

Sigemina D'Estrelli. *Human female.* *Ht: 5'5", Wt: 110#, Age: 24.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Sigemina was enraptured by the glamour of the stage at an early age. She began her profession as a dancer and singer with the old troupe and admits to an infatuation with Adriano, although he has thus far rebuffed all her advances. When Adriano left to form the Fellowship of the Moon, Sigemina promptly followed him. She quickly rose to prominence as the Fellowship's leading actress, garnering choice roles through the sheer power of her skill and talent as a performer. She has perfected the role of the tragic heroine. Her performances as the wronged bride have brought tears to many eyes.

The real Sigemina, however, is a far different person from the chaste, wronged women she plays on stage. Unable to requite her desire for Adriano, Sigemina seeks comfort in the arms of a great many men. She has had many lovers in the past, a new one for each new town the company has visited. Her intimacies with such strangers are passionate and short-lived, primarily because she cannot reconcile her own obsession with Adriano and her need to love and be loved. She has also romanced and broken the hearts of a number of players in the company, though she views all of this with a kind of cold abandon.

Sigemina is a real beauty, voluptuous, yet possessing a certain naive charm about her. With the right costume and make-up, she can transform into the unprepossessing heroine of the tragic romances penned by Adriano. She is also an accomplished flirt



Sigemina D'Estrelli

and seductress, able to entrance any man who catches her fancy with a look and some words. Fond of jewelry, she is rarely seen without her various adornments, even offstage. Most of these are the gifts from previous lovers seeking to gain her affections. Her penchant for such ornaments has earned her the appellation "Magpie" from some of the other players, a cutting reference to both her fondness for bright gems and her personality.

Rashim Varddin. *Fiend.* (details here are for his human form). *Ht: 6'2", Wt: 170#, Age: 40 (apparent).* *Fighting Prowess: Good (but prefers to use magic).* *Magic Ability: Very Good C3, C4, C5. Good: C1, C7.*

Rashim Varddin is tall and swarthy, with lank black hair and a neatly trimmed beard. Soft-spoken and contemplative in his manners, he is not what he appears to be. In a company of actors, Rashim is perhaps the most consummate actor of them all. He is neither human nor of this world. The being known as Rashim Varddin is actually a fiend, an emissary of the Ebon Man, sent to keep an eye on Adriano, to ensure that the playwright maintains his part of the bargain now that he is gaining the success he so craved. Rashim's natural form is that of a vaporous humanoid with amber pinpoints of light for eyes and a night-black maw. In the guise of a small-time magician, the entity approached Adriano and inveigled his way into the company. As the resident mageling and illusionist, Rashim works minor magics during performances and creates flash powder and smoke pellets for special effects. He possesses more powerful spells than he makes known, but refrains from using them in front of other humans.

Along with keeping his eyes on Adriano, Rashim is also tasked with protecting the playwright from those who would harm him. It seems that Adriano is integral to the Ebon Man's plans, and it is important that he be allowed to complete the play unmolested. Already, Rashim has had to surreptitiously get rid of several agents sent by rival playwrights and producers intent on driving this upstart young dramatist out of town. A few corpses have been found in the river and in alleyways, but the Bridge Guard do not suspect the Fellowship.

Drubo. *Human male. Ht: 5'11", Wt: 220#, Age: 36.*
 Fighting Prowess: Good with clubs, hammers, fists and maces. Fair otherwise. *Magic Ability: None.*

Drubo is the company's resident handyman. Skilled in carpentry and metalsmithing, and gifted with the strength of an ox, this bear of a man is responsible for the care and keep of the pageant wagon, props and stage. At times, he also doubles as the company's nightwatchman or bodyguard for the more comely and popular players such as Sigemina, Artris and Adriano. Drubo comes from a distant village and his rustic background is evident in his mannerisms. Since joining the troupe, Drubo has appeared in a number of comic sketches, usually in the guise of a beast or a thuggish villain. Despite his size and background, Drubo has some talent for acting and hopes to win more important roles in the future.

Drubo is an affable fellow, gentle and prone to loud laughter and bawdy humor. He speaks slowly, deeply, with a rustic inflection. Though not particularly bright nor well-educated, Drubo is very level-headed and not easily fooled. Despite his own reservations about Adriano's aloofness, Drubo remains faithful to the playwright, if only because he admires Adriano's flair and talent. He is somewhat in love with Sigemina — along with the other male members of the troupe — and is pliant to her will; but he is realistic in his ideals and knows that a rustic such as he can never win the affections such a beauty.

Drubo is large, broad and hairy all over his body. Not a handsome man, his ruddy, thickly-sideburned face exudes a sense of calm and contentment. His brown, grizzling hair is cropped short and he is usually clean shaven. His eyes gleam with good humor and merriment. Solid as a rock, Drubo is everyone's friend and confidant. He is usually seen in working clothes with a leather brat around him, his bag of tools tied to his belt and a wooden mallet in his hand.

Artris Imaginata. *Human male. Ht: 5'5", Wt: 150#, Age: 16.* *Fighting Prowess: Fair.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Artris is one of the youngest players in the company, but this youth possesses talent matched only by Sigemina and Adriano. A cocky, self-assured young man, Artris sees himself as Adriano's protege. Others of the company agree that if anyone is heir to Adriano's position in the Fellowship, it must be Artris. Strangely, Adriano does not seem threatened at all by this prospect and continues to train the young actor.



Artris Imaginata

Artris is a handsome fellow. His strawberry blonde hair is worn short and in the latest fashion. His eyes are a striking cornflower blue. He has an infectious smile and a way of looking at young women that indicates something more than just simple admiration. He has been in trouble with the lasses before, and Adriano and Drubo have had to bail him out of prison several times. At present, he is on probation, warned that if such errant behavior continues, he will be withdrawn from major productions, thus jeopardizing his position in the troupe. Artris is trying hard to behave, but is uncomfortable under all these restraints.

Artris is very much the free spirit. He is good at heart and doesn't mean any harm, but has little control over his passions. He is impulsive, overconfident and insincere, quick to make friends and just as quick to lose them. It takes a certain sort of person to understand and form a lasting friendship with this mercurial youth. Still, if he lacks discipline in some aspects of his behavior, Artris more than makes up for it in the verve and energy he puts into all his performances. Despite his youth, he has been given chief roles in Adriano's productions, usually playing the dashing hero opposite Sigemina's wilting heroines.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1. Manhunt. An ex-lover of Sigemina's comes to the City, having followed her trail from another town. A powerful, possessive man, he is intent on winning back her favor at any cost. Upon discovering Sigemina's adoration of Adriano, the

brute makes his move. Unaware that Sigemina's love is unrequited, he plans to get rid of Adriano, thinking that with the playwright gone Sigemina will be his once more. Unfortunately, Rashim intercepts him before any confrontation can take place, and the man mysteriously disappears. The adventurers are hired by the man's wealthy family to find him. The trail leads to King's River Bridge and the Fellowship of the Moon. The characters will have to play detective for a while, until the unfortunate man's corpse turns up in a back alley near the markets. Marks on the body indicate that he was strangled by someone very strong. Clues seem to point to the Fellowship, and Dubro becomes a chief suspect: he is the strongest man in the company and has been seen staring longingly at the actress. More perceptive characters might even trace Sigemina's connection to Adriano and through him come to suspect Rashim. Then woe betide the person who crosses the fiend's path.

Scenario 2. Girl Trouble. Artris has a problem, and asks the characters to help him out of a sticky situation without the news getting back to Adriano. He has been romancing the lovely daughter of a wealthy merchant, and the girl has managed to extract a promise of marriage from the youth. Artris does not intend to honor the promise, but fears repercussions from the father, who commands much respect and power in this quarter. He asks the characters to go "smooth it over" with the patriarch while he hides out in the storage room in the pageant wagon. Unfortunately for the characters and Artris, the girl's father has discovered the indiscretion and hired a group of thugs to teach the young wag a lesson. The characters learn of this, and must stop the thugs before they beat the hapless Artris to a pulp. All the while, they must make sure that the other members of the company remain ignorant of Artris' transgression or things will be grim for the youth.

Scenario 3. Get It In Writing. A rival playwright has learned of Adriano's secret script and wishes to copy it and pass it off as his own. He hires the characters to infiltrate the troupe and discover the contents of this new play, promising a rich reward should they return with enough information. The characters will have to get close to Adriano, a task in itself, and try to gain information about the secret play. Only three people know about it: Adriano himself, Rashim Varddin and Sigemina. Adriano will deny that such a play exists. If the characters are persistent, he will send Dubro after them to knock some sense into their heads with his mallet. Sigemina knows about the play but nothing about its content, though this will not stop her from fabricating something. She will only tell if the characters can make Adriano take notice of her, a seemingly impossible task. Rashim will feign ignorance of the secret play but begin to plan a way of getting rid of the characters and their employer to ensure that the secret remains safe.

Bridge Encounter

Marla Adelwine. *Human female. Ht: 5'8", Wt: 120#, Age: 28.* *Fighting Prowess: Fair.* *Magic Ability: Poor C1, C4 otherwise none.*

Marla has curly black hair, a contagious smile and by far one of the most obnoxious jobs in the world. She has to get people to try things. She will spray perfumes on the ladies, or ask shoppers to taste different drinks and say what they like the best. She'll always have a



sample or two from some bakery or restaurant in the City.

City and bridge merchants issue small brass tokens to Marla. She, in turn, gives these to customers who seem likely to purchase goods on the basis of the free samples. The tokens may be redeemed for a small discount at the particular shops. Marla receives a commission for each customer she brings in.

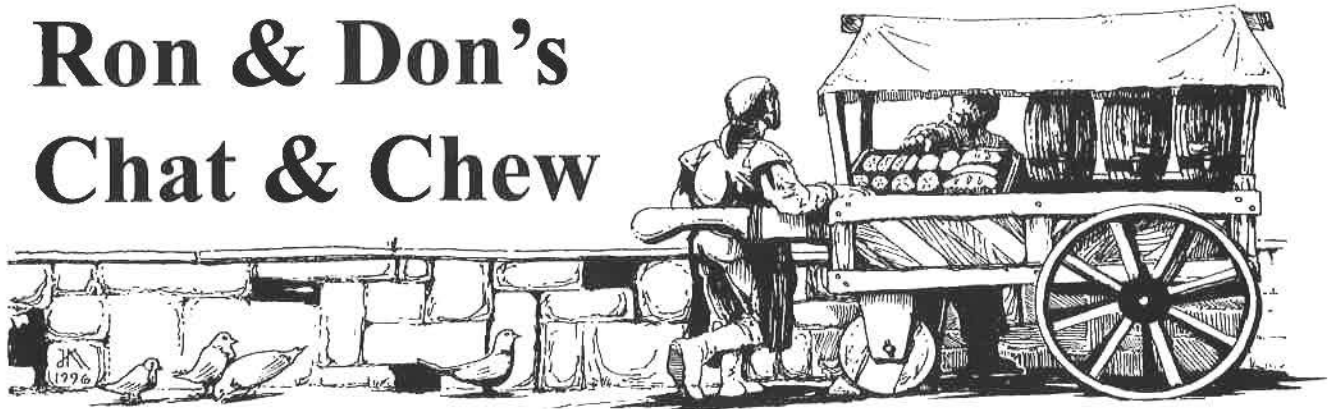
Even though the samples are free, and a discount is offered, there is always a chance that travelers may be offended by Marla, who is relentless in her sales pitches. When people become too annoyed, she has a fairly reliable teleport spell which sends her a few dozen yards away from the conflict.

She has nothing to sell, and carries little cash. She lives in the City with her parents, and hopes someday to have enough money to open her own hairstyling shop. She is currently dating Morrison Haprice [see *CityBook VI: Haprice's Golden Scissors*].

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1. Up, Up and Away. A new baker asks Marla to distribute his cookies on the bridge. However, the baker is actually Hieronymus Zingerr, a practical-joking magician. The cookies cause anyone who eats them to experience a mild levitation effect about an hour after consumption. They'll float a few feet in the air for two hours then gently drift back down. If the enraged, or intrigued, victims track Marla down, she'll be very apologetic — and will give them her last six cookies. The cookies will retain their magical effect for five days.

Ron & Don's Chat & Chew



What is nicer than a sweet, hot pastry in the morning? Don and Ron sell the best, and they're such nice men as well. You feel so at ease talking with them. In fact, you'll tell them everything. Incidentally, didn't you see them watching you and your party during an adventure once? Just who the heck are these guys anyway?

Layout

The *Chat & Chew* cart is six feet long and three and half feet wide. It has a green awning top and two push handles extending three feet. There are three urns filled with beverages: coffee, tea and sweetened lemon juice. These are in no way magically warmed or chilled. They're hot or cold at the beginning of the business day and lukewarm at the end. There are a variety of pastries on the cart, from curry-dill heart-shaped loaves to cherry sweet rolls to sausage in a biscuit. The prices are reasonable, with enough profit for Ron and Don and their two helpers to make a go of things. Ron and Don live exactly as one would expect a lower middle class vendor to live; to complete their study they must appear to be nothing more than they seem.

There's a cash drawer with a lock² and small change. The help is paid daily, as is the bakery in town where Ron and Don buy the breads. Beneath the cash drawer is a small drawer filled with parchment. Whenever Ron or Don will it so, the parchment will begin to print upon itself every word of any conversation within ten feet of the cart. The cart has a concealed chest area, which opens from the side. This normally empty space can be used for discreet smuggling, for it can hold a man bent double, or anything else that fits into a 4' by 2'6" by 1' space and weighs less than 200 lbs.

Activities

Just after dawn each day, Don leaves his rented room in the City, and when safe to do so, takes a tiny wooden cart from his pocket. The proper magic words expand it to its full size. Don picks up the first load of bread from a City bakery at six in the morning. He's on the bridge with Marion by eight. They work all the way to the opposite end of the bridge by ten, then work their way back by noon. On the return trip, all the prices are ten percent less, since the coffee isn't piping hot and the bread isn't 100% fresh. Marion then runs off to her lessons, and Don takes the cart to a local temple where he gives the remaining bread to the poor. There he meets Ron and John. Don returns home, and works on his notes.

Ron picks up the second load of bread at two and is back on

In a world where there are a variety of cultures, philosophies, religions, species, and magics, mingling with the customers of the *Chat & Chew* is a great opportunity to study sentient life. That is how Ron and Don spend their days, though they could easily acquire a good share of the world's riches by following their other interests. Both are extremely competent magicians, and Ron is a warrior as well. Yet they operate what appears to be a simple bakery cart on King's River Bridge.

The two of them met on a magical espionage mission five years ago. They discovered in each other an intense curiosity about how intelligent life shapes and is shaped by its environment. Ron and Don decided that if they could come up with a way to observe people from all walks of life, from as many philosophical and ethnic backgrounds as possible, they might actually learn more about how the mind works. For their study to succeed, they needed two things. First, a way of being "unobserved observers", and second, a constant supply of test subjects.

The Cart

The bakery cart has a very strong enchantment upon it. Most who come within ten feet will feel they have to stop and chat. If they do, they will trust the vendors implicitly. Not only will they answer any questions Ron and Don may ask, but will even volunteer secret information if no other customer is present to overhear. Don and Ron began their project five years ago. They're going to continue for another year. Ron then plans to travel to the ends of the world, and Don is going to write some (he hopes) very important books.

the bridge by three. He and John make the afternoon run — end of the bridge by five, back by seven. John takes all the unsold bread in a large sack to give to friends and family. Ron pushes the cart back toward Don's lodgings, ducking into any convenient alley along the way to say the magic words and shrink the cart to a tiny model. Ron stops by Don's room for dinner, and Ron returns the cart. Ron then heads home, and the cycle is repeated the next day.

Don and Ron's rooms contain nothing unusual, save for hundreds of pages of notes kept in their magical valises. The valises are ordinary looking.

The friends are getting a little bored of late. They room at different inns, and pursue different social lives. If one of them is on to a good mystery, he might not tell the other.

Personalities

Don Ovidius Naso. *Human male. Ht: 6', Wt: 250#, Age: 46.* *Fighting Prowess: Average in hand-to-hand, Poor otherwise.* *Magic Ability: Legendary C5, Good otherwise.*

Don is firmly built, with black curly hair and dark brown eyes. His communication skills are beyond compare, and Don has no trouble making the impression he desires on those he meets. Don loves to appeal to different people in the same group in different ways. He can be very romantically charismatic to one, a wise and trustworthy father figure to another, and a fairly dumb country hick to a third. When he wants to be, he can be as unnoticeable as wallpaper.

Don is interested in everything, and often uses his communication sense to ask the most disturbing questions that he can: "Why are you the group leader?" or "Why do you hate trolls?" He almost always asks the question that will produce reframing of people's conceptions.

Don owns two magical items: a ring that makes him both invisible and inaudible, and the inconspicuous valise with the odd ability to hold all of his library and notes. He likes to use his ring to follow people he thinks are interesting, or to track after Marion if he thinks she's in trouble.

Don's most annoying habit is giving unwanted advice, which even more annoyingly is often correct.

Ron Bhairava Hara. *Human male. Ht: 6' 6", Wt: 230#, Age: 36.* *Fighting Prowess: Very Good hand-to-hand, Good everything else.* *Magic Ability: Very Good C5 and C1, Average everything else.*

Whereas Don "charms" everyone with magic-enhanced communication skills, Ron sways the crowd through good looks, tales of military adventure, and knowledge of far-off lands. Ron has long black hair, a full beard, and enchanting eyes. Ron can kill silently, scale sheer walls, and become "invisible" by disguise and shadow. Despite his skills as a warrior (or perhaps because of them), Ron is a very peaceful man, seldom resorting to



Don Ovidius Naso

violence. He does love practical jokes, and his stealth abilities make him a fierce prankster. He is a great dialectician, and can speak with most people for just a minute or two and know where they come from — and he enjoys surprising them with just that fact. He too owns two magical items. One is a valise just like Don's, and the second is a key that allows him to open all locks that are less than Excellent.

He is intensely interested in travel and far away places, and abhors being lied to. (Liars will learn about the practical joking side of his character.) If he hears of any particularly dangerous or harebrained scheme, he will often track along, even if not asked. Remember, he's a difficult man to spot. He always keeps an eye on John, who has a knack for getting into trouble.

Marion Bookner. *Human female. Ht: 5' 6", Wt: 108#, Age: 19.* *Fighting Prowess: Average with dagger, Poor otherwise.* *Magic Ability: Poor C7.*

Marion has dyed her hair raven black and painted her pouty lips scarlet. She wears dark clothes, and everything about her screams "Artist." She is an aspiring poet, with talent and a long way to go. She is also a very good linguist (as are Ron and Don). She's taking afternoon classes at the Poets' Guild, learning obscure ancient tongues. She's really crummy as an assistant, full of attitude.

Marion's on the look-out for good stories, and some real adventure to work into her poems. She's a bit naive, and apt to find adventure in the wrong places.



Ron Bhairava Hara

John Rayner. *Human male. Ht: 5' 8", Wt: 120#, Age: 18.* *Fighting Prowess: Good with dagger or hand-to-hand.* *Magic Ability: Average C7, Poor C5.*

John has bright red hair, innocent blue eyes, and a charming roguish manner. He's got quite an eye for the ladies, and an even more roving eye for purses and gems. Ron has tried to lead the lad away from stealing, and does a pretty fair job as long as he can keep an eye on him.

John's a good thief of the pickpocket variety. He tends to boast a little too much of his expertise in other areas, and generally act "tough" which sometimes gets him into bad situations.

Scenarios

Scenario 1: Better Than Truth Serum. Someone in a powerful group has noticed that people talk too much at Ron and Don's Chat and Chew. They want to know why, and they want to obtain the power. The players are hired to find out the secrets of the bakery cart.

Scenario 2: The Help Is In The Way. Either John tries to steal something from the players at the worst possible time (while Ron's along to protect him), or Marion decides to follow the players (or their archenemies) to gain some new story. Ron and Don will try not to fight the players, merely popping in and out and arranging the situation so that their friends aren't hurt.

Scenario 3: Isn't that the guy? The players have a minor

interaction with Ron and Don. A few months later, in the most unlikely, strange, bizarre setting, the students of human behavior show up again. Of course it's coincidence, but players never believe in coincidence . . .

Scenario 4: Roommates. The local innkeeper makes a serious error when assigning the adventurers quarters. She gives them the key to Don's room.

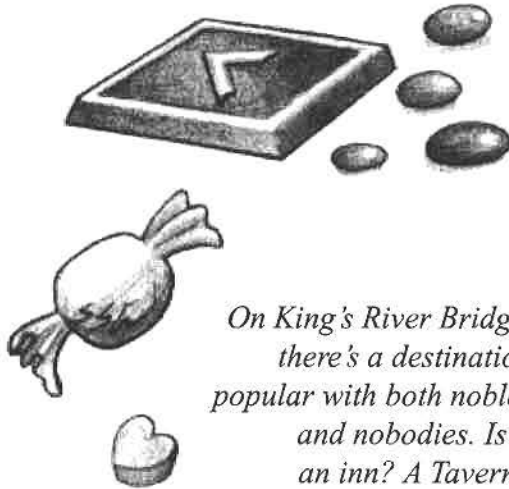
The adventurers will have the opportunity to open Don's valise and discover the reams of confidential information held within. They might also find his ring of invisibility, or even the tiny bread cart!

Scenario 5: Help Me With My Homework. Marion needs to complete an assignment for one of her classes at the Poets' Guild Training Centre [see page 34]. She has to find a "hero" and write an epic about the champion's deeds. While the party visits the bread cart, one or more of the adventurers is coerced by Don to mention a past exploit, which Marion overhears and finds intriguing for her project. She will then hound the group until they tell her the juicy details.

If indeed someone spills the beans, the bridge gossipers will have a field day spreading the tale after Marion performs her epic in public (another requirement for class credit). Will the news reach the wrong ears and endanger the party? Or will they indeed be granted the respect that epic heroes deserve?

Ron and Don serve three functions for the Game Master. First, they can inject a lot of paranoia into the game, while each player tries to figure out why their character just spilled their guts to a guy running a bread cart. Secondly, Ron and Don provide a way to insert any information about anything to the game. Thirdly, since their questions tend to deal with world-construction issues, they can be used to get players to think and speculate about any number of philosophical ideas. They are best used as catalysts rather than central figures in a scenario.

The Confection Connection



*On King's River Bridge,
there's a destination
popular with both nobles
and nobodies. Is it
an inn? A Tavern?
Actually, a candy store.*

In an adventurer's world, food is by and large a bland form of sustenance, even in a place as diverse as the City. While there are the occasional fine foods, the average City dweller's meals often consist of boiled mutton followed by tasteless bread. For these people, there is a place in the City where food is not just to be enjoyed, but to be truly savored! The Confection Connection sells many sweets including the rare and expensive substance known as chocolate.

Services

Lita Lee and adopted daughter Sherry are the proprietors of the City's finest sweet shop. Every day, Lita and her staff tirelessly sell a select variety of candies. Available in small packages or individually, the candies are sold on a per-item basis with prices among the highest seen in the region. But gold is well-spent at The Confection Connection, and no one regrets paying a little extra for the best sweets they have ever had. You're likely to meet Lita or Sherry behind the counter, while Zeljak Naust and Kavorn Salem work behind the scenes.

The Confection Connection sells a variety of sweets. Modestly priced hard candies are available in various fruit flavors, depending on seasonal availability. Licorice and mint candies are also available for modest prices as well. Somewhat more

Fremont, California's Kevin Crossman wrote "The Bottomless Keg" for *CityBook V* and "Haprice's Golden Scissors" for *Citybook VI*. He is happy to report that he finally received his Masters Degree in Library Science. Kevin is now married and also runs a World-Wide Web site called "Lip Balm Anonymous."

expensive are cinnamon sticks which can be put into teas and coffees. Lita sells these candies to other merchants, such as the Widow Rohls [see *CityBook I*], who put the candies into their cakes and cookies. The quality of these items is unsurpassed.

While the previous wares are almost commonplace in the City, chocolate is very rare. Because the cacao tree is not indigenous to the land, no one had ever heard of chocolate before Lita arrived. Lita imports the beans that when combined with sugar and other ingredients make chocolate. Because chocolate is such a delicacy, the prices charged are very expensive, with some variability depending on quality. Chocolate is usually sold in solid blocks or in small bite sized globs, sometimes containing nuts, fruits, or other delicacies. The most expensive candies Lita sells are chocolate candies filled with a potent rum-like alcohol. These are often served at fancy Up Town [see *CityBook VI*] parties by those who want to impress their guests with their culinary sophistication. Lita will gladly fill custom orders, usually at substantially higher prices.

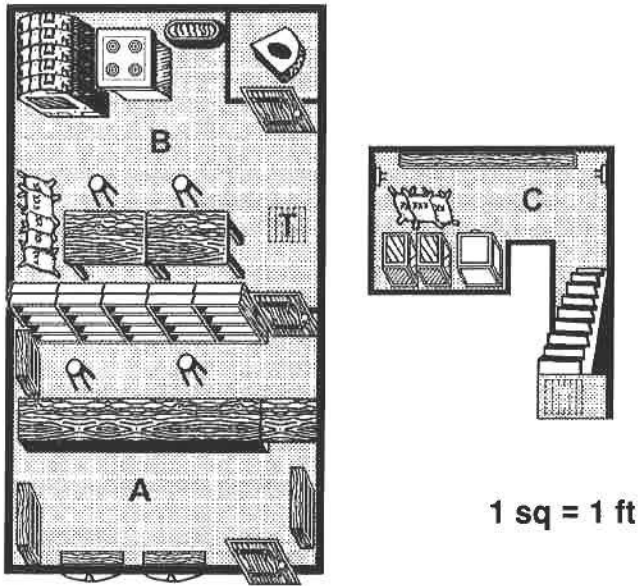
King's River Bridge provides an ideal location for Lita's business. The visible location and proximity to trade routes ensures a steady demand for her candies. This results in the high prices which cause Lita's profits to continually increase.

Cooking Sugar: Because sugar must be heated to different temperatures depending on the desired finished consistency (from syrupy to hard and brittle), candy making is a true skill in the City. While many merchants use sugar in their products, none can produce such consistent results as The Confection Connection. Lita is tight-lipped as to how her kitchen is able to produce the candy so effectively. Truthfully, it happens because Sherry can magically alter the chemical composition of the sugar while it is cooking. Her magic is much more precise than the skill of even the best chef in the City. Thus, the sugar is always of the same consistency and flavor, allowing for a better looking and better tasting product.

Layout

A. Storefront. (11' x 13') Colorful candy and packages sit on a shelf visible through the front windows. The front door locks⁴ when the store is closed and is generally propped open during business hours. Several shelves of packaged candies and a long counter greet customers. A basket with prepared packages of candy sits at one end of the counter, while loose candies are available on the shelves behind. A locked³ cashbox (normally under the counter) is stored in the Cellar (C) at night. Two tall stools are available to give the feet of Lita and her staff a break.

B. Back Room (13' x 13') This area serves as the preparation area for the candy. There is a large oven and stove, along with a water pump and sink which drains into the river. A large, smooth oak table allows several people to work simultaneously on different projects. Shelves provide storage for supplies and space to cool candies. A dozen or so old cacao beans are stored in a glass jar in plain view on one of the shelves. Lita hopes this will



deter would-be thieves from looking in other areas of the store such as the safe where most of the good beans and other valuables are actually hidden.

A privy here drains into the river. Opposite its door is a hidden trap door to the cellar which can become a bolthole for the candy shop proprietors in case of trouble. Someone actively seeking secret doors would easily find it, but it can easily be missed by hurried or distracted investigators. The door into the storefront locks².

C. Cellar. (6' x 9') A steep staircase leads to this small room which has a low (6') roof. It is often crowded with rare candy ingredients and other store valuables. The safe is always locked⁵ and holds the cashbox at night. Lita's prized cacao beans are also stored in the safe. Because of the cramped nature of this chamber, Zeljak has begun to fondly call the cellar "his room."

Personalities

Lita Lee. Human female. Ht: 5'2", Wt: 140#, Age 38.
 Fighting Prowess: Poor. Magic Ability: None.

Lita is a smart, friendly woman who is a well-known and well-respected member of the business community. Lita has a terrific smile, light brown skin, and large brown eyes which make her inviting to the opposite sex. Her long black hair is usually drawn up when working, but Lita often wears it down when socializing. She relates well to the children who frequent her shop, and although Lita has many suitors, she has never had a serious relationship with any local man. Lita has a good sense of humor and often jokes with her regular customers. She lives with adopted daughter Sherry in a small cottage on the outskirts of the City.

Lita came to the City from her homeland far to the south.

Betrothed in tribal ritual against her will when she was 15, Lita tried for five years to conceive a child. Her husband often beat her in his frustration over her sterility and eventually banished Lita from her primitive clan. Fleeing with food and plants for nourishment, Lita was befriended by Julius Senmac who brought her to the City. Julius left her in the care of the aging proprietor of a local bake shop, Herbert Dalgert. Herb taught her the language and ways of the City. One day, Herb noticed some cacao pods that Lita had brought with her. Having heard of the exotic confection called chocolate, Herb experimented with the ground cacao beans and soon created a passable chocolate. Lita took an interest in the recipe and it soon became her specialty. When Herb died, Lita sold the bake shop and used the money to start the The Confection Connection on King's River Bridge.

Lita loves children. In fact, she often takes in orphans for short periods of time until she can find a good home for them. She took in a young Sherry Poirier ten years ago as a temporary measure, but grew to love her so much that she adopted her shortly thereafter. Due to her experiences with her husband, Lita avoids



Lita Lee

close relationships with men and has vowed never to marry again. Because of this, Lita watches Sherry carefully, lest she fall under the spell of those who would be a bad influence.

Sherry Lee. Human female. Ht: 5'3", Wt: 95#, Age 16.
 Fighting Prowess: Poor. Magic Ability: Average C9.

Orphaned when she was four, Sherry is the adopted daughter

of Lita Lee. She survived under the watchful eye of Fizhak Thornberry [see *Fizhak's Waifs*, page 110] for two years before Lita took her in. Little Sherry's stories about life with the brownie and his band of orphans were never taken seriously. On rare occasions, Sherry catches a glimpse of Fizhak on the bridge, but these sightings trouble her and she does not speak of them.

Sherry is just blossoming as a woman, with some girlish lankiness still present. Sherry's straight black hair, round brown eyes, and milky white skin make it obvious that in just a few years Sherry will be among the City's finest looking women.

Although neither she nor Lita know her family background, Sherry's self-taught magical ability to change the chemical composition of various foods provides evidence that at least one of her parents was a magic-user. This ability has been finely honed in The Confection Connection, and lately Sherry has been thinking about attending wizard's school. The world of magic and alchemy intrigues her, and she always provides an attentive ear to discussions on such subjects. Although some of the local boys fawn over her, she has not yet taken an interest in them.

Sherry and her mother have a good relationship. Sherry loves her dearly. Although she enjoys working at the store and Lita is respectful of Sherry's magical inclinations, in recent months Sherry has begun to contemplate her future. Lita seems to be grooming Sherry to take over the store upon her retirement. Zeljak and Kavorn both know about Sherry's abilities, though neither voice an opinion on how that might affect her future. Several of Sherry's friends are starting to begin apprenticeships and others are contemplating warrior or magic schools. Sherry knows she has a magic gift and sometimes it seems a shame to be wasting it on chocolate. But parental pressure, even in a good relationship, is often very powerful.

Zeljak Naust. Dwarf male. Ht: 3'7", Wt: 160#, Age 70.
 Fighting Prowess: Average. Magic Ability: None.

Zeljak works behind the scenes at The Confection Connection, doing all the various odd jobs which are always needed to make things run smoothly. He usually arrives early, takes a break in the middle of the day, and then returns to stay late and clean up after closing. Zeljak has worked for years with Lita and is very loyal. She pays him good money, and though he is quiet at work he is serious about doing a good job for her. Zeljak is just an average fighter. He rarely needs to use his fighting skills, but does not hesitate to provide some muscle if trouble should appear.

A family man, Zeljak lives in a small dwarven settlement just outside the City. He especially likes to treat his young children to the sweets he sometimes brings home. Always dressed in modest, but clean, working clothes, Zeljak enjoys his job and the joy it brings people. Generally happy-go-lucky, Zeljak has been known to display a keen wit and a good eye at observing people and their habits.

Kavorn Salem. Human male. Ht: 5'8", Wt: 155#, Age

14. Fighting Prowess: Poor. Magic Ability: None.

A growing young man, Kavorn has just started working at The Confection Connection as a delivery boy. He carries candies to other merchants who sell them in their restaurants or shops and he makes special deliveries to places such as Up Town. Kavorn also visits other merchants, where he picks up raw ingredients used in the store's candies. He is a hard worker and is forever pestering Lita to let him work in the store selling or preparing candy. Sherry thinks he has a crush on her, but he really has a crush on Lita. This adolescent fascination is likely to pass soon, as he meets more girls of his own age.

Kavorn lives with his poor parents in a small home inside the City. He has been able to afford a few nice clothes to wear to work, and he is helping pay for his family's expenses. Kavorn has olive-colored skin and short brown hair. He is very intelligent and well-spoken, especially given his age and background. His parents pressured him into the job market and he finds the work exciting. Lita has noticed some restlessness in the boy, a trait that might be rekindled by the next adventuring party.

Julius Senmac. Human male. Ht: 6'2", Wt: 205#, Age 42. Fighting Prowess: Fair. Magic Ability: None.

Trader, smuggler, rogue, and heartbreaker; Julius Senmac is all of these things. He is also friendly, caring, unselfish, and loyal, but only with some people. Lita Lee is one such person who has known the inside of Julius Senmac.

Dressed in comfortable but still fashionable clothes, Julius



Julius Senmac

travels with a war horse and broadsword, trading and deal-making throughout the continent. Some have (rightly) claimed that Julius has a small ship which he uses for trading and traveling far distances by sea, though he always denies it, preferring not to let others have any idea where he might be obtaining his craved contraband. Julius knows people on both sides of the law at each settlement along the major and minor trading routes. Many of the items he smuggles are illegal. True to his own code, he kills only when threatened and rarely double-crosses the people he deals with.

Lita needs fresh cacao beans every few months, and Julius always arrives with a supply just when they are needed. Lita's candies are famous in places far away, thanks to Julius's trading partners. Julius sometimes tells Lita of the happenings in her homeland when she asks, though he never volunteers this information to protect her feelings. With long black hair and a goatee, Julius is considered handsome by most women. He is respectful of Lita's avoidance of relationships, but would happily volunteer if she ever changes her mind about men.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Sweet Riches. Julius Senmac is weeks late with his latest shipment of cacao beans. As Lita's supply begins to dwindle, she becomes worried about her supplier and friend. Perhaps nefarious groups in the City have kidnapped Julius to find out where he obtains the beans that everyone seems to crave. The adventurers could be paid with either gold or chocolate to find Julius and expose his kidnapers. Alternatively, Lita may hire the adventurers to go to her homeland to get more cacao beans. The journey itself is long and arduous, but could be made even more so by bandits and dangers along the way.

Scenario 2: Enchanted Candy. Somehow, Sherry's magic has gone haywire on one batch of candy. All consumers of a particular personality type (like fighters) fall madly in love with her. Sherry may find this flattering at first when just a few potential suitors are affected, but when dozens arrive she will become quite frightened. Eventually, someone will start a "fight for my lady" and mayhem will ensue. The adventurers may try to stop the melee, or some of them may be involved, having eaten the enchanted candy themselves.

Scenario 3: Love for Lita. Perhaps the enchanted candy scenario above puts Lita at the center of one of the adventurer's attention. Due to her past negative experience, Lita will naturally be afraid. The adventurers could try to win her heart with heroism at the local joust, or with riches from the local dungeon. Perhaps Sherry will try to protect her mother with heretofore unknown powers in Combat Magic.

Scenario 4: The Return of Fizhak. Sherry has begun to see Fizhak Thornberry following her about the bridge. This is happening so frequently that Sherry is afraid to step outside the candy shop. While visiting The Confection Connection, the

player characters will be asked by Lita to escort her daughter on an errand, and protect her from the strange little man who has been trailing her.

Fizhak is trying to tell Sherry that he has been contacted by her real mother and father. These wizards want their little girl back, now that she has come of age and her magical powers have proved their worth. If the players keep Fizhak from interacting with Sherry, the brownie will have no choice but to let the wizards deal with the adventurers who stand between them and their child.

Scenario 5: That Candy's Bad For Your Teeth! Julius is smuggling small gemstones out of the City by hiding them in the centers of Lita's chocolate candies. (This is one reason he has always kept The Confection Connection adequately supplied with cacao beans!)

Unfortunately, Toady [see *The Bridge Guard*, page 39] snatched a chocolate from Julius's pack and painfully discovered the truth. Now Lita is implicated in the scam, although Julius swears she had no knowledge of his camouflaged contraband.

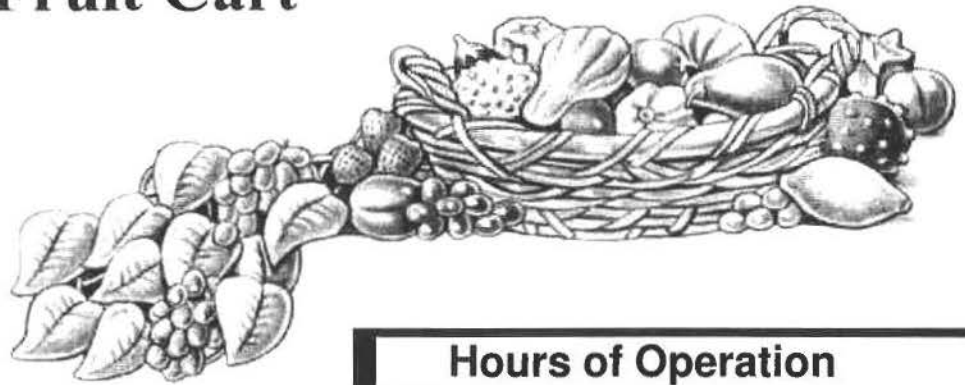
When the adventurers come upon the scene, the Bridge Guard are trying to break down the door of the candy store to arrest Lita. Zeljak has barricaded the entrance, and is hiding with Lita in the secret cellar room.

Public sentiment is on the side of the candy shop, and the locals will beg any competent-looking warrior to put a stop to the guards' invasion. Will the party interfere? Can they help clear Lita's name?

Scenario 6: Gobbling Goblins. Some of the goblins under the bridge have discovered that delicious candies are free for the taking from Lita's store. From the bridge's sewage tunnels, they've been climbing up through The Confection Connection's privy hole and making themselves at home in the back room in the dead of night.

Lita is at a loss to explain who has been getting into her locked shop at night, stealing her wares and leaving such a mess! Perhaps the adventurers will hear her bemoaning the situation and offer to guard her store one night to discover the thieves.

Orada's Fruit Cart



The countryside beyond King's River Bridge supports numerous orchards and fruit fields. Succulent treats from near and far may be sampled from Orada's Fruit Cart.

When you arrived late last night to King's River Bridge, the guards "suggested" that you delay your trip into the City until morning. Now that they've had a better look at you, they've decided to let you pass. In the bright morning sunshine, you feel the first pangs of hunger. Then she catches your eye — a beautiful, raven-haired woman tending a brightly painted fruit cart. She's strangely familiar, but beyond the guards, the only person you've seen for days was a stew-cart man closing up shop in the wee hours of the prior evening. Shrugging off your doubts, you approach the cart . . .

Services

Orada's Fruit Cart is stocked with seasonal fruit from the farms and orchards dotting the surrounding countryside. Typical offerings include apples, grapes, pears, melons, and berries. Occasionally Orada will be able to obtain rare fruits from southern climes from Julius Senmac [see *The Confection Connection*]. The cart also sells common shelled nuts. At one end of the cart is a small two-drawer wooden cabinet with a hinged lid that Orada keeps latched. She has been known to open the cabinet for persistent customers, but generally does not respond to casual requests for a look at its contents.

Mike Keller's work has appeared in Flying Buffalo, Inc.'s *Maps: A Book of Cities and Maps 2: Places of Legend*. Mike is educated in Anthropology and has worked as an exhibits preparator at the Mesa Southwest Museum for the last ten years. Mike is single and will date nerdlily or hairless women. He has been known to associate with pirates.

Hours of Operation

Orada's cart is always on the bridge during the light of day. She can frequently be seen struggling to push her cart into position just after sunrise. As the long shadows of the afternoon close in on the bridge, Orada will quickly pack up her wares, no matter how brisk the business or disappointed the customers. In fact, her eagerness to close up shop is a matter of jest among the other merchants, for Orada never seems to have as much trouble pushing her cart home as setting it up for the day! Like many of the cart vendors, she does not open for business in the rain. Even on cloudy days, Orada is often not seen on the bridge.

Layout

Orada's store is an 8-foot wooden, wheelbarrow-shaped pushcart with spoked wooden wheels. The cart is brightly painted with images of realistic and fanciful fruits and flowers. Thin boards crisscross the cart's interior to segregate different types of fruit. The wooden cabinet is tucked into one of these sections near the center. The cabinet's interior contains rows of small bins filled with tiny fruits, nuts and seeds. Each of these tidbits is marked with unusual symbols. Orada keeps a potted plant in one corner of the cart. This bright, purple-blue thistle is not for sale.

Secrets

Orada's cart typically contains at least one extremely unusual varietal fruit. Generally enchanted, commonly poisonous, and always expensive, Orada claims no knowledge of the taste, quality, or side effects of these treats, and warns potential buyers that consumption is at their own risk. Sometimes she even dares them to give the strange fruit a try. If the trial goes badly, she shows little emotion whether the diner suddenly drops dead of a seizure or turns into a pumpkin. (In case of the latter consequence, the victim can be assured of a good home on Orada's cart.) When rumor of magical fruits and nuts draws delvers to inquire at the cart, Orada relates to their requests cryptically, sometimes merely opening the lid of her wooden cabinet and uttering, "What you seek can be found amongst these."

Personalities

Calerynn Murro, aka "Orada." *Cursed Elf, female human form. Wt: 160#, Ht: 5'9", Age: 50 (appears 25).*

Fighting Prowess: Poor in this form. As himself, Fair.

Magic Ability: Fair, reverse C2 only.

Calerynn Murro the elf learned the hard way that humans could be formidable opponents; especially human wizards. After insulting a sorcerer's daughter, Calerynn was the target of an especially harsh curse, at least from his point of view. The elf was enchanted to be a human woman in sunlight, and a human man in darkness. Although some might see advantages to this situation, Calerynn was horrified, for he held a deep seated hatred of humans. When the elvish wizards could not remove the curse, Calerynn found himself shunned by the elves, who were embarrassed by his predicament. After several appeals to the sorcerer for mercy were unsuccessful, Calerynn drifted away from his homeland and settled in the City.

Another side effect of the curse affected Calerynn's magic ability. As an elf, he was an accomplished magical healer who specialized in enchanted foods. In the form of "Orada", his C2 abilities have reversed. Orada can only poison her wares or embue them with unnatural and dangerous side effects. This development is an avenue of revenge: Orada sells the



Orada

predominantly human populace of the City strange fruits and nuts with uncertain effects, and watches in bitter amusement what consequences result.

To Calerynn, one of the most objectionable aspects the curse afflicts upon him is the attractiveness of his human forms. "Orada" is a voluptuous beauty with flowing, dark, gently curling hair. Her complexion bears no blemish, and her teeth are pearly white and perfectly aligned. This attracts a horde of men to the fruit cart on a daily basis who seek her favor, with whom Calerynn as "Orada" must deal politely in order to protect her spot as a cart vendor in the competitive environment of the bridge. While maintaining an outwardly pleasant personality, Calerynn secretly sneers at the bridge folk's acceptance of him as Odara, laughing at how little he thinks of them in return. Calerynn's opinion of humans is very low, and he considers them fundamentally ignorant and unobservant. Although a number of aspects of his clothing and demeanor are the same between his forms, he makes only a token effort to disguise these similarities. The observant may notice that both Orada and Adaro wear an elvish necklace, and both have a hole in the toe of their identical left boots.

If the sun sets or is obscured by heavy clouds, Orada's physical form will begin to morph into its male counterpart. This transition occurs so quickly that Calerynn must immediately leave the bridge if the light fails. With the change comes an increase in upper body strength, which helps Calerynn shove the cart back to his home in the country.

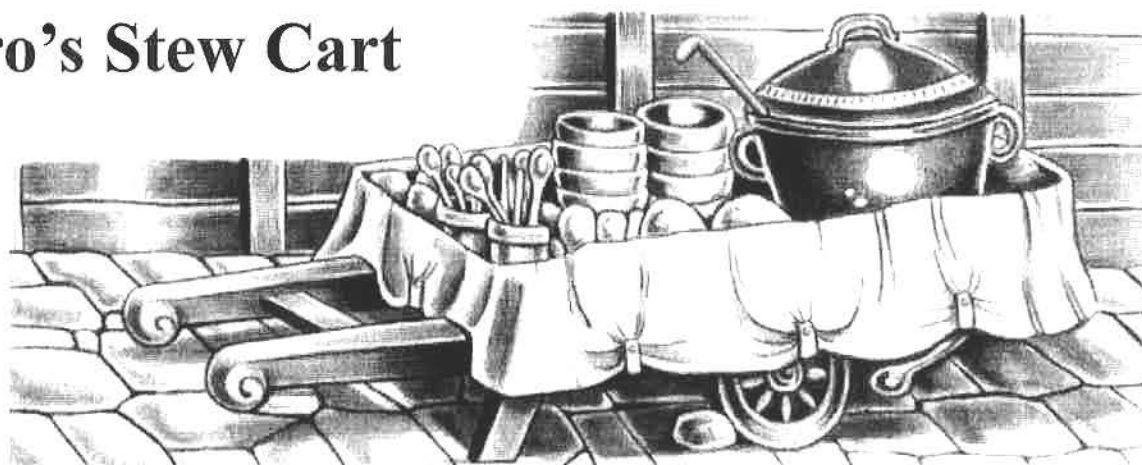
Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: A Taste of Magic. The delvers are provisioning for a short trip and decide to buy a little fresh fruit. Orada insists on including a bag of oddly shaped fruits that they do not recognize free with their purchase. Any of the party who try the fruit will change to the opposite sex within 12 hours. Orada will insist she doesn't know how to change the affected adventurers back, but cites rumors that a local stewcook's recipe can reverse the effect. Who has the secret recipe? Is it Tolman Bromson [see *Sweeney's Pie Shoppe*, page 43], Scrogga [see *The Guzzling Gargoyle*, page 68], or Adaro [see *Adaro's Stew Cart*, page 66]?

Scenario 2: Oh, Nuts. One of the nuts Orada sells is actually a dormant parasite whose life cycle is activated by being digested. The unfortunate snacker will fall ill immediately, and if his stomach is not emptied in short order he will be devoured from the inside out by the parasite's larval form.

Scenario 3: An Apple a Day. When the delvers arrive to do their fruit shopping, Orada's cart has almost been picked clean. Only a dark, richly green fruit remains. The effect of the fruit on those who touch or eat it is merely cosmetic: any organic material that the juice touches (lips, fingers, teeth, etc.) will be dyed an apparently permanent dark green. Desperate to be rid of the taint, the delvers are directed to the bridge's resident physician [see *Blind Geoffrey's*, page 82]. Geoffrey has his own special, and painful, remedies to remove the "green demons."

Adaro's Stew Cart



When the late hours have closed the other restaurants on King's River Bridge, hungry travelers can always grab a delicious bowl of hot stew from Adaro.

Unless it's festival season, the late-night leisure activities on King's River Bridge are rather limited. Most of the merchants retire in the early evening, and even those who keep their doors open later dim the lights after The Fellowship of the Moon's last performance. For true night owls, the choices for food and drink are limited to the rotgut liquor of Dirty Joe's Tavern and the satisfying bowls of stew from Adaro's Stew Cart.

Services

Adaro's stews are familiar to the patrons of the bridge's drinking establishments. Besides being delicious, they seem to have a healing effect. When the barkeep at Dirty Joe's Tavern identifies customers who have "had enough", these unfortunates are often encouraged to pay Adaro's cart a visit. The Guzzling Gargoyle began to serve stew from its own kitchen in response to the long lines at the cart vendor. The brewery's stew however, though tasty and filling, is no hangover cure. Even Tolman Bromson [see *Sweeney's Pie Shoppe*, page 43] has tried to cash in on the stew craze by offering his pie fillings sans crust. Despite this competition, Adaro does a brisk business, strolling the bridge behind his cart bellowing, "stewed meats!" in an earsplitting voice that can be heard for many blocks.

In addition to his stews, Adaro sells an assortment of utensils, mostly bowls and spoons. A few dry porridge or soup mixes are sold by the bag in small portions for travellers. The service at Adaro's cart is quick and businesslike. He doesn't like to chat with his customers, and those who linger near the cart to eat their meal will be studiously ignored.

Hours

Adaro appears on the bridge after sunset, and keeps late hours. He is always present to wish Mother Footcandle [see *The Oil Shack*, page 24] a good evening when she dims all but the essential oil lamps of the bridge. Although his customers complain that he should open for lunch and dinner business, Adaro refuses to change his habits. He likes the night, he explains simply, and that's that. His dislike of daylight extends to all activities; he even hires messengers to pay his cart taxes rather than present himself to the tax collector in the light of day. The Bridge Guard, at first suspicious of his nocturnal business, have come to trust Adaro as a keen observer of night time happenings on the bridge.

Layout

Adaro's 8-foot cart has long handles and spoked wooden wheels. A plain canvas drape lines the bottom of the cart and hangs far down over the sides. Some of the vendors tease Adaro about how ugly his cart is. But he merely smiles and insists that the canvas both insulates his stew pot and keeps his cart clean. The canvas is secured to hooks screwed into the bottom of the cart, and Adaro spends a lot of time fussing with the tie-downs, especially on windy nights. His large crock of stew is nestled at one end of the cart. The rest of the space is filled with his other wares. On colder nights, Adaro sets up a small brazier to keep refillable urns of stew warm for his customers.

Personalities

Calerynn Murro, aka "Adaro." *Cursed Elf, male human form. Wt: 160#, Ht: 5'9", Age: 50 (appears 25).*
 Fighting Prowess: Poor in this form. As himself, Fair.
 Magic Ability: Fair, C2 only.



Adaro

Almost every night, “Adaro” endures the recurring question, “Haven’t I seen you somewhere before?”

Those who deal with Orada’s fruit cart during the day have often commented on a family resemblance between the two vendors. Adaro always shrugs off these speculations with a terse remark about there being a lot of his kin in the City. This persistent line of conversation is a constant irritant to Calerynn as he suffers under his gender-bending curse. A human woman in sunlight, and a human man in darkness, the elf endures his unhappy fate and rues the day he ever called that sorceror’s daughter a “soiled offspring of Adam.”

During the moonlit nights on the bridge, Calerynn longs for the days when he was a popular young elf among his own kind. But after the curse was inflicted, the elves shunned him, and now his only “friends” are his fellow tradesmen on King’s River Bridge. While maintaining an outwardly pleasant personality, Calerynn secretly sneers at their acceptance of him as Adaro, laughing at how little he thinks of them in return. The troll bridge guards in particular treat him as a comrade, while Calerynn struggles to hold his breath at their stench and his stomach at their disgusting habits.

As an elf, Calerynn was an accomplished magical healer who specialized in enchanted foods. In the form of “Adaro”, he has maintained some of his curative magic. Although he is working hard to redevelop the extent of his powers, at this time he can only brew up soups and stews that cure common ills of the times. His magic seems to be coming back to him, but at an infuriatingly slow pace.

To Calerynn, one of the most objectionable aspects the curse

afflicted upon him is the attractiveness of his human forms. “Adaro” is a handsome man with a full head of dark, gently curling hair. His complexion bears no blemish, and his teeth are pearly white and perfectly aligned. This attracts a horde of women to the stew cart of an evening to seek his favor, with whom Calerynn as “Adaro” must deal politely in order to protect his spot as a cart vendor in the competitive environment of the bridge. However, Calerynn’s opinion of humans is very low, and he considers them fundamentally ignorant and unobservant. Although a number of aspects of his clothing and demeanor are the same between his forms, he makes only a token effort to disguise these similarities. He is mainly concerned that the canvas covering on his cart remain tightly secured, lest it reveal the brightly painted floral decorations the cart flaunts when filled with Orada’s wares [see *Orada’s Fruit Cart*, page 64]. The observant may notice that both Adaro and Orada wear an elvish necklace, and both have a hole in the toe of their identical left boots.

As the sun rises and the rosy light of dawn greets the City, Adaro’s physical form will morph into its female counterpart within half an hour. Calerynn always leaves the bridge long before his transformation begins, since the change reduces his upper body strength and makes pushing the cart back to his home in the country difficult.

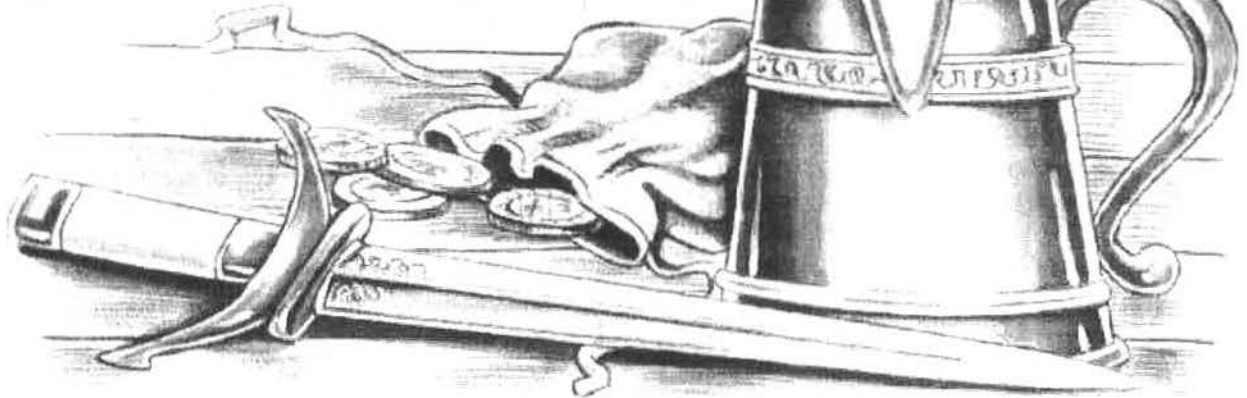
Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Strange Change. On their way to King’s River Bridge late one afternoon, the adventurers discover a beautiful, unconscious woman lying beside an overturned fruit cart. Apparently she was attacked by bandits who made off with her day’s profit. As they tend to her wounds, they watch in astonishment as she changes from woman to man. When Adaro awakes, he will beg the party to keep his secret, perhaps confiding how ashamed he is of his human forms if there are elves in the group. If any of the party are high level wizards, Adaro will surely request their help in dispelling the curse.

Scenario 2: False Witness. One night, the troll bridge guards are pestering Adaro for information on who might have set a fire near the tax collector’s office. To get rid of them, Adaro looks across the bridge and points out the first human he sees, who happens to be one of the player characters.

Scenario 3: Creatures of the Night. Because of the late hours he keeps, Adaro knows much about some of the activities that occur under the cover of darkness on King’s River Bridge. He’s seen Red [see *The Cornerstone Ghost*, page 106], Fizhak [see *Fizhak’s Waifs*, page 110] and even a goblin or two [see *The Halfling Rat Catchers’ Guild*, page 16] lurking on the bridge. Daytime personalities might suggest that adventurers looking for information on late night activities talk to Adaro. However, his willingness to assist them will be colored by his prejudices. In the course of the conversation, a mage in the party may be able to detect that Adaro is not what he seems . . .

The Guzzling Gargoyle Taproom and Brewery



The best riverside ale comes from Finhinaus Toshtok's brewery. But don't drink too much, or you may start hearing things . . .

Travelers along the King's River Bridge who require large quantities of finely crafted brew do little better than The Guzzling Gargoyle, where the locally famous Toshtok's Golden Guzzle Lager is brewed. The Guzzling Gargoyle is the only brewery located on the bridge, and is one of the very few in the City to produce a lager beer, as opposed to the common ales, a fact of which Brewmaster Finhinaus Toshtok is justifiably proud. The Gargoyle's location is the key to its unique brew. While ales ferment fairly quickly at temperatures of up to eighty degrees, the lagering process requires weeks of ever colder temperatures, ideally finishing fermentation just above the freezing point.

Thanks to the river location, the Gargoyle is able to produce a perfectly lagered beer the year round. Fin's technique, painstakingly perfected over the last four generations of Toshtok brewmasters, is as unique as his brew. When the malt and hops (the wort, in brewmaster's jargon) are ready to ferment, they are loaded into huge kegs built especially for the purpose, then lowered through a trapdoor in the brewery floor and suspended in the river below at the depth where the river's temperature matches the optimum for the first stages of lagering. As lower temperatures are required at later stages of fermentation, the kegs are dropped deeper into the cold waters, until they rest nearly on the bottom of the river, coming to perfection in icy darkness.

This lagering process, executed impeccably, results in a smooth, clean tasting beer capable of cutting through the dust of the City and dispatching even the most rapacious thirst during the hottest season. A pint of Golden Guzzle Lager is a much sought commodity, appreciated by discriminating drinkers

throughout the City. Both an amber and a dark version of Golden Guzzle are brewed at the Guzzling Gargoyle.

In addition to the brewery, the Guzzling Gargoyle also houses a small taproom where thirsty bridge travelers can down a pint of freshly tapped Golden, and satisfy their hunger with a bowl of homemade stew. The taproom is fairly small, with space for only a dozen patrons or so. Distinguished and noble persons have been known to make occasional appearances to sample the famous golden brew, though it is rather more common for a few nefarious local fellows to be found mixed among the small crowd of beer connoisseurs at the Guzzling Gargoyle Taproom.

A Visit To The Brewery

Buyers of beer for many of the local taverns, as well as travelers and adventurers seeking a superior pint of brew, often find the Guzzling Gargoyle Brewery and Taproom highly recommended by those in the know. Whether by the barrel or the pint, Golden Guzzle is a rare treat. Upon entering the establishment, the first task faced by a party would be finding a place to sit, as there are few tables. Those are nearly always occupied by other seekers of refreshment. Space at the bar is equally limited. Buyers seeking larger quantities are well advised to complete their purchases before the taproom opens to the public at 4:00 PM. Those arriving during taproom business hours need to speak to the brewmaster, Finhinaus, behind the bar. When possible, Fin will try to accommodate them, but his taproom customers come first.

Upon securing seating space, travelers are served at the tables by Scrogga, Fin's harried apprentice, who earns her keep by running full pints to the tables, and washing empty ones. Should the travelers find space at the bar, they would be served by no less than the brewmaster himself. Brewmaster Finhinaus Toshtok is usually too busy to pay much attention to strangers, aside from filling all orders with alacrity. Should the party arrive during

one of the rare slow periods, however, Finhinaus will generally be quite gregarious and engaging, insisting that his friends call him Fin, and that the members of the party have his permission to do so as well. He will also attempt to interest them in purchasing a barrel or two of his beer, though Fin never employs hard-sell tactics.

The main area of the taproom is occupied by the bar itself, a few small tables that could seat two or three people each lining the walls, and a medium-sized fireplace, upon which a large iron pot of stew simmers. The aromas of garlic, pepper, and cooking meat waft from the iron pot to fill the interior of the taproom, and a bowl of the stew provides a hot and filling, if simple, meal.

Fin is a potential source of boundless wisdom concerning brewing, as it is his obsession and life's work. With even the slightest encouragement, he will dramatically render the story of his great-grandfather's discovery of river-lagering [see *Personalities*]. Fin also is privy to a fair amount of bridge gossip, and often will know whom to talk to if the party is in need of any special services, particularly those of which the legal authorities might disapprove. This sort of information is only given if Fin establishes some sort of rapport with the members of the party, or if a large enough bribe is proposed.

One way to establish a great rapport with Finhinaus is to show an interest in his finely crafted lager. If business is particularly slow and the travelers express any interest, Fin will offer to give them a tour of his brewery and store room, in which he takes great pride. Should a party take the tour, and pay courteous attention, Fin will consider them OK in his book. He usually gives a pint of his Special Reserve Golden Guzzle, one of the finest brews available anywhere, to those he believes would appreciate it. Those who are capable of appreciating it will be deeply impressed indeed.

Hours Of Operation

The Guzzling Gargoyle Taproom opens around 4:00 PM every day except Monday, which Finhinaus spends brewing. Normally, Finhinaus works throughout the day brewing batches of Golden Guzzle, but it is not uncommon to find him hard at work producing a special variety of beer for an upcoming holiday, royal birthday, or other special event. On Mondays, he spends the entire day in the brewery, and will not open the taproom, as there is always much work to be done in preparing for brewing, brewing, cleaning up after brewing, and finally shipping barrels to eager customers. Scrogga, the apprentice, usually assists during these periods, unless she has been sent on some errand. During the brewing process, and especially during the day-long brewing affairs each Monday, Finhinaus boils large amounts of malted barley in the huge tuns (basically, 800 gallon kettles), tossing in hops and other secret ingredients like some mad scientist, and stirring the contents with an enormous wooden paddle. This is actually rather amusing to watch, though Finhinaus does not take well to being ogled by a bunch of tourists on brewing day.

The brewery is open for orders and pick-up of finished barrels of beer throughout the day, from around 8:00 AM until an hour before the taproom opens. If business in the taproom is slow, Fin will allow orders of beer to be picked up even after 4:00 PM, when the taproom is open. He views this as an interruption, however, and will often be blunt and somewhat irritable when dealing with such late coming customers. The taproom closes around 10:00 PM, sometimes earlier if business drops off. On holidays, or during times of particularly heavy nightlife, the taproom will remain open as long as customers keep drinking.

Layout

A. Taproom. (14' x 26') This is the public area of The Guzzling Gargoyle. It is the only part of the establishment most visitors will ever see. The taproom is generally a lively place of socializing, though seating is very limited. Barroom brawls are surprisingly rare at the Gargoyle, and it is unusual for more than one or two disreputable characters to appear simultaneously in the taproom. The atmosphere is friendly, the Gargoyle is a very cozy place to spend the evening, especially on cold winter nights.

A1. Bar. (2' x 17') The bar at the Gargoyle comfortably seats half a dozen customers at the stools lined up along it. When open for business, Fin spends most of his time behind the bar, serving pints of Golden Guzzle Lager as fast as they can be drunk. The bar is made of blond wood, with brass fittings in the shapes of gargoyles in various positions and attitudes, many of whom are apparently drinking from tankards. A stout club of leaded oak rests in a bracket just under the bar on Fin's side, ready for trouble should it raise its ugly head. The club is enchanted, and has a 50% chance of causing anyone it is used against to fall asleep should it make contact.

A2. Fireplace. This is a medium-sized fireplace, where a large iron kettle of stew is always kept simmering. A small trap door lies directly below the fire grate, opening to a chute that dumps the ash into the river. A loose brick on the right interior of the fireplace conceals a small tin box. The box contains three small rubies, worth 20-30 gold pieces each, and the incisor tooth of a mermaid. The tooth allows anyone holding it to breathe underwater for up to three days each month.

A3 - A5. Tables. These three tables provide seating for patrons who cannot find room at the bar. They are entirely unremarkable, except for some rude dwarven sayings that have been carved in the surface of the table at A4. Characters sitting here are usually served by Scrogga rather than Fin, who generally confines himself to the bar.

A6 - A7. Tapped Lager Kegs. These kegs rest on racks in the storeroom, their tapped tops fitting through holes cut in the wall to that Fin can easily dispense the goods for which his establishment is noted. The left hand keg holds Dark Golden

Guzzle, the right is filled with Amber.

A8. Main Entrance. The door here is large, heavy and wooden. When the taproom is open, the door is unlocked. After hours, the door is bolted from the inside by two heavy duty iron bolts. There is a small, arched window (12" x 10") located in this door, which sheds a cheery light out to the street.

B. Store Room. (11' x 21') Hundred gallon barrels of finished lager line the back wall of the store room, surrounded by bins of malted grains and other ingredients used in brewing. This is a part of the tour which Finhinaus will gladly give before the taproom opens, or when business is slow. Normally only Scrogga or Fin would come back here.

B1. Dark Barley Bin. Malted barley that has been toasted to a deep, rich brown awaits the brewmaster's attention. About 300 pounds of grain are kept in this bin. Scratched on the lid, in a strange hand, are the words "Thieves be warned! We are vigilant." If anyone tries to take more than a pound or two of this grain, or tamper with it, the party will immediately be attacked by the mice at B3.

B2. Light Barley Bin. This bin is identical to the one at B1, except that it contains untoasted malted barley the color of light straw. Scrawled on the lid of this bin are the words "You are being watched." Again, if more than a pound or two of this grain is taken or if tampering is afoot, the mice at B3 will attack the party.

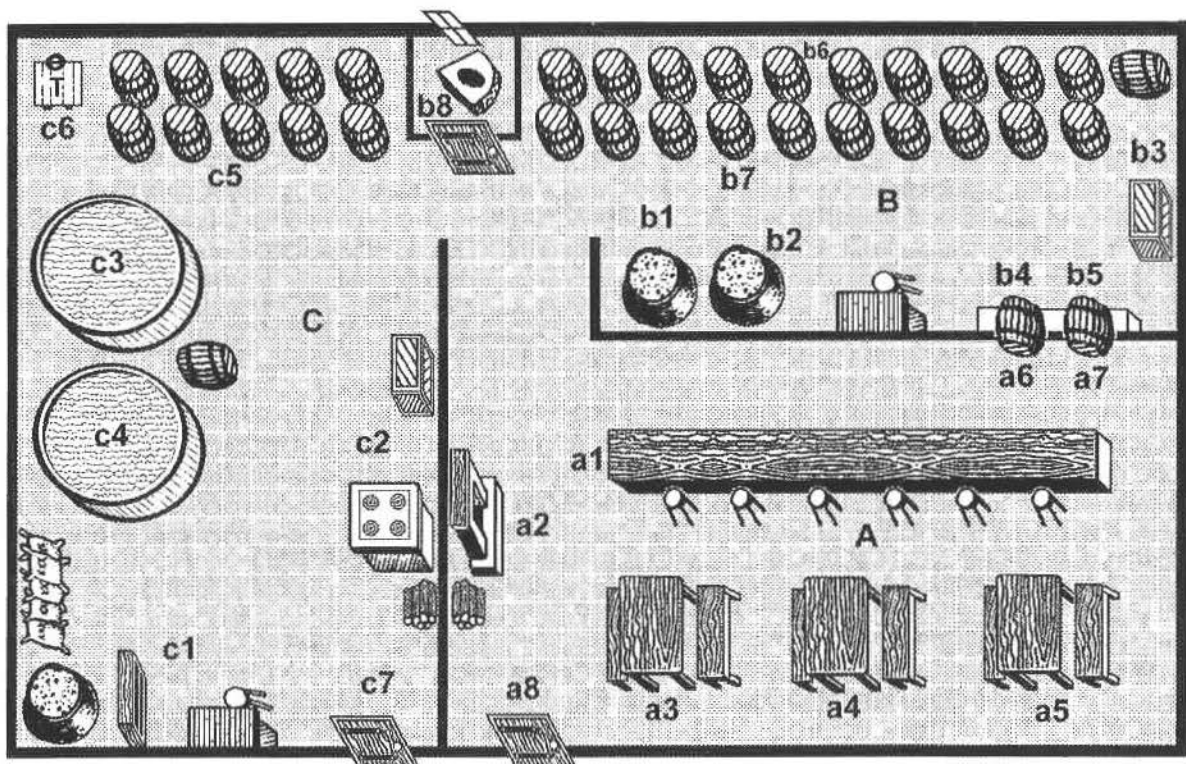
B3. Talking Mouse Nest. This nest is the home of twelve talking mice. Fin allows the mice to live here because they drive off other pests, and he is vastly impressed with their ability to converse. Plus, they don't eat much. In fact, he considers them pets. The mice eat and will vigorously defend the barley at B1 and B2, and give warnings to any adventurer they see to "Stay out of the grain." They are reticent to discuss any other matters, and will ignore most questions that do not involve food.

Being mice who live next to a bar, they have accumulated a collection of about a hundred miscellaneous coins, and a dozen small items of jewelry dropped or forgotten by drunken patrons. They may also have found a key or two for potentially important places around town under similar circumstances. They will trade their treasures for grain, fresh vegetables, or most importantly, cheese. When provoked, they will attack with a selfless courage, biting fingers and other exposed and vulnerable flesh with their sharp teeth. The mice have a 10% chance of infecting their victims with a ravaging disease whose symptoms are similar to plague. Left untreated, the disease will kill an average human in seven to ten days.

The mice have no magical ability, and have no idea that their gift of speech is remarkable in any way. When asked why they talk, they will reply "Doesn't everyone?", "Who wants to know?", or "Why do *you* talk, human?"

B4 - B5. Rack and Tapped Keg. These racks hold the tapped kegs which provide Fin with beer to draw at A6 and A7. The keg at B4 is filled with dark lager. B5 contains amber lager.

1 sq = 1 ft



B6. Treasure Keg. This keg is noticeably lighter than the others, and only contains half as much beer as a normal keg. It has a false bottom, which conceals a pouch of 500 gold pieces and a leather-bound journal listing the recipes for Golden Guzzle Lager and several other varieties of beer.

B7. Golden Guzzle Special Reserve Keg. This keg contains 100 gallons of the finest lager to be found anywhere in the City. It is a special reserve, which Fin has set aside for special occasions and for very close friends. The full keg would be worth 5000 or more gold pieces to a wealthy beer aficionado.

B8. Lavatory Window. This long window directly overlooks the river, and is normally open during business hours. The window provides a wonderful view of river traffic, and its panes are etched with the Toshtok family's ancient coat of arms. The Toshtoks were fierce warriors before they took to brewing.

C. Brewery. (15' x 25') In this location, Brewmaster Finhinaus cooks up malted barley, hops, and a variety of secret ingredients. This is also where he spends his time before the taproom opens, receiving orders for his brew, and shipping barrels of finished Golden Guzzle to their assorted destinations. It is rather like a large kitchen, with various utensils, pots, pans, etc. hung from the walls. A block and tackle hangs from the ceiling at C6, but the room is dominated by the large, 800 gallon tuns at C3 and C4.

C1. Spice Cabinet/Order Desk. This cabinet is filled with hops and various spices used by Finhinaus as he prepares his lager. It is also where he keeps copies of orders to be filled, and any buyer placing an order will be brought here for it to be duly recorded. Some of the hops and spices are quite rare, and could be sold on the black market for around 350 gold pieces.

C2. Stove. This is a large stove used to prepare small batches of less than 25 gallons of assorted special components for Golden Guzzle Lager, and its special holiday variations. Stored on racks near the stove are various implements for cooking, including large kettles, spoons, and measuring devices.

C3 - C4. 800 Gallon Tuns. These large, identical copper kettles each have a capacity of 800 gallons, and Fin uses them for boiling the usual Monday batches of Golden Guzzle Lager.

C5. Barrels. These 100 gallon barrels either await lowering into the river, or have just recently been retrieved from the river to be sent to storage or to a cultivated client. There is a slight chance (about 1%) that one of them might contain Golden Guzzle Special Reserve, which would make it a dear prize for the discerning thief.

C6. Trapdoor. This door opens to reveal an unobstructed view of the river. A block and tackle in the ceiling above the trapdoor is used to lower barrels into the river below for fermentation

and lagering. Below the door, a series of iron hooks trail ropes into the river. At the other end of each rope, a barrel is suspended at a specific depth in the river. Scrogga, under Fin's direction, routinely adjusts the depths as necessary until the barrels are ready to be hauled out of the river and tapped, or shipped to an eager buyer. At irregular intervals and in the dead of night, a small shipment of assorted smuggled goods makes its departure to a boat waiting below, or a similar shipment might arrive through this portal. Once or twice, the barrels lowered to the river have been reputed to hold not beer, but wanted criminals bent on making their escape from royal justice via the river.

C7. Entrance. Into this door pass all the ingredients that Finhinaus uses in his brewmaster's craft, and out of this door kegs of the resulting lager are shipped to gourmet cafes and the homes of epicurean citizens throughout the City. The entrance is unlocked when Finhinaus is in the brewery, and any buyers can easily enter to place their orders. At all other times, the doors are locked³, and Finhinaus carries the key on his person.

Personalities

Finhinaus Toshtok. *Human male. Ht: 5'6", Wt: 200#, Age: 43.* *Fighting Prowess: Good with club, Very Good bare-handed, Poor with all other.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Finhinaus, known more commonly as Fin, is a stocky, powerfully built fellow. Fin enjoys nothing more than sharing brewmaster lore and telling the tale of his great-grandfather's discovery of the perfect method of lagering, the result of which is the famed Golden Guzzle Lager.

According to Fin, one very hot summer day, his great-grandfather, Torhno Toshtok, encountered brigands who robbed and nearly killed him, then tossed him into the King's River. As he sank into the river, Torhno was roused to semi-consciousness by the bitter cold of the deepest water. As if in a dream, Torhno heard the voice of his long dead brother, who had drowned in the same river when Torhno was very young, speaking to him as if giving a lesson. "The deepest waters are coldest" said his dead sibling. "Remember this, brother, for it would serve a brewmaster well." With that, Torhno lost consciousness. Rescued barely in time by a passing fisherman, Torhno soon recovered his strength and immediately set out on his mission to become a brewmaster, using the message from his dead brother as a starting point. After much trial and error, Torhno developed the basic method of lagering beer in the river by using the different depths of water for temperature control.

For four generations, this method of brewing has been refined, and has brought fame and fortune to the Toshtok household. Finhinaus is the consummate craftsman obsessed with obtaining the finest ingredients. He will pay top prices for rare hops and other components he seeks to give his lager just the right touch, and he may even be willing to hire a set of intrepid adventurers to obtain certain rare flavoring agents and other beer ingredients



Finhinaus Toshtok

for him.

With time for nothing but improving his craft, Fin never married. However, he has a very deep, fatherly affection for his young apprentice Scrogga, who shows great promise with the craft of brewing. Fin plans to leave the Guzzling Gargoyle to her to carry on the family tradition.

Scrogga. *Human female. Ht: 5'4", Wt: 125#, Age: 17.*
 Fighting Prowess: Fair with knife or dagger, Poor with all other. *Magic Ability: None.*

Scrogga was found abandoned as a baby on the bridge near The Guzzling Gargoyle. The identity of her parents is unknown, as not even a note was found on the poor infant. The cloth she was wrapped in, however, was fine linen, suggesting that perhaps Scrogga was the bastard child of some scurrilous nobleman. Scrogga, however, bears no resemblance to anyone of high lineage, and thus her pedigree remains a mystery.

Fin took pity on the poor child, and raised Scrogga as his own. Scrogga has proven to be a hard working, intelligent girl, and seems to have a knack for brewing that portends a great future as a brewmaster. She also loves Finhinaus, and constantly strives to please the brewmaster, working harder than any apprentice he has ever trained.

Scrogga is pleasant, even-tempered, and well-mannered. She will gladly assist anyone in the taproom, filling all orders promptly and with great courtesy, assisting patrons in finding their way home when they have overindulged, and generally

being helpful. Her appearance and dress is somewhat plain, and she attracts surprisingly little attention from the male patrons. Strangely, her bearing might even appear noble, if one was looking for such a thing. On one curious occasion, an inebriated traveler grabbed Scrogga as she brought another round to the table. Fin hurried to rescue the young woman from what he took to be the beginnings of an indecent proposal, but Fin stopped in his tracks as the odd scene unfolded before him. The stranger looked at Scrogga in shock that registered through the fog of alcohol, crying out "Your highness!" before passing out cold amid scattered snickering at this remark. The traveler claimed to remember nothing upon awakening, and quickly paid up and left. The incident was soon forgotten, written off as the absurd ramblings of a drunk who had guzzled one too many. For a time, however, some of the locals jokingly took to calling Scrogga "Princess", much to her embarrassment. Scrogga enjoys cooking up the stews that Fin offers for his customers.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: At Lager-heads. Dirty Joe [see *Dirty Joe's Tavern*, page 47] greatly desires his own barrel of Golden Guzzle Special Reserve, but Finhinaus refuses to sell his fine lagers to his disreputable watering hole. Dirty Joe hires the party to break into the brewery and steal the formula from Finhinaus. Dirty Joe plans to get his revenge by selling the secret recipe to other brewers in the City. The latest rumor is that the formula is hidden somewhere in the store room under a false stone.

Scenario 2: A Pinch of Spice, Part I. Mistress Bromson [see *Sweeney's Pie Shoppe*, page 43] covets one of Finhinaus's special brewing spices. She engages the adventurers to sneak into the taproom and steal it. Provided they avoid the mice (and avoid enjoying too much lager), they have a good chance of succeeding and collecting a generous reward.

Scenario 3: A Pinch of Spice, Part II. Finhinaus is at a loose end. The upcoming celebration of the King's birthday requires the brewing of a batch of the monarch's favorite beer, and the special herb crucial to the recipe is nowhere to be found! Fin hires the party to enter a nearby swamp, or some such equally unpleasant or dangerous location [see *Sweeney's Pie Shoppe*], and obtain the herb for him.

Scenario 4: My Heroes! One of the talking mice has strayed from the brewery and is cornered behind a slop barrel by a hungry cat. The mouse, as loud as its tiny voice can screech, is calling out to any passing human for help.

If the adventurers hear and help the tiny victim, the mouse will lead them to some of the treasures in Fin's brewery.

Personal Services

It's hard to resist the call of shopkeepers flaunting their wares. Few can cross King's River Bridge without willingly contributing to the healthy merchant economy. Not only are there plenty of goods and supplies to be purchased, but there are other services of common interest to adventurers, including medical care and boat rental.

Those seeking a true symbol of status might visit *Helani's Fine Timepieces*. Garand Helani is said to be the finest clockmaker in the entire City, and his timepieces are sought by the wealthy and influential. Perhaps the party might mingle with these aristocrats at a royal ball or City festival, where a rented costume from *Tunki's Other Wear* will transform them for an evening of intrigue. Bargain gear and clothing can be found at *The Clothes Chest* and *Teeble's Found-Goods Warehouse*. For just a few coins or even a trade-in they can re-outfit their entire party.

If their quest calls for a journey upriver, *Skinhold's Boat Rental* can see to their traveling needs. If they float back into town worse for the wear, the friendly caregivers at *Blind Geoffrey's Barberie and Cauterie* will have them up, and running, in no time.



Helani's Fine Timepieces



*Nobles desiring the finest in
timepieces know that one
man can fill this need.
Garand's shop produces
the most accurate and
beautiful clocks in the City.*

Twenty five years ago, Garand Helani opened a small shop in the heart of the City. He lived in the back of his store along with his wife, Alea, and their infant son, Darel. Within five years, the shop grew from relative obscurity into a thriving business, with more orders than Garand could fill by himself. Unfortunately, he was never able to find an apprentice possessing enough skill to help with his business.

All this trade ensured that the family was never in need of anything. Garand accepted nothing but the finest in clothing and furnishings for his family and his home. This wealth came with a price, however. Garand was in his shop seven days a week, often into the late hours of the night, while trying to catch up with the latest orders. He resolved that once he had enough money put aside, he and his family would close up the shop and take a much needed vacation, perhaps seeing more of the world than the marketplaces of the City.

That day never seemed to come. For ten years, the shop prospered on the skill of its proprietor. When Darel was 17, Alea died of a rare illness carried to the City by a traveling merchant. Garand was overtaken by both grief and guilt. He blamed himself for not making enough time for his family. Before he could deal with these emotions, he received another blow when Darel packed his belongings to run away with a band of adventurers. Father and son argued that night, ending their relationship on

bitter words.

Garand realized that he had not seen his son grow into a man, and he felt a bitter emptiness where his family used to be. Several years passed, with no word from Darel. Garand closed his shop and reopened a new one on King's River Bridge, hoping to see his son among the travellers.

The Present

Seven years after opening his shop on King's River Bridge, Garand has built his business back up to the level of success he was enjoying in the City. The bridge exposes his work to many wealthy patrons who choose to live outside the City, as well as his previous clientele.

Despite the losses he's suffered, Garand is still an upbeat, positive man. He continues to work at his chosen craft, but now he allows himself time to appreciate the world around him. Instead of planning for a future vacation, he's learned to take pleasure in the people he sees each day.

He has relaxed his standards a bit, and has been able to find a capable apprentice. Vek, his apprentice, is a relative from the countryside who did not take to his family's farming lifestyle. Although he is not as skilled as his master, Vek is learning his craft quickly. The two of them live quietly in the back rooms of the shop.

Garand treats Vek as a son. Vek, in turn, respects Garand as a father figure. After taking in Vek, Garand became more aware of the number of orphaned and homeless children living on the bridge. In an effort to get to know them better, he began crafting toys in addition to his clocks. Every Saturday and Sunday, Garand closes the shop to customers, and invites the children inside. He has been instructing a group of children in woodcarving, hoping to give them a marketable skill. A number of the children are showing a talent in the craft, and Garand has been selling their carvings in his shop. The full purchase price of these items is returned to the carver, so many of the children have gained enough money to survive through the shop.

Services

Garand's shop is one of the smaller ones on King's River Bridge. His business does not require a large inventory, and he has modest needs for living quarters. The shop was originally a storage building for a neighboring business. Garand was able to purchase the building for a very low price when another merchant fell on hard times. The building itself is plain but well cared for. A brightly painted sign hangs above the door, displaying the Helani name and a picture of a clock surrounded by an ivy border.

The shop is open from mid-morning to dusk, five days a week. Customer traffic is thin, due to the amount of time it takes to build a custom timepiece. Normally, a messenger will carry an order from a prospective customer to the shop, and wait for Garand to provide a price estimate before returning to the City. After doing a preliminary sketch of the clock, Garand will summon the customer, in order to get approval for the design and collect a 50% down payment. His clocks are expensive, costing roughly as much as three month's lodgings for a commoner. Despite this, he usually has more work than he can complete.

Helani's Fine Timepieces also sells wooden toys. Garand's toys began as simple affairs — toy soldiers carved from his scrap wood. After getting to know some of the children, he began listening to their ideas, and his toys grew more complex. He has carved elaborate marionettes, small boxes, puzzles and games for the children.

Recently, Garand has begun experimenting with clockwork toys. His wind-up carriages and wagons are significantly more complex than his earlier toys, and they cost more in time and materials to make. Many of these are sold to merchants inside the City, for resale to wealthy patrons. Garand's latest project is a wind-up soldier that will actually walk, but he has been unable to complete a working model.

Garand refuses to craft toy weapons for the children. He will not allow any of his students to carve daggers, knives, or anything of the sort. Garand is strongly opposed to the adventuring lifestyle, and doesn't want to put ideas in their heads. Knowing that many of the children live in the streets, and that some resort to begging or picking pockets, he doesn't want to provide weapons, real or otherwise.

Layout

A. Main Shop. (16' x 16') This room contains one small display shelf, directly across from the entry. A counter separates this section from the work area. Two large windows take up most of the front wall, providing ample light for the shop, and allowing passersby to see the interior of the shop. Garand's shop is a small affair, because most of his work is done by commission. Due to the continuous demand for his work, there are very few clocks on display in the shop. There are two large mantel clocks, each meticulously crafted and mechanical, with animated figures that

move around as the clock strikes the hour. The first is several years old, and was made in his old shop in the City. The cabinet is carved with an abstract woodland design, and the face is painted with leafy vines. As it chimes, small doors in the upper corners open and birds pop out, whistling a tune. The second is a recent addition, and reflects Garand's new attitude toward life. The cabinet is wood, but it is carved and painted to resemble the stones of the bridge itself. On the hour, two doors pop open, and the figure of a child chases a barrel hoop from one side of the clock to the other. The shelf around this clock is filled with carefully carved boxes, candle holders, and various decorative items crafted by the children Garand teaches. None of these show the same degree of skill as the clocks, but they are still of good quality. A small card next to each item is marked with the initials of the carver, and the asking price for the item. In most cases, the prices are a few silver pieces or less for these items.

A small table fills the middle of the room. Three chairs surround the table. A pad of paper and various drawing instruments cover the table. Here Garand sits with potential customers, sketching the design as it is described to him.

Along one wall is a counter covered by a thin layer of wood shavings. A number of stools surround it. This is where the children work on their projects. Under the counter, Garand has stored all of his scrap lumber and a few 'extra' pieces for his proteges to work on. The wall at the end of the counter is covered with nearly new tools, of a lower quality than Garand's personal set. These are used by the children.

B. Workroom. (14' x 16') A large, L-shaped workbench dominates this area. The top of the bench is covered in wood shavings and metal filings. Tools such as knives, chisels, and files hang from the walls above the bench. A well-worn whetstone rests on top of the workbench. A locked³ cashbox holds whatever funds Garand has on hand.

A small forge is pushed back into the corner of the workbench. Molds for the various gears and other components are stacked neatly nearby. Garand initially casts the parts, and then files each piece to its final size. This corner of the workbench is marred by faint scorch marks.

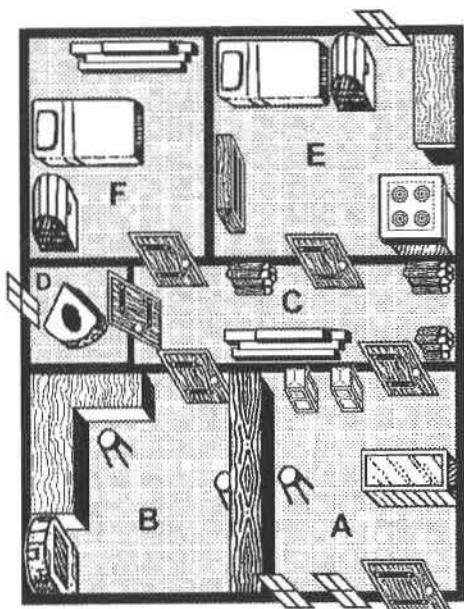
A shelf under the workbench is filled with various toys, none of which are completed. As quickly as he completes a toy, it is either sold to a passing customer, or given to a child. Between his savings and the money he makes off the clocks, Garand doesn't need to sell the toys. He's more interested in bringing happiness to a child than in making any additional profit.

C. Storage Room/Hall. (8' x 22') This room serves as both a corridor to the living quarters and a storage room. Various hardwoods and small steel ingots are stacked neatly at each end of the room and along the walls. A small window at each end of the hall allows some light in.

D. Privy. (8' x 8') This small room is connected to the sewer tunnels running through the bridge.

E. Garand's Room. (16' x 18') Garand's room is spartanly

1 sq = 2 ft



furnished, reflecting his simple life. A narrow bed lies along one wall, with a trunk at the foot. This trunk contains Garand's clothing and a few personal items. A narrow shelf above the bed holds a few treasured keepsakes. An intricately carved frame displays a portrait Garand painted of his wife and infant son, shortly after Darel's birth. A hairbrush inlaid with a gold foil rose pattern rests next to the portrait.

Several books are also on the shelf. Garand's interests are varied; he has fairy tales, fables, forestry titles, and religious texts of several faiths. Opposite the bed is a low counter, which holds a basin and pitcher of clear water. A mirror hangs on the wall above the basin. Garand's razor is normally on the counter nearby. Shelves under the counter hold various food items; loaves of bread, fruit and vegetables in season, and a few cheeses.

A small iron stove fills the corner of the room. In addition to the obvious use of cooking, it provides enough heat to keep the building comfortable during the winter. Garand burns whatever scrap lumber the children don't use. In addition, during the winter months, he purchases coal by the bucketful. A large bucket covered in black dust is near the stove.

F. Vek's Room. (8' x 10') This room used to be for storage. Since Garand took Vek in, the stock has been moved to the hall. Vek sleeps on a cot along the back wall. Several books are strewn about under the cot. Garand has been teaching Vek to read and write, but many of Garand's books are still beyond Vek's limited skill.

Vek's clothing is strewn about the room. A small portion of it does lie in a chest Garand provided. Wood chips litter the floor around the bed. Vek has been carving a set of 4" tall wooden soldiers in his spare time. Five completed soldiers are on the floor under the bed, along with several rough cut pieces waiting to be finished.

Personalities

Garand Helani. Human male. Ht: 5'8", Wt: 160#, Age: 57. Fighting Prowess: Poor. Magic Ability: Fair C6.

Garand is a slightly stocky, middle-aged man. His once dark hair has started to go grey, but his green eyes are as bright as ever. Faint lines crease his forehead and the corners of his mouth and eyes. When at work in the shop, Garand tends to dress in earth tones and wear a leather apron.

As those on the bridge have come to know, Garand has a soft spot for children. He has started to teach them a craft, and been an adult friend to many children who had no one else to turn to. Often, he did this against the advice of the other merchants, who saw nothing but trouble in the mischievous eyes of the youngsters.

Since moving to the bridge, Garand has not spoken of his family to any of his new neighbors. He prefers to keep his troubles to himself, and deal with them in his own way. He does anxiously scan the crowds when he hears of adventurers crossing the bridge, and many of the children are keeping an eye out for Darel, although they don't know why.

Although his shop is located outside the City, Garand has a very good idea of the political happenings among the nobility. His business caters almost exclusively to the wealthy, who are prone to brag of their accomplishments. Garand never visits court, but he is as well informed as any there. This knowledge



Garand Helani

has saved him from doing business with those unable to pay for his work.

Garand is totally unaware of his magical aptitude. He has never questioned the accuracy of his timepieces, or the skill with which he can assemble a complex mechanism. His magical skills are limited to enhancing talents related to his profession, and are not consciously controllable.

Vek. *Human male. Ht: 5'4", Wt:130#, Age: 15.*
 Fighting Prowess: Fair. *Magic Ability: None.*

Vek was sent by his family to Garand's shop after all their attempts to get the boy to take to farming failed. Vek had little desire to become a clockmaker either, but he did long to be closer to the excitement he imagined existed for all who lived in the City.

For many months, Vek was good for little beyond sweeping the floor. Garand did not try to force the youth to learn his trade, only offered to demonstrate the many techniques involved in clockmaking. Eventually, Vek became interested enough to learn some simple carving techniques. These he is perfecting, and now enjoys.

Vek has been with Garand for three years, and truly regards him as a second father.

Darel Helani. *Human male. Ht: 5'11", Wt:175#, Age: 27.* *Fighting Prowess: Good with sword or dagger, Poor otherwise.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Darel ran away from home in order to join an adventuring band. As a romantic teen, he was expecting white horses and beautiful princesses to rescue. He was quickly educated in the realities of adventuring when he ended up as a squire to a particularly egotistical knight. It rained steadily for the first week he was 'in the field,' which kept him busy oiling weapons and washing the knight's white standard.

After this experience, although humbled, he stubbornly refused to return home. He continued to travel from town to town, joining different bands of adventurers, until he'd made a minor name for himself. This fame has not yet spread back to the City, so his father is unaware of his success. Darel's current whereabouts are unknown.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Two Quests For The Price Of One. The PCs are in the City and hear of a dangerous quest. Garand believes that his son may have undertaken the same adventure, and approaches the characters. He will try to persuade them to go on the same adventure, seeking for news of his son.

Scenario 2: Family Reunion. While on an adventure, the party rescues a swordsman. This swordsman turns out to be Darel, and he is very weak from his period of captivity. He asks the

party to escort him back to the City, anxious to make amends with his father.

Scenario 3: Wayward Child. A child attempts to pick the pocket of an unsuspecting character, and is noticed. The ensuing chase leads into Garand's shop. Garand will offer to reimburse any stolen money, and try to explain the situation of many of the children on the bridge. His knowledge of the politics of the City, as well as what he knows of the marketplace, can be very useful to a party wise enough to cultivate his friendship.

Scenario 4: Toy Gone Bad. A merchant was found dead, killed by a slashing sword. One of Garand's soldier marionettes was discovered nearby, and the sword was covered in blood. The marionette had a faint magical aura, the result of Garand's skill. Garand is the prime suspect in this unusual crime, and he hires the party to prove his innocence and find the real killer.

Scenario 5: What Time Is It? An eccentric client has asked Garand to create a fanciful clock with thirteen hours on its face. Because of the customer's close ties to the King, Garand decides it is in his best interest to accept the commission.

Coincidentally, the player characters visit King's River Bridge as Garand is working on the clock. They have come for an important rendezvous to begin or end a mission. While waiting for their meeting, they notice that time seems to be passing more slowly or quickly than it should. As Garand comes closer to completing the strange clock, more severe temporal effects will plague the bridge. The GM may decide that years pass by in a day, or that time begins to run backwards at alarming speed.

This will severely disrupt the player's plans. They will have to investigate the bridge establishments to determine the origin of the time problem. Some credible red herrings might be mages casting enchantments at Tunki's Other Wear [see page 78] or illusions cast by Rashim Varddin [*Fellowship of the Moon*] or Lalla Mossian [*Mildred Al Hassan's Messengers*].

Once Helani's is identified as the source of the problem, the characters will have to convince Garand to destroy the clock to restore the flow of time. However, Garand is trapped within the clock's spell, and from his point of view there is nothing strange about the clock at all. Should the characters resort to theft or vandalism to "kill the time", everything will be returned to normal — except that Garand will be calling upon the authorities to punish the hooligans who forced their way into his shop and destroyed his merchandise!

Tunki's Other Wear



If you've received an invitation to the Queen's Masquerade Ball, or merely need a disguise for your next caper, go see Tunki.

Rogues and gentlefolk alike on route across King's River Bridge are welcome at this Kanchuese costume shop. A wizened little man from Kanchu has located his business on the very edge of the east end of the bridge. Tunki Han Li is the caretaker of a fantastical array of finery fit for every costuming need. Opulent garb for royal masques, simpler guises for local festivals, and accessories fit for any disguise are available at Tunki's Other Wear. Full costume rentals are the foundation of Tunki's business, and consequently he is reluctant to sell too much of his collection. There seems to be a strong, repeat demand for Tunki's costumes, perhaps because his is the only costumery in the region.

The Truth

From the tiny far east land of Kanchu comes a man possessed. Tunki Han Li is spell-bound to provide the means for old, tired, or bored sorcerers to partake of youth and vitality. It happens that some of Tunki's ensembles are not really costumes at all, but magic makers in "cloth shell" shaped guises. These ancient conjurers are in need of emotional or physical vitality. They pay Other Wear's owner to "hang around" his shop, waiting to provide their lucky renters with experiences beyond their most frenzied dreams; at the small cost of a piece of their psyche.

Norma Baker Blair, a native of Michigan, is a novelist who writes creative nonfiction, short and long science fiction, and poetry. She enjoys river rides with her husband Bill, gardening, and hand crafting greeting cards. Norma co-authored "Knight's Cranial Hospitaler" in *CityBook V*.

In addition, many of Tunki's regular rental costumes are saturated with powerful C7 spells. Choose one of these enchanted costumes and you may become what you wear. Other realms of reality could be your destination. The intensity of the costumed experiences keeps Tunki's customers coming back for more, providing a steady diet of energy for the hungry wizards.

Renters are required to answer Tunki's questions about their personality quirks and physical strengths and weaknesses. Supposedly the data provides the proprietor with the insight to suggest the most appropriate costume. Actually, Tunki has a waiting list of "special needs" conjurers in search of particular human attributes. When a customer returns one of these rentals, he may find himself curiously short of his usual good humor. Or, he may feel physically drained, missing a seer's share of stamina or willpower. There is one big bugaboo, a vile warlock, who feeds on souls. For warlock Wirt Collingsford, any soul will do. Those unlucky enough to pick the shell of this magus must rely on their mental and physical toughness to withstand his onslaught.

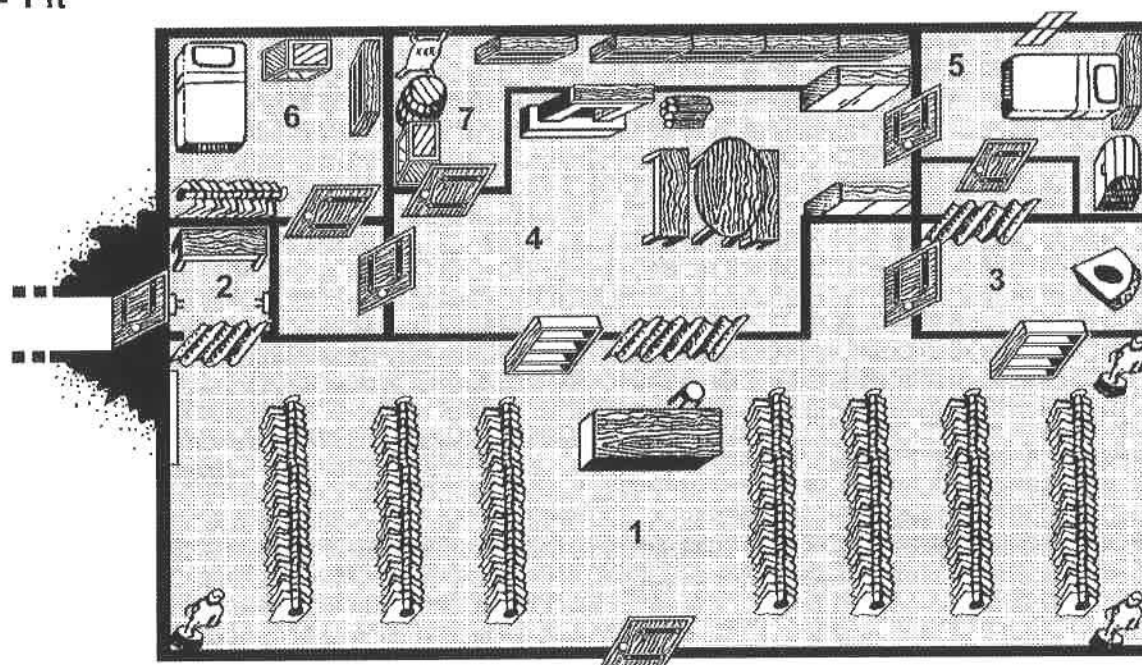
Services

There are no set prices at Tunki's Other Wear. Tunki negotiates all his rentals by haggling individually with each customer. Generally, rental fees are in the moderate price range, although some elaborate costumes which require extra cleaning and repair run higher. Fees also hinge upon how desperately Tunki needs to rent a mage's shell for that creature's feeding. Any special discounts could mean big trouble for the renter!

Costumes are loaned out after the full rental cost is prepaid. Tunki expects them to be returned within two days of receipt, and warns every customer that being late will cost them. For a hefty charge, Tunki will special order costumes for exceptional occasions such as royal weddings or coronations.

Among the costumes available to rent are:

1 sq = 1 ft



Witch: She possesses the power for great good deeds, or feats most foul, it depends upon the wearer. This costume comes with a magic wand that can make the river run backwards for up to two hours at a time.

Court Jester: The renter may find the joke's on him. While wearing this costume makes him the life of the party, it's not without a dangerous pratfall or two!

Knight: Shining armor is only one of the perks of this costume. The customer gets to wear a sword, ride a war horse, and win the heart of a fair lady, but only for one night. Beware the urge to fight to the death!

Queen of Kanchu: Mysterious, beautiful, and deadly. A night in this apparel will bring the ultimate in whatever pleasure the woman desires.

Troubadour: This knightly poet composes songs. For one night, any woman or man truly desired will be powerless to resist the serenading.

Chamberlain: The respect and deference due an official in charge of a lord's chamber is bestowed upon the wearer of this garb. Watch the power brokers seek favor, and listen as underlings are all too eager to share the latest bits of juicy gossip.

Harem Dancer: In a long, semi-transparent silvery skirt with matching wrist-length sleeves, this costumed dancer will transfix any audience. The headdress consists of an illusion of glittering silver light, that dances in the air as the crowd throws coins.

Castellan: Dressed as governor of a castle, the masker will have unlimited power to order people about. Command the royal household, arrange a hunting expedition, check on that treasure chamber . . .

Provost: In this costume, one will absolutely know the contents of his friends' minds. Pass judgements on their real or imagined "sins." Demand bribes in exchange for suspended sentences. Learn the deepest secrets in their hearts.

These costumes may be wizards-in-waiting, or just heavily saturated with Tunki's C7 spells. There are, of course, many other outfits with no special powers whatsoever.

Layout

Facing north, the door to Other Wear is distinctive in that it changes from day to day depending upon Tunki's whim. One day you'll feel the fiery breath of the dragon as you stroll into the yawning mouth of the beast. On your next visit, you may have to pass through a foreboding dungeon door. These C7 illusion spells are so realistic that the faint of heart may opt for more docile zones of commerce. In two closed-at-the-rear display windows fronting the building are the latest arrivals: crystal balls, scepters, richly decorated footwear, and an occasional bejeweled sword. (Windows not shown on map.)

1. Costume Rental Room. (11' x 33') Once inside the shop, you are immediately enveloped in flickering shadows from gargoyle-shaped oil burning sconces set high on all four walls. In the four corners of the room, there are incense burners that stand 3 feet high in the form of giant uncoiling serpents. From their mouths comes the pungent aroma of fresh patchouli incense purchased from scent merchants from the deserts of Airabie. The thick aromatic smoke writhes up the serpent's throat and puffs out between gaping fangs that drip a venomous looking green fluid. The room is crowded with wooden frame racks (7 in all) that show off a dizzying array of costumes. The disguises hang from worn teakwood hangers that were transported from Tunki's homeland. If you keep a sharp eye open, you may catch the occasional guise moving of its own volition.

An ornately carved blond wood counter with a glassed-in

display front contains costume jewelry and magic potions. This counter is directly in front of the entrance to the Magi's lounge in the south portion of the building. In a clear space beside the counter on the north partition, stands an impressive mirror for your viewing pleasure. A circular shape, the frame of the mirror is a jade green dragon that stands with foot claws anchored in the plank floor. The scaled tail sweeps up and around to form a mirrored circle and ends at the dragon's head. The beast's luminescent golden eyes peer at the customer and its head periodically nods approval.

2. Fitting Room. (4' x 4') Situated on the east wall next to the large dragon mirror is a fitting room furnished with a bench and wall pegs. A secret door in the east wall behind a plain floor length mirror leads to a tunnel which burrows through the east river bank; there are occasions when Tunki needs to conduct patrons from his shop in secret. A heavy, gold brocade trimmed span of floor length cloth serves as a door to shield undressed customers from prying eyes. The cloth was spun by elvish women from the high mountains of Tyrol.

3. Privy. (4' x 8') A one hole privy is on the interior west wall of the building, and faces the counter area. A secret passageway to the closet in Tunki's room is concealed behind a tapestry with a pagoda motif in the southeast partition of the privy. This room contains the bare essentials.

4. Magi's Lounge. (14' x 9' x 5') The entrance to this back room is covered by the same elegant gold cloth from the Tyrol mountains. It serves double duty, being Tunki & Marc's dining kitchen as well as a special meeting place. Mages, maguses, and an occasional highly placed wanna-be sorcerer meet in this lounge to exchange other world gossip and haggle to trade closely guarded magical techniques. More than one plot to gain power or prestige has been hatched here. In the center of the room there is a round table and two benches. A fireplace on the south partition provides hot beverages and an occasional free lunch. Two cupboards occupy the northwest and the southwest corners of the room. Cooking utensils, imported coffees, teas, and hard cakes bought from cart vendors are stored for snacking here.

5. Tunki's Bedroom. (5' x 8') In the southwest corner of the building is Tunki's room. His bed is under a south-facing window. At the head of the bed is a small bureau. There is a large trunk with a scrolled rendering of a blue dragon on the lid. The trunk is pushed up against the west wall. It is always locked² and Tunki keeps the key on his person. It is crammed with high quality gemstones, costly oils, rare cloth, and expensive perfumes. This treasure trove is Tunki's inheritance. The goods were sent under armed guard to Tunki when his father ordered it from his death bed. When Tunki rids himself of Other Wear, he intends to build a fine hostel in the City using his locked away treasures. At the north partition is a large closet with a false back that completes the room.

6. Marc's Room. (7' x 8') Tunki's assistant lives in this room in the southeast corner of the shop. It, too, has a south window. There is a large straw-stuffed pallet on the floor, and a battered bureau against the west partition. The northeast portion of his room is crammed with dismantled clothes racks and costumes awaiting repair.

7. Storage Room. (18' x 2' x 5') This L-shaped room occupies the south end of the shop and contains foodstuffs, staple goods, just-arrived costumes, and empty shipping containers.

Personalities

Tunki Han Li. Human male. Ht: 5'2", Wt: 126#, Age: 33, but appears twice that. Fighting Prowess: Poor. Magic Ability: Good only in C7.

A stranger would be sorely tempted to feel sorry for Tunki upon first meeting him. A small man, he is gray and seemingly bent under the weight of his years. He has a pronounced limp and habitually shuffles in a peculiar sideways gait. He keeps his almond grey eyes downcast and peers from round wire-framed spectacles that he really doesn't need at all. He has a long wispy grey beard with equally drooping moustaches. A grey fringe of hair circles a shiny bald pate that is usually covered with a black cap embroidered with red and gold threads. Clapsed hands inside



Tunki Han Li

voluminous sleeves are his trademark. On a leather thong around his neck Tunki wears a carved stone rune for which he traded a rental fee. The carving of "feoh" on his rune means wealth, and signifies the Kanchuese man's wish for power over his environment.

Once an up-and-coming hosteler in partnership with his father in his native land, Tunki's destiny was drastically altered one night when he accepted a dare. The brash young Kanchuese visited a costume shop with a shady reputation. Drunk with too much wine, he let the owner of the shop talk him into signing an agreement to buy the store. That signature triggered the full enchantment that affects all who become the shop's owners. With that spell came the awareness of the shop's true purpose, and an inescapable duty to provide new patrons for the disguised wizards. Now Tunki faced an angry father and a bleak future with his new business. He decided to avoid his family's wrath by moving to King's River Bridge.

Tunki is desperate to get rid of the shop (and the spell). He constantly tries to get patrons interested in purchasing his business.

Marc McManus. *Human male. Ht: 6'2", Wt: 220#, Age: 23.* *Fighting Prowess: Average.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Marc relates to his employer as would a hopeful child. He is fiercely loyal and blind to Tunki's lies. When the man from Kanchu lets him wait on patrons, Marc becomes clumsy in his



Wirt Collingsford

eager excitement to please. This has cost Tunki good will although rarely a rental fee. Clients are happy to see Marc alone in the shop because his reputation for being an extremely poor haggler is widely known.

A hard worker, Marc possesses a sturdy, brawny body. He saves all wages to take home to the north highlands for his mother, a visit he insists on yearly. Marc's habit of nodding in agreement to orders, requests, or comments makes him a pleasant companion. On the rare occasion he looks directly at people, his vivid blue eyes are a startling contrast to his tanned face and wealth of curly nutmeg colored hair.

When ordered to do so, Marc wears elaborate costumes to serve customers. He much prefers simple tunics and pants of cotton in neutral colors. Tunki requires him to wear a 5-lobed broadsword during business hours, hoping the sight of the weapon coupled with Marc's size will deter would-be robbers.

The Magus, a.k.a. Wirt Collingsford. *Human male. Ht: 6'7", Wt: 140#, Age: 206.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* *Magic Ability: Very Good.*

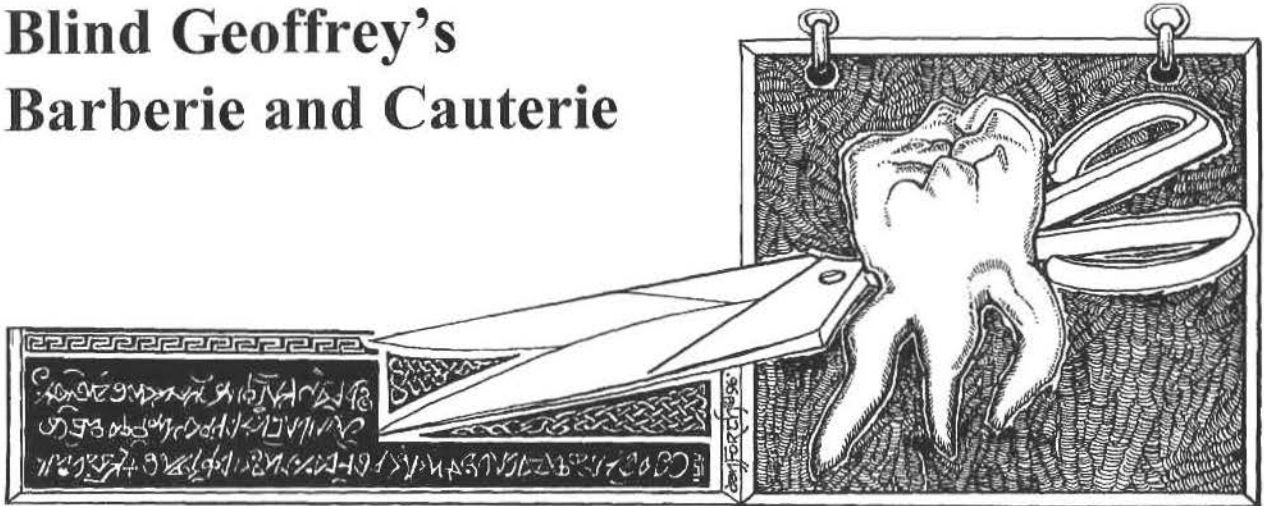
This tall, slender magus is centuries old. A shock of white hair stands in marked contrast to his coal black eyes. His milk-white skin has grey overtones. Wirt inhabits a long black cloak that is lined with crimson silk. He has fed on more human souls than he can count. The older he gets, the more souls he needs to devour just to sustain his magic ability. When Tunki moved onto the bridge, Wirt smacked his pale lips in anticipation. Sensing Tunki's frantic state of mind Wirt smoothed his way in as slick as snake-oil. It didn't take the warlock long to convince the owner to let him "hang" around. Wirt doesn't care who runs the store as long as his niche is secure.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: More Than You Bargained For. Desperate to rid himself of Other Wear and finding no takers, Tunki has made a bargain with Wirt. If Tunki can furnish three souls for the warlock to feed upon in a single day, Wirt will use his powers to make sure one of the victims who wears his shell signs the purchase papers for Other Wear. Which of the adventurers will suffer this fate?

Scenario 2: Not What He Seems. It's the night of the Spring Carnival and Marc pleads with Tunki to rent him the knight costume. Tunki gives in, and the magical outfit transforms the plain young man into a dashing hero, who interferes with the adventurers in some way. When the party tracks Marc down, they find only a simple shop clerk. This may spur them to investigate the secrets of Other Wear.

Blind Geoffrey's Barberie and Cauterie



*The keepers of the City's dungeons
could learn a thing or two about
torture from the resident physician
of King's River Bridge.*

The damp river breeze is rich with sounds of life: the shouts of the boatmen and the clang of their bells, the cries of vendors, the rattle of cart wheels, the songs of street performers, the barking of hungry strays. Beneath it all is a music that seems to seep into the foundations of the bridge and into the muddy riverbottom — a chorus of shrieks, wails of misery, and sighs of relief — an orchestra provided by Blind Geoffrey the Phisick. Barber, Dentist, Surgeon, Cauterer, and Bleeder, Blind Geoff is eager to make any traveler feel fresh and healthy before he makes his crossing into the City.

The sign tacked above the door to Blind Geoff's establishment bears the carved image of a tooth superimposed on a pair of iron shears. Beneath it, for the reading public, the following inscription is painted in thin, gold-on-black paint:

Geoffrey Theobald and honoured company, phisick. Rasator, minutor, medicus, apothecarius, cirugicus, charm-seller, cauterer, leech-rancher, eel-magister, barber, and adubedent. Services Highly Speciale for the Fyne and Wealthie available, pursuant to the Bedroome. Walke-Ins Welcome. Enjoy our Citye.

The building behind the placard is curious, consisting of three narrow, leaning stories of indifferently-painted wood, covered in astrological symbols and the sigils of a hundred different deities of healing. The shop front is sunken back several feet between two larger establishments, and the alcove before the door contains a smoking iron brazier, spitting and stinking day and night. Within the coals lie several long iron tools and (in the evenings) Geoff's dinner, a tin plate of river-shellfish and eye-watering spices. The

screams and wails are less muffled here than amid the crowds, and the door hangs open to let the breezes through. The locals have a nickname for Blind Geoff's place. They call it "The House of Pain."

History

On a foggy morning uncounted years ago in the City's youth, the wizard known as Magister Theobald stood by the banks of the King's River and conjured up an undine, a simple-minded elemental, an obedient gallon of ancient water and silt. The motives for the Magister's summoning are no longer known, but when whatever task for which the elemental had been called was completed, Magister Theobald found that he could not dismiss it. The undine refused to rejoin the river's flow.

Theobald was a reasonable man, for a wizard. He attempted many humane spells for dispersing the beast before moving to more drastic measures. Boiling seemed only to stimulate it. Sponges were consumed as food. Splashed across hot cobblestones, the undine simply steamed and coalesced, returning to the feet of its master. And it was growing. The gallon soon became a tun, and Magister Theobald became a laughingstock, known as a one-man flash flood. He was forbidden from entering his favorite drinking house, lest his pet soak the feet of the customers and cause the baseboards to rot.

The Undine was affectionate to the wizard, but Magister Theobald, at his wit's end, saw the creature as nothing less than a spiteful demon out to make him suffer and drive him toward the grave. Determined to return his life to normal or lose it in the attempt, Magister Theobald struck off into the wilderness in search of greater knowledge of nature magic.

Magister Theobald consulted hermits, monks, tree-spirits, wild elves, ghosts, and more. He learned much. He learned about spirits of stone, flame, wind and water, and about the natures of beasts and plants, besides. As he climbed mountains in search of rare herbs, from a distance the progress of the wizard and the

undine looked like a waterfall in reverse slow-motion. He crossed deserts, selling his services as a one-man oasis. Seventeen years passed before he returned to the lands just outside the City, shocks of damp hair arcing from his head in all directions. His eyes were the eyes of a lunatic. Strangers found it odd that no matter where he stood, he seemed to be standing at the edge of a small swamp.

Magister Theobald was now a skilled elemental. By the wayside, he had become a master herbalist, a master naturalist, and an accomplished natural healer. But what he truly wanted to become was dry.

The ritual took days to prepare, and when the magic began to flow, the river glowed for two miles of its length. The night sky turned black and roiled with purple clouds, punctured by arcs of red lightning. The City's wizards were mobilized to investigate, but by the time they reached the river's edge, a breeze had kicked up and everything seemed normal. They didn't notice the wild old beggar kneeling in the mud, broad smile on his lunatic features.

The Undine had loved and admired Magister Theobald, wanting only to serve him. When powerful magic pulled it into the river and bound it, the Undine looked up past the rippling waters, saw Theobald's smile, and knew it had been betrayed. The Undine, for the first time in its existence, hated, and it lashed out at the Magister with a spray of rocks and mud. Theobald was struck full in the face, and the Undine felt his pain, and relaxed, soaking it in.

Theobald had studied long and hard the lore of the undines, and had seen this coming. When the pain subsided from the muddy attack, the Magister bit his own arm to make more. Sure enough, the Undine relaxed, rippling deeper into the muddy bottom. Undines, even servile ones, love nothing more than pain.

In the following days, Magister Theobald built a small shack at the river's edge, becoming a low-priced barber-surgeon. Using his accumulated knowledge of herbs, he was a competent physician. Using his iron tools, he provided the Undine with a daily diet of agony.

When the shops of King's River Bridge were constructed, Geoffrey became a part of them. Today, he is an old-fashioned surgeon. He rejects specialized medicine, combining the services of barber, dentist, sawbones and mystic healer into a single profession — the phisick. Geoff and his assistants, Hildegarde, Rutherford, and Dan, serve the noble traveler and muddy, injured adventurer alike, with an enthusiasm that many find disturbing. His practice of sorcery has suffered somewhat over the years, becoming focused on the rituals that keep the Undine at bay. He is now, and for as long as he can stay alive, a doctor, and a keeper of a terrible secret.

Due to a past conflict with the Undine, Geoffrey has no physical eyesight. At first, he feared this would ruin him as a phisick, but his magic became the key to his success. By developing the Second Sight latent in any with magical gifts, Geoffrey overcame his blindness, and earned a reputation as something of a marvel. The locals gather and applaud as he spears the chunks of food in his tin plate with a flourish, and then roar

with pleasure as he flings them six feet into the air, catching them in his mouth only after he's downed a swallow of beer. He smiles and bows, usually in the right general direction.

Today, many of his wealthier customers come just for the novelty. If they are especially rich and vain, Geoffrey finds that he can cause them "healing agony" with much less guilt.

Services

Blind Geoffrey's two primary services are the use of his shears and dental tools.

Dentistry: Using a variety of pliers, tongs, blades, awls, hammers, clamps, and long "spoons," Geoffrey or the halfling twins can strike terror into the hearts of ordinary teeth. Hildegarde uses her bare hands to achieve similar effects. Geoff has developed a unique method of "pain-relief adubedentment" whereby the tooth is first crushed or otherwise brought to new heights of unbearable pain, and *then* removed. The halflings and Hildy are fully trained in the technique. By providing a cushion of preliminary agony, decay-oriented harmful spirits are subdued, ensuring long-term health. Furthermore, the actual removal feels pleasant by comparison. 15 gold pieces is the standard rate for Dentistry, less for obviously poor patients, more if tools are broken, which happens only occasionally.

Barberie: While Hildegarde fancies herself a hair stylist, the shears at Blind Geoffrey's rarely produce anything other than a tasteful, ordinary haircut or beard-trim. Despite his blindness, Geoffrey is the best barber of the bunch (Hildy tries too hard, and the twins are hampered by their need to stand on stools). Two silvers, five coppers is the going rate. For an additional silver, hair and beard can be washed, as well.

As Geoffrey Theobald, sorcerer, the blind doctor provides a third, secret service to the City. He keeps the Undine pacified by afflicting painful treatments on his patients. The following are some of his favorite techniques.

Cautery and Special Prescription: Any patient that needs more than a haircut or attention for his aching tooth will get "special treatment" from the good doctor. Geoff's spidery smile will crack from ear to ear, and he will bid the patient to step into his office. Crooking a single finger, he will summon either Hildegarde or one of the twins to join them.

Geoff's office contains many valuable books, and Hildegarde or a halfling will pull a few down as they enter the room, placing them on the small desk that squats between Geoff's chair and the cushioned stools set out for guests.

An interview will begin, with the blind Doctor smiling and nodding as he asks probing questions about the patient's person, symptoms, medical history, diet, and personal habits. All the while, his chosen assistant flips quickly through yellowed pages and whispers into the doctor's good ear. Occasionally, a huge

astrological wall-chart will be consulted.

What the doctor will diagnose for any ill depends less on symptom than what the phisick's whimsical notions of physiology, herbery, and astrology tell him, and on the mood of the Undine. If the characters have been rude to the assistant in any way, he or she will smugly steer the doctor toward the more painful remedies. If the Undine hasn't been "fed" enough agony yet that day, again, pain is the answer.

The game master may either select a healing method that strikes him as entertaining, or roll dice to pick one at random. Half of the time, a combination of two methods will be prescribed.

There is a fifty-fifty chance that any of the good doctor's bizarre methods really work, although it might take a day or two for the cure to fully develop. Any incidental scars, burns, and emotional trauma must heal separately! Descriptions of the following cures are described in Geoff's own words (from his journals), and in the words of his textbooks.

Abstinence. "If ever a man complains of aches in his head, and has been eating too much of pork, he should from this abstain, and also from wine, apples, bitter herbs, or gall. If his ache is in his side, walks in sunlight should he shun, wearing a hat except to worship, and eating only tubers and feet of duck. If a woman cannot sleep, she must not drink water except it has honeycomb in it." Blind Geoff might suggest that any conceivable habit or food be avoided to cure an ill; the GM should strive for strangeness and inconvenience. Such consultation costs from 2-8 silver pieces.

Amputation. "On the next morning, a captain of the watch came in, tended by Dan, who confided in me that he had been stabbed in the foot, but that the wound had taken to laudable pus. The captain did, however, suffer from a deep sadness, which I found was caused by an evil spirit residing in his good foot. We gave him beer and powdered sleepwort, and while he rested removed the spirit with Rutherford's good timber axe and my shears. The captain awoke much relieved from his depression, raving and yelling with new energy, so much so that he did not want to pay." 10 gold pieces, plus the price of the beer.

Apothecary's Charm. "When the first cure fails, due to poor influence of stars or the malice of demonic worm, give instead to the patient a charm made of the skeleton of a mouse, dipped in silver, and rested under the new moon. Tie to the skeleton a smooth stone and brush it with dust from a crossroads. This should be worn about the neck, hung there by a carpenter or cooper on a favorable eve when the patient's planets are not ill-aligned. Thus will the patient be free from wind." Prices vary depending on materials used, but are fair to cheap.

The Beer Cure. "He was clearly a potent wizard, for his robes bore sigils of true import, but the wound from the ogre's axe was dire, with gangrene causing madness, and we feared for his life. It was then that Hildegard suggested that his only salvation was the Beer Cure. It took until sunset to force him to imbibe the

entire cask while the twins sang songs as instructed by Hildegard. When other casks were purchased, my own health, too, felt much improved, and the efficacy of the cure was not in question, despite the loss of the good wizard. Rutherford and Dan learned interesting songs. Hildegard is clearly a woman of strange passion." Since that fateful day, Blind Geoff has been very fond of the Beer Cure, and uses it for nearly anything. Price is 1 gold piece, plus the price of a cask of beer.

Belching and Sneezing. "When the spirits dwell within the stomach, only a sound Belching is effective. We feed the patient beer, goosefat and my spices, and instruct him to relax and watch the river through the window. Hildegard then, without warning, strikes him on the back, while the twins slap him in the stomach. When the spirits dwell in the head, a quick sniff of spice can induce sneezes, which will violently expel the spirits behind the eyes. If the belch or sneeze is satisfactory, the cure has been given. If not, cautery is often necessary." 2 gold pieces.

Cautery. "The Lords and Lawyers of the City occasionally are unhealthy in their appetites, expressing great hunger and growing slow and fat, unable to do their duties. Hunger of this sort is a terrible affliction of spirits, of the kind that cause most serious disease. Cautery is the best cure for this, as for most any ill. The irons must be very hot, where Rutherford tells me that they glow red, and I can feel the heat on my nose from a good distance. For hunger, burns must be applied behind each knee, one on each side, and one to each shoulder. This will destroy any appetite. Only on some occasion has my blindness misled my hand, but on those occasions I have often cured other ills by happy mistake." Cautery is similar to acupuncture, using burning irons instead of small needles. Blind Geoff loves it above all else. His skills are so fine that patients almost never black out from pain, staying alert and lively to scream. He often prepares the patient with spices and beer to both relax and alert them, and he uses strong leather belts to bind them to their chairs. The overall injury is roughly equivalent to a good strong smack with a mace, but when you have the flu, isn't it worth it? 15 gold pieces.

Cupping. "When blood and bile are in imbalance, favoring blood, the blood must be drained until there is no excess. Careful selection of blade and cup must be made, dependent on the placement of the stars and whether the sun is still low. The smaller cups, for instance, will not cure the Sitting Itch until past noon. Patients bled to great exhaustion can be restimulated with cautery." 10 gold pieces.

Other Cures. "Many methods may be used, but must be carefully matched to the ailment. A diet of seven live squirrels nightly can cure back pain, while a diet of three live squirrels and an apple is deadly poison. The distresses of married men are cured on a bed of shocking eels, while similar distresses can be cured by inducing dreams with herbs and fitful sleep. Bathing in herbal baths, or the administering of herbal elixirs, is proof against both pasty skin and watery eyes. Leeches are excellent for cupping

where cups cannot go, and work best if followed by a plaster of pitch and bat dung. For some sickness, a course of travel must be prescribed. The good air to the north can cure much, as can the dust of the desert. Other illness requires ritual in accordance with astrological omens."

For any of these cures (or others the GM cares to devise or extrapolate), Blind Geoff's prices are fair at worst, quite reasonable at best. He and his assistants make the bulk of their money from routine barbering and dental extraction, and can afford to charge only what is necessary for other work.

Layout

1. Operating Theatre. (10' x 24') Five wooden chairs, equipped with leather straps, are here. On the walls are two sets of porcelain cups, ranging from the tiny to about a half-quart. These are used for bleeding. A tool rack is on the opposite wall, next to leather aprons hanging on nails.

In one corner of the room, there is a hole in the floor, square, wide enough for a slim human to fall into (probably getting stuck). It is one of the old drain-holes for the bridge, and is kept covered with a flimsy wooden lid that will break if stepped on. Blind Geoff throws his trash down this chute.

A stairway in another corner of the Operating Theatre leads up to the second floor. A door opens to Geoffrey's office.

2. Office. (8' x 22') Blind Geoff's office is a small room crammed to the gills with books, scrolls, handwritten notes, and wall-charts. His desk is small, and equally overflowing with the detritus of his poor clerical habits (he *is* blind).

There is a three-foot tall wax model of a human hanging near

the desk, with deep cuts all over it, painted red. Beside each "wound" are notes in a scholarly script on appropriate treatment.

Geoff's books are valuable, and heavy. The larger ones weigh upwards of 20 pounds! Their subject matter includes astrology, physiognomy (the science examining how physical appearance relates to personality), phrenology (the same, for bumps on the head), receptaria (antidotes for poisons and illnesses), demonology, and physiology. A copyist would charge up to 450 gold pieces for the big ones; a well-connected fence would pay about a fifth of that. Titles and text alike are written in the languages of scholars; many of the diagrams and illustrations are quite gruesome.

3. Storage. (16' x 18') The second floor is given over to a single dusty room, used to store everything from mildewing stuffed ocelots to several decades' worth of medical and magical notes. Shelves, jars, chests, and crates pile on top of one another here, some in apparent violation of the laws of gravity and basic neatness. The stairway continues upward to Geoffrey's apartment.

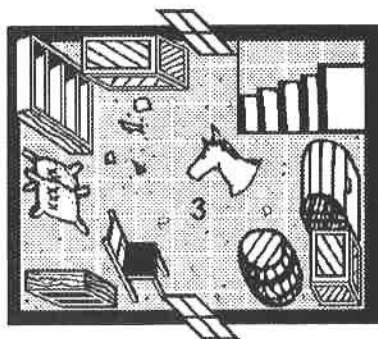
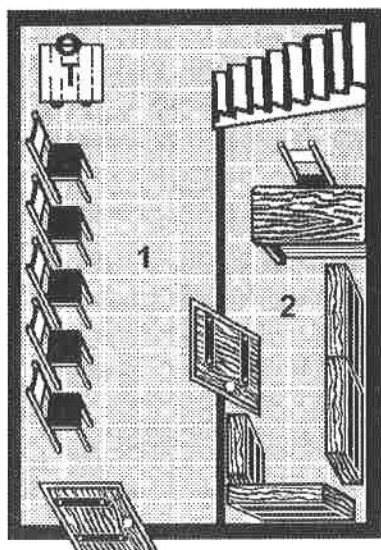
Any robbers or investigators spending ten minutes or so searching this room will come across something weird. The GM should either improvise something, or roll a six-sided die:

1: *The Diary of Theobald.*

This tiny book is buried inside a crate of moldy paperwork from decades past. Blind Geoffrey believes it to be long lost. It describes the original summoning of the Undine, and the earlier versions of the spells used to keep it pacified with its hunger for pain. It might, if the GM decides so, reveal many important secrets that a contemporary wizard could use to either rid the river of the spirit, or even to steal it! The latter might be unwise.

2: *Blue Leeches.*

Several tall jars of these can be found on a shelf behind a collection of stuffed rodents in amusing (and rude) poses. They are not only blue, they are deep, luminescent blue. Drawn from the mud where the Undine itself dwells, the leeches are magical and live for a very long time without maintenance. In addition to their normal function of draining small quantities of blood, these leeches administer a super-powerful anaesthetic. A single leech can render an arm insensate. A handful could paralyze a man-sized creature with numbness (and without any dangerous side-effects once they become satiated and fall off). They could even be used by clever fighters to resist the pain of combat. Geoffrey keeps the leeches secret, and (because of the Undine, and his long-standing views on the healthy value of



1 sq = 2 ft

pain) rarely uses them on patients.

3: *The Magic Tool.*

A thin bar of iron with a spoon on one end and a broad pair of blades on the other, this enchanted dental/surgical tool is buried in a pile of assorted metalwork. It is enchanted with the ability to, on simple verbal command, perform any simple dental or surgical job, from safely removing a barbed arrowhead to extracting a difficult molar. Geoffrey thinks it was stolen years ago.

4: *Elixir of Mystick Health.*

The dusty bottle bearing this label was once a magical healing tonic. Covered in aging silt and sitting innocently on top of a crate of old clothing and pickled sheeps' eyes, it is now a deadly poison. It eliminates the body's ability to absorb oxygen, killing within minutes without any physical injury. An alchemist could identify the fouled potion for what it is.

5: *A Wooden Puzzle.*

This simple, polished wooden toy is well-made from rare dark woods. There is nothing special about it except an inscription in silver paint: "Property of the Child Emperor, a gift on his third birthday." Quite out of place, and dated fifty years ago, the puzzle could lead to a lucrative adventure, or simply be a red herring, at the whim of the game master.



Geoffrey Theobald

6: *A Human Hand.*

The remains of one of the twins' patients. They killed her accidentally while attempting to remove a stubborn tooth, and (since Geoff and Hildy were in town shopping for supplies) they took the opportunity to chop the poor patient up and make notes about her. They took the notes home, but stashed a few parts for later study in the storage room.

4. Geoff's Quarters. (Not shown. 16' x 18') Geoffrey keeps simple quarters, consisting of a small washbasin, a creaky iron bed, a wardrobe, and a small table loaded with odds and ends. Clothing is strewn about carelessly. Outside the riverside window, a rope and a pulley are attached to a bucket that can be lowered into the river to refresh the washbasin.

Personalities

Blind Geoffrey Theobald, Phisick. *Human male. Ht: 5'11", Wt: 130#, Age indeterminate and very old, but he appears to be in his mid-fifties.* *Fighting Prowess: Less than Poor.* *Magic Ability: Average with C2 and C8. Poor with all others. Many of his previous skills have atrophied from lack of use.*

Resembling a preying mantis with smoked spectacles and white hair, Geoffrey Theobald seems to stare straight through anything at which his blind eyes are pointed. He is typically dressed in a loose white blouse, brown breeches, and heavy leather apron, indifferently stained with blood. He smiles warmly, and hums while he works, strange, reedy tunes from the depths of the mud.

Geoffrey is a caring healer. His scholarly tradition holds that illness is most often the result of angry spirits, demonic worms, or elf-shot. Treatments that are painful or disgusting can drive away evil spirits more effectively. Pain, in short, is healthy. It drives away illness. But Geoffrey knows that there are limits, and he crosses that line every day. He rationalizes his excesses when he can, but some days find him depressed, and on those days Hildy and the twins know enough to leave him alone. Geoffrey is deeply tortured, suffering for the suffering he causes in others. He is trapped, and has sought an escape for years and years, with little success.

When Blind Geoff isn't causing horrific shrieks of good health in his patients, or stewing with his conscience, he is sitting in his office with Hildy or the twins, listening to them read new books of medical and magical technique to him.

Geoff's principle pleasure is spicy food, especially shellfish and sausages. He is a firm believer that hot spices are healthful and cleansing to both body and spirit, and would single-handedly invent Medieval Cajun Cooking if he weren't so busy with his other work.

Hildegarde. *Human female. Ht: 6', Wt: 175#, Age 31.*

□ *Fighting Prowess: Good with bare-handed grappling and brawling, Poor with anything else.* □ *Magic Ability: None.*

Seventeen years ago, the Undine got loose. Geoffrey had been depressed, and drinking. His assistants were on errands, and the operating theatre stood empty for an entire day. Hatred boiling in its magical heart, the Undine, slowly, arose from its slumber.

King's River then was much like King's River today. There were travelers, merchants, adventurers and boats. A small river-trader, its hold heavy with spices from the tropics, was the property of Hildegarde's parents. By the time Geoff was awakened by the sound of cracking timbers and the scream of innocent death, all he could see through his window was a young girl, holding desperately to a chunk of broken hull and kicking at something in the water. The Undine, temporarily sated, was forming a menacing ripple around her, marking her for its next meal. A small band of heroes appeared on the scene (the City tends to be chock full, even on slow days), and Geoff watched as they were systematically slaughtered. Again, the Undine rested, and the crowds at river's edge stood terrified, not knowing what to do. Hildegarde, held in the currents by the Undine, simply wept and awaited her doom.

Geoffrey, spry and energized by guilt and anger, had raced out to the bridge and around to the bank while the heroes were slain. He pushed his way violently through the crowds and screamed out across the water, "Killer! I am who you want!" The Undine shuddered with delight, and its roar emerged from the water.

Still clinging to the girl with one of its tendrils, the Undine inched toward the shore where Geoffrey stood. As if in playful defiance, it began to pull the girl into its mass while Geoffrey stood, helpless. The girl screamed in fear, kicking angrily at her would-be destroyer.

Geoffrey knew the only thing that would pacify the creature, and he refused to let the girl die. Grabbing a knife from a guardsman standing next to him in the crowd, he slashed his own shoulder, and cried out as the pain tore into him.

The Undine stopped moving, but only for an instant. With a force of hateful will, it continued to drown the girl.

Geoffrey knew that without his arms, he could not finish the fight, or even cast the necessary spells. He stabbed himself a second time, in his thigh, again screamed, and again the Undine stopped, this time for many seconds. The girl, Geoffrey saw, was struggling. She was strong, and was nearly free before the beast awoke again. Geoffrey was exhausted and bleeding, screaming to the people pressed around him to let him be, to mind their own business.

He ripped out his own right eye with the knife. Even Geoffrey was suprised at how loudly he screamed. Through a haze of agony, he saw the Undine relaxing further, slipping into the river bottom, while the girl began to swim.

The Undine, in the throes of ecstasy, knew that it could not succumb if it was to have its revenge. It fought. It did its best to ignore the delicious agony that it was feeling from the blood of

its tormentor. Gathering all its will, it lashed out one final time, plucking the young girl from the river's surface, and dragging her to the bottom in one total motion. It had overcome the delight of Geoffrey's eye being ripped out.

It could not, however, overcome the second eye.

For the second time in the City's history, the river glowed for two miles of its length. The sky turned black and roiled with purple clouds, punctured by arcs of red lightning. The girl made her way free of the river while the spell was completed. The next day, Geoffrey had to make a lot of very clever excuses to the City officials. He convinced them that his spell had destroyed the creature, not daring to admit that it still slept beneath the river.

These days, Hildegarde is a handsome woman, no longer young, with short, fair hair and a grin that seems as broad as her powerful shoulders. She still remembers her parents, and cares just as much as Geoffrey about ridding the river of the Undine forever. She also protects the shop; her presence is intimidating, and she has demonstrated her ability to bend an armored dwarf in half when the occasion demands it.

Rutherford and Dan. □ *Halfling male twins. Hr: 2'11", Wt: 105# each, Age 43.* □ *Fighting Prowess: Average with surgical tools, otherwise Poor.* □ *Magic Ability: None.*



Rutherford and Dan

The twins — grinning, happy little monsters. Rutherford and Dan are genuine sadists. While Blind Geoff uses pain “for medicinal purposes,” and even then with guilty reluctance,

Rutherford and Dan use it for fun. Geoff and Hildegard prevent them from performing cautery themselves, but they do most of the dentistry these days, and take a kind of savage glee in their work.

Geoffrey and Hildy have never found out exactly where the twins live, though the halflings have worked for Geoff over five years. They show up every day, work with enthusiasm, and take their pay home with them. Beyond that, their lives are a mystery.

The twins enjoy an exciting (if depraved) double life. They don't live anywhere permanently. Using their pay from Blind Geoff to take up rooms, they spend their free hours as thieves, using all the booty to gamble, drink, and hire women (they prefer humans) to submit to their less medical (but no less painful) ministrations. The less said the better. Suffice it to say that if one of the PCs recognizes the halflings from a social situation, they deserve any embarrassment that might result.

The Undine. □ *Malevolent water-spirit. Ht: Variable (up to 35 feet or so), Wt: 24 Tons, Age: Millenia.* □ *Fighting Prowess: Very Good with brute force water-attacks; doesn't use anything else.* □ *Magic Ability: None.*

The Undine isn't much of a conversationalist; its intellect is on par with an especially cruel five-year-old. Physically, it is simply a mass of water held together by an evil, magical soul. The Undine can take human form (a gigantic shape towering above most of the buildings of the City), or simply extend pseudopods from its central mass in order to deal with the world. On most days, it just rolls around invisibly at the bottom of the river, soaking up the pain, its sensitivity magnified a hundredfold by Blind Geoffrey's spell.

If it ever gets loose again, it'll be a bugger to beat. Weapons tend to slosh right through it, with the exception of some rare enchanted ones. It is highly resistant to most hostile magic, and it doesn't have enough of a mind to hypnotize or charm. Its one real weakness is pain. Even when the spell is broken, sufficient agony will pacify it for very short periods. If it manages (for instance) to break the leg of a warrior fighting it, it will swoon under the pleasure of it all for a little while — occasionally long enough for something serious to be done to it.

It is motivated by one thing: the destruction of Geoffrey Theobald. After Geoffrey is dead, it will simply start killing and consuming anyone it sees.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Theft of the Undine. It is for good reason that Geoffrey keeps the Undine a secret. True, the wizards of the City might be able to help him get rid of it if they knew. Equally true, the less scrupulous wizards of the City would just try to steal and tame the beast in order to gain a powerful servant. Worse still — what if somebody succeeded in stealing the Undine? Geoffrey just might have to fight to get it back, and for that, he might need the help (or perhaps the pain) of some delvers.

Scenario 2: Bug Hunt. Geoffrey uses a lot of rare herbs, crushed insects, bile of demons, and any number of other strange substances and alchemical nightmares in his work. Such things are important to Geoffrey, but they aren't always available within the City. A small group of well-armed heroes might just be necessary to track down a particularly hard-to-get insect. Geoffrey, being absentminded, will provide the PCs with a picture of the insect, but neglect to mention that the creature in the picture is over nine feet long!

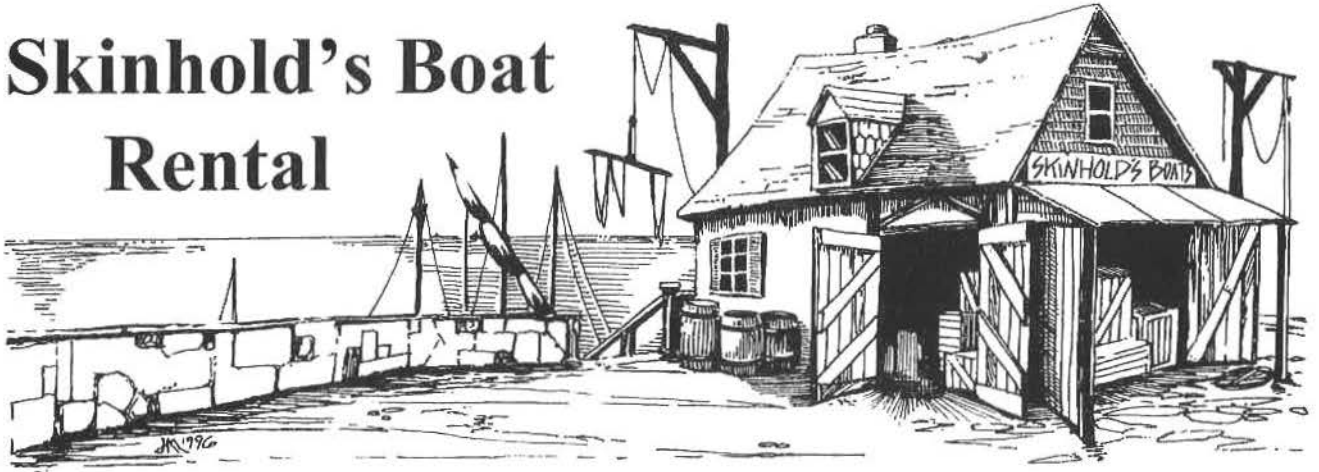
Scenario 3: Hildegard's Romance. While Hildy is very dedicated to her work with Blind Geoffrey, she isn't without a social existence. One way to gradually work Geoff and the Undine into the campaign is via Hildegard. If a delver were to become romantically involved with her, and it turned serious, Hildy might have a moral quandary. After all, her work for Geoff does take a lot of her life. Of course, romantic interludes can be interrupted by dire emergencies, if Hildegard's absence causes a repeat of the events which brought her to the good doctor in the first place.

Scenario 4: Doomsday. Keelat Angelo [see *Bridge Encounter*, page 93] has been insistently foretelling an impending disaster for several days. As if to confirm his prophecy, a bizarre accident claims Blind Geoffrey's life. With the death of their employer, the twins skip town to seek other work in the torture industry. Hildy alone is unable to sustain enough agony in the bridge's patients to pacify the Undine. It escapes its binding spell, and begins to wreak revenge for its years of imprisonment in the King's River.

When the water spirit attacks the bridge, Red [see *The Cornerstone Ghost*, page 106] appears to protect it. He calls upon his goblin worshippers [see *The Halfling Rat Catchers' Guild*, page 16] to help him fight the Undine. With a water spirit, a malevolent ghost, and a horde of goblins battling for the bridge, it certainly appears that Keelat's vision has come true!

The Bridge Guard and guardsmen from the City proper will certainly join in the defense of the town, as should any player characters. Will their psyches be able to deal with fighting in the trenches on the side of goblins, trolls and ghosts? What other NPCs will be placed in harm's way? Who, or what, will win?

Skinhold's Boat Rental



Is there a bit of smuggling in your future? Terina Skinhold will know, and Trasbor Skinhold can provide you with just the boat you need.

The fact that the King's River is, indeed, a river, accounts for one of the main modes of transportation to be found in the vicinity of the bridge, namely boats. A constant stream of craft of all types sail, paddle, and pole the river at all hours, bringing shipments of goods and passengers from near and far. These same ships depart carrying the sundry products made in the various shops, smithies, breweries, vintners, craft shops, and small factories found throughout the city. Most of the establishments located on the bridge have some access to the river, and can send and receive shipments of goods directly, and even illegally. For those who spend any amount of time on King's River Bridge, some form of aquatic transportation will likely be necessary at some point. Adventurers seeking portage of goods or persons, especially transport with no questions asked, will find that Skinhold's Boat Rental fills the bill nicely.

Services

Trasbor "The Vigilant" Skinhold, and his wife Terina, are the proprietors of Skinhold's Boat Rental. An assortment of small craft are readily available at reasonable daily rates. More often than not, Trasbor is also able to acquire larger craft, or meet other special transportation needs; extraordinary services, however, carry extraordinary prices.

Skinhold's Boat Rental is rumored to be a center of smuggling activity around the bridge, though no evidence of wrongdoing has ever been found there. Despite constant vigilance and thorough investigation by the royal inspectors of any allegations

of smuggling, Trasbor is apparently an honest, law-abiding merchant plying a legally licensed trade. He pays his taxes fully, and is never late with the rent or any other imperial fees. Officially, Trasbor is a model citizen. Unofficially, Trasbor provides safe haven and transportation to a good number of the less-than-legal enterprises, and he has found great profit in such activity.

Trasbor also has great luck in tracking down those renters who fail to return their vessels. This is partly due to his many connections and friends on the bridge, who will report on the presence of any missing boat of Trasbor's found drifting or abandoned in the vicinity. But for the most part, the fact that all of his boats carry a faint homing spell is the key to their consistent return. Though the homing spell is not strong enough to actually propel the boats to Skinhold's Boat Rental dock, their magical signature is conspicuous to anyone who knows what to look for. With the aid of a charm Trasbor keeps for just such occasions, the boats are easy to track down within a radius of fifty miles.

The secret of Trasbor's success is to be found in the startling clairvoyant abilities of Terina Skinhold. Terina specializes in magic involving the detection of danger, and her spells of divination, though limited in scope, unfailingly point Trasbor away from those situations which may result in excessive legal entanglements. Her prognostications also keep Trasbor out of trouble with the often dangerous characters he deals with on a regular basis. Simply put, when the signs point to trouble, Trasbor stays out of it by taking to his bed early in the evening. Thus, when investigated or officially observed, Trasbor is always perceived to be a lawful citizen, honest and upstanding, and very devoted to his wife, with whom he apparently spends each and every night.

In spite of such appearances, there is little that goes on in the shady world of illegal bridge trafficking that Trasbor does not know about. There is, likewise, very little that exists that Trasbor could not obtain using his underworld connections, should he be persuaded to do so. The right price could be very persuasive indeed, though Trasbor does not take risks lightly. No amount of gold will convince him to disregard Terina's advice. Ever.

Renting A Boat

The rather shabby exterior of Skinhold's Boat Rental could easily mislead the careless adventurer to disregard the usefulness of the services provided there. On a typical business day, Trasbor Skinhold can be seen sitting apparently idle in the sun outside of the office, leaning back in his wooden chair, whittling, smoking a long-stemmed clay pipe, or even dozing the hours away. Dressed in loose-fitting clothing, barefoot, with a cutlass in his belt and a large earring of gold, Trasbor appears to be a retired corsair. In fact, that is precisely what he is. His face is weathered by years in the sun and wind, and he looks older than his 35 years. Trasbor greets all passersby with a smile or nod, and can occasionally be convinced to tell a seafaring tale or two, especially if the convincing is done with a taste of good rum, or a pinch of snuff.

After a brief discussion of terms, adventurers who find Trasbor's rates and craft suitable are shown inside the warehouse, where they will make their mark on a rental agreement and pay their deposit, plus the rent for the agreed upon period of time. All rent is payable in advance. The deposit is usually ten times the daily rental rate, and Trasbor never waives it. Trasbor will also show skeptical adventurers down to the docks to inspect any available craft before any formal agreement (or payment) is made.

When all the paperwork is done, Trasbor often will close the deal with a small glass of wine. He will then show the renters down to their craft. Trasbor will open the trap door at A4, and the party can then descend the rope ladder to the docks below and sail off in their newly rented craft.

Skinhold's Boat Rental keeps daylight business hours, opening at dawn and closing at dusk. Trasbor does not ordinarily open for business on Sundays. He will frequently be at his business far past twilight, for the profitable sideline of smuggling often requires the cover of darkness. Prior arrangements must be made, however, in order to find him at Skinhold's Boat Rental at anything other than regular business hours.

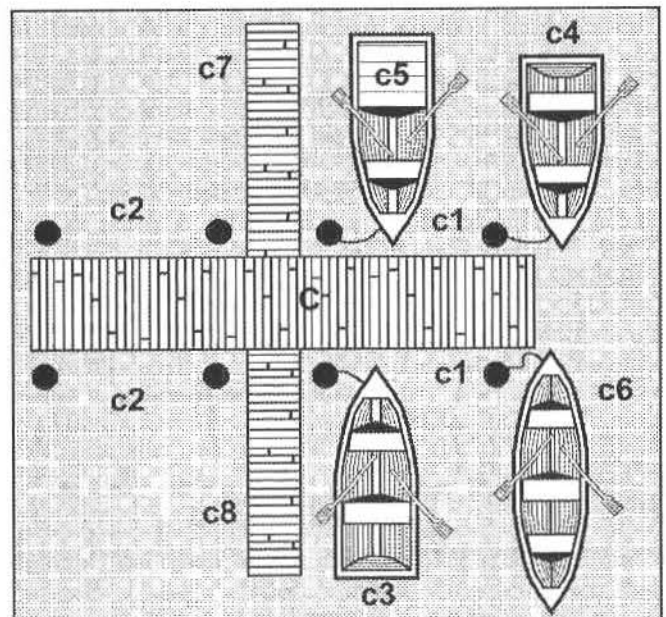
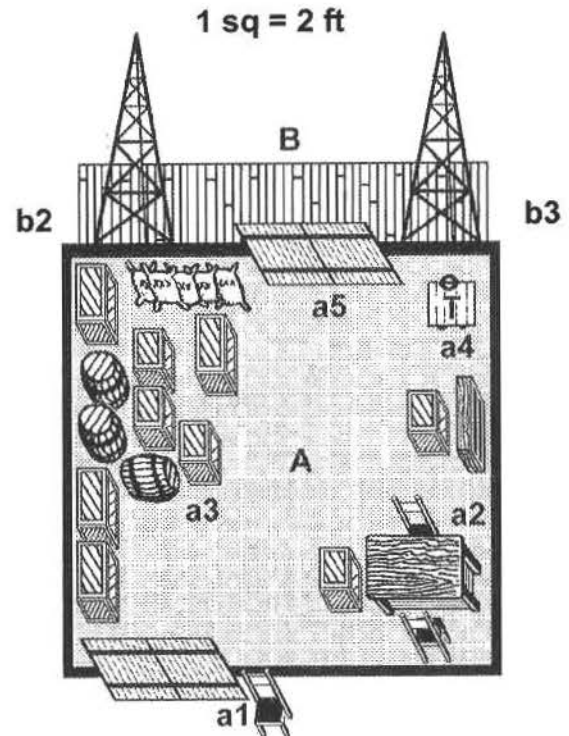
Layout

A. Main Storeroom and Customer Service Area. (30' x 30') This is the only indoor area of Skinhold's Boat Rental. It serves mainly as a warehouse, storing crates of goods in a fairly secure place until they can be shipped out or delivered to their destinations. Arrangements for transportation rentals are made in this room.

A1. Entrance. A large, sliding double door is the only entrance to Skinhold's Boat Rental from the street. These doors are open when cargo is being delivered, and kept locked at all other times. Trasbor Skinhold usually sits outside of these doors in a comfortable wooden chair, smoking a clay pipe during business hours. He will converse amiably with any potential customer, and will bring them inside to make any necessary arrangements

for a boat rental, or whatever service is required.

A2. Desk. Every business requires paperwork, and Skinhold's Boat Rental is no exception. This is a simple wooden desk used by Trasbor to write up charter agreements, or fill out any other paperwork needed for the business at hand. The desk has only one drawer, which has no lock and contains paper, pre-written standard charter agreements, ink, a ledger book, and other office



supplies. A small magic charm is kept in this drawer, and is attuned to the homing spell cast by Terina on all of Trasbor's rental craft. Its sole purpose is to track down boats which are not returned on time, and it can locate any such boat within a radius of fifty miles.

A3. Crates. A dozen or so wooden crates are stored in this area, waiting for delivery or shipment. Depending on the local traffic, the crates can contain anything from bedroom slippers (all left foot) to genuine orc bone carving knives. A favorite trick of Trasbor's is to leave a nest of hornets in one of the crates after closing time so that any curious intruder may receive more than he bargained for.

A4. Trapdoor and Rope Ladder. (4' x 4') This door lifts to reveal a sturdy rope ladder leading down to the river dock below.

A5. Loading Doors. These large doors slide out of the way, providing a clear opening for the movement of cargo into and out of the warehouse.

B. Loading Dock. (6' x 28') This deck is made of wooden planks, and from here it is fairly simple to unload cargo from the ships docked at location C below, using the pair of cranes at B2 and B3.

B1. Crane Controls. (Not shown) A set of levers and buttons controls the cranes at B2 and B3. The controls are moderately complex, but with a few minutes of trial and error, any character of average intelligence should be able to figure them out enough to haltingly operate them.

B2 - B3. Loading Cranes. Each of these matching cranes has the ability to hoist 2000 pounds. They are fairly complex affairs of ropes and pulleys, ending in stout iron hooks. Using the controls at B1, two or three adventurers could efficiently load or unload a small cargo vessel as it waited on the river below. In fact, that's just what Trasbor uses these cranes for.

C. Docks. Two plank walkways cross here, forming the private dock of Skinhold's Boat Rental, whose offices are located directly above the docks. A rope ladder leads up through a trapdoor to A4. The walkways are supported by empty barrels floating in the river, and the entire structure is anchored to large pilings driven deep into the riverbed itself

C1. Rental Dock. (6' x 16') Around this walkway are moored the four main craft which Trasbor rents out by the day. All craft are very, very faintly enchanted with a homing spell which can be followed by the charm kept in Trasbor's desk drawer at A2. Even an experienced spellcaster will likely fail to detect any enchantment, however, as the spell is designed to be difficult to detect by any means other than the charm.

C2. Auxiliary Dock. (6' x 16') This walkway is surrounded by

space for up to four small craft, or two larger craft. These docks are usually empty, unless a vessel is actively loading or unloading cargo. If Trasbor has made any special arrangements for rental of a craft not moored at C1, then it will be tied up here.

C3 - C4. Rowboats. These matching, oar-powered vessels can each hold three humans, plus a small amount of cargo, or fewer humans and more cargo. They can safely transport about 700 pounds across the water. The rowboats are cheap to rent (around 10 gold pieces per boat per day, plus a deposit), and although they are slow and unwieldy, they are very stable on the water and simple to operate in all but the stormiest weather. They can be used by just about any adventurer, regardless of skill with watercraft, and are fairly difficult to capsize.

C5. Magic Skiff. This small vessel is about the same size and has the same capacity as the rowboats docked at C3 and C4, but appears to be more streamlined and bears a luxurious canopy of fine, waterproof cloth. A closer inspection would reveal that this vessel also lacks oarlocks. For those who are sensitive to such things, this is the only craft to strongly radiate magic. The skiff is, in fact, magically powered. Its capacity is the same as the rowboats (700 pounds), and two humans could fit comfortably under the canopy and ride the waves in splendor, while one human (perhaps a servant) or their cargo rode in the bow, exposed to the elements. This skiff rents for a minimum of 100 gold pieces per day, and will automatically return to its



Trasbor Skinhold

here when the rental period expires, even if this action strands the renter. It can travel at a constant speed of up to 20 knots, and provides safe transport in any weather. Trasbor will not consider selling the skiff for any price, it being such a useful and rare craft.

C6. Canoe. This slender, elegant craft can hold three humans and their personal belongings (up to 600 pounds). The canoe is swift, silent, and a very useful craft on the King's River. However, it requires a good deal of skill to operate safely, and is prone to capsizing when subjected to maladroitness handling or when used in rough weather. It rents for 10 gold pieces per day.

C7 - C8. Empty docks. (4' x 16') These docks are used by Trasbor for whatever special business he might transact on the side. If the party has chartered any special vessel, or has any business involving a particularly large ship, it will be docked here when ready for use.

Personalities

Trasbor "The Vigilant" Skinhold. *Human male.* *Ht: 6'1", Wt: 210#, Age: 35.* *Fighting Prowess: Very Good with cutlass and dagger combination. Good with axe. Fair with all other.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Trasbor Skinhold, called "The Vigilant" for his ability to unflinchingly spot the most surreptitious imperial patrol even at midnight in the dark of the moon, is officially in the business of short-term boat rental for personal transportation. Unofficially, Trasbor's business is firmly entangled in the vast, hidden web of semi-legal and outrightly illegal shipping (i.e. smuggling) centered around King's River Bridge. Trasbor developed his connections to the smuggling business during his years as a privateer.

Trasbor obtained his sea legs at the tender age of 10, when his parents were killed in a fire at their dry goods shop. His uncle, a sea captain, took little Trasbor in as cabin boy, and taught him the ways of the sea. Trasbor came to love the sea, and especially the ships that sailed it. Over the course of the next 20 years, Trasbor served aboard all manner of vessels, finally winding up as a privateer. At age 30, Trasbor met Terina, who was reading palms in a tavern. The two fell hopelessly in love and married soon after. At Terina's insistence, Trasbor gave up his life at sea and settled down to operate Skinhold's Boat Rental on King's River Bridge.

Trasbor's reddish brown hair falls naturally around his shoulders, former corsairs not being much concerned with styles of coiffure. His eyes are blue and bright, seeming almost to reflect the water that he so loves. Trasbor once had a full beard and moustache, but Terina convinced him that a clean-shaven man looked more respectable. Considering his sideline activities, he took her advice. He shaves every morning before leaving their lodgings in the City.

Terina Skinhold. *Human female.* *Ht: 5'2", Wt: 120#, Age: 32.* *Fighting Prowess: Fair with knife or dagger, Poor with all other.* *Magic Ability: Excellent with C3, Good with C1. Average with all other C's.*

Terina Skinhold, whose pale beauty is both ethereal and delicate, is the wife of Trasbor. Terina's magic accounts for much of the luck Trasbor has found in his career as smuggler. Her specialty is casting spells to assist her husband in knowing the movements of royal river patrols, whom he should and should not trust, and easily spotting other dangers associated with his main line of business. It was on her advice that Trasbor gave up the life of a privateer and now rents boats.

Terina was born and raised in the City, and like her mother, became a mystic seer. Her magic has proven to be very reliable, and she enjoyed a reputation as one of the most accurate seers in the entire City, at least when short-term danger was involved. Even now, people will seek her out for a divination, and Terina contributes a fair share to the household income. Normally, Terina will not be found at Skinhold's Boat Rental. Her magic is land based, requiring that she remain ashore in their home should she desire to use it. She makes a fair amount of money divining and casting, foretelling the futures of any who seek such knowledge. She often remotely monitors Trasbor when he is on duty, and will send an urgent message or possibly come in person to warn him of any detected danger.



Terina Skinhold

SKINHOLD'S BOAT RENTAL

Though she never told him the reason for her insistence that he abandon his successful career as a privateer, Terina's magic revealed that Trasbor would die at sea. She will not speak of this to anyone. Terina wears her sun-colored blonde hair in a single waist-long plait that cascades down her left shoulder. Her face is oval, her dark brown eyes adding emphasis to her predictions, staring piercingly out from an otherwise bright visage.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Haunted Island. The restless spirits of a crew of drowned sailors are haunting a nearby island in the middle of the river. Their wailing drives passing crews insane, and the problem must be dealt with. The party is hired to find the cause of this blight, and drive off, destroy, neutralize, or bargain with the spirits. No captain will steer his craft anywhere near the cursed shore, so the adventurers are forced to rent their own transportation.

Scenario 2: Hot Cargo. The adventurers have recently come into possession of a large quantity of ill-gotten goods which would bring a premium price if smuggled out of the City. Trasbor's reputation for always evading the authorities has come to their attention, and they must persuade him to aid in removing the loot from the locale.

Scenario 3: Lost Reservation. The party sets out to rob a well-defended establishment and decides to attempt an attack by river. Reliable boats are needed for reconnaissance and later for the actual job, and that's just what they hope to find at Skinhold's Boat Rental. Unfortunately, Terina senses danger for Trasbor on the night of the robbery. When the adventurers arrive, their rental boats are nowhere to be found! Do they have a contingency plan? How will they deal with Trasbor the next day?

Scenario 4: The Sting. For years, Terial Skyone-Sheth [see *The Royal Tax Collector*, page 10] has suspected Trasbor of engaging in illegal activities, yet no evidence to support this suspicion has ever materialized. The party is hired by Terial (or perhaps offered a deal to stay out of the royal dungeons) to attempt to catch Trasbor red-handed in a smuggling caper.

Scenario 5: You Will Meet A Smuggler. Terina Skinhold is very worried about her husband. Her powers of foretelling have warned that Trasbor is in great danger, yet uncharacteristically he refuses to stay at home or allow her to accompany him. She hires a party of capable adventurers to keep an eye on her husband, and protect him should the need arise.

Bridge Encounter

Keelat Angelo. Human male. Ht: 5'8", Wt: 107#, Age: 49. Fighting Prowess: Good with sign. Magic Ability: None

Short and balding, wearing a spotless white tunic, everyone dreads the coming of Keelat Angelo with his hand-held painted wooden sign that proclaims: "THE END IS NEAR."

Keelat used to own a prosperous laundry service in the City. His wife ran off with his partner, the laundry burned down, and his house was destroyed when a magical duel got out of hand. Since then, Keelat has been a member of most religious sects, both name brands and two-person cults. He likes one thing a lot — eschatology — the study of last things. He knows how the world is going to end according to many creeds, and is familiar with every scientific or magical theory as to its end. He believes them all.

He loves to talk about doom, and urges people to repent and solemnly consider that the world's about to go — maybe today. He will interrupt people eating, talking, or doing business to spread the word.



Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: A Sign! According to some obscure creed, the arrival of a hero, who coincidentally meets the description of one of the PCs, is a sign that the world is about to end. Keelat will be terrified to see this person arrive on King's River Bridge, and will do his best to warn the populace that disaster is afoot. Some of the bridge people may believe Keelat, and decide that doomsday can be averted by killing this herald of the world's end.

Scenario 2: Repent! Keelat, as every single person on the bridge can tell you, knows every legend of any disaster that may come. He also knows when all the eclipses, comets, and other dire omens will show up. He is a goldmine for all kinds of gloom — including that legend the characters need to know about. His price for this information, however, is that the adventurers admit to their sins to prove their worthiness to hear the truth. Can they? Will Keelat believe they are sincere?

The Clothes Chest



*If your cloak is tattered
and your breeches are torn,
for just a few coppers you
might find less used gear
at Anya Dyer's shop.*

Fifteen years ago, Anya Dyer was the beloved wife of a successful textile merchant. She lived in a prosperous shop with her husband and his apprentices. Anya's specialty was the creation of exquisite, uncommon hues for fine cloth. The dye shop prospered until the winter the red lung disease swept the land.

Anya watched helplessly as first the apprentices, then her husband suffered the coughing of blood and died of the lung sickening. Then the Dyers' Guild Master came.

Master Harkeneston had little sympathy for Anya. "Your husband was behind in his dues, goodwife, and was removed from our lists a sennight before his death," he abruptly informed her. "If you can provide proof that you have served a full apprenticeship, you may enter the guild as a journeywoman. Otherwise, you are forbidden to sell new merchandise to the public." Harkeneston, who did not approve of female membership in his guild, knew that Anya had learned her trade at the side of her late father and husband, neither of whom had ever registered her in the official apprentice rolls. She had no proof that she was anything but a daughter and a wife.

Being banned from selling new merchandise meant that she couldn't sell any of the stock in her store. Soon the rent came due and the creditors arrived, and she had to pay them with the

bolts of fabric that had been her legacy. They took the dye vats and the recipe books of her husband. Anya despaired, left with nothing but an empty shop and a few personal belongings.

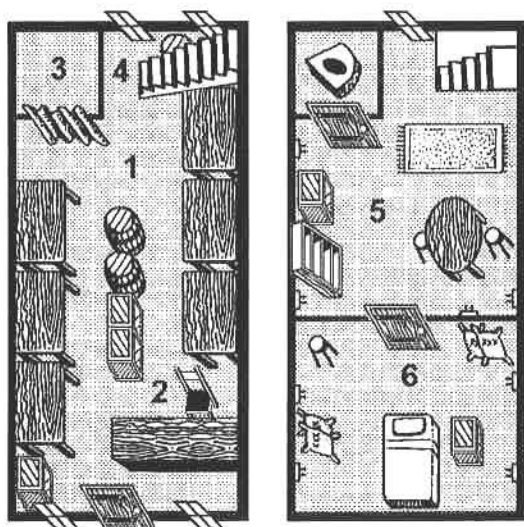
When the time came to vacate the shop, Anya discovered a small cache of gold packed in a chest of her husband's old clothing. With this unexpected windfall, she rented a narrow, run down store on King's River Bridge. Determined to spite Harkeneston by staying in some aspect of the textile business, Anya moved into her new location on the bridge. A chance encounter with a street urchin offered her the opportunity to trade some of her husband's old clothes for empty boxes and barrels stolen from the wharves. Anya used these to set up display tables and bins for the gear that remained. Slowly, with barely enough trade to keep her from starving during the first few months, her second-hand clothing store proved to be a viable trade. Mercenaries from the campaigns were her best customers, eager to trade exotic fashions looted from far-off lands for more conventional and practical clothing. These exotic goods in turn found buyers from the City and customers who traveled over the bridge. So began Anya Dyer's shop, The Clothes Chest.

Layout

The Clothes Chest is a two-story rectangular structure. There's no sign identifying the business, but Anya seems to find customers despite the lack of advertising. If trade is slow, she will often stand in the doorway and invite passersby to stop in and take a look at her wares.

1. Sales Floor. (10' x 20') All of Anya's goods for sale are displayed in this room. Trestle tables line the walls, with boxes and barrels forming a center aisle. A ladder, leading up to the ceiling, is adorned with cloaks and belts. Elsewhere in the little narrow shop, clothes are stacked on trestle tables, spilling out of barrels, and heaped into boxes. Under the tables you can find shoes, boots, hats, and shin guards.

Lisa Star Walker reports that her fanciful outlook may have originated in a family argument over what name to give her as a baby. Her parents finally settled on her name by combining two love songs, "Mona Lisa" and "Star Dust." Lisa writes and tell stories mainly for the entertainment of her daughter. She works for Flying Buffalo, Inc., and recently contributed devious devices to *Grimtooth's Traps Bazaar*.



1 sq = 1 ft

2. Counter. (2' x 5') Near the front door is a counter where Anya conducts her bargaining, which allows a good vantage point for assuring that no one walks out before paying for their items. Under this counter is a narrow, flat box filled with buttons, pins, medals and jewelry. These are the most precious goods in her store, and Anya keeps a very close watch over them.

3. Alcove. (4' x 4') In the left corner of the store is a curtained alcove for changing clothes. For travelers eager to divest themselves completely of an old outfit, Anya charges a modest amount for an urn of water to wash and change. This service has been appreciated by many delvers hard on their luck, who sell the clothes off their backs in exchange for an older outfit and a few coin in hand.

4. Stairway. This stairway leads up to Anya's living quarters on the second floor.

5. Living Room/Storage. (10' x 12') The upstairs of The Clothes Chest is comprised of two rooms. This first one serves as Anya's living room, kitchen, and storage area. Still financially insecure, Anya has not invested in a great deal of furniture. There is a rough table with two chairs, and a beat-up cabinet which serves as a pantry. Wall pegs support Anya's clothing and housewares. Other implements such as brooms, mops, and buckets are neatly arranged in corners of the room. Shutters in the wall open to a small window overlooking the bridge below.

6. Bedroom. (8' x 10') Like the living room, Anya's bedroom is sparsely furnished. She sleeps on a simple cot. An upended crate serves as her night table. A basin and pitcher sit atop it for washing. Baskets and sacks contain her personal belongings as well as candles, string, sewing supplies and other daily goods.

Personalities

Anya Dyer. Human female. Ht: 5'3", Wt: 150#, Age: 43.

Fighting Prowess: Poor. Magic Ability: None

Anya is the only child of a master dyer. She was the bright light in her parent's life, always looking for, and most times finding, the magic of life. All her days were lived around bright fabrics and clothes. From watching the activity in her father's shop, Anya discovered how to create vibrant tints and colors which were the envy of the other dyers in the City. To her, it was more fun than work. As a young woman, she married her father's journeyman Gregory, her childhood sweetheart. Although not a real knight, he was her pretend knight in all things. He played the role of defender of her ideas and goals. Champion of her causes, he promised to live forever with her.

Her storybook illusions were shattered when Gregory died. Although he had showered her with attention and finery in life, he had made no provisions for a secure future following his death. The Dyers had no savings beyond the shop goods which were confiscated by the guild to cover debts. Anya was stunned to discover that her husband had lied to her, and never registered her in the guild records.



Anya Dyer

THE CLOTHES CHEST

Reeling from her hard luck, Anya no longer looks for the good in life. She especially hates the Dyers' Guild for their lack of compassion, and it pleases her to irk the guild masters by succeeding with her second-hand shop. All of their thievery and penny pinching helped them not a bit; her special dye recipes were never recorded in her husband's books, but in her own. Where once she was a cheerful woman delighting in the creation of beautiful fabrics, now she is harsh, only believing in what she can see, touch, and put in her strong box. Anya now wears predominately black or gray clothing. She has an abandoned air about her person, somewhat like a deserted mansion, once beautiful, but now with peeling paint and sagging eaves and shutters. Her disillusionment with the guild has carried over into all aspects of her life. She no longer believes in magic or miracles.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Hand-Me-Down Quest. Anya sells and trades clothes originating from all over the City as well as distant lands. The opportunity exists for adventurers trading or buying gear to discover clues or treasures left forgotten in pockets or sewn into linings. Maps to dungeons and castles, or scrolls with magical travel incantations, can be used as starting points for adventures upon or beyond King's River Bridge.

Scenario 2: Fashion Misstatement. The clothes the party bought from Anya were stolen from Dyers' Guild Master Harkeneston, who spots the adventurers dressed to the nines on the bridge. Their choice: a thorough beating or the name of the shopkeeper who sold them the purloined clothing. If the adventurers turn Anya in, they will have a chance to discover that the angry "victim" in this case has an outstanding grudge, and has engineered the entire situation to have Anya jailed for theft and to close down The Clothes Chest. Can the player characters save Anya from her fate?

Scenario 3: Do You Believe In Magic? Anya has lost her belief in magic and miracles. If a character expects to receive a high trade value for a magical clothing item he no longer needs, he may be surprised at Anya's disinterest in the value of his protective cape or enchanted boots. Anya's lack of faith is so ingrained that some magic items will not even work in her presence. If the characters attempt to use magic to free Anya from jail in Scenario 2, they may have to deal with the counter effects of her disbelief.

Bridge Encounter

Shecky Reenstein. *Human male. Ht: 5' 6". Wt: 230#, Age: 57.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor.*
 Magic Ability: Legendary C4.

Shecky is a street comic. You'll find him in his ugly lime green suit telling a pretty stale monologue of one-liners. [This gives the game master the chance to remember all the gaming jokes he or she knows, and inflict as much Henny Youngman-style monologue as they care to on their poor players.]



Shecky asks people for food or silver, but please, no gold. A funny thing happens when Shecky touches a gold piece. It turns into a lightweight, brightly colored disk of an unknown substance. If the players have ever been to an Earth casino, they will recognize it as a poker chip.

No one bothers Shecky, because once a day he can say to them "Oh, get lost!" and they vanish—returning 24 hours later with strange and frightening tales. It hasn't happened very often, but frequently enough for no one to bother Shecky.

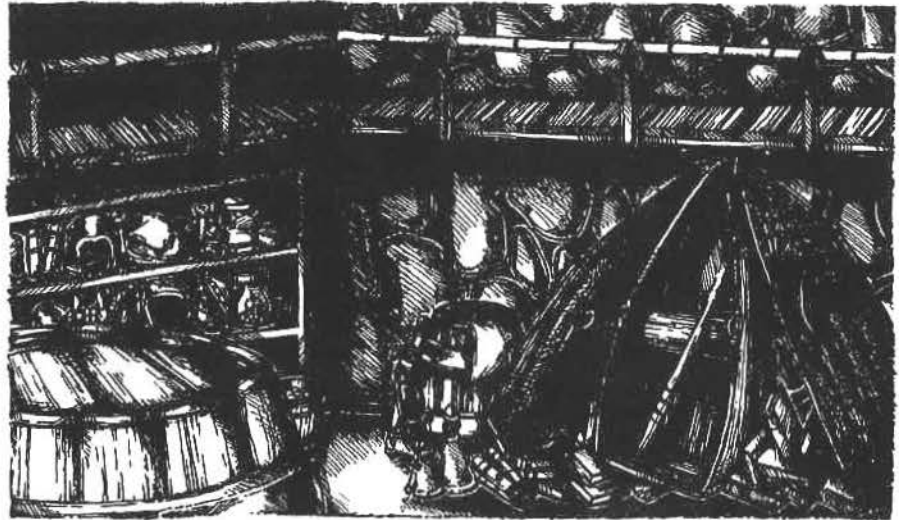
Shecky was a warm-up comedian at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas in the late 1970s. One day he insulted Zoltan the Magnificent, Magical Scourge of the Twelve Dimensions (who was in Vegas for a vacation). Zoltan transported Shecky here. He gave him the odd affliction with the poker chips and the ability to transport either a single person (or a group) to Las Vegas for 24 hours. Shecky doesn't know this, but he can send himself back home any time by using the spell on himself. Zoltan is a big fan of the movie version of *The Wizard of Oz*.

Shecky doesn't quite understand his condition. He talks about "Area 52" and "alien abductions" a great deal. Otherwise he's a happy guy.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: They're Jewel Seeds. A character hears and believes a rumor that Shecky's discs, if hung from the bridge on a moonless night in a gourd filled with river water, will turn into gemstones when the sun rises. The player will have to convince Shecky to handle the gold to test this theory; then he will have to deal with the monetary loss when the discs fail to transform. This is a good way for the most gullible member of the party to put the rest of the group in financial straits!

Teeble's Found- Goods Warehouse



Whether it washed up on the river bank, or rolled off a passing wagon, Teeble's has some Thing for everyone!

King's River Bridge has a junk store unlike any other. It is a cramped, convoluted maze of broken bells and rusty tools, of cracked jars and old belts, and barrels and toys and unwanted furniture. Within the dusty, shadowy canyons of anonymous Things, a warm sense of comfort, of order, of home prevails. And, as befits an extraordinary junkshop, Teeble's is piled with extraordinary junk.

Looking Around

The first phrase that probably comes to mind upon entering the Found-Goods Warehouse is "fire hazard." The second, if you've wandered from the door, might be "I'm lost." Teeble's is a maze of paths forced through unbalanced mountains of *stuff*. Looming cliffsides of pottery hanging with cascades of old chain and bits of colored string obscure a view of three rowboats, stacked point-to-point like a miniature pyramid atop a stack of molding books. Behind you, an unfathomably strange iron framework supports the most astonishing collection of wooden dolls, and also hangs with buckets full of bone buttons.

Teeble's sits near the northeast corner of King's River Bridge in what was once a miniature warehouse providing temporary equipment storage (and occasional flophousing) for the City Guild of Fishmongers (freshwater fraternity). The Guild, more wealthy and powerful now (despite the mysterious fish-shortage of four years ago), has moved downriver to a larger establishment. At that time, the property was purchased lock, stock and barrel by a loud, wealthy dwarf calling himself Clanghollow Teeble.

Most of the bridge's businessmen consider Teeble to be a dangerous eccentric. At night, his place rings with his hearty laughter and the sounds of mountains of junk shifting and (for all they can tell from listening) collapsing. They doubt seriously if the place brings Teeble any profit, but he seems to be independently secure.

What they do not realize is that Teeble's Warehouse is Teeble's personal triumph over his own terrible past. They don't comprehend that Teeble's business is not so much a shop as a temple. Things are not only Clanghollow Teeble's stock in trade. Things are his religion.

Services

If adventurers wander into Teeble's Warehouse looking for bone buttons, they won't have any trouble, except perhaps finding the exit. Bone buttons are not a problem, nor are chairs, stepladders, cracked scroll cases, rusted daggers, a set of three curious helmets shaped like fruit, or a painted wooden statue of a man holding a cat above his head.

Searching through the shop for a given item can take a while, since it requires both rooting through piles of strange goods and navigating the "maze." Clanghollow Teeble himself knows every inch of the place by heart, however, and will be pleased to help any customer who seems overwhelmed.

Those who choose to simply browse are likely to run across some unusual things. The GM is encouraged to improvise, but in a pinch roll 1d6 on the following table:

- 1 — An ordinary object, but with an inscription of ownership. Roll 1d6 again. If the result is a six, the owner is someone the PCs know, not necessarily on the best of terms! If the result is a five, the owner is (or was) someone important or powerful, but the PCs may or may not recognize the name or insignia. Otherwise, the name belongs to a stranger.

- 2 — An ordinary object of use in the PC's profession. It is of exceptional, even unbelievable quality, or is some variation that the PC has never seen (this could be anything from an elven blade to a primitive form of fountain-pen, depending on the vocation in question). Roll 1d6 again. On anything but a one, the object is missing a single part or is otherwise in need of repair. At any rate, Teeble won't charge above the price of an unremarkable item of the same type.
- 3 — An ordinary object relating to a very different profession from any of the PCs, but enchanted. Wizards may or may not notice the radiant aura, depending on their powers. This could be anything from a butter churn that works itself to a quill enchanted to record musical notation when the user sings to it. If the GM wants magic items of any kind to remain rare in his campaign, any result of 3 should be instantly rerolled, applying only if it comes up again.
- 4 — An object that one or more PCs should be frightened by. If any members of the party are of a taboo-heavy faith or of a strange race or species, it could be a kind of cursed totem or unlucky charm. Alternately, it could relate to a character's phobia, or something bad in their past. Depending on the tone of the campaign, it could offer opportunities to face fears in need of facing.
- 5 — An ordinary object that is exactly like something one of the PCs used to own. Whether it actually *was* the property of the adventurer at one time is for the GM to decide. In any case, it could bring back old memories, or even be used as a story hook.
- 6 — This result should *always* be rerolled, as suggested for result 3, above. The object is something truly extraordinary — not magical or even useful, necessarily, but something wondrous and mysterious, or even disturbing. Example: an ornate helmet inscribed with the name of a PC — but the PC doesn't ever remember owning the helm! Furthermore, the inscription includes something scandalous or promising (the PC is a secret heir to a distant throne, the PC participated in a terrible genocidal slaughter and was rewarded by an evil King for it, or some such).

Clanghollow's Story

Clanghollow Teeble, in his younger days, was stereotypical in his consuming greed for gold and silver, and remarkable for his selfishness in its pursuit. He was an overseer in the mountains far to the north, working a vein of metal as old as his clan. He was infamous for driving his fellow dwarves toward their workable limit, from the deadly ice of winter into the heat of the mine and out again, hauling tons of rock to the surface to be cracked and heated until every tiny sliver of soft metal could be drawn from it. Teeble wanted to be rich, and he was.

He owned things in the same way ordinary dwarves breathed

air, consuming without conscious decision, never looking back. The things he purchased one day were forgotten the following morning, the pleasure of acquisition replaced by an empty, aching need to acquire again. His house was full of expensive junk, accumulated from many successful seasons working his mines.

This continued for nine years, until Shaft 17 developed a fault. Four dwarves were killed in a minor cave-in, and as clean-up crews cleared the rubble, Clanghollow Teeble shouted at his engineers to shore up the damage so the mining could continue. His face twitched with horror as he contemplated a day without a full shipment of gold to his clan's coffers.

Two hours passed, and Teeble stood in the snow, steaming. Bringhammer, his Master Engineer, emerged from the shaft with a grim look, his feet churning up snow as he made his way before Clanghollow.

"Master," said Bringhammer, sadly, "one more hand was lost."

"Does the work continue?"

Bringhammer nodded. "Indeed sir, and very well. The new splinter we forced a fortnight ago has struck a fresh layer of nearly pure metal! It was the vigorous pursuit of this vein that caused the trouble. It is my opinion," he added, carefully, "that this vein should be ignored for a time, and approached again from another angle, perhaps a more stable shaft from the ridge on the —"

"No," said Clanghollow. It wasn't even shouted. A simple, spoken order carrying such deep tones of lustful desire for gold as to totally silence his exhausted engineer. Snow fell around them for several seconds before Bringhammer could speak again. Clanghollow trembled, but not from cold.

"With due respect, master, this will endanger the lives of the miners."

Clanghollow was unmoved. "With courtesies returned, Bringhammer. But if they cannot bring me my gold, I will not pay them and I will not feed them. My caravans will not bring supplies past Mountain Gate. I will have that gold." Clanghollow turned on his heel, and made his way home in the snow.

Of the 130 dwarves working Shaft 17 that night, 123 were killed; five were Clanghollow's own poorer brothers.

Even the wealthy Clanghollow could not avoid the wrath of the Dwarven Kings, and his clan had no desire to defend him. He was stripped of his possessions (the proceeds split between the crown and the families of the deceased) and cast out of the north country forever. Furthermore, a council of dwarven geomancers worked charms to place a curse on him. They pronounced that for the rest of his life, he would be destined to own all he could stomach. Wherever he went, he would find those things which others no longer cared for. He would be buried, they assumed, in a mountain of neglected trash.

They were wrong.

The Special Nature of Rubbish

Within the piles of candelabras and carousel-horses can be found hundreds of very special things. The dwarves were careless in their curse-making, because there are many things of value

that are “no longer wanted” by their owners. Indeed, Clanghollow himself had exemplified the principle.

What nobody realized was this: Things have feelings. Not *all* things, but any Thing that has ever *meant* something to someone gains a kind of consciousness, a sense of being loved. Favorite hats, toys, even weapons are aware of their place of importance in a life. And if they are ever neglected, they are hurt. When they hurt, they escape, slipping into the folds of space and following a siren song, a beacon to a place where they know they will be found and wanted. That beacon, these days, is Clanghollow Teeble.

When Clanghollow first realized that he had become the babysitter for every old hammer a carpenter ever got tired of, he believed that he truly had received a terrible curse for his crimes, and he repented. He became determined to rid himself of the curse by single-handedly finding loving homes for every piece of junk he came across. He wandered from town to town, finding things and then finding owners, making sure that people loved and took care of their things. It became a genuine faith for him, a bizarre religion, a worship of possessions very different from his own natural greed. He no longer lusted after ownership. He wanted others to really appreciate the Things that they had. He told stories and sang songs about it, and if his message also happened to help people appreciate the other people in their lives, that was a kind of bonus. It was around this time that the real guilt over the death of his brothers finally struck him.

Clanghollow’s curse makes him the nexus of a bizarre whirlwind of strange magic. It also makes his shop very special.

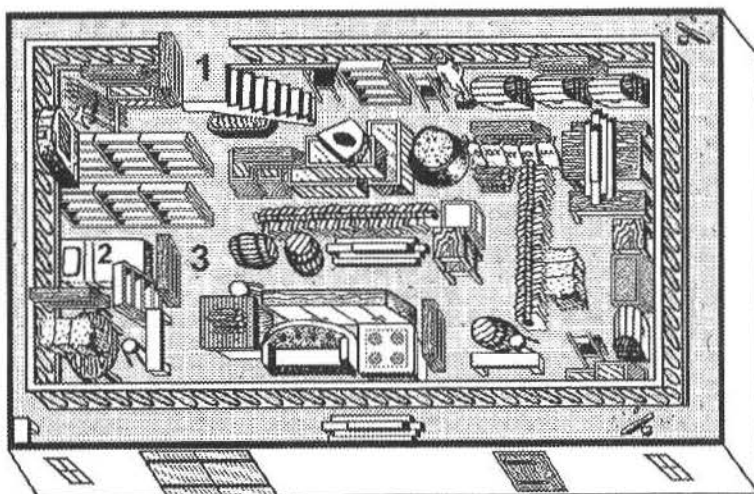
Whenever anyone enters the Found-Goods Warehouse, Clanghollow will introduce them to things they need. He has an uncanny sense of it, which makes him very valuable to anyone not put off by his strangeness. Sometimes, Clanghollow finds (usually washed up in the river mud) objects of great importance, which someone has made the terrible mistake of neglecting. Many an adventurer has been collared by the loud little dwarf, and apprised of the need to return a sceptre to a tired king, or a holy item to a cynical priest, to convince their owners that they must not abandon what the Thing represents.

Many people who come to Teeble’s warehouse find something that *they* had lost, sometimes years before. If Teeble senses that this is the case, there is no charge for the item, provided Teeble is convinced it will now be properly appreciated.

Layout

Teeble’s is a simple rectangular warehouse, very small, with two entrances, both on the southern wall. The main entrance is man-sized, kept open during business hours. The second is a double-door suitable for a cart to pass through. It is usually closed.

There is no rhyme or reason to the layout, and the junk is so thickly packed into the small building that paths have been forced through the mountains of rubbish and form strange patterns (and include two or three actual dead-ends). After a few trips, any



1 sq = 2 ft

customer will be accustomed to the layout, but the initial visit is often very confusing.

1. The Walkway. (4' x 60', 4' x 40') This narrow, bannistered catwalk runs around the entire warehouse at a height of eight feet from the main floor. It is accessible only by a narrow wooden stair on the back wall. The stair is almost concealed behind mountains of goods. Up on the walkway there is more junk, and risky-to-use access to the tops of the larger piles.

2. Teeble’s Bed. This bed (reconstructed from parts found near the riverbank) is tucked along a side wall, surrounded by other furniture for sale.

3. Stock Room. (32' x 50') The rest of the warehouse is the maze of mountainous stacks. Teeble doesn’t have a business countertop or even an adding-table. He does all his work on foot, haggling and joking and trying to make any customer feel welcome.

Personalities

Clanghollow Teeble. *Dwarven male. Ht: 3'6", Wt: 145#, Age 41.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* *Magic Ability: Very Good, C5 (limited to matching people to the Things they need or might appreciate).*

Those unfamiliar with Teeble’s unfortunate early years would have trouble believing that they happened. The Clanghollow Teeble of today is a cheerful, rosy-cheeked merchant with a booming basso voice and a perpetual laughing grin. He is generous with his property, selling for very fair prices to any who visit his emporium.

His style of dress is distinctly dwarvish, with sturdy dungarees and a comfortable coat of oiled leather. He would look just as natural with chainmail and an axe, and his beard is huge and



Clanghollow Teeble

braided, peppered lightly with distinguished grey.

Clanghollow doesn't speak openly of his religion; he prefers to let the world think that he is simply insane when he decides to favor it again with his homespun parables about being good to one's tools, or appreciating a good button. If visitors allow him, he'll talk their ears off and even offer to sing a few songs he's written.

At night, when he is alone with his curious stock, he talks to it, and constantly fusses over it, moving things from pile to pile trying to make the warehouse more "comfortable," both for his clients and his wares.

On some nights, he simply sits among candles and stares into the shadows, remembering those he killed and sobbing. He'll be paying for his crimes the rest of his life, but not with the curse he was given. The curse, ultimately, has provided him a path to personal redemption, but one that his guilt isn't likely to let him see the end of.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Missing In Action. A curious event to explore is the moment of escape when a neglected Thing makes its way through the folds of space to find its way to the King's River Bridge. If the GM decides that there is an item on a PC's character sheet that qualifies as "neglected" (perhaps written down at the beginning of the campaign and never referred to again), then one night it may begin to shift in a backpack or belt-pouch. The

PC might be one of the rare individuals who *notice* the escape of a Thing. And if it leaps across the grass, hunting for shadows, can the PC catch it? If he does, will he be "folded" himself, washed up on the shore at Clanghollow's feet? Teeble might mistake the PC for a neglected *person*!

Scenario 2: Spectres of the Past. While enjoying ale at one of the City's many watering holes, the adventurers overhear two dwarves talking about Teeble. The dwarves are members of his old clan, and have heard that he has somehow beaten his curse and found prosperity in the City. They are intent on finding him and, if need be, dragging him back into the north country to stand trial again. Both dwarves are motivated personally by the loss of brothers to Shaft 17. This would be an excellent opportunity for the PCs to learn the truth about Teeble's past, and make their own judgment as to whether he's paying his debt. It works most effectively if the characters have visited the Found Goods Warehouse in the past.

Scenario 3: Passing the Flag. One one terrible winter night, Clanghollow Teeble falls ill, and the PCs find him, collapsed among his stacks of goods. He is in need of medical attention, and will be under the weather for more than a fortnight. Assuming the PCs help him to get to a physician, he will thank them and smile, slipping into unconsciousness. The next day, the PCs will notice that *they* are now finding things; Teeble's "curse" has passed to them! As long as the dwarf is sick, the players will suffer the effects of his curse. If Teeble is being treated by an unskilled healer, or even Blind Geoff [see *Blind Geoffrey's Barberie and Cauterie*, page 82], he may *never* recover!

Teeble's is a bizarre collection of the hopelessly ordinary and unthinkable unusual. The Game Master should be free to have anything hiding there, probably barely visible and balancing on a precarious seven-foot pile of wooden casks. Prices are about one-third of what a new item would cost for an object in good shape. For "fixer-uppers" (buckets with handles missing, a shield missing a rim, a bell without a clapper) the price is closer to one-fifth.

Neela's Flower Cart



Do you wish to buy a nosegay for your lady as you pass into the City? Want to bring some cheer to the house of a friend? Neela's flower cart is the place to stop, bright blossoms and simple arrangements beckoning to travelers across the bridge. Those in need of plants of a more than decorative nature will not be disappointed, either.

As you approach Neela the flower seller, her cart is the first thing to catch your eye. A rickety affair, it seems ready to topple under the weight of blossoms and greenery that it bears. Posts barely visible beneath bundles of fern, pussywillows and flowering twigs rise at each corner of the cart to the height of a tall man. The cart is laden with baskets, difficult to see beneath their colorful burdens: calendulus, primroses, iris, the rare bouquet of roses—the elegant lines and artful hues of cultivated flowers. More baskets are on the ground, skirting the cart, laden with wildflowers: five-petaled white stars, wild grape hyacinth and delicate lavender blossoms, an overflow of fragrant abundance.

Neela, a short, plump old woman, bustles about the cart. Her face is lined but cheery, her white hair straggling free from the bun atop her head, her hands rough-worn by the bark and bracken she handles every day. She looks like a simple farmwife, her clothes modest, her skirt and apron still tangled with leaves and twigs from her morning meadow walk and flower harvesting. She looks up from the mixed bouquet she is putting together, her fingers working industriously even as she greets you, stripping thorns and sucker leaves, twining flowers and greenery together with a rapid twist of a tendril of raffia.

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Neela is always ready with a smile, a joke, a pleasant line of airy chat, whether you are buying or not. But she is attentive to your needs when you start to look over her colorful offerings, helpful and knowledgeable about the flowers she loves. And if you know enough to softly inquire about that rarest of blossoms, the black orchid, she will speak with you in a private aside, for then she knows you have business of a somewhat different nature to conduct with her.

History

Neela has been a widow for many years. She lives in a small cottage in the neighboring countryside, a few miles walk from King's River Bridge. Neela is a well-known midwife to the women of the outlying areas, and has attended birthings for several decades. When her husband passed on, she needed a steadier source of income than the simple in-kind barterings offered for midwifery, and so turned to the cultivation and sale of the flowers she loved so well in her garden.

It soon became clear to the enterprising widow that she could not grow enough plants in her crofting to keep a steady supply during the temperate months when flowers were in bloom. She approached various friends and neighbor-women, and through business sense and charm, convinced many to grow various flowers and allow her to cut them for a small fee. These "cutting patches" exist in a patchwork array, a few rose-bushes here in one neighbor's yard, there clusters of iris and lily beside a back creek, here some snapdragons beyond a run-down hen coop. From these casually-tended offerings, Neela collects nearly half of what she sells to the public from her cart.

Besides the cultivated blossoms that Neela harvests from her friends, she offers an eclectic assortment of wildflowers, greenery, and occasionally herbs from meadows and woodland clearings in the surrounding areas. She or her young helper, Adine, take turns walking fields and stream banks, collecting asters, jonquils, fairy's delight, bluebells and myriad other wild flowers, plants of marvelous delicate fragrance, short-lived once cut, but a fragrant delight for that time. The women are up long before dawn every morning, to pluck the flowers before the dew has settled upon them. Their colorful bounty is packed into Neela's cart and brought to King's River Bridge shortly after first light, when tradesmen coming into the City across the span

are among the first of her early morning customers.

Although Neela's knowledge of flowers is broad, and her eye for the design of a bouquet keen, she knows more about certain herbal extracts than she cares to admit or will readily talk about. In all the years that she worked as midwife, it was inevitable that she pick up a certain amount of hercraft along the way. Yet curatives and herblore were never the flower seller's calling, and for the longest time she personally had little interest in this craft beyond the basics essential to midwifery — a poltice of stinging nettle stops hemorrhaging; raspberry leaf tea eases cramps. To induce cramps and bring on labor, an extract of belladonna could be used in a dilute and mild dosage.

It was, perhaps, only a matter of time before Neela discovered first-hand that too much belladonna was everything the old wives whispered it could be — deadly. The first overdose was accidental, poured and administered by an ignorant farmwife, the cause of the victim's death not recognized by anyone but the midwife herself, and she too shocked and horror-stricken to say a word. But a year later, there was that drunken cooper who had beaten his pregnant wife senseless with a barrel stave, and then demanded that Neela pour his ale . . .

No one mourned *that* man's death, that much was certain. It would never do, of course, to advertise in plain language that Neela had such means at her fingertips. She knew which shady creek beds to visit, and how to brew the tincture of deadly nightshade. But her love of flowers gave her the perfect cover story. There was the legendary black orchid — a flower she had never seen and probably never would — one said to be a magical plant, whose extract had magical properties. It could be harmlessly consumed by the pure of heart, but blackguards would merely taste of it, and be smitten dead on the spot. A discriminating potion, was the juice of the black orchid. Better that its name should be whispered about, than "belladonna", which would speak too loudly of poison.

And so it became something Neela began to offer, discreetly, to those who seemed in need. To the wife whose arm had been broken by her husband; to the sister whose brother-in-law would not stay out of her bed at night; to others wronged by those who should do them no harm. Over time, Neela has become less discriminating about to whom she sells her "black orchid extract." Years ago, she concerned herself to learn the details of each case, to judge for herself if death was right and deserved. But too many tragic tales heard have taken their toll. Nowadays, Neela sells bouquets with a smile, and hears requests for the black orchid with similar equanimity. She is concerned only to know that the buyer is sincerely aggrieved, and then she will do what she can to help. More than that, she does not wish to know.

Hours of Operation

Neela is present most days of the week at King's River Bridge, usually setting up her cart near the middle span of the bridge, but always at some distance from other cart vendors. She prefers to have a bit of privacy for her talks with customers. About one day out of every ten, she is called off somewhere to attend a new

birth, and stays gone 1 to 3 days at a stretch. During such times, Adine takes over the sales from the flower cart.

About two days out of ten, Neela is present at the bridge for only a half-day, from the early morning while flowers are freshest until noon. She then gives away unsold flowers of the fast-wilting varieties to local inn and shopkeepers, while holding on to those cultivated varieties that will last for several days. While she is gone these half-days, she is busy harvesting certain plants during necessary moon phases, or brewing up the black orchid tincture.

Services

Neela sells bouquets and arrangements, and will send her delivery boy Willis to carry items anywhere on King's River Bridge or to the City beyond. Flowers are moderately priced, starting at a few coppers for a nosegay of wildflowers, ranging up to many silvers for an elaborate bouquet of cultivated flowers, to a gold piece or more for intricate wreaths and wedding work. Occasionally magical plants and unusual growths pass through Neela's hands — grasping vines, fungi that glow in the dark, similar fairly-harmless oddities. She does not seek these out, but might buy one or two such things if they are offered to her. She never knowingly deals in any plant that is deadly or could be seriously hazardous for her customers to touch or be near.

Arrangements for holidays and festive occasions must be ordered in advance, as is greenery for seasonal decorations. Neela is illiterate, and keeps no notes. Her memory is sterling, though, and she recalls very well the customers who order and how much is owed. Everything sold from her cart, including orders for special-occasion items, is paid for with cash up front. She offers no credit and will not commit to any specialty work until the project has been paid for. Her work has a good reputation and the doubtful first-time buyer can readily hear good references from shopkeepers on the bridge.

Persons interested in the black orchid extract pay a moderate cost in gold for Neela's specialty ware. Her first sales were to working-class women without much money, and she has never tried to profit from sales of the poison. By the same token, she does not want to make it readily affordable to someone who is casually vengeful. Neela is circumspect in negotiating such a sale and will never name a price, waiting for the buyer to offer something in the correct range first.

Personalities

Neela. *Human female. Ht: 5'5", Wt: 160#, Age: 60.*
 Fighting Prowess: Poor. *Magic Ability: None*

Neela is jovial and pleasant-natured, although she has cold regard for people intentionally cruel and abusive to others. Her grandmotherly years are plain to see, but she is not yet stooped by time or infirmity. She is unskilled in any weapon use, though her tongue can be sharp-edged enough to rude or officious persons. She is spontaneously generous, and will often give away



Neela



Adine and Willis

a flower or an arrangement to someone who seems sad, or in love, or who otherwise catches her eye.

Adine. *Human female, Ht: 5'3", Wt: 112#, Age: 15.*
 Fighting Prowess: Poor. *Magic Ability: None.*

Adine is a young woman of 15, a great-niece who was sent to live with Neela because her precocious nature was getting her in trouble with boys in her home village. This sweet-faced blonde is as cheerful and chatty on the surface as her great-aunt, but really has little interest in the rustic life of a flower seller. Although she is diligent enough under the older woman's eye, or when gathering flowers on the morning meadow walks, Adine on King's River Bridge is less than reliable as a cart vendor. She would much rather talk to passersby than sell wares, and always has an eye out for a handsome soldier or a brawny adventurer. Her friendly demeanor under Neela's watchful eye turns into a flirtatious chattiness and wandering feet when left on her own.

Adine is aware that Neela sells "the black orchid", but knows only that it is a rare and special extract, not spoken of to strangers. She does not realize there is any more to it than that, and the flower seller is careful to keep her great-niece in ignorance. Adine has expressed no interest in midwifery, and only a little interest more in the flower business. Although Adine is quick to recognize plants and can describe their wares and hardness to customers, Neela does not let her assemble bouquets or do anything more than sort greenery and load bundles into the cart and baskets. Adine has no interest or talent in flower arrangement or the more aesthetic side of the flower seller's craft.

Adine will flirt with anyone who is above average in looks. She is not particularly greedy, but she can be lured afield by offers of entertainment — song, dance, something to imbibe. She feels life is a party and she is on the fringes of it, anxious, but not yet able, to jump in. Anyone who offers her the opportunity to "jump in" may find that Adine tags along, puppydog footsteps, indeed may develop a full-blown crush or bad case of hero worship on the one who has given her the glad eye. She is a talented dancer and has an aptitude for herblore, although she has not yet given this any serious consideration and Neela has intentionally neglected this part of her education.

If approached by customers interested in flowers, Adine does what she can to help. She is enthusiastic in her efforts, although she is only modestly skilled as a florist. If queried about the black orchid, she will refer the client to Neela and is unable to answer any questions even if pressed.

Willis. *Human male, Ht: 4'6", Wt: 90#, Age: 11.*
 Fighting Prowess: Poor. *Magic Ability: None.*

Willis is a ragged street urchin and sometime delivery boy. He is suspicious of strangers and close-mouthed until he gets to know a person. He is a trustworthy runner, messenger, and carrier of flower arrangements to their ordered destination. He is thoroughly familiar with the streets and byways of the City, as well as all establishments on King's River Bridge. He knows a large number of the soldiery, customs officials, and other regulars

NEELA'S FLOWER CART

who populate the bridge and its environs. He is considered to be a somewhat unlicensed competitor with Mildred Al Hassan's Messengers, and when he encounters her runners, Willis takes care to lie low lest he be beaten up and chased far out of his path. He has lost more than one assortment of flowers that way, while carrying Neela's handiwork to a destination.

Willis can be hired to guide adventurers around the bridge or the City beyond, or to point out persons and places of interest. There is a 40% chance that Willis will be familiar with any rumor or piece of general news that is of contemporary interest.

Willis has fallen into a sibling-like relationship with Adine. The two seem to despise each other, and quibble and bicker constantly when Neela is not present. Yet, they stand steadfast together against outsiders. Any stranger who harasses either must deal with the other, if they are within sight or sound of the incident. Unity under stress notwithstanding, Willis constantly threatens to "tell" on Adine for her unauthorized strolls away from the cart, as she slips off for a drink or a talk with some charming stranger.

Adine, likewise, threatens to tell on Willis for losing deliveries and forcing Adine to create a second, less-artfully-constructed, substitute. Thus far neither has snitched on the other and at this rate, the pair will remain in stand-off mode for a good long time to come. It is the jousting and camaraderie, it seems, which these near-siblings enjoy most of all.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: The Gilded Lillies. Ransom Swaith, the owner of the Golden Dragon tavern in the City, is throwing a party, and none but the finest flowers will do. Swaith has given Neela a small fortune in fine gold dust, which the flower seller has in turn painstakingly painted onto the edges of hundreds of callis blossoms. This leaves the lily-like curve of each callis bell gilded, a fine decoration for the upcoming wedding of Swaith's daughter.

The PCs are hired to escort the callis blossoms to the Golden Dragon on the morning of the wedding. It would never do for the expensive gilt shipment to be damaged or stolen. In fact, a small group of petty thieves does make a brief bid to snatch the flowers, but this minor challenge should be something easily surmounted by the adventurers. It is after their delivery is made that the real trouble will start. After the wedding, a furious Swaith leads a squad of guards and demands that Neela and the PCs be arrested for fraud and theft of his gold dust. Swaith carries a silk flower with a yellow-painted edge — a tawdry imitation of the gilt-trimmed callis he had expected. The PCs know they delivered the real thing, and if they wish to avoid prosecution, they will need to investigate the substitution of their flower shipment with great speed. In fact, the hostler at the Golden Dragon, who took delivery of the flowers, committed this theft. He is even now melting the gilt into puddles of gold, and planning soon to leave town. If this deception is not discovered in time, both Neela and the adventurers may well go to prison for their "theft".

Bridge Encounter

Thomas Roe. Human male. Ht: 6' 2", Wt: 200#, Age: 28. Fighting Prowess: Fair. Magic Ability: Poor.

Thomas has blonde hair, fair skin and a slight squint. He usually has chalk dust on his hands and paint on his smock. Thomas carries pastels, charcoal, canvas, paper, pencils, easel and cash box. He wears a painter's smock, and shows his art on the bridge whenever he can get a merchant to allow him. He creates his paintings at his brother's



house in the City, and does his quick pastel portraits here on the bridge. He makes pretty good money. His cash box has a lock², but would be easy to carry away.

A few silvers will buy you a nice sketch of yourself, either as a straight portrait to send mom, or an amusing caricature. For five gold Thomas will paint a nice but uninspired landscape. Thomas is still looking for his style, but as he will tell you, he can imitate any painter's technique, and perfectly copy any design.

Thomas has made some serious money from forgery. If the characters need these services he'll provide them for a stiff fee. More than anything, he wants to be a great painter, and a famous painter — and hasn't figured out yet that sometimes those both don't happen at once.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: The Emperor's New Clothes. Thomas is hired to paint someone, and because of his powers of observation sees through the illusion they have cast. The portrait shows the mayor is a ghoul, the party member is older/younger than they're passing for, etc. Such a painting may become vastly more valuable, and Thomas won't want it to go cheap.

Scenario 2: The Art Bubble. A short time after a player buys a painting, a critic tells him how really great the painting is. Can the players get Thomas on some kind of exclusive contract? What about thieves after the art? How much money should the players invest in the art? Should they buy up other work cheap before the word is on the street? Decide how many days Thomas's art is the rage. After that it should be worth next to nothing.

Undercurrents

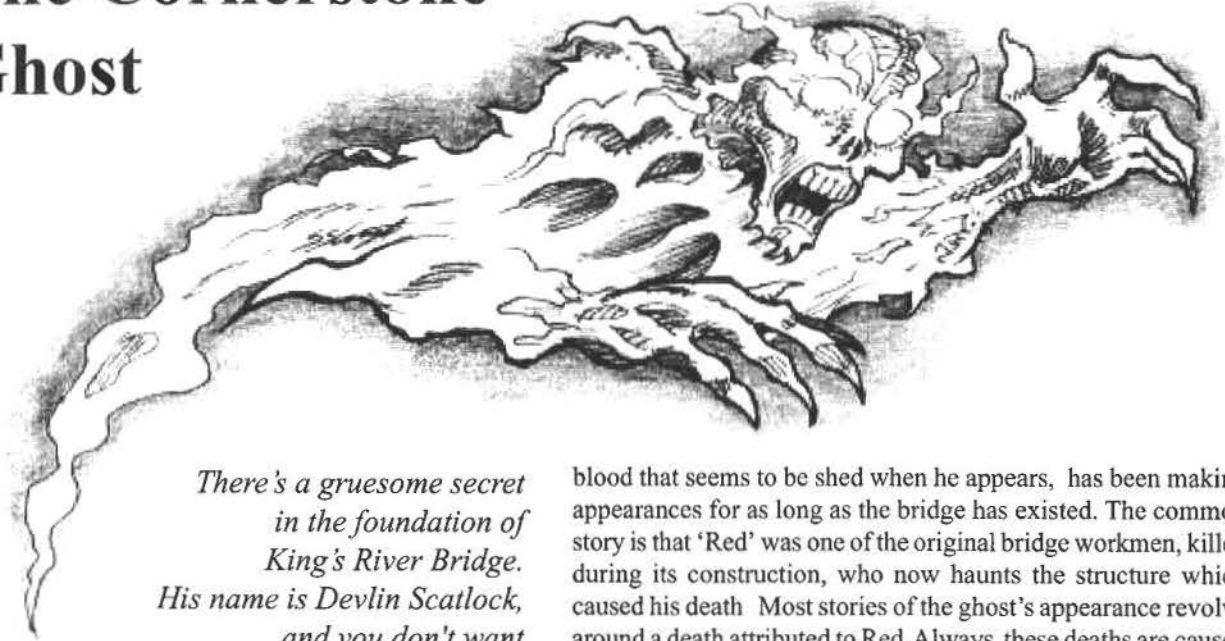
When the morning mists and the evening murk hug the banks of the King's River, the bridge can seem an eerie and sinister place. Some say it's haunted, and that story isn't hard to believe in the presence of those severed heads of traitors impaled upon the iron stakes that thrust from the face of the bridge.

But true adventurers have no fear of ghosts! That tapping, rapping sound down the dark alley holds no terror for them. It's probably just one of *Fizhak's Waifs*, orphan thieves scrounging for scraps. Besides, treasure maps prove there's gold under the bridge road. No tavern tales of *The Cornerstone Ghost* will keep them from their prize.

Still, the bridge is unsettling in the dim, dead hours of the night. Stirred by the party's passage, rats are heard, skittering about below the sewer grates. Haven't those rat catchers dealt with that vermin? A curious thief peers into the sewer. Eyes bigger than any rat's stare back, then retreat into the darkness. A vigorous tug lifts the grate, cracking the shaft's stone framework. In response, a blood-curdling howl rings out . . .



The Cornerstone Ghost



*There's a gruesome secret
in the foundation of
King's River Bridge.
His name is Devlin Scatlock,
and you don't want
to meet him.*

Two rogues, desperate for cash, pondered what might happen if some unfortunate boatman, passing under King's River Bridge at night, happened to be struck by a dislodged block of stone from the bridge railing. Would it fall onto his craft, sinking the boat and sending his cargo into the waters to be scavenged down river? Just waiting around for the chance occurrence of a block falling on a boat took too long, so the miscreants sped up the process with a crowbar. While prying the slab loose, one commented about the sudden chill in air on an otherwise warm night. Just as the mortar cracked, a shriek sounded right next to their heads. A ghastly visage of a rotting, emaciated form with glowing red eyes appeared. One man stumbled backward, tripped, struck his head, and fell to his death in the river below. The other ran off screaming, to spread the news that the Cornerstone Ghost had claimed another victim.

Common Knowledge

The story of the ghost of King's River Bridge is one that most inhabitants of the City, and all on the bridge itself, know. The ghost, nicknamed "Red" for his fiery eyes and the amount of

Richard Shaffstall has been involved in gaming for over 18 years. He worked for Flying Buffalo, Inc. for four before leaving to work for a rival pbm company. This is his second *CityBook* submission, having created "The Fellowship of the Blessed Companions" for *CityBook IV*. He is just recently married to a belly-dancing woman named Karyn who believes that she is actually a space alien who has been sentenced to spend the rest of her life trapped in human form on planet Earth.

blood that seems to be shed when he appears, has been making appearances for as long as the bridge has existed. The common story is that 'Red' was one of the original bridge workmen, killed during its construction, who now haunts the structure which caused his death. Most stories of the ghost's appearance revolve around a death attributed to Red. Always these deaths are caused by mishaps triggered by the ghost's appearance, rather than by direct action of the ghost himself. All who have died by Red have died by accidents. The most famous of the stories involves Red appearing in broad daylight before a carriage bearing a rich merchant and his wife. His horrible visage panicked the horses, driving them over the side of the bridge, dragging the carriage and its occupants into the river to their deaths. Other stories about the ghost concern the numerous exorcisms that have been attempted to rid the bridge of him, all of which were to no avail. Red has never seemed disturbed or even inconvenienced by any exorcism attempt. In fact, he has even appeared during the exorcism rites to disturb them! In the last attempt to rid the bridge of the ghost, the adventurers performing the exorcism were taunted by Red's appearance at the end of the rite, as if he were ridiculing their effort.

For the most part, Red seems to leave those living on the bridge alone, although there have been a few notable exceptions to this. And frankly, not that many people have died by the ghostly appearances, only about half a dozen in the last two hundred years or so. This fact is usually ignored by the storytellers. There are also reports of another ghost: a tall, dark-haired, handsome, bearded man in outmoded dress who appears and disappears from various points on the bridge. Depending on which story you might hear, this spirit has talked to passersby asking about news in the City, requesting directions, seeking knowledge of a lost loved one, etc. No one knows who this ghost is, or why he is haunting the bridge. Apart from some speculation that he is one of Red's old victims, no explanation for the other ghost's origin exists.

Truly there is only one ghost of the bridge, with two visible forms. He haunts the bridge, not for revenge or blood, but to protect it, as he was bound to do when sacrificed by being buried alive in the original bridge foundation almost four centuries ago.

History

Four hundred years ago when the City was young, the reigning king ordered the construction of a bridge. In a time of tension and strife, when various warlords were attacking the City's trade routes and trying to carve kingdoms for themselves in the surrounding lands, such an idea was criticized. The City needed walls to keep out the raiders, not bridges to invite them in! But the King proceeded with his plan, despite frequent interruptions to construction while the able bodied builders were diverted to chase off robber bands.

The mightiest warlord of the time was Wayvirrn. He had been raiding the most profitable trade routes for years, and had even sacked the King's treasure train as it came into the City. As the kingdom's losses mounted, a trap was laid for the warlord. The King ordered a large force to be gathered and disguised as a merchant train. Wayvirrn took the bait, and most of his army was crushed. As for the warlord, he escaped, leaving his second in command, Devlin Scatlock, to be captured. The King decreed that Devlin should be executed in a manner to pay back all the pain and suffering his fellow raiders had caused, and ordered him to be given up in sacrifice for the building of the new bridge. A space, two meters long and quarter meter deep, was opened in the bridge's foundation. Devlin was taken from the City's prison and entombed in the space, alive. A standard magical rite, empowered by the sacrifice of Scatlock's life, was performed to protect the bridge from harm. Thus, Devlin Scatlock was forever united with the bridge, bound to protect it from harm until its final ruination.

In the years following Devlin's death, the bridge came to be called "Prisoner's Crossing" by the inhabitants of the City, partly for Scatlock's entombment, but also because the king who succeeded the bridge-builder was tough on crime, and enjoyed hanging criminals from the bridge. Prisoner's Crossing was not as wide as the current bridge, and had no buildings or inhabitants. The combination of inadequate size and distasteful use made it an unpopular avenue. Soon, various stories began arising about odd deaths on and around the bridge, making the crossing even more disreputable. As time passed, the warlords were eventually broken, the hangings curtailed, and the fact of Devlin's entombment slowly forgotten by the City's people.

Two hundred years ago, in an attempt to effect some badly needed renovations to the old bridge and to popularize the avenue, a construction project was started to widen the thoroughfare using the original construction as a base. During this time, several workmen died under odd circumstances, thus leading to the belief that Red is a haunt resulting from one of their deaths. Eventually, the bridge was expanded to the form that is seen today. A much more normal rite was then done on the new bridge to protect it from harm. It was also renamed "King's River Bridge" at this time, mainly due to the fact that most people could not remember why it was called Prisoner's Crossing in the first place.

Red's haunting and the deaths attributed to him have garnered

enough notoriety to warrant the number of expensive exorcisms that have been performed over the years. However, since no exorcist has discovered that Red's haunts are guaranteed by the protection spell on the bridge, all have failed. Red must protect the *bridge* from harm. No provision was ever made for protecting the *people* who use it. The spell that bound Devlin Scatlock's soul to the bridge was designed to use his entrapped soul to 'power' the protection spell. However, Devlin's natural magical ability was so strong that he instead used the protection spell to sustain his soul, leaving him as a powerful, intelligent ghost. He is obligated to protect the bridge from harm, just as the original spell intended, and must pursue this duty relentlessly. But while Devlin has to protect the bridge, it doesn't mean he has to like doing it. He, in fact, is very resentful of having to protect this monument to the City's success and his warlord's failure. He has no compunction about causing deaths to get the job done. In fact, he often goes out of his way to cause the deaths. It's his revenge on the inhabitants of the City for his entombment, even if it was over four hundred years ago.

Devlin contrived the incident with the merchant's carriage to alert the citizens to erosion around one of the bridge's support pylons. He caused the carriage to fall into river at a point where diving rescuers would discover the weakness and repair it (which they did). Devlin could have certainly found an easier way to reveal this threat to the bridge, but preferred to do it in a deadly and melodramatic fashion. He also gains great pleasure from the exorcism attempts to be rid of him. He finds these 'ghost hunts' great fun and delights in causing failure and frustration to the participants. Devlin has also appeared to the goblins living under the bridge, and has tricked them into believing he is some sort of spirit god [see *The Halfling Rat Catchers' Guild*]. He can call upon these goblins if he has need of them to work his will.

Personalities

Devlin Scatlock. *Human spirit. Ht: 6', Wt: n/a, Age 400+ (30 when he died).* *Fighting Prowess: when he was alive — Very Good with sword and bow, Good with all other weapons; in death — none, as he cannot physically interact with the world.* *Magic Ability: Good C4 (on bridge only), C7.*

In life, Devlin Scatlock was a very intelligent, but cold and unsympathetic man. His hard upbringing led him to despise those who could not help themselves and to be indifferent to the pain and misery he caused around him. Not to say that Devlin could not show friendship, or trust. But these qualities were reserved for those who had impressed Devlin with their strength and power to survive and rise in the world. He had a great sense of duty to those who had gained his confidence and friendship.

Devlin Scatlock was born the seventh son of a seventh son of poor farmers outside the City. Under the circumstances of his birth, his fate should have been to either have great luck or to become a powerful mage. Well, as to luck, Devlin would have said he did have an excessive amount of luck, all of it bad. And



Devlin Scatlock

though he was blessed with the magical prowess of legends, he never had the chance or even the self-awareness to pursue his gift. Devlin did experience manifestations of his magical abilities. He could start fires just by thinking about it, and move small objects with his mind. Being untutored in what these signs meant, he kept them secret and only occasionally used them for small pranks.

When Devlin was thirteen, a blight struck his family's farm, leaving his father and most of his brothers and sisters dead and the farm in ruin. Devlin, left to begging, scrounging, and stealing to stay alive, eventually sought his fate on the road. He quickly fell in with a meager band of ruffians who resorted to highway banditry to survive. He took to the bandit life quite readily, and began to rise in their ranks. By the time he had reached the age of twenty, he was their leader.

One day Scatlock's group was approached by Wayvirm and his warband. Wayvirm was gathering men, recruiting from the local parties of bandits. When he came across Scatlock's band, he was impressed with Devlin's natural leadership abilities and intelligence. During the years that followed, Scatlock rapidly rose through the ranks of the fledgling warlord's army, making many successful raids on merchant caravans, towns and farmsteads.

Devlin gradually became the warlord's trusted colleague, and later, friend. He was the one in command when Wayvirm's band blundered into the King's trap. When the warlord's men found themselves ambushed by the King's troops, Devlin felt it his

responsibility to give both his men, and Wayvirm, time to escape. Scatlock let himself be captured to delay the King's troops.

Devlin today walks a thin line between sanity and madness. The rigid structure of the spell assures that some of his sanity is kept intact. Yet the long span he has endured, waiting, watching, occasionally protecting and killing, has taken its toll. He has split into almost two separate personalities: his guise as Red, the evil, death-dealing ghost, and his normal appearance. In the last century he has begun appearing more as himself, just to wander the bridge and watch normal life. He usually tries to remain inconspicuous. Unfortunately, Devlin has lost track of the number of years that have gone by, and can easily be confused by changes time has wrought on the bridge. When in his normal guise he will not be aggressive, and can even be charming. Threaten the bridge in any way, however, and Red will come out to vent his wrath.

Devlin's shade is a tall, dark-haired man in the outdated garb of a nomadic warrior. His apparition is so lifelike that Devlin appears to be a normal man if not observed in direct sunlight.

Red. *Human spirit. Ht: 6', Wt: n/a, Age: 400+.*
 Fighting Prowess: None, as he cannot physically interact with the world. *Magic Ability: Good C3, C4 (on bridge only), C7.*



Red

THE CORNERSTONE GHOST

Red is a translucent, rotting, emaciated corpse with crimson, glowing eyes. He has become very adept at arranging accidents and fighting indirectly. He can, of course, be invisible for any length of time, and can sense any damage being done anywhere to the bridge instantly. He can also perform a half a dozen small magic cantrips which cause people to trip at unfortunate times or hear strange noises which distract and frighten them. His tricks come not from his ghostly guise, but as part of the natural magic ability Devlin had during life. Red does not have great control over his magic, but if hard pressed or threatened he could cast truly great spells.

Neither Devlin nor Red can leave the confines of the bridge, and their presence is totally undetectable. Any attempt to 'detect' them, or detect magic on or around the bridge will reveal only the basic protection spell, which is common enough.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Getting Some Exorcise. The player characters could be asked to rid the bridge of the ghost. In their preparations, they discover the true history of Devlin Scatlock. An interesting twist could be that the exorcism attempt stimulates Devlin's magic, and the release of power sends the players back to the days of the first bridge. The players will run into both the old King's troops and the warlord Wayvirm's men. To return to their own time, the adventurers might have to prevent the attack on the false treasure train or rescue Devlin from the King's justice.

Scenario 2: Ghost of a Chance. A priest from a well-respected temple in the City approaches the delvers: *"I have a job for you for which you will be well-compensated, both here and in your next life. A dreadful mistake has been discovered, recorded in our ancient scrolls! When this bridge's first pilings were sunk, WE were the ones slated to provide the traditional sacrifice! But those thrice-cursed servants of Slag-Blah intercepted our holy men and entombed the sacrifice with their own unholy magic. Our god has been patient, until now. He has charged us to find warriors such as you, to right this wrong. You will be richly rewarded . . ."* The priest will ask that the adventurers kidnap a prominent personage of the King's River Bridge community as the designated "purification sacrifice." Some amusing selections for the victim might be: Rashim Varddin [see *The Fellowship of the Moon*, page 51], Blind Geoffrey Theobald [see *Blind Geoffrey's Barberie and Cauterie*, page 82], or Gav [see *The Street Cleaner*, page 28].

Scenario 3: Oops. The most likely encounter with The Cornerstone Ghost (considering the destructive nature of many players) will stem from one of the adventurers doing something to harm the bridge. Perhaps they pry up a loose stone looking for loot, or vandalize a pylon by chipping their mark on it. They will then have to deal with the immediate problem of Red trying to cause their death. If Red is seriously aggrieved by their actions, the players may be pursued and harassed by goblins even when the bridge is far behind them.

Bridge Encounter

Mary the Street Poet. Human female. Ht: 5', Wt: 130#, Age: 512 (appears early nineties). Fighting Prowess: Poor. Magic Ability: Good C3 (Prophecy).

Mary is humpbacked, lop-handed, and deeply, deeply wrinkled. Her long hair would be a dowdy gray if it was washed, her teeth are green and black, and she smells. She wears clothing and rags that may have been fine dresses thirty years ago, her jaw trembles, and her personal habits are less than fastidious. She carries a sack full of scavenged food and clothing (always with a few rolls from



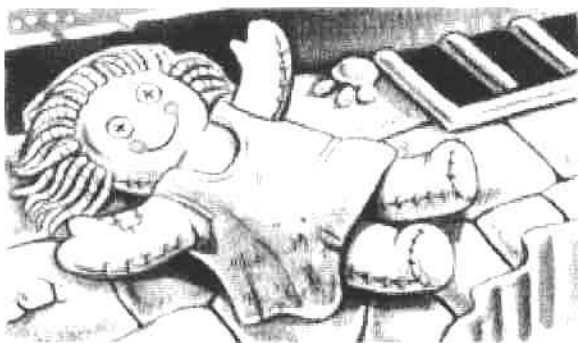
Don and Ron's Chat and Chew). She also carries a sack full of tiny books of poetry, her own self-published "Aunt Mary's Rhymes of Reason." She approaches everyone and offers to sell her book for a very small fee. The book has a magical property. You can't throw it away, or give it away, until you have read it. You can drop it off the bridge, feed it to the fire, teleport it to another dimension — yet it's back in your knapsack the next day. It can't even be stolen.

If players ever think to conceal a single short piece of paper in the book, it will likewise be protected. More than one small sheet, however, and the extra pages will fall out, burn, etc. Mary had been a lover of a young god some centuries ago. During their love, he granted her immortality, poetry, and prophecy. After he found out that she was seeing a djinn on the side, he let her age (but remain immortal), let her have trouble selling her poetry, and addled her wits so her prophecy is hard to figure out. Breaking up is hard to do. Mary can tell her tale in a garbled fashion, but her mind is basically worn out.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Payback. If the players show Mary some kindness, she will repay it at an odd but crucial moment. Mary may lean out a window and pop a villain in pursuit of the party with a frying pan, for example. If the players are particularly mean to Mary, she will surely cause them problems at an inopportune moment. She may utter an embarrassing prediction in front of important contacts, or compose an insulting poem about one of the characters which she reads aloud every morning. Mary will always be kind to those who buy her book, and spiteful to any who belittle her poetry.

Fizhak's Waifs



Nearly every large gathering of people has a few that get overlooked or forgotten. The bridge is no exception. There always seem to be orphans in the alleys and byways, making a living however they can. Where do they come from, and how do they survive?

Over fifty years ago in the western wood, a major uprising took place among a tribe of brownies. A group of these normally good creatures rebelled, hoping to start collecting a tax from merchants travelling through their forest. Although the gold wouldn't be particularly useful to the forest dwellers, the magic it could purchase would be. A bitter battle was fought, and the rebellious brownies were exiled from the wood by the Queen of Faerie. The group disbanded, and each went his separate way. One of the brownies, Fizhak Thornberry, eventually made it to the City. Fizhak had been wounded during the battle, and was barely able to walk by the time he arrived at King's River Bridge. Exhausted, he crawled into one of the many drainage tunnels running beneath the surface of the bridge, to wait for his wounded leg to heal.

Time passed, but his leg showed little improvement. Fizhak became increasingly bitter about his situation, and began taking his spite out on the merchants and entertainers on the bridge. Typically harmless faerie pranks became dangerous. The brownie climbed out of the sewer nightly, and the tapping of his crutch sent travelers on the bridge running for their homes. Older members of the community still remember the mysterious fires, and the epidemic of broken oil lamps that was never adequately explained. Food and supplies continually disappeared without a trace.

One moonless night, as the brownie pulled himself out of his tunnel, he found a young girl standing by the entrance. "Why don't you run home, girl?" he snarled, thinking to scare the child away. "Ain't got one, mister," was the quiet reply. At that moment, Fizhak had a change of heart. He invited the girl into

his warren, and shared his supplies with her. Over the years, other orphans joined the secret family.

Currently, Fizhak is watching over fifteen to twenty children. Most of them live in Fizhak's section of the storm drains, but a few have private hideaways on the bridge. The brownie sees himself as a father figure to the children, but he has no delusions about their eventual destiny. As the children grow up, Fizhak tries to find a home or profession for each of them. When they become adults, the children leave the warren, never to return. Most of them never see Fizhak again.

Fizhak tries to teach the children basic skills they will need in order to survive. All of the children can count and do simple arithmetic, and a few of the older ones are beginning to learn to read. The brownie also teaches them various ways to steal without getting caught, and how to pick their targets to avoid retribution. Since Fizhak has a hard time climbing in and out of the tunnels due to his leg, the children share their booty with the brownie.

The waifs are a loosely organized band of thieves and con artists. They make a living from whatever coins and supplies they can beg, borrow, or steal. It is worth noting that the children are not malicious. They only take what they need in order to survive, and then only from those that can afford it. The Bridge Guard tend to ignore the petty thefts committed by the waifs, because they often use the orphans as a reliable source of information.

The Warren

Beneath the surface of the bridge, there is a maze of tunnels designed to drain rainwater from the roadway. These tunnels are small for an adult; the main trunks are roughly four feet in diameter, with some of the smaller branches as small as one foot in size. The tunnels run throughout the bridge, including the center, pivoting section. The roadway is lined with evenly spaced grates.

These sewers are patrolled by the goblins of the Halfling Rat Catchers' Guild, and are relatively free of vermin. Fizhak's home lies in an abandoned section of drain from an earlier design of the bridge. Access to the rest of the sewers is blocked by altered construction and debris. The goblins and halflings don't know about Fizhak and his wards; Fizhak, however, is well aware of the activity in the other tunnels, and steers his waifs away from exploration with grisly tales of giant rats and albino alligators.

Schemes

Fizhak has taught the waifs a number of ploys to obtain the food and coin necessary for day-to-day subsistence. Some of their typical tricks include:

Picking Pockets: Most of the orphans have some skill at picking

pockets, pouches, or backpacks. All carry small knives, which are used to cut holes in pouches and bags. This allows them to follow the mark and pick up whatever falls out of the pouch.

Wagons: Several of the waifs spend mornings at the country end of the bridge, waiting for wagons to come in from the farms. As the wagons arrive, some will accost the driver, begging for coins, or just slow the wagon by playing in the street in front of it. While the driver is distracted, other children steal as much of the produce as they can carry.

Tag: A group of children begins to play a noisy, rowdy game in the street. Once a mark is selected, one of the larger youngsters will "accidentally" run into the mark, attempting to knock him down or drop what he is carrying. The others will immediately apologize and help gather up the items strewn about the street, palming as many as they return to the original owner. This ploy also works on street vendors and carts, but the children avoid stealing from bridge regulars wherever possible.

Information Please: The children have been taught the value of eavesdropping, and make a concerted effort to overhear anything being discussed on the bridge. They trade tales every evening, to share a large amount of common knowledge. The information can be useful to merchants, guardsmen, and travelers interested in business deals, crimes, or road conditions outside of the City. This information service naturally costs a few coins, but most find it to be worth the expense. However, some of the children are more than willing to make up an answer, if the person asking the question is about to leave town . . .

Personalities

Fizhak Thornberry. *Brownie male. Ht: 2'11", Wt: 40#, Age: 113.* *Fighting Prowess: Average.* *Magic Ability: Very Good C7, C8.*

Fizhak is a bitter, old brownie. He appears physically frail, and he walks with a severe limp. The limp is due to a poorly healed broken bone, sustained during the brownie rebellion. His reddish hair is beginning to show grey, but his brown eyes still show the sparkle of youth. Because of his magical heritage, Fizhak is very adept at concealing himself. The young have sharper 'true sight' and are more likely to see the brownie when he doesn't wish to be seen. As a general rule, Fizhak has a percentage chance to remain unseen equal to double the viewer's age. For example, an 8 year old child will see him 84% of the time, while a 35 year old only has a 30% chance. If the brownie is actively trying to remain invisible, these chances are halved. His other magical skills are suited to the type of frivolity and trickery normally associated with the faerie folk.



Fizhak Thornberry

Fizhak subconsciously fears anyone more than five feet tall. This fear manifests as a hatred of most adults and a few children. He reserves his nastiest pranks and tricks for those over five feet in height. The brownie feels more at home with those his own size, and this is easily seen in his band of orphans. Most of his waifs are pre-teens. The children are the central focus of Fizhak's life, now that he has been exiled from his own kind. He regards each child in his band as a family member, and will go out of his way to avenge any harm or slight inflicted upon one of them. As they grow up, the brownie attempts to find some type of future for his charges outside the drainage tunnel. Some are adopted into families lacking children, others are married to prosperous farmers or merchants, and a few are apprenticed to different tradesmen on the bridge.

Karli. *Human female. Ht: 4'4", Wt: 71#, Age: 11.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Karli is currently one of the leaders among the children in Fizhak's band. Although there are a few older orphans, none are as outspoken or intelligent as Karli. She came to the bridge when her mother died and her father was put into debtor's prison by a heartless moneylender. She is an adept liar, and she has no qualms about making up outrageous tales of misfortune in order to gain sympathy from a mark. Karli has greatly enhanced the band's repertoire of moneymaking schemes. She is stashing away

half of whatever money she 'finds' in order to buy her father's freedom.

Mouse. *Human(?) female. Ht: 3'6", Wt:50#, Age: Apparently 9.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* *Magic Ability: Fair C7.*

Mouse has been a part of Fizhak's band for years. No one really remembers when she arrived. She was found by Fizhak many years ago, a baby wrapped in a blanket. The odd thing is that no one has ever realized that she doesn't seem to be growing up. She is a pretty girl, with a hint of faerie in her features. Those guessing at her past have suggested that a housemaid or tavern wench may have had a brief affair with an exotic traveler.

Her innate ability with concealment magic seems to hide her in plain sight by making her totally nondescript and nearly impossible to remember. Her ability to blend in makes Mouse a formidable sneak thief and pickpocket. No matter how closely the guards may be watching, she is always able to steal some food or coins.

Nyle. *Human male. Ht: 3'6", Wt:50#, Age: 6.* *Fighting Prowess: Poor.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Nyle is the clown of the group. He is also the most likely to be in trouble at any given moment. Nyle is possessed with almost unbelievable bad luck, which manages to ruin even his most foolproof ideas. His straw-blond hair and blue eyes give him a deceptively innocent appearance, but even that isn't enough to prevent him from getting caught at nearly everything he tries.



Nyle and Karli

Nyle is a recent addition to the band. He fell from a wagon as his parents were traveling out of the City. They quickly realized that he was missing, and retraced their route looking for him. Unfortunately, Nyle had wandered down to the river and nearly drowned before Karli fished him out. Since that point, Nyle has been nearly inseparable from Karli, regarding her as a big sister.

Max and Dax. *Human males. Ht: 3'10", Wt:60#, Age: 8.* *Fighting Prowess: Average with club, Poor otherwise.* *Magic Ability: None.*

Max and Dax are identical twins who have been with Fizhak for over 4 years. The two have shoulder length brown hair and bright green eyes. They dress alike, making it nearly impossible to tell them apart. Only the other children know of both twins, although the bridge guards are beginning to suspect there's more than one boy. Normally, the two do not travel together, preferring to use one twin as the alibi, in case the other is caught. One or the other is almost always playing innocently in clear sight of the guards, while the other is out picking pockets.

Scenario Suggestions

Scenario 1: Tag and Snag. A party member is the target of Tag and loses an important map or scroll. Tracking down the young thieves eventually leads to the warren, where the adventurers become the targets of the invisible Fizhak's numerous traps and practical jokes.

Scenario 2. Seeing Double. Max (or Dax?) is caught with his hand in a party member's money pouch. If the party tries to turn him over to the guards, they'll have some explaining to do, since Dax (Max?) was sitting outside the guard post the entire afternoon. Dax (Max?) disappears shortly before the party arrives with Max (Dax?).

Scenario 3: The Goblins Go Hunting. Burnfast Brushfire [see *The Halfling Rat Catchers' Guild*, page 16] sees Nyle crawling into a drain. Motivated by both his dislike of children and the fear that the goblin activities in the sewers will be discovered, Burnfast asks Bogwhomper and his goblin minions to quietly catch and dispose of the boy. The adventurers are the first potential saviors Karli finds as she rushes from the warren to escape the goblin raiders. Will the adventurers defeat the goblins? Will they meet Fizhak? Will the halflings join the battle to keep their business secret? Don't forget the predatory albino alligators!

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