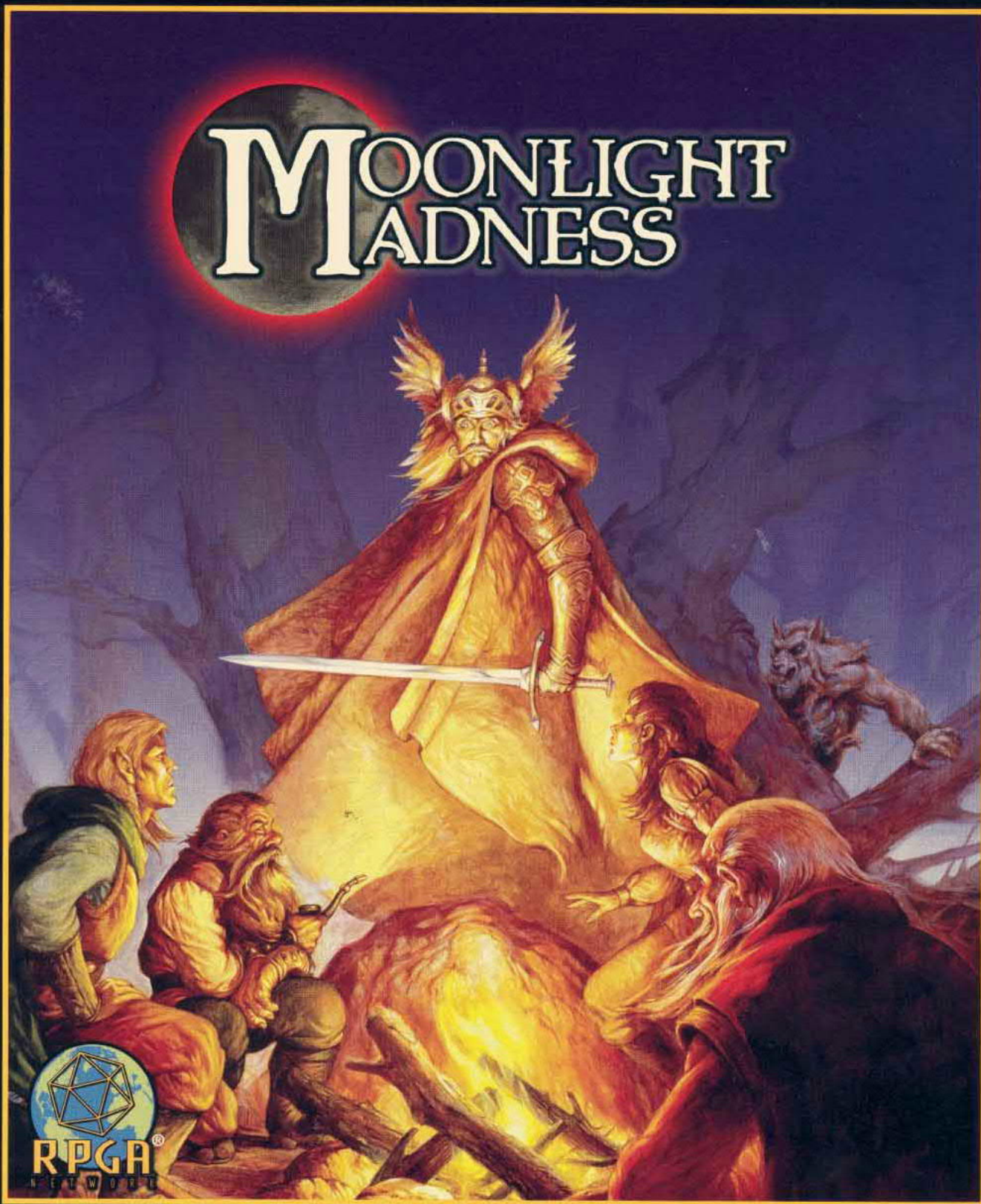




Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

Adventure

MOONLIGHT MADNESS



By Penny and Skip Williams

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®



Game Adventure Moonlight Madness

An AD&D® Adventure for 4–6 characters of 4th–6th level

by Penny & Skip Williams

Table of Contents

Dungeon Master's Background	2
A Note on Lycanthropy (Optional Rules)	2
Thornburg	5
Courier Service	9
Cold Springs	12
Fun in the Forest	16
Sphinxes and Others	22
Brant's Bandits	29
Hermits and Antihermits	36
Rude Awakenings	38
Sharptooth Valley	41
The Mountain Pass	44
The Hermitage	46
Scrying Rules/Moon Chart/Prerolled Saves	47

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Dungeon Master's Background

Some or all of the player characters in this module are suffering from lycanthropy. Each character so cursed will naturally wish to find a cure before his or her personality and alignment change to embrace the darkness within, leaving the new animal-self dominant. Conventional cures having failed, the characters are seeking for a semi-mythical place called "the Hermitage on the Lake," which offers them one last hope of finding someone willing and able to effect a cure before it's too late. Unfortunately, no one seems to know exactly where the Hermitage is. It is said to be a retreat far away from the hustle and bustle of civilization that only the truly pure or needy may find in their hour of greatest need.

The adventure opens in the walled city of Thornburg, which is currently undergoing a werewolf panic. The city gates have been sealed and a mob mentality rules, with angry citizens ready to set upon any suspicious-looking stranger. Characters who confess their affliction will either be lynched on the spot ("Get him!") or arrested and held until they can be formally executed. The PCs are thus faced with two goals throughout the adventure: keeping their lycanthropy secret and finding a cure before time runs out.

Before the adventure begins, then, the DM should arrange a series of encounters in which the player charac-

ters are exposed to various types of lycanthropy. These can be as simple as a nighttime raid on the PCs' camp by a pack of wolves (several of which are secretly werewolves) or a dungeon encounter with a swarm of giant rats (with several wererats unobtrusively among their number), to as subtle as the dying curse of some evil high priest the characters have just slain or side effect of that magical fountain they all drank from. It's best if more than one PC is infected—ideally at least half the party, if not all, should be suffering from exposure to a variety of weretypes. In the original tournament upon which this module is based, the player characters were a werewolf ranger, a wererat thief, a werebear cleric, a weretiger mage, an elven werefox fighter/mage, and a wereboar barbarian.

A Note on Lycanthropy (Optional Rules)

The following optional rules are provided to help the DM adjudicate the chances of player characters becoming werebeasts, infecting others with their curse, and involuntarily assuming bestial form. The much briefer standard lycanthropy rules may be found in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* (under "A DM's Miscellany") and the *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* tome (under "Lycanthrope").

The Progress of the Disease

A character may be cursed with the magical disease known as "lycanthropy" in any of a number of ways. The most usual is to be bitten by a werebeast. In the standard rules, the chance is 1% per hit point lost. Under these optional rules, a character so bitten has a chance of acquiring the disease equal to the percentage of his or her total hit points lost due to the injury. Thus, a 1st-level character mauled for 4 out of his total of 5 hit points would have a much greater chance (80%) of catching the disease than a 5th-level fighter who got scratched for a mere 4 points out of 40 (10% chance) in the same fight. A character reduced to zero hit points or below who survives due to prompt aid (the "death's door" rule), or one slain by the beast and then raised from the dead, should be given a 95% chance of becoming a werebeast. In all cases, the particular type of lycanthropy picked up in this fashion will be the same as the attacking creature (thus a person attacked by a werewolf will become another werewolf, not a wererat or wereboar, and so forth). Note that if the attacking werebeast is in animal form at the time the character may not realize until long afterwards that there was anything supernatural about the encounter and thus may not seek aid (beyond standard healing spells for the injury) until it is too late.

Three traditional cures for lycanthropy are listed here: the DM may allow the player characters to learn of them from NPCs they encounter in the course of the adventure





(gypsies, Muldoon the druid, Stewart the ranger, Grim, the gynosphinx, etc.). Whether or not these remedies work is, of course, entirely up to the DM.

(1) Swallowing a fresh sprig of belladonna within an hour of the attack has a 25% chance of negating the disease, but remember that belladonna is toxic and can kill the patient (1% chance), incapacitating any survivors for 1d4 days.

(2) *Cure disease* can negate the blight, but only if cast within three days of infection and only if cast by a priest or priestess of at least 12th level (this adventure assumes that no clerics of appropriate level are available in the campaign this side of the Hermitage).

(3) *Remove curse* may negate the infection but only if cast on the victim while in wereform (i. e., after the disease has fully manifested itself) and even then only if the character in question succeeds on a saving throw vs. polymorph. If this cure works, the character immediately reverts to normal form, free of the curse. Remember that the werebeast will do everything within its power to disrupt the spell, including fleeing at top speed or simply attacking the priest with tooth and claw. Think of the werebeast as a second personality beginning to emerge that will eventually devour and replace the PC's original personality. At first it isn't aware of what the PC does, nor does the PC know what his or her bestial form does under the full moon. Eventually each becomes aware of the other, but only when they are beginning to merge with the werebeast mind as the dominant one. When it is in control it does everything possible to destroy the PC's friends (allies of the hated original personality), either by killing them or by infecting them in turn. If only one PC is infected at the beginning of the adventure, that could easily change after the first full moon!

Demihumans are a special case: most are not transformed by the disease (with the notable exceptions of the elven werefoxes and dwarven werebadgers). So long as a demihuman player character keeps to the "designated driver" role, well and good, but if such a PC gets too cocky over his or her "invulnerability" don't be afraid to take the character down a peg or two. For example, you might rule that just because the particular form of lycanthropy the demihuman has just been exposed to does not trigger a shapechange doesn't mean he or she is immune to the disease. Rather, it might cause the character to be utterly debilitated throughout the next full moon and will eventually kill outright if not cured before the disease has fully taken hold (say the second or third full moon after exposure).

Note that characters might also become werebeasts through malfunctioning or cursed magical items, scrolls, or potions. A cursed *cloak of the bat* might turn the character who uses it once too often into a wererat; a faulty *portion of invulnerability* could make its drinker a werebear; a cursed scroll could turn its reader into a weretiger. These disease vectors are particularly insidious because the

character in question might have little cause to suspect that he or she has been infected until the process is too far gone to cure by ordinary means. Characters can also become werebeast, especially evil types, through committing heinous acts that are more "animal" than human (e.g., cannibalism), but player characters should rarely fall in this category.

Involuntary Changes to Wereform ("Going Were")

Infected characters will assume wereform under one of two circumstances: when undergoing great stress or during certain phases of the moon. Any time the character takes one-third or more of his or her total hit points in damage in combat, he or she has a flat 50% chance to shift into wereform (kindly DMs may, optionally, reduce that chance to 25% in daylight hours). In addition, all infected characters undergo the change during the time of the full moon (at sunset on the night before, the night of, and the night after the moon becomes full). Use the Moon Chart provided as an appendix to this adventure as a handy means to keep track of how many days the characters have left before disaster strikes. It's up to the DM to decide the moon's phase when the adventure begins: the adventure assumes that the opening scene takes place during the dark of the moon, but a generous DM may rule that the full moon has just passed, allowing a full month before the next transformation.

The change to wereform temporarily boosts the character's Strength to 19 but renders the character unable to function for one or two rounds (roll any die: odd = one round, even = two) due to disorientation. While in wereform, the character is immune to normal weapons and can only be harmed by silver or magical weapons (spells, acid, and fire still have their usual effects). Lycanthropes cannot abide the touch of silver or smell of wolfsbane, and some have such a strong antipathy that silver actually burns their skin (for 1 point of damage per round) when in close contact. The werecreature is not interested in any possessions and will abandon them, either dropping them where the change took place or scattering them somewhere between that spot and wherever he or she winds up. Hence, keeping track of clothes, weapons, and the like becomes a matter of some difficulty. The player has no control over the character's actions in wereform (see the "Prerolled Saves" section on page 47); instead, the DM directs the wereform's actions (i.e., choosing to fight or run if injured, deciding whether or not to eat the horses, dig for truffles, raid a chicken coop, or whatever seems appropriate at the time). Have the werecreature react to situations entirely as an animal would; self-preservation should be the creature's overriding goal, although evil werebeasts will do as much harm and wreak as much havoc as possible in the time available to them.

Characters who change to wereform remain in that



form until the next sunrise. If a character was wearing armor when the change occurred, apply damage as per the following table.

Ordinary clothing (shirts, breeches, skirts, etc.) will be shredded beyond any future use unless taken off and stored before transformation occurs. Experienced lycanthropes eventually learn to disrobe before transformation, storing all their items in some safe place they can be sure to find upon resuming their human (or demihuman) form. One small consolation for characters who find themselves naked, lost, amnesiac, and unarmed at dawn is that the reversion to human form (or demihuman, as the case may be) restores 1d6 × 10% hit points of any damage they may have suffered.

A Final Note

In the normal course of things, all the player characters in a party know each other before the adventure begins. Just to keep things interesting, you might want to let the players roll up all new characters and quietly inform each

that he or she recently acquired lycanthropy and is trying to find a cure. Tell each player that the character is trying to keep his or her curse a secret from everyone (including the other players and player characters) and see how long it takes before they all realize that they're in the same boat. Each has tried, and failed, to find a cure and been told that his or her last hope is to find "The Hermitage on the Lake," a quiet retreat located somewhere up in the Spikey Mountains. This Hermitage is rumored to be chock-full of powerful priests who should be able to cure the affliction. Legend also says that pilgrims seeking the hermitage should wear amber (a traditional sovereign against disease) as a token of their sincerity. Allow each character a chance to find or buy some piece of amber jewelry—a sword pommel, amulet, ring, cloak pin, belt buckle, bracelet, headband, or whatever. Whether he or she chooses to openly display it is, of course, up to the PC. Note that, for reasons discussed later (see page 46), an *arrow of direction* and similar magics will not avail in finding the Hermitage.

Armor Type:	leather	studded/ring	scale	chain	splint or banded	plate
Damage:	1 hp	1d2	1d3	1d4	1d3+1	1d4+1

Note: subtract -1 hp from these figures for small werebeasts (e.g., wererats and werewolves); add +1 hp for large werebeasts (e.g., werewolves, weretigers, and wererocodiles). Winged forms (werewings and wereravens) present special problems which the DM should resolve as he or she sees fit, taking into account any creative preparations on the player's part.





Thornburg

At first you thought you liked Thornburg. After all, it was the only town for miles around, with high walls, well-stocked inns, and friendly people. Then the werewolf scare began. Before you knew what was happening, panic seemed to have swept the town. The gates were closed, with well-armed guards carefully checking the bonafides of anyone trying to enter or leave. Local wizards set up an air patrol that blasted out of the sky anything that tried to get over the walls. The burgo-meister sent a message asking for aid from a famous lycanthrope-hunter, asking him to come and help exterminate the menace. What you intended as an overnight stay has stretched into almost a week, with no end in sight. It's high time you were moving on—but how?

Allow the player characters to exercise their ingenuity trying to find ways around, over, under, or through the city walls. Brute force shouldn't work, as any blatant attack on the gate guards results in quick reinforcements, who stand an excellent chance of overwhelming the attackers and dragging them off to the city jail. Even if this crude tactic succeeds, the townspeople will alert everyone for miles around that the "evil fiends in human form" are at large and provide them with a detailed description of the PCs' appearance. Characters who prefer subterfuge to an unequal combat might try any of a variety of approaches:

Try to bluff their way past the gate. The guards here are careful to check for passes, requiring characters who want to get past to either steal or forge one (to produce a passable copy, the forger must have an original to work from). The quarantine is tight, so with or without a pass the guard in charge will still hold suspicious-looking characters for questioning. Trying to *charm* a guard stands an excellent chance of being observed by his or her fellows, who consider this an attack on one of their number and immediately retaliate.

Join a caravan. Normally this would work, but at present all caravans have been delayed from leaving the city. Hence while any of a number of merchant caravans would gladly hire on the PCs, that won't get them out of the city any faster.

Join the guards. This option may appeal to characters of the "if you can't beat them, join them" persuasion. It has the advantage of familiarizing the characters with the patrol routine and watch patterns. However, if the characters sign up in a group they will quickly be split up (mages going to the air patrol, fighters to the gates, and others to the mess halls, street patrols, or house-to-house search details). A character in the guard has a good chance of making a break or slipping off quietly, making this a good option for solitary characters, but thereafter security will be tightened as a result.

Slip over or under the wall. The walls are under the watchful eye of the air patrol (see page 6); the sewers lead to heavy iron grates which have recently been set with silver slivers in such a way that player characters cannot get a good grip on them, making bend bars/lift gates rolls impossible.

Smuggle self out. Even though no one is allowed in or out, people still must eat. Food arrives daily from outlying farms and traveling merchants, who leave their goods at the gates and collect their payment along with any barrels and casks emptied since their last visit. Characters might try to hide themselves inside these empties, but this strategy is only practical if they can somehow negate their weight as well, as otherwise the drovers will immediately realize that someone or something is inside that shouldn't be. The city cemetery also lies outside the city walls, so a desperate character might try to hide inside a coffin and get carried out by pallbearers. Given the present crisis, though, guards are likely to intercept the procession and insist on cremating the remains, which should give encoffined PCs a few bad moments.

Other possibilities are limited only by the players' imaginations and their characters' capabilities.

Thornburg Militia

The gate guards are quite vigilant and shoot down anyone seen trying to escape with their silver-tipped arrows. No one in town, not even criminals, will trust anyone trying to hide or slip out of the city. If approached with such a proposition, any citizen will call for help, and a vigilante team similar to the one described on pages 6-7 will appear in 2d4+1 rounds to pound the offender flat with silver-studded bludgeons. No proof is needed, and no questions are asked. Gate guards will arrest and jail anyone trying to leave the city for any reason (except the shipment guards); all passes are now void. The guards will attack if characters become abusive. Since martial law is in effect, there is no appeal for injustice of any sort until the emergency is over.

Gate Guards

Watch Officers, 7th-level Fighters (2): AC 2 (plate mail & shield); MV 12; 56, 47 hp; THAC0 14 (13 with two-handed sword due to specialization); #AT 2 (specialization); Dmg 1d10+2 (two-handed sword, specialization) or 1d4 (dagger); SA weapon specialist (two-handed sword); SZ M; AL LG; XP 650 each.

Guards, 1st-level Fighters (6): AC 4 (chain mail & shield); MV 12; 7 hp each; THAC0 20; #AT 1 (spear, short sword) or 2 (short bow); Dmg 1d6 (arrow, short sword, spear); SZ M; AL NG; XP 35 each.

Cleric, 5th-level: AC 4 (chain mail & shield); MV 12; 25 hp; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (mace); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M; AL LG; XP 650. Wis 17. Spells: *cure light wounds* ×3,



detect evil, protection from evil; aid, hold person, know alignment ×3; *dispel magic, prayer*.

Mage, 5th-level: AC 10; MV 12; 10 hp; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M; AL LG; XP 650. Int 17. Spells: *color spray, magic missile, shield, sleep; detect invisibility, ESP; Melf's minute meteors*.

Wall Patrols

Wall Guards, 1st-level Fighters (40 per shift per wall-section): AC 4 (chain mail & shield); MV 12; 7 hp each; THAC0 20; #AT 1 (spear, short sword) or 2 (short bow); Dmg 1d6 (arrow, short sword, spear); SZ M; AL NG; XP 35 each.

Patrol Leaders, 4th-level Fighters (1 per shift per wall-section): AC 2 (plate mail & shield); MV 12; 56 hp; THAC0 17; #AT 1 (short sword, morning star) or 2 (short bow); Dmg 1d6 (arrow or short sword) or 2d4 (morning star); SZ M; AL LG; XP 175 each.

Clerics, 3rd level (2 per shift per wall-section): AC 3 (splint mail & shield); MV 12; 14 hp each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M; AL LG; XP 175 each. Wis 13. Spells: *cure light wounds* ×3; *hold person*.

Cleric, 5th-level (1 per shift per wall-section): AC 4 (plate mail, Dexterity penalty); MV 12; 25 hp; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (flail) or 1d4+1 (war hammer); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M; AL LG; XP 650. Wis 16, Dex 6. Spells: *cure light wounds* ×3, *detect evil, sanctuary; aid, hold person* ×2, *know alignment* ×2; *dispel magic*.

Air Patrol (on a carpet of flying)

Mage, 7th level: AC 7 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12, fly 24 (*carpet of flying*); 19 hp; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell; SA spells; SD spells; SZ M; AL LN; XP 1,400. Dex 17, Int 17. Spells: *feather fall, magic missile* ×6; *detect invisibility, stinking cloud, web; fireball, slow; Rary's mnemonic enhancer* (already cast for three extra *magic missiles*).

Mages, 5th level (2): AC 8 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12, fly 24 (*carpet of flying*); 15 hp each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell; SA spells; SD spells; SZ M; AL NG; XP 650 each. Dex 16, Int 15. Spells: *feather fall, magic missile* ×3; *flaming sphere, web; lightning bolt*.

Fighter, 7th level: AC 4 (banded mail); MV 12, fly 24 (*carpet of flying*); 49 hp; THAC0 14 (12 with Strength bonus, 10 with long bow specialization at point blank range); #AT 2 (long bow) or 3/2 (long sword); Dmg 1d8+4/1d8+4 (sheaf arrows, Strength bonus) or 1d8+4 (long sword, Strength bonus); SA bow specialist; SZ M; AL NG; XP 975. Str 18/78.

Note that if the DM needs more assistance within the city walls to bring the PCs under control, there are dozens of vigilantes, not to mention hundreds of ordinary citizens, who will rush to aid the constabulary.

The Streets of Thornburg

Should characters think to ask the citizens of Thornburg for information about the Hermitage, they get an earful. No one seems to know exactly where it is, other than somewhere to the north and up in the mountains. Several informants say that they've heard there's an old man in Cold Springs named Mudface who knows where it is (note that none of them know his real name, nor that "Ol' Mudface" is merely a nickname). One or two suggest they try the gypsies, who travel around a lot and so ought to know where things are. A spy planted in an inn by Baron Brant urges them to try Brant's Castle, while a sympathetic farmer suggests that the druid in the woods to the north might be able to help them.

To help player characters realize that their situation is becoming ever more untenable, run the following encounter for them.

You're out on the street, mulling over how to leave this town, when you're caught up in the press of people. You're carried along, eventually coming to a stop in front of an inn. When you arrived in town, this was a cozy little place known as "The Wolf Whistle." Now the walls are covered with burn marks and gouges and the hastily whitewashed sign hanging over the door bears a new name: "The Wet Whistle." An empty cage with hideously twisted bars next to the door was once the residence of the inn's mascot. It appears that something broke in—not out.

Right now the inn is ringed by a crowd of angry-looking citizens, most of whom are armed with great bludgeons, crudely studded with bent silver pieces. A knot of the largest men peer through a ground-floor window with scowls on their faces. They speak in low whispers. A man on the fringes of the crowd turns to face you. "We've got one cornered," he whispers hoarsely. "It's not gonna get away from us this time, the filthy shapechanger!"

"Get your clubs here," shouts a street peddler. "Silver-studded clubs for killing monsters. Only ten silver pieces each. Get one before they get you!"

The villagers are certain that they have trapped a lycanthrope inside the inn. They try to pressure the characters into joining them. ("You look like you've been around—grab a club and join us. I'll bet all your toadstickers are enchanted, huh? Even better!") They will be quite suspicious of any characters who refuse to join the ambush attempt. Make clear that denouncing the mob or



refusing to take part draws unwanted attention that strangers in town would probably rather avoid.

Actually, the mob's intended victim is a trapper who came to Thornburg to sell his pelts. Unfortunately for him, the large bearskin he always wears for warmth has given the frightened townspeople the wrong idea. If questioned, the armed vigilantes on the fringes of the crowd will explain the situation with curt phrases, such as "Yeah, there's one inside there. Had the nerve to walk right in and ask for a room with a view. Had fur all over 'im!"

The PCs are free to join either side of the coming fracas, of course, but impress upon them that going against the mob could be unhealthy. Assurances on their part that the crowd will certainly be able to handle the beast meet with grudging acceptance. Attempts to convince the vigilantes that the intended victim should receive a fair trial by law will only make the townspeople more suspicious of the character(s) who suggest it.

"Quiet!" hisses a fat merchant. "He'll hear you." The vigilantes finish their whispered discussion with enthusiastic nods, then three burly fellows peel off and stalk into the inn. Moments later, a scream splits the night, accompanied by the sounds of rending and breakage from within. A large furry shape shoots out through the inn doors into the streets as though propelled. The three bravos follow as the crowd swarms the creature and bears it to the ground, pounding it mercilessly with their bludgeons.

The PCs may, of course, try to save the trapper, but they will have a difficult time. A *sleep* spell thrown into the attacking crowd would affect enough people to stop the fight (it will also affect the trapper). A shout that the guard or watch is coming will disperse the crowd. Any more overt actions, however, cause the mob to attack the PCs as well. Unless the characters in question use deadly force, the vigilantes simply overbear them, bludgeon them into unconsciousness, and drag them off to the local jail. Jailed PCs wake up some hours later to find themselves stiff and sore but basically unharmed. However, each will be fined 10 gp for starting a riot.

If the crowd succeeds in bludgeoning the trapper to death, the biggest attacker grabs the still body by what appears to be the scruff of its neck, only to discover that its "pelt" comes right off. The crowd slowly disperses in confusion, muttering, "Didn't know they came apart" or "Must've been changing back." If the PCs succeed in dispersing or distracting the crowd, they can point out the trapper's detachable fur before further damage is done, causing the frustrated townspeople to wander away, muttering darkly.

If the PCs are not already a group, use this event to bring them together. Describe what each PC looks like in general terms, being sure to mention any amber jewelry

openly displayed. Give the characters a few minutes to get acquainted, during the course of which they should begin to realize that they all want to leave Thornburg as soon as possible. Don't railroad them, but if possible nudge them toward the conclusion that a visit to Cold Springs, a trading post two days' travel from here, would probably be a good move. When they are finishing their conversation, they see a messenger approach with a sheaf of papers in his hand. He takes a paper from the stack, tacks it up on a nearby post, and moves on. The paper is a notice which reads as follows:

WANTED: GUARDS AND DRIVER FOR
AUTHORIZED OUT-OF-CITY DELIVERY.
MUST BE SEASONED ADVENTURERS.
EXCELLENT PAY.
REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO HIS EXCELLENCY
THE BURGOMEISTER.

Assuming that the player characters want to follow up on this promising opening, allow them no more than a few minutes to discuss options, purchase extra supplies, etc.

The Burgomeister

The Burgomeister lives in a palatial residence on the south side of town. Guards armed with silver weapons patrol the grounds and rooftop day and night to protect





the Burgomeister and his family. The two guards at the outer gate stop all those seeking entry and inquire as to their business. Anyone claiming to be here regarding the posted notice soliciting adventurers will be admitted immediately under armed escort and taken directly to the Burgomeister. All other business must wait until tomorrow (if uninvited characters come back tomorrow, they'll be told to come back the next day, ad infinitum).

The guards escort you to an open door, over which hangs a silver horseshoe. One guard announces your presence to those within, and signals you to precede him into the room. A rotund, middle-aged man with a small mustache and rosy cheeks greets you with a curt nod. His countenance is marred by worry lines, and he appraises you sternly. "Be seated please," mutters the Burgomeister gruffly. "It may be your last bit of comfort for quite some time."

"We have now pinpointed the source of the menace which plagues our fair city. The infection in our midst must be eradicated without delay, for the citizens will no longer tolerate the presence of a ravaging monster within our walls. To that end, we have brought in a specialist to sear the infection from the land with the fire of Justice and Truth. You have doubtless heard of the renowned paladin, Sir Lance Vandric. Even now, he and his stalwart men are moving to answer our desperate plea from their home many leagues to the north, scouring the land clean of lycanthropy as they come. Soon, with reasonable good fortune, there will none of these foul, unnatural werebeasts left to threaten this fair city.

"Even the best artisan needs proper tools, however. Therefore, the city elders and I have appealed to the proud citizens of Thornburg to donate their silver for the defense of the city. What we have gathered has been fashioned into weapons for Vandric and his men, so that they may easily lay low the foul beast-men who threaten Thornburg and bury them from the sight of men forever.

"Our resident guards and spellcasters are needed here, to defend the city and prevent the foul werebeasts from escaping until they can be identified and slain. Since you are skilled adventurers, I have decided to entrust you with the safe delivery of these silver weapons to Sir Lance. The safety of every man, woman, and innocent child of Thornburg is in your hands. It is up to you to ensure that Vandric and his men are able to destroy the vicious werebeasts before they can bring further harm to the helpless, law-abiding citizens of Thornburg. After all, the townspeople have no way of defending themselves from this terror.

"Sir Lance has been notified of our plan. He and his men will meet you in Cold Springs two days hence to receive the shipment. No passwords will be necessary at the time of delivery, for as you can see," says the Burgomeister, pointing to a small shimmer in the northwest corner of the room, "Vanessa, the wizard with Vandric's team, has been monitoring this interview via her *crystal ball* and now knows each of you by sight. She will monitor your progress throughout the trip and attempt to send aid should ill befall you. However, Sir Lance's forces are far afield, and aid may be slow in coming. Payment, of course, will be made on delivery. We are all depending on you to carry these weapons to Cold Springs and place them safely into Vandric's hands.

"I have already arranged for the gate guards to let the shipment and its guards through. The wagon is packed and waiting for you in the town square. The townspeople have gathered there to celebrate its departure. My personal guards will escort you back to your lodgings to collect your personal effects and take charge of any last wills or testaments that you may wish to leave with us. Should you perish in this attempt, be assured that your offspring will always have a safe and happy home here with us in Thornburg.

"Any questions before you depart?"

If they ask, the Burgomeister says that Vandric will pay up to a maximum of 10,000 gp (for the entire group, not per character), plus two magical elixirs, upon successful completion of the delivery (the Burgomeister does not know which potions the paladin has available—the DM can make them be anything he or she thinks appropriate, with *potions of extra healing* as the default). Each adventurer is now equipped with a silver weapon of choice free of charge, and the party given a *scroll of protection from lycanthropes*, which must be turned over to Sir Lance at Cold Springs if not used. The Burgomeister knows little about the exact composition of Vandric's force, except that it consists of many hand-picked soldiers, plus a few specialists to provide needed skills. Should the characters try to refuse at this point, the Burgomeister nods and offers them a second job instead.

"I do understand your reluctance to put life and limb in danger for a city that is not your own, even with innocent lives at stake. After all, we are not all heroes. There are many volunteers from the citizenry who, though unskilled, are nevertheless willing to lay down their lives for our cause.

"But there is another position open within these walls for adventurers such as yourselves. The city has of course been sealed against the lycanthrope menace, and no one may enter or leave for any reason—except



the guards of the weapons shipment. But we know that at least one werebeast has managed to penetrate the city itself, and may even now be lying in wait for moonrise to feed upon our people. Tomorrow morning, seven skilled clerics will arrive to begin questioning every man, woman, and child within these walls. They have spells which can separate truth from fiction, as you well know. After each of you has undergone the examination—a mere formality of course—you may escort the clerics through the city as they question each citizen in turn. By the time Vandric and his men arrive, any and all lycanthropes still within Thornburg will have been identified. Their fates will not be pleasant, I can assure you! Quarters have been prepared for you within the manor. Fear not; you will sleep under heavy guard until the clerics arrive.”

Payment for escorting the clerics is room and board plus 10 gp each day, plus all needed curing at no charge. Naturally, dancing in the dragon’s jaws in this manner should be a nerve-wracking experience for any lycanthropic PCs involved, wondering just when their cover will be blown.

Courier Service

Leaving Thornburg

Word travels fast in Thornburg. All the citizens already know who the PCs are and what they are doing. If they have refused the mission, vigilante groups will show their disapproval by tracking down and bludgeoning any characters who leave their quarters. Then the militia will cart them off to jail, as described above (see page 7). If they accept the mission, the Burgomeister immediately assigns two guards to escort each PC around town to make any last-minute preparations. Every citizen encountered will thank the PC(s) for their aid, then follow along behind the guards until departure time, making it very difficult for any PC to slip away. Handle any attempts to escape as quickly as possible—do not waste time on mundane preparations (the guards, he explains, are to protect them from any evil werebeasts who might try to insinuate themselves into the delivery detail). If they accumulate too large a crowd, the PCs will eventually find themselves involved in yet another mob scene. When the characters head for the town square, read the following.





As promised, a wagon loaded with silver weapons waits in the square, surrounded by beaming townspeople waving their bludgeons in a celebratory mood. As you and your escorts approach, a cheer goes up from the crowd, and several citizens rush toward you.

The citizens will try to hoist the PCs to their shoulders and bear them off to the wagon. Snatches of song erupt spontaneously from the crowd.

The two horses harnessed to the wagon shy away abruptly as you approach, their nostrils flaring. They paw the ground nervously, whinnying in fear.

The horses have picked up the smell of predatory beasts that clings to the character(s) with lycanthropy, and they will not willingly cooperate with those PCs. A *Speak with Animals* spell enables them to tell the user that they want the affected PCs to go away because they "smell bad." A successful Animal Handling check or use of the Teamster secondary skill makes the horses cooperate, though they will not be happy about it. If the characters try to board the wagon without dealing with the horses first, the frightened creatures rear and bolt through the crowd, scattering townspeople as they go. The guards are surprised and a bit suspicious at this turn of events—the horses never act this way with anyone else. The guards immediately take the party back into custody and have them carefully examined unless the characters can come up with a reasonable excuse for the horses' reaction to them. Anything plausible will do, but some reason must be offered.

Once the characters are up on the wagon, the guards hand them each a silver weapon and a small vial of belladonna distillate ("just in case"). Handsome young men and pretty girls walk up and tie a sprig of wolfsbane around each character's neck. Any lycanthropes among the PCs will not be able to stand the smell of the wolfsbane, yet refusal to accept the townspeople's gifts will cause a scene. Each character must succeed on a saving throw vs. poison every round or tear the herb off and throw it away. Even on a successful save, those PCs must make a Wisdom check each round to be able to bear the stench. Lycanthropic characters wearing wolfsbane will not be able to fight or cast spells until the noxious herb has been removed, saving throws notwithstanding.

After the gifts have been offered and accepted, the PCs are escorted out of town by the enthusiastic citizenry. The city gates start to swing shut as the party pauses through, almost hitting the rear rank. The PCs hear the thud on a heavy bar being slammed into place immediately behind them. Check the Scrying Rules on page 47 and let the characters make percentage rolls: any who succeed notice a shimmer in the air over the party. While they might as-

sume this is Vandric's wizard (Vanessa) keeping an eye on them, this time it is actually Grim (see page 30), the wizard employed by Brant, the bandit baron, using his *crystal ball* to watch the party's departure. Both Grim and Vanessa thereafter scan the PCs several times a day; the timing of their spot-checks is entirely up to the DM (and thus whether one of the two wizards spots PCs turning into lycanthropes, ditching the weapon shipment, etc.—and if so which of the two).

Ditching The Weapons

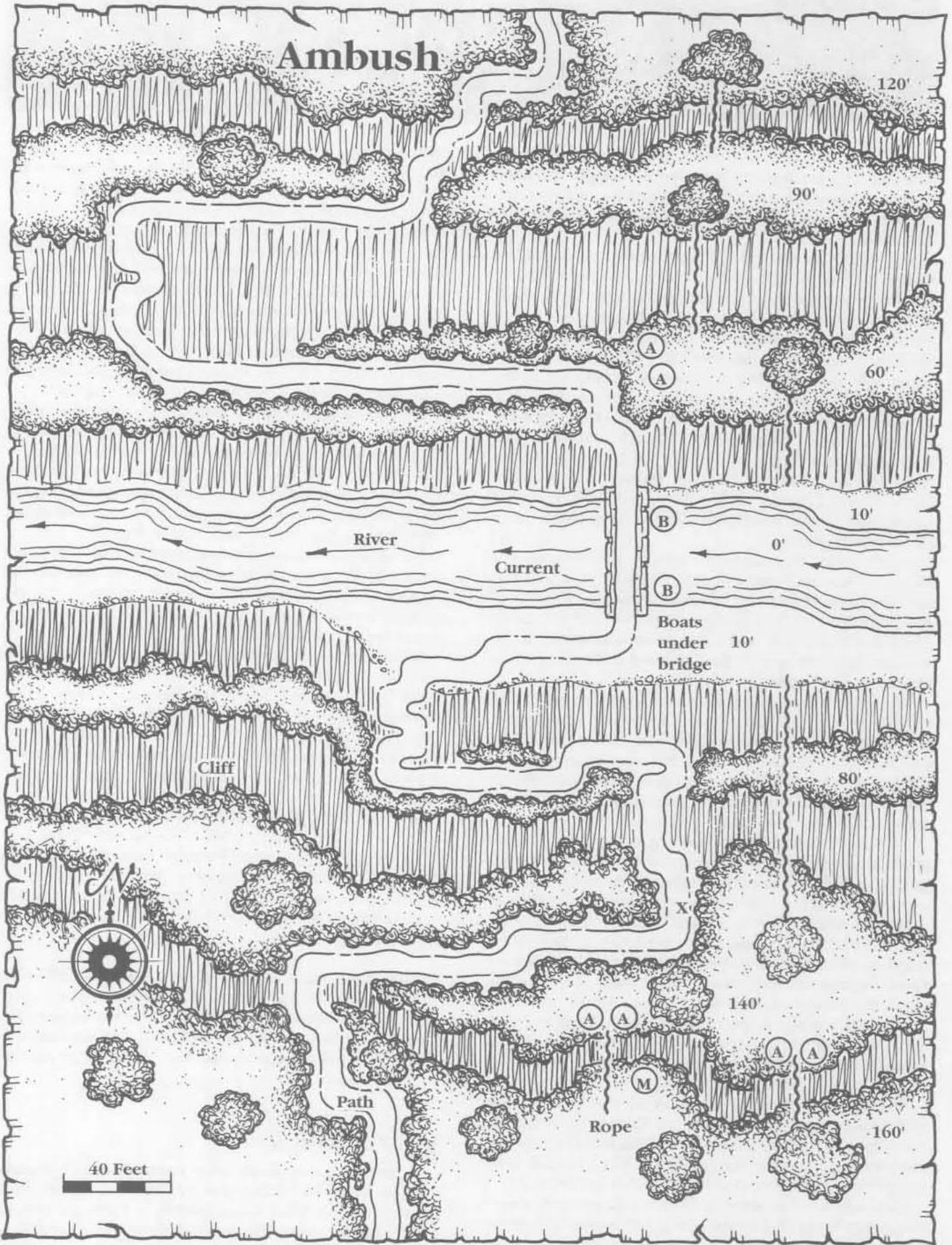
As soon as they are clear of Thornburg, the PCs may decide to get rid of the silver weapons rather than deliver them. While this makes sense in the short term, it has some long term consequences the DM should know about. Most importantly, Stewart the ranger is their chief source of information in Cold Springs about the Hermitage's whereabouts, and he will not aid characters he suspects of being evil (failure to deliver the weapons constitutes proof of the characters' growing corruption in his eyes). He will only help them if they redeem their misstep by backtracking and recovering the lost weapons. Unfortunately, the jettisoned weapons won't stay where they're left for long. Brant's bandits have had their eye on the shipment since before it left Thornburg because of the intrinsic value of the silver, and if the cargo is abandoned the bandits will find it and cart it off in short order (certainly before 24 hours have passed). Should this occur, Stewart is adamant: he will tell them all he knows about the Hermitage when they recover the weapons and complete the delivery and not before, forcing the PCs to either venture into Brant's Castle in search of the missing silver or to strike out on their own hoping to find the Hermitage without a guide.

Ambush

The first day's travel from Thornburg passes uneventfully. Ask the players what precautions the party takes as dusk falls (regarding unhitching and feeding the horses, setting a watch, etc.). The first night passes without incident. A few hours past noon on the second day, the road that the party has been following plunges into a deep ravine with a small river at the bottom. Inform the players that the road to the bottom of the ravine is very steep and twisty. After this fair warning, it's up to them to realize that they will have to take precautions to insure that they can keep the wagon under control on the slope. Any character using his or her Animal Handling ability will suffice (no check necessary), but allow any reasonable solution the players may come up with.

This ravine is the site of an ambush from a group of bandits trying to get the silver. They have placed hidden archers, each specialized in the bow, at the positions marked "A" on the map. For additional firepower, they have brought along a bandit mage, who crouches at the

Ambush



120'

90'

60'

10'

80'

140'

160'

River

Current

Boats
under
bridge

Cliff

Path

Rope

A

A

B

B

A

A

M

A

A

N

40 Feet



position marked "M." Each bandit has 50% cover and thus gains a -4 bonus to Armor Class. The bandits attack when the PCs reach point "X." They do not gain surprise because of the noise they make breaking out of their camouflage, but having had their arrows ready they do get first strike.

Two of the archers behind the party will shoot at the horses. If an arrow hits, the team bolts (making attacks by anyone inside the cart impossible due to jostling). These archers then join their fellows in each targeting a separate PC and firing at the same target until he or she falls, missile fire no longer becomes possible, or the archer is killed or retreats. Note that the two closest archers are at the very edge of point blank range when they loose their first volley; the two others on the south bank of the stream are at medium range (giving them a -2 attack penalty on their chance to hit) and the two on the far bank are at long range (giving them a -5 penalty). However, each archer has a +3 attack bonus for Dexterity, and the two closest ambushers gain an additional +2 from point blank range on their first shots).

If the party has taken no special precautions, the wagon, team, and any characters riding on it will run straight through the hairpin curve ahead and plunge over the embankment. The seventy-foot fall will kill the horses and inflict 7d6 points of damage to any characters riding it down. Characters with the Tumbling ability may make checks to avoid or lessen this damage.

The bandits mean business and continue attacking until the PCs are killed, surrender, or change to wereform. If even one PC changes to wereform, the bandits panic and flee. The bandits also flee if the mage or any three of the archers are killed. When fleeing, the bandits scatter in the hopes that the characters cannot pursue all of them; those that escape report back to Baron Brant.

Full movement is possible in the gorge, but only on the road, and even then movement is only half normal when going upslope. Off the road, half-movement (or quarter-move when going upslope) is the limit. The cliffs and ridges are impassable to anyone without climbing abilities. The bandits use concealed ropes (also marked on the map) to move upslope at half their normal movement rates. The ropes are concealed under bushes and tall grass until the bandits begin using them. When a bandit reaches the top of a ridge, he immediately turns and cuts the rope to prevent pursuit. Should the PCs kill or disable a bandit before he has a chance to cut the rope, they may use the rope to climb up after him.

Two small rowboats are hidden underneath the bridge at the points marked "B." They are there to carry the silver shipment back to the castle, but the bandits may use them for escape if needed. In desperation, bandits may jump from the slope into the river and swim to a boat.

Captured bandits are unwilling to talk but spill everything they know if they think magical means of interrogation are being used (it need not be true magic, so long

as they think it is). Threatening to infect a bandit with lycanthropy also produces immediate results. By either of these means the PCs may learn that their ambushers are part of a bandit group which makes its home in a complex a few days away on this road. The operation is run by a retired fighter turned bandit named Brant ("The Baron"). They prey on travelers and caravans and exact toll from all bypassers on the road. Brant and his henchmen know the area so well that little passes by without their noticing it, from pilgrims to merchants (a clue for the PCs that this "Baron Brant" might know the location of the Hermitage). Hearing through their sources that a large shipment of silver was being transported from Thornburg to Cold Springs, Baron Brant arranged for an ambush.

It's not like the old days, though, they complain. Lately Brant has practically gone "legit." He's been selling off the stolen goods on the open market, whenever he can find a buyer. Why, the old fort is practically a store these days. They have odds and ends of equipment, magical items, clothes, animals, weapons, cures, and just about anything else you could want for sale there.

No matter which bandit(s) are captured, the prisoners claim that one of the bandits who died or escaped was the brains of this operation. They carry normal adventuring equipment and rations. Their horses (four in all) are hidden at the top of the ravine.

If the draft horses have been killed, the PCs will have to carry the shipment on to Cold Springs the hard way. If they locate the boats, the PCs can row them up river for half a day before they have to go ashore and walk the rest of the way. No matter how the PCs get to Cold Springs after crashing the wagon, Sir Lance will remonstrate with them not only for being late but also for "bending the weapons."

Bandit Archers, 2nd-level Fighters (6): AC 5 (leather armor, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; 14 hp each; THAC0 19 (17 with long bow and Dexterity bonus); #AT 2 (long bow) or 1 (short sword, dagger); Dmg 1d6 (arrow, short sword) or 1d4 (dagger); SA bow specialization; SD camouflage, 50% cover (-4 bonus to AC); SZ M; AL N; XP 120 each. Dex 17.

Bandit Mage, 3rd level: AC 8 (*bracers of defense*); MV 12; 8 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 2 (*wand of magic missiles*) or 1 (dagger); Dmg 1d4+1 (*magic missiles*) or 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M; AL N; XP 175. Spells: *shield, spider climb, web*. Special Equipment: *wand of magic missiles* (19 charges).

Cold Springs

Cold Springs is a small forest town of about 150 souls built up around a trading post and inn. The arrival of Sir Vandric and his band of do-gooders is the biggest thing ever to happen here, effectively doubling the population



for a brief time. The locals are naturally intensely interested in everything that happens. When the PCs appear, a crowd of townspeople gather and begin asking questions: "Where did you come from?" "Have you seen any werecreatures?" "Is that a werebeast hide?" "Have you ever been to the gnashing rocks?" "What's happening in Thornburg?" etc., ad nauseum. Allow a few minutes to roleplay answering the questions, at the end of which time Vandric, alerted by the commotion, arrives on the scene and disperses the crowd.

There seems to be no end to the questions these people can ask, but you are rescued when a tall man with a dazzling smile emerges from a doorway and pushes his way through the crowd, politely asking everyone to go back about their business—this could only be Sir Lance Vandric. "It seems you had some difficulties on the way!" he says, extending a friendly hand.

The rest of Vandric's commentary depends on how well the PCs have come through. He tries to always be frightfully polite and encouraging to those less gifted than himself (i.e., everybody), but some characters might take offense at his condescension. While the paladin talks with the party, his sword begins to hum in its scabbard. A crease mars his saintly expression as he notes this, but he is only briefly distracted, mumbling "Hmm! Usually only does that when werebeasts are around." The conversation ends with a group of Vandric's men at arms taking charge of the weapons and the PCs being herded into the common room of the inn to wait while the paladin gathers the PCs' payment.

The Inn

The Inn has a common room with a well-stocked bar at one end. Several ale and wine casks are visible behind the bar, and the innkeeper and two assistants are busily filling orders from them. A true smorgasbord of preserved foods hangs over the bar. Large sausages, hams, and a huge wheel of fragrant yellow cheese, along with bags of onions and dried vegetables and fruits, make an impressive display. The large common room is filled with people, rustic locals proudly rubbing elbows with Vandric's liveried troops. Almost every square foot of space is filled with eating, drinking, or talking humanity, all jostling for a little bit of space. The only quiet spot is a shadowy corner where a hooded figure sits with muddy boots propped upon a stool, meditatively picking his teeth. The man lazily strokes a yellow cat that sits contentedly in his lap. Your escort clears a space for you between Vandric's men at one of the tables and orders you drinks. Frothy mugs of ale are quickly set before you by a bustling, blushing barmaid.

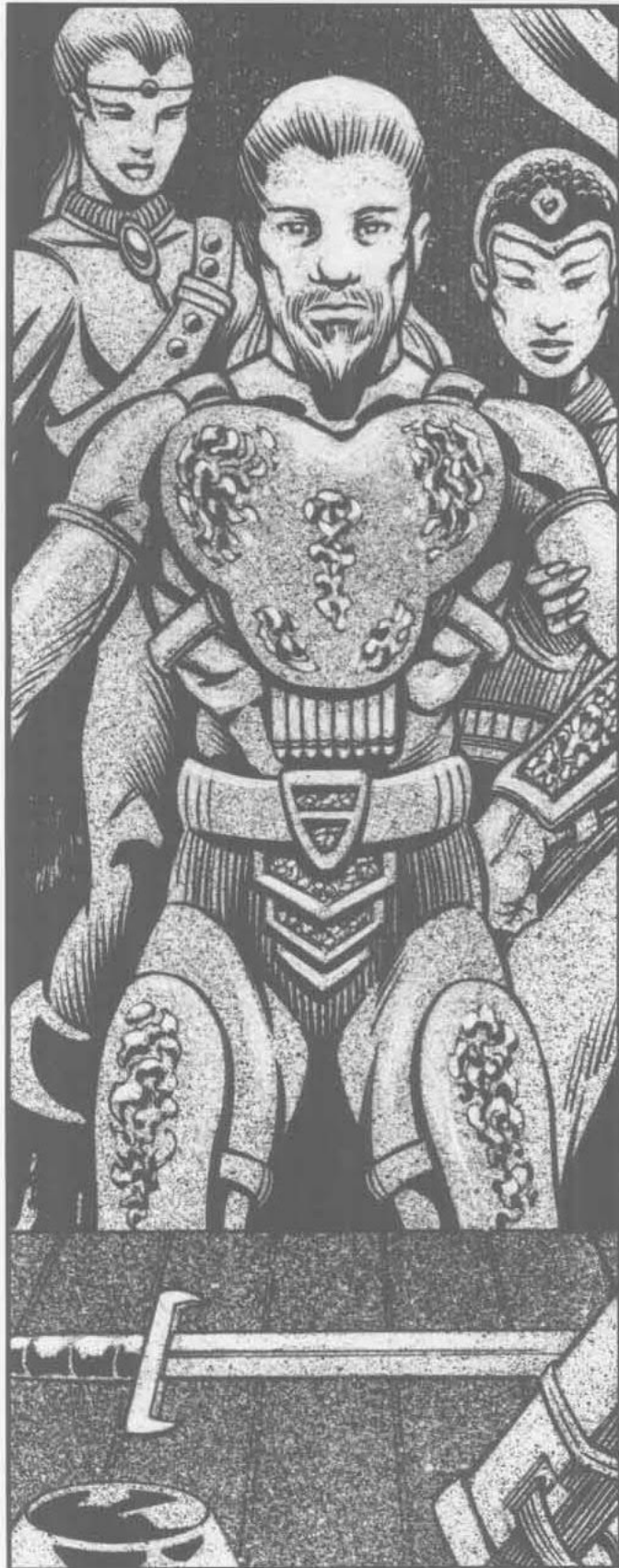
The hooded man is Stewart (locally known as "Ol' Mudface"), a high-level ranger working with Vandric. Stewart is far more powerful than Vandric (smarter, too), but he allows the more charismatic paladin to run the show in public and only contests Vandric's decisions when the paladin "goes off the deep end" in his opinion—as now, when Vandric thinks killing every large predator in the forest would be a "reasonable precaution." Stewart has promised the local druid to protect normal animals from Vandric's zealotry; since the ranger does all the tracking for the paladin's troops, he can easily deflect Vandric's excesses simply by leading him in the wrong direction.

Stewart is far more worldly than Vandric and assumes everyone has his or her own secrets. He also has no use for the social niceties (hence his nickname—he's not old, but he does firmly believe that "a little dirt never hurt anyone") and can be direct to the point of rudeness. Thus he gives the PCs the hairy eyeball for the entire time that they are at the inn, carefully observing their every move. Should any lycanthropes with the group betray their nature in any way (trying to steal some of the odiferous cheese hanging overhead, frightening the local dogs with their strange supernatural scent, attracting the friendly attention of the local cat, etc.), he quickly puts two and two together and realizes that here are the lycanthropes everyone's hunting high and low for. However, Stewart does not confront the PCs publicly or report them to Vandric, realizing that such would be an immediate death sentence. Their delivery of silver weapons into the hands of a lycanthrope hunter forces him to conclude that there must still be good in them and a cure might still be possible. Of course, being suspicious by nature it also occurs to him that this might be a very clever ruse to divert suspicion. If any character is openly wearing amber, Stewart will notice this and be aware of its significance.

If the PCs approach, they discover that the hooded figure is talking to the cat. They catch only a few of the following snatches of the conversation (one-sided, unless they speak both Common and cat):

"She did? All of it?" "He does look rather like a pig."
"They really don't get along, do they?" "What's the elf's problem? Oh, Really?" "Do I look like I carry around a pot and a pocketful of incense?"

When the PCs actually come face-to-face with Stewart, the ranger interrupts his teeth-picking long enough to snort, "Amber jewelry, very cheap." If he asked why he's here, Stewart blandly replies that he is a "reconnaissance and information expert." If they have betrayed their lycanthropic sides in any way, he then begins to hum "Bad Moon Rising" or some similar tune (if the PCs don't talk to Stewart he'll simply walk by them later in the evening,



humming). Stewart knows the general area of the mountains where the Hermitage is located but not the exact spot; he can, however, direct player characters as far as the hermit Caleb. If the characters failed to make the weapon delivery, he refuses to help them in any way until, as a sign of good faith, they demonstrate their good intentions by recovering the lost silver.

PCs who strike up a conversation with the troops at their table are treated to as many ales as they can stand but learn very little. The troops don't know what Sir Lance's plan is, but they are confident that it'll work. They tell the PCs that Vandric's "recce man" knows where the lycanthropes are—"Nothing gets past Ol' Mudface." In fact, it was his recommendation that got the silver weapons ordered. The troops know nothing of the Hermitage, but they recommend talking with the hooded man, since he knows a great many things of value. The soldiers are not fond of his personality and wish he'd take a weekly bath like the rest of them, but they like having him around because he's so tough—several of them saw him take on a green dragon single-handed, and win.

The local peasants and townsfolk know even less of value than the soldiers. They can point out the way to the mountains (i.e., "Over there") and offer helpful trivia ("They're called the Spikekeys because of the mountains' pointy tops, y'see"), but for any more detailed information they direct the PCs to the ranger. The townsfolk are much taken with Vandric's shining armor and courtly ways, but none of them will get within ten feet of Ol' Mudface if they can help it, considering him rude, filthy, and cynical (all true, though beside the point).

Several trappers are present at this trading post as well. If the PCs approach one, he will be an aged, crusty individual with an amazing capacity for absorbing ale. For the price of several drinks, he will tell them what he knows of the mountains—there are at least 100 mountain lakes in the nearest part of the range, and perhaps thousands further out. There are numerous trails and passes, not all of which are safe to travel. The PCs can hire such a person as a guide if desired, but Stewart is not about to let a pack of lycanthropes take an innocent local off into the woods with them, and he intervenes to prevent this before their departure. In any case, the trappers have no idea where the Hermitage on the Lake is. They consider it nothing but an old campfire tale. The only priest they know of in the area is the local druid, who might or might not be able to help the PCs.

Allow the characters a while to roleplay conversations with those in the tavern. Then Vandric enters with two of his associates, the sorceress Vanessa and the priestess Theodora, and strides toward them, smiling. Interrupting whatever the characters are doing at the time, he greets them:



"Well, I see you've met everyone, so there's no need for introductions." He looks around, beaming and waving at all in the tavern, until his eyes light upon the hooded figure. His smile momentarily fades but quickly reappears, almost as if on cue, as his gaze moves on around the room. "Here's your payment. Fine job, performed under the most difficult of circumstances. So, I suppose you'll be moving along now? Oh, I know you'd like to stay and help us hunt down the vicious werebeasts, but don't worry, we can handle it." ("Hmmm," says Vandric's sword from its scabbard.) "You're free to proceed with whatever business brought you to this part of the country, and you have our thanks for the vital aid which you have provided. Folks, let's have a round of cheers for these brave adventurers before they leave."

The crowd cheers and raises glasses of ale in toast, then several crowd around the party, wishing them well on their trip.

"Of course, if you'd like to stay, I'm sure the innkeeper could arrange to rent you a room at the normal fee. However, most of the good rooms are taken, so a bedroll beside a campfire might be more comfortable." He leans forward and whispers, "Less vermin, you know."

"Oh, don't worry about the lycanthropes. With these shining weapons and my gleaming blade ("Hmmm"), we'll soon bury those foul creatures in the stinking holes from which they crawled forth! My, that certainly is odd," mutters Vandric, looking at his vibrating sword hilt. "Must need polish."

Vandric stands and beams at the characters, giving them a perfect chance to engage him in conversation. He's a busy man (advisors to consult, lackeys to encourage, lycanthropes to kill, etc.) but they can get in a few words before he makes his excuses and goes off to deal with some pressing business. If they ask him about the Hermitage his face lights up and he slaps the nearest PC on the back, congratulating them on their pious intent to undertake a pilgrimage. He can give them vague, inaccurate directions to "a good man who lives high up in the mountains" (the false hermit—see page 36) who can surely show them the way. Vandric only wishes he could join them, but his many responsibilities mean he must forego the pleasure of a few weeks of their company. Theodora and Vanessa chat amicably with any character who wishes to strike up a conversation with them, provided the PC meets their rather high standards. After the paladin and his entourage leave, allow the characters a chance to get into trouble if they like—for example, a wererat player character should find the cheese hanging overhead almost irresistible (Wisdom roll every ten minutes to keep from trying to buy or steal and eat the whole wheel). Give others a chance to shine also: a werewolf

might spot an apparently unguarded chicken coop or be tempted by a courtyard goose that wanders in and out, a wereboar could smell truffles in the nearby forest or meet a snake (pigs like truffles and hate snakes). Similarly, a werebear could go fishing bear-style in the local stream, a weretiger might spot a stand of catnip or a tempting bird's nest, and a werewolf could get into trouble in any of a variety of ways, from ravaging the local cattle to scrapping with the village dogs. Place temptation in the player characters' way, then sit back and see how they handle it. Don't forget the prerolled saves on page 47. If PCs wait too long to make good their departure from the common room, the ranger walks by, humming a suggestive melody (e.g., "Werewolves of London").

The characters may rent the last available room without difficulty if desired, or they may leave for the mountains, as the paladin has so subtly hinted. The villagers have no space in their homes, as they are proudly allowing soldiers to bed and board with their families. The room the characters can get at the inn (a single room for all the PCs to share) is twenty feet by thirty feet, and Stewart is waiting there when they arrive (having slipped in the window).

As you enter your room, there's the hooded man from the common room, sitting patiently in a chair with his drawn sword resting across his lap. It shines in the firelight. "So glad you decided to stay," he says with forced pleasantness. "Let's talk. Come in and shut the door."

If the player characters leave town and camp in the woods instead of staying for the night at the inn, they come across him leaning lazily against a tree in their path once they're well clear of the town, the very picture of studied casualness. "Planning on camping here?" he says. "Nice location. Kinda like it myself. Let's talk." In either case, proceed with the dialogue below:

"Y'know, you people are real celebrities back in Thornburg. Nobody's seen a single lycanthrope since the day you left. They figure you drove the beasts out. That's quite a coincidence, isn't it? And then there's that woodsman who got mauled on the road between here and there just about the time you were passing by. Now someone with a suspicious nature might think that you yourselves were the lycanthropes menacing the area. But there couldn't be anything to that. After all, only a bunch of real putzes would deliver a cartload of silver weapons to a fanatic like Vandric if they were really werecreatures. You couldn't be that stupid—or that clever."



"Of course, if I were a werebeast looking for the Hermitage, I'd stroll off to the woods and look for Muldoon the druid. Muldoon knows the area better than anyone else and might be able to direct pilgrims to the fabled Hermitage on the Lake. But know this—I've got my eye on you. Any problems with werebeasts while you're within a week's ride of this village and I'll have Vandric, bless his thick little head, down on you like a ton of silver-plated bricks."

If the players start discussing the possibility of attacking Stewart, read the following:

The burly man gives you a cold stare and strokes his sword. "I know what you're thinking," he says in a harsh whisper. "Is it enchanted, or isn't it?" He slowly rises to his feet. "Well, you've got to ask yourselves one question—Do I feel lucky?" He pauses for effect. "Well, do you, were-punks?"

If attacked, Stewart defends himself to the best of his considerable abilities, seeking to subdue rather than slay his opponents. He will not be disturbed by their change to wereform if such occurs. If Stewart successfully subdues the entire party, he binds their wounds and takes them to a grove outside of town where he stacks them like cordwood, women on top. If not attacked, Stewart will depart quickly when he has said his piece. Note that Stewart volunteers less information if he's the one who takes the initiative than the characters can gain if they seek him out and question him on their own.

Sir Lance currently has about 150 troops in Cold Springs, and two flunkies (the rest are out beating the bushes for werebeasts; see pages 39-40).

Sir Lance Vandric, 7th-level Paladin: AC -2 (full plate armor +1 & shield +1); MV 12; 74 hp; THAC0 14 (12 or 10 with Strength bonus and long sword +1, +3 vs. lycanthropes and shapechangers); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+4 or +7 (long sword +1, +3 vs. lycanthropes and shapechangers, plus Strength bonus); SD paladin abilities (see below); SW overly trusting; SZ M; AL LG; XP 1,400. Str 18/21, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 10, Chr 17. Special Abilities: detect evil intent within 60 feet, +2 bonus to saving throws, immune to normal diseases, 10-foot radius aura of protection from evil, lay on hands (14 hp, once per day), cure normal diseases (twice per week), turn undead as 5th-level cleric. Special Equipment: *potion of vitality*.

Vanessa, 5th-level Mage (Flunky #1): AC 8 (ring of protection +2); MV 12; 14 hp; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells; SD spells; SW Vandric; SZ M; AL NG; XP 650. Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 10, Chr 18. Spells: *charm person, magic missiles, shield, sleep, Tasha's*

uncontrollable hideous laughter, web; slow. Special Equipment: *crystal ball*.

Theodora, 6th-level Cleric (Flunky #2): AC 1 (bracers of defense AC 4, cloak of protection +3); MV 12; 26 hp; THAC0 18 (17 with flail +1); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (flail +1); SA spells; SD spells; SW Sir Vandric; SZ M; AL LG; XP 975. Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 16, Chr 17. Spells: *bless, cure light wounds* ×3, *sanctuary; aid* ×2, *hold person, know alignment, silence 15' radius; dispel magic, prayer*.

Soldier, 3rd-level Fighters (150): AC 3 (banded mail & shield); MV 12; 18 hp each; THAC0 18; #AT 1 (long sword, spear, dagger) or 2 (short bow); Dmg 1d8 (long sword) or 1d6 (spear, arrow) or 1d4 (dagger); SZ M; AL LG; XP 65 each.

Stewart ("Ol' Mudface"), 12th-level Ranger: AC -6 (bracers of defense AC 2, cloak of protection +2, ring of protection +4, boots of speed); MV 24 (boots of speed); 94 hp; THAC0 9 (8 with long bow +1 or mace +1, 4 with long sword +3 frost brand and Strength bonus); #AT 5/2 (two-weapon attack with long sword and mace) or 2 (long bow); Dmg 1d8+7 (long sword +3 frost brand and Strength bonus), 1d8+4 (sheaf arrow and Strength bonus), or 1d6+6 (mace +1 and Strength bonus); SA two-weapon attack without penalty; SD move silently in woodlands 94%, hide in woodland shadows 77%; SZ M; AL NG; XP none. Str 18/90, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 18, Chr 7. Special Abilities: rarely surprised (1-in-6 chance), Tracking (21), Animal Lore. Spells (as 5th-level priest): *animal friendship, pass without trace, messenger, speak with animals; tree*. Special Equipment: *ring of spell storing (heal spell), ioun stone (lavender and green ellipsoid, absorbs 63 spell-levels of up to 8th level), periapt of health*.

Sun in the Forest

After leaving Cold Springs, the PCs travel through the forest for several days without incident. Ask them for a marching order each day and a watch schedule each night anyway, just to keep them on their toes. If at any point the characters try to retrace their steps by going back to Cold Springs or even Thornburg, they encounter Stewart, who is scouting for Vandric; the ranger warns them that the paladin is headed this way with his entire entourage.

The Gypsy Band

Several roving bands of gypsies travel through this territory regularly. There are about fifty gypsies altogether in the clan, but they are only loosely organized and often split into smaller family units to work cons or thievery in the small towns and outlying farms of the area. At any point between Cold Springs and the mountains the characters have a



1-in-10 chance per day of encountering a small group of gypsies. The gypsies will be very friendly, inviting the characters to share their humble camp or perhaps a meal (complete with exotically spiced stew, wine, music, and a spirited dance from the most personable member of the troupe). Once the warm welcome has put the strangers off their guard, the Pick Pocket attempts can start (all that nice amber jewelry...). The DM can assign whatever bonuses he or she feel appropriate for the distractions the PCs' hosts have provided: dim light, music, wine, the dancer, etc. If caught, the gypsies laugh and give back whatever they've just taken, praising the sharp eyes of their guests.

The gypsies have come to an understanding with Baron Brant whereby they provide him with information and occasionally send naive travelers his way in exchange for being allowed to pass freely throughout "his" territory. Should they learn of the PCs' lycanthropy, they express interest but no shock or horror, suggesting that the characters would do well to seek out the local baron, a reasonable man with many resources at his command. Perhaps his court wizard or castle chaplain could effect a cure. They also relate rumors about a genie bottle in his possession.

In short, unless the characters treat the gypsies unusually well and somehow win their friendship, these chance acquaintances do all they can to persuade the desperate heroes to head for Brant's Castle instead of up into the mountains, sending them firmly off track.

Typical gypsy, 2nd-level Thief: AC 8 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12; 8 hp; THAC0 20 (19 with throwing knives); #AT 1 (knife) or 2 (throwing knife); Dmg 1d4 (knives); SA backstab (+4 to attack roll, double damage); SD thief abilities; SZ M; AL CN; XP 65. Dex 16, Chr 17. Thief Abilities: Pick Pockets 65%, Open Locks 15%, Find & Remove Traps 5%, Move Silently 40%, Hide in Shadows 35%, Detect Noise 15%, Climb Walls 70%.

The Chase

On the ninth day after leaving Cold Springs, the party spots a few rocks shaped like pretzels, doughnuts, and bows, all of them oddly colored in various garish tints. Closer examination reveals no signs of chisels or paint (actually, they have been *stone shaped* by the local faerie dragon and colored by the resident pixies).

This faerie dragon has been watching the characters as they progress through the woods. He and his pixie friends have hatched a plan for an elaborate prank. Through their ESP abilities the pixies have learned that the characters are lycanthropes and that they are afraid of vigilantes and lycanthrope hunters. The pranksters plan to put the characters to sleep, drag them to an appropriate location, then hold a mock trial, with an illusionary Burgomeister of Thornburg presiding.

The faerie dragon has called together all the pixies for miles and miles around and organized them into seven





bands of ten each: one capable of using *Otto's irresistible dance* and nine to shoot enchanted arrows at hapless characters (the PCs must save vs. spell for each arrow that hits or instantly fall asleep; racial and magical resistances do not apply). The dragon has been watching the group's approach with a magical *reflecting pool* and has planned this harassment well in advance. For most of the attack, he waits beside the pool observing the characters' flight and directing pixies to intercept. His intention is to capture the party as quickly and easily as possible. Neither he nor the pixies are interested in fighting, only in taking prisoners. To speed things up, you can use the prerolled saves (p. 47) for the arrows.

About halfway through the first watch, those of you on guard become aware of a crashing sound—distant at first, but moving closer to your camp. It sounds like the tramp of many feet. Then you can hear distant voices, shouting things like "This way!" "Those dirty shapeshifters won't get away this time!" "Vandric said they were heading this way. We'll make short work of them!" "Anyone want a fur jacket when we're through?" "Naw, there won't be enough left of 'em for a pair of gloves." "Look! Here's a trail! It's them all right! This way! This way!"

Now you can see the torches bobbing through the woods in your direction. There must be a hundred torches coming towards your camp, and the sound of several hundred marching feet grows ever closer, accompanied by the baying of what must be dozens of hounds.

The lights are *dancing lights* maintained by the pixies, and the catcalls are a mix of audible glamers and the pixies' disguised voices. The pixies use the fake vigilantes to herd the characters towards the snares, even allowing a villager to appear from time to time (usually this is an illusion, but occasionally it is a polymorphed pixie).

If the characters attack, the response will be wave after wave of (illusionary) arrows, from several directions, some of which will appear to strike characters, seeming to cause normal damage unless a disbelief attempt is successful. Volleys of pixie sleep arrows will accompany these illusions, largely hidden by the distraction. If the characters flee, volleys of missile fire (both real pixie sleep arrows and illusions) follow them closely from behind. If they split up, the faerie dragon likewise splits up his teams of pixies to continue their pursuit, using the following magical traps to ensnare them:

Illusionary pit (pixies): thirty feet deep with sharpened stakes at the bottom—victims believe themselves to be stuck at the bottom of the crumbly earthen hole.

Entangle (Shap): victims will be shot with sleep arrows until they eventually fail a saving throw and succumb.

Snare (Shap): there are hundreds of these placed all

through the general area. The druid comes through periodically with a scimitar to cut down trapped animals and clean out the woods with his *dispel magic*.

Trip (Shap): placed strategically in areas that Snap considered likely paths for fleeing characters. Running characters encountering one of these take 1 point of damage and are stunned for the rest of that round.

Otto's irresistible dance (1-in-10 of the pixies): Delivered by touch by invisible pixies, no saving throw. Affected characters make great targets for sleep arrows.

It is very likely that all of the player characters will eventually be captured; practically the only way to escape is to hide so well that not even seventy-one sharp sets of eyes can find the character. Even then some protection from *ESP* is required, as the pixies will scan the area and detect anyone whose thoughts are not magically shielded in some way. Anyone who does escape can attempt a rescue of his or her fellows at any point in the trial scene described in the next section.

Shap, old Faerie Dragon: AC 1 (invisible) or 5 (visible); MV 6, fly 24 (A); HD 4; 15 hp; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (bite); SA spells, breath weapon (euphoria gas, 2-foot diameter cloud, save vs. breath weapon or wander aimless in state of bliss for 3d4 rounds, unable to attack and suffering +2 penalty to AC); SD spells, invisible at will (does not become visible when attacks); SW sick sense of humor; MR 64%; SZ T (1½ feet long); Int genius (17); AL CG; XP 3,000. Spells (as 10th-level Priest): *entangle* ×3, *faerie fire*; *Speak with animals*, *trip* ×2, *heat metal*; *snare* ×3; *animal summoning I* ×3; *animal summoning II*, *pass plant*.

Pixies (70): AC 1 (invisible) or 5 (visible); MV 6, fly 12 (B); HD ½; 3 hp each; THAC0 20 (16 with pixie bow); #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 + special (sleep arrow), 1d4+1 (pixie war arrow), or 1d4 (pixie sword); SA sleep arrows (1d3 damage, failure to save vs. spell causes the victim to fall deeply asleep for 1d6 hours, racial and magical resistances do not apply), memory loss arrows (no damage, a failed save vs. spell results in complete memory loss, *heal* or *limited wish* required to cure condition), spell-like abilities; SD naturally invisible (do not become visible when attacking), spell-like abilities; SW *dispel magic* forces all pixies within range to become visible for 1 round, bows have half the range of a human short bow; MR 25%; SZ S (2½ feet tall); Int exceptional (15); AL N; XP 650 each. Special Abilities (each once per day, as 8th-level mage): *become visible*, *confusion* (delivered by touch, save vs. spell to resist, effects last until target receives *remove curse*), *create illusions* (with both visual and audible components, require no concentration to maintain, last until magically dispelled), *dancing lights*, *dispel magic*, *ESP*, *know alignment*, *polymorph self*. In addition, seven of the pixies have *Otto's irresistible dance*.



The Trial

Captured characters are taken to the natural amphitheater in a forest clearing with crude benches carved into the side of the hill and illusionary spectators filling the seats. There is a stump at the bottom, normally used as a podium for pixie gatherings. Unconscious PCs will awaken here at midnight, whereupon the real fun begins (at least from the pixies' point of view). All characters have been completely stripped of all equipment other than essential clothing. They can try to untie each other's bonds (Rope Use, anyone?), with each such attempt taking two to four rounds to complete. If your campaign's spellcasters use material components, they may try replace missing components with available substitutes and could then cast an already memorized spell with partial success. For example, a mage who already has a *sleep* spell memorized (material component: fine sand) and can gather a bit of sand and grit from the ground could affect half of the usual number of victims with the spell. Characters trying to break their bonds should roll their bend bars/lift gates percentage; success indicates that a rope has been broken. Check the prerolled saving throws for those declaring that they wish to disbelieve. Success indicates that the character recognizes the various illusions as such but does not necessarily see through the illusion to the reality beyond. As soon as any characters appear to be loose, several illusionary angry villagers rush forward with their clubs and attack, binding the character again. This time, however, the bonds are illusionary.

Do not just read aloud all of the following boxed text: allow the characters to break in and speak when they wish (if nothing else, it gives the judge a chance to pound his gavel and shout "Order! Order in the court!"). However, unless the characters say something that gives their captors an idea for more mischief, they will continue in this vein according to their original plan until the characters discover the ruse, attack, or escape. If the characters manage to disrupt the proceedings sufficiently (DM's option), the pixies decide that it's no fun anymore and depart: all the illusions vanish in the twinkling of an eye, leaving only the tinkling of distant mocking laughter. Bring in Muldoon immediately thereafter.

As you fight your way back to consciousness, your eyes are greeted by a natural amphitheater, starkly outlined in the light of the moon overhead. You and your companions are bound with ropes and vines, and you are sitting on a bench on a raised platform of dry logs, carefully stacked. Bits of brushwood peek out from between the logs. The benches which line the amphitheater are occupied by about two hundred townspeople and soldiers, packed shoulder to shoulder in the narrow benches. Silence reigns as they glare sternly at you, torches held ready.

To your left stands Sir Lance Vandric, leaning on his unsheathed sword, which glows and hums triumphantly. He smiles and waves at the crowd, flanked on either side by Vanessa and Theodora. The Burgomeister of Thornburg stands behind a large stump, shuffling official looking documents. To your left is an empty pen, crudely built of deadwood held together with vines.

Glancing in your direction, the Burgomeister frowns. "Thought you'd get away, did you? Escape justice for your misdeed, eh? Well we'll see about that," he says menacingly. Then he turns to the crowd and calls out "Hark! The beasts awaken. Let the trial commence! Mr. Prosecutor, read the charges."

Vandric steps forward, brandishing a scroll handed him by Vanessa. Unrolling it with a flourish, he begins to read. "The defendants now before the court are charged with lycanthropy, murder, destruction of property, and causing a public panic. The details of these crimes are so sordid and detestable that they cannot be illuminated before the decent and law-abiding citizens here assembled."

"Thank you, Sir Lance. And may I say that your bravery in tracking down these vicious beasts and capturing them is an inspiration to us all." Vandric smiles and steps back. Fixing your group with a stern glare, the Burgomeister says, "Humph. Must observe the formalities, I suppose. Are you vile creatures represented by counsel?"

Of course, the answer must be no. All offers from the characters to defend themselves will be curtly refused, though they may make a brief statement if desired. If the characters tried to ditch the weapons en route, then theft and "malicious endangerment of property" should be added to the list of charges. Characters who are not werbeasts themselves are charged with conspiracy to commit mayhem, aiding and abetting, and the like.

"Then counsel shall be appointed for you. Step forward, ranger Stewart." There is a long pause. "Hey, Mudface!" yells a spectator. The ranger steps out of the darkness behind the last row of benches, and saunters forward. "Right. Whaddya want?" he snarls.

"This court appoints you to represent the defendants before us, who are to be tried for the crimes named by the prosecution."

The ranger stifles a rude chuckle. "Idiots. I knew they'd get caught. Anybody in their condition who'd get stuck with a load of silver weapons"

"Do you accept the appointment, sir?" asks the Burgomeister.



Stewart leans back against a nearby tree, pulls out his pipe, and says, "Ahh, why not? I wasn't doing anything else tonight anyway. Who needs sleep? But let's make it fast, okay?" Stewart lights his pipe with a piece of smoldering tinder, then throws it carelessly into the stack of logs on which the PCs are sitting. "Oh, sorry," he mutters. Then, "Your honor, I must object to the potential bonfire upon which you have confined my clients. Show them mercy. Hang them. Besides," he continues, indicating the curl of smoke drifting up from the stack of brush, "recent developments indicate that they must be removed, unless the trial proceeds quickly."

"Yes, yes, let's get on with it," says the Burgomeister gruffly. "Proceed, Sir Lance. Let's get on with the jury selection." Vandric points to several villagers among the spectators, who rise and start down to the stump.

"Your honor, I object!" says Stewart. "These jurors are biased."

"Qualify that statement!" demands Vandric, indignant. "Are these not decent, helpless, law-abiding citizens whose commitment to justice is surely as strong as their desire for personal safety?"

"Nonetheless, the law is quite specific," says Stewart. "The accused must have a jury of their peers."

"Objection sustained," says the judge. "It is so ordered. Court will recess while an appropriate jury is found. Bailiff, put out that fire." A murmur arises from the crowd, but none leave their seats.

Stewart regards you with an amused grin, then walks off into the forest, shaking his head. While Vandric confers with Vanessa, Theodora directs some soldiers to stomp out the sparks. Minutes pass, with the crowd getting ever more restless. "What's the hold-up?" asks an angry voice.

Vandric raises his hand, "Be patient good people," he says. "Just hold on for a few more minutes and you will see justice is done." The crowd quiets down.

Not long afterwards, the ranger returns. "Your honor," he calls. "I have taken the liberty of assembling a jury qualified to determine the guilt of these monsters—er, my clients."

At this point, the ranger beckons toward a gap in the trees, and a small group of animals walks calmly into the clearing. The exact composition of the "jury of their peers" will vary according to the exact nature of the PCs' affliction(s). Thus, if the party is composed of potential werewolves and wererats, the jury will consist of wolves and rats (or the nearest woodland equivalent—perhaps shrews or squirrels). Wild boar, bears, foxes, bats, and the





like are all possibilities. The animals can be real (attracted by Shap's *animal summoning* spells) or illusionary (as will likely be the case if the DM opts for the more exotic specimens—e.g., tigers and crocodiles—rather than woodlands equivalents like snakes and bobcats).

"Excellent," says the Burgomeister, beaming. "Does the prosecution have any objection to the jury selection?"

"No objection, your honor," says Vandric, after a quick whispered discussion with Vanessa.

"Please be seated in the jury pen," says the Burgomeister, pointing to the fenced-off area. The animals quietly file into the pen, and Theodora closes the gate behind them.

"Make your opening statement," says the Burgomeister.

Vandric steps forward. "The charge of lycanthropy is easily proven," he says grandly. "My own sword has the capability of detecting werebeasts. Let's put it to the test."

With that, he flourishes the sword (to the "ooohs" of the assembled crowd) and points it at the player characters one by one. It hums audibly each time, even if that character has actually not been infected with lycanthropy (no doubt disconcerting uninfected characters who'd counted on being cleared by this magical test). Alternately, the sword could remain silent when pointed to such characters, causing the Burgomeister to mutter something about "Guilt by association."

"Just a minute," interrupts the ranger. "I want to cross-examine that sword." Vandric hands the sword to Stewart, who holds it out and stares at it. The sword hums up and down the scales, while Stewart frowns and shakes his head. Finally, it hums a distinctive melody (e.g., "Moondance"). Stewart nods, hands the sword back to Vandric, and says, "No further questions."

Next, Vandric turns and addresses the crowd directly. "How many of you have been attacked by vicious werebeasts in Thornburg?" he asks. Nearly all the villagers raise their hands. "Now, how many of you can identify at least one of the defendants as one of those werebeasts?" A few hands go down. "Two?" A few more hands go down. Vandric continues in this fashion, until at last roughly half the townspeople have hands raised to identify all the defendants as their attackers. With a nod to the judge and a wave of his hand, he says, "The prosecution rests."

"Does the defense have any final statements?" asks the Burgomeister.

"You guys might as well go ahead," says Stewart. "Can't do yourselves any more harm now."

The characters may make such brief statements as desired to the court. Their statements will be greeted by booing and jeering from the crowd (unless they make an abject confession, in which case their rapt audience listens with horrified attention). Sir Vandric objects to any requests from the characters to face their accusers directly, on the grounds that the characters will undoubtedly change to wereform and endanger innocent lives. Should any PC shift into wereform at any point for any reason, a rain of arrows (mostly illusionary, to conceal the sleep arrows hidden within) soon brings him or her down, leaving a convincing-looking corpse. The Burgomeister looks at the body and says "Shot while trying to escape, note it in the record." He then moves to wrap up the proceedings.

"The jury will now retire to consider the facts and reach a verdict," announces the Burgomeister.

"Considering the facts," says Vandric, "is there any need to deliberate?" The animals mill about in their pen, growling and spitting, then take their places again.

"What is the verdict?" asks the Burgomeister.

One of the animals growls, as if in answer. "Guilty as charged," announces the ranger, knocking out his pipe and stowing it away. "I still say they should be hanged. We can always burn them afterwards, just to be sure."

The crowd surges forward, laughing and shouting. Under Vandric's direction, they thrust their torches into the dry wood underneath you. As the flames rise up to obscure your vision, the whole scene seems to swirl and then fall apart before your stinging eyes. Suddenly your vision clears. The crowd, the Burgomeister, Vandric and the ladies, and Stewart all disappear and your ears ring with the sound of eerie laughter receding into the woods in all directions. The flames seem to have all gone out and you're lying, still tied, in the empty amphitheater atop the unlit bonfire.

Rescue

Muldoon, the local druid, makes a habit of periodically clearing the area of Snap's *snares* and pixie traps—they disrupt the natural patterns of the forest. As the characters struggle with their bonds, a lone leather-clad figure in a cloak enters the clearing and sits down in the last row of the amphitheater, where he strikes up a whistling conversation with a passing jay (or owl, if it's still nighttime). Muldoon says nothing to the group, merely sits and watches them until addressed. He will release the characters if asked, otherwise he simply watches them struggle and chats with the local wildlife. The characters must come up with some reasonable method of releasing themselves. Any reasonable plan will work, but they must come up with it themselves. If



they work their way free, Muldoon congratulates them on a fine effort.

"I see you've already met the local pixies and that dratted faerie dragon. Nice of you to play along with them—not many folks would do so. Mischievousness is part of their natures, after all, inconvenient though it is."

The characters may have been told about Muldoon either back in Thornburg or Cold Springs. If asked about the Hermitage or lycanthrope cures, he gladly rehearses the traditional cures (see page 3) and gives them directions on the most direct route to the mountains. Since he has limited knowledge of the passes beyond, he urges them to consult the sphinx who lives in the Spikeys' southernmost reaches and directs them to a cart track used by gypsies that will take them as far as the mountains' foothills.

If for some reason the PCs attack the druid, he either surrounds them with a *wall of thorns* (courtesy of his *staff of the woodlands*) or shapechanges into animal form (a bird, a mole, or whatever seems appropriate) and flies or burrows out of sight in a twinkling. Once safely away he pauses for a moment to taunt the party: "See those clouds gathering? I don't usually get to cast **that** spell. This is going to be fun. Lightning can strike more than once in the same place, you know. Just needs a little encouragement." Then he makes good his escape in whatever form seems appropriate.

If the PCs break the information chain by angering the druid and are truly at a loss how to proceed, a kind-hearted DM might remind them of their various leads and options (the sphinx, either of the hermits, the gypsies, the bandit castle). This might be a good time for them to encounter a wandering band of gypsies, who try to deflect them in the direction of Brant's Castle (hoping for a reward from the baron later on after the PCs' capture).

Muldoon, 12-level Druid: AC 3 (*bracers of defense* AC 4, Dexterity bonus); MV 12, fly 36 (as bird); 78 hp; THAC0 14 (12 with *scimitar of speed*); #AT 2 (*scimitar of speed*) or 1 (*staff of the woodlands*); Dmg 1d8+2 (*scimitar of speed*) or 1d6+4 (*staff of the woodlands*); SA spells; SD spells, druid abilities, immunity to restraint (*ring of free action*); SZ M; AL N; XP 6,000. Str 12, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 18, Chr 15. Spells: *animal friendship*, *cure light wounds* ×3, *detect snares and pits*, *entangle* ×2, *faerie fire*, *charm person or mammal* ×2, *goodberry*, *heat metal*, *messenger*, *obscurement*, *speak with animals*; *call lightning*, *hold animal*, *plant growth*, *spike growth*, *tree*; *call woodland beings*, *cure serious wounds*, *plant door*, *quench fire* (reverse of *produce fire*); *summon insects*, *commune with nature*, *cure critical wounds*; *fire seeds*, *weather summoning*. Special Abilities: shapechange to woodlands animal

three times per day (recover 1d6×10% damage suffered with each change), immune to charms from woodland creatures, identify plants, animals, and pure water, pass through undergrowth without leaving trail.

Sphinxes and Others

The Evil Eye

After parting company from the druid, the group travels through the forest for three days without incident. The cart track, if they follow it, passes several (empty) gypsy camps, identifiable by the cart tracks leading into them, fire pits, and other signs of repeated use. Late on the third day the party nears the camp of a greenhag. The party will encounter this monster when they begin to search for a campsite. The greenhag is using the only really suitable campsite in the area—an old gypsy camp near the cart track.

You spot the glow of a campfire, the only bright spot in the deepening twilight. When you investigate, you see a clearing containing a brightly painted two-wheeled wagon. Golden lettering on the side of the wagon reflects the light of the campfire, allowing you to read it even in the failing light. "Esmerelda, queen of soothsayers." In smaller lettering beneath this you can read "Sovereign cures, divinations, fortunes told."

A squat, exceedingly ugly humanoid is fussing over the campfire, probably attempting to cook a meal. As you watch, a leathery old crone wearing a bright silken bandanna and oversize gold earrings sticks her head out of the wagon. "Retch!" she wheezes, "If you burn that dinner, I'll skin you." The humanoid hunkers and cowers meekly, but does not reply. "What's that matter with you?" snaps the crone, "Why haven't you started my tea?"

"Right away, mistress," whimpers the servant. He slinks to the side of the wagon with a halting gate and removes a teapot from a hook. Then he ladles water into the pot from a barrel at the back of the wagon and returns to the fire, where he places the pot on the hot coals.

For convenience, the greenhag poses as an old gypsy fortune-teller. She preys on the unwary who straggle behind gypsy bands and on any adventurers who stray across her path. Retch is a mongrelman who acts as her servant and beast of burden. If the characters approach, she casts a fearful look in their direction and retreats into the wagon, screaming for Retch to protect her. The mongrelman obediently scurries to the side of the wagon and pulls down a crossbow, pointing the unloaded weapon at the party in a threatening manner. "Stand back or I sic the dogs on you," declares Retch. Then he and his mistress



use their mimic ability to create the sound of dogs barking, though the characters can see that Retch is doing at least some of the barking.

If the characters attack, Retch throws down the crossbow and shouts "There too many of them, mistress." He runs to the rear of the wagon, where he leaps into the water barrel to hide inside, drenching the vicinity. The crone leans out of the rear of the wagon, pulls Retch out by an ear, and says, "You fool! Get up to the front and pull. We have to get out of here!" She pulls him into the wagon's rear door and almost immediately he emerges out from the front, arms flailing as if pushed. He then grabs the two poles to which a donkey would normally be hitched and heaves, setting the wagon into motion with a Movement Rate of 1.

If the characters actually attack the pair, the greenhag shows them no mercy, falling upon them with spell and rock-hard talons. Slipping in and out of invisibility, she uses *weakness* on whoever appears to be the strongest character first, then proceed to target others as needed. Meanwhile, she melees with targets of opportunity, trying to sneak up on and take out the spellcasters first. If severely damaged, she attempts escape by creating a distraction with her mimic ability or an *audible glamor* while slipping away invisibly with her *pass without trace* ability. She is not really concerned about saving Retch, though she will save him if it is convenient and does not put her in danger.



If the characters do not provoke the hag into dropping her disguise (very wise), they can coax her out of the wagon without difficulty by offering her money for information, asking to have their fortunes told, offering food, or making any other reasonable request. If they simply wait until her tea boils, she comes out to pour a nice cup and they can then approach without alarming her. She tries to assess the characters' abilities, but it is always difficult to tell exactly how powerful an adventuring party is without seeing them in action, so she will not risk herself with an open attack unless attacked first.

Once out of the wagon, she orders Retch to continue fixing her dinner, then smiles at the PCs and invites them to sit down and have their fortunes told.

"So sorry to be impolite dears, but a poor old woman alone is so vulnerable these days. You never can tell what a group of young bucks like yourselves will do to a lonely woman. Ah well, I suppose you'd like Esmerelda to look into the future for you, eh? Here, have some tea." Esmerelda pours you each a cup of tea, and another for herself. She takes a sip and sighs happily.

When the characters have finished their tea, she takes back their cups one at a time and pretends to read the tea leaves to tell their individual fortunes. These will include the following vague phrases:

- You will soon meet a tall, dark, handsome stranger.
- One of your companions is hiding a dark secret.
- The evil eye is upon you; your ultimate fate will depend upon the kindness of a stranger.
- I see a great fortune gained and lost.
- It is wise to remember that each of us has a darker side. Some keep it under control . . . others succumb to the beast within.
- Your future is cloudy, but pigeons are coming home to roost (a metaphor that should cause any werewolf or wererat's mouth to water).

The crone shakes her head. "I can see that all your fates are linked together. If you cross my palm with silver, I shall seek the answer to your combined destiny in the cards." Madame Esmerelda takes your money, hobbles into her wagon, and returns moments later with cards. She asks for complete silence, so that she can hear the spirits speak. As she lays the cards out face down in obscure arrangements, she croons broken words in some unknown tongue.

Actually, the hag is casting *audible glamor* mixed with nonsense phrases in her own language (a dialect of annis).



Gradually, you begin to hear a haunting melody somewhere far away in the forest. There are no words, but the melody seems familiar somehow. The old woman begins to speak as she turns the cards over one by one, naming each in its turn. After the last card is face up she pauses for a moment, then says in a trance-like voice: "The cards say that you will meet a man who makes music. By listening closely to his song, you shall learn everything you seek to know." Then her head droops and the music fades. Soon you hear a decided snore. Madame Esmerelda is asleep.

The greenhag feigns sleep, the better to overhear the characters' plans and comments. If they do not awaken her, eventually Retch will approach with a steaming bowl of squirrel stew and set it down on the table in front of her. She gives a sniff or two even before he gives her a gentle shake and says "Supper, mistress." She falls to and begins eating at once. She does not offer them any food (there's none to spare, unless they want to take Retch's portion). If asked about her tribe, acquaintances, or background, she makes up lies about once being Queen of the Gypsies but says she abdicating in favor of her daughter long ago. She then sighs and tells how Marya ran away to marry a young man named Estaban Carlotti and now travels around with some carnival. As for Madame Esmerelda herself, she ekes out a bare existence by telling fortunes. Otherwise she and Retch live off the land. Retch is but a poor waif that she has raised all these years as though he were her own son. He's a good boy, though none too bright.

If the characters confess their problem and ask for a cure, she tells them that there is a place in the mountains called the Hermitage on the Lake, where they take care of those things. She doesn't know where it is—it's hidden, you know. If she does find out about their condition, the hag will follow them throughout their travels, hoping to scavenge from the kills that they make in wereform. She appears shortly after any incidents involving a killing, make vague statements about curses and the evil eye, then take the corpse(s) away with her "for cleansing and proper burial" (i.e., lunch!).

Madame Esmerelda, greenhag: AC -2; MV 12, swim 12; HD 9; 42 hp; THAC0 11 (8 with Strength bonus); #AT 2; Dmg 1d2+6/1d2+6 (talons plus Strength bonus); SA spells, move in absolute silence in swamp and forest settings (-5 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls); SD spells, superior hearing, smell, and sight (90' infravision), rarely surprised (1-in-10 chance); MR 35%; SZ M (5 feet tall); Int very (12); AL NE; XP 4,000. Str 18/00. Spells (at will, as 9th-level mage): *audible glamor, change self, dancing lights, invisibility, pass without trace, speak with monsters, water breathing, weakness*. Special Ability: mimic voice (can imitate any human or demihuman, male or female, as well as most animals).

Retch the mongrelman: AC 5; MV 9; HD 1; 8 hp; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (punch or head butt) or 1d0 (unarmed crossbow); SZ M (6'10"); Int low (6); AL LN; XP 35. Special Abilities: Pick Pockets (70%), camouflage (base 80%).

Tall, Dark, Handsome

The greenhag has actually tried to direct the characters toward a nearby wolfwere she knows about. As it inevitably tries to ensnare all who pass its lair, she intends to watch the results to assess the group's power. If the wolfwere wins, she will challenge him for a share of the kill. If the characters win, she thereafter follows them, hoping to scavenge from their conquests.

The wolfwere typically waits in a tree near the cart track for prey to pass by. A small pack of three wolf companions surround the base of the tree, with five more hidden in the nearby underbrush. The wolfwere has trained the wolves to respond to various hand signals (bay, be quiet, kill) that should pass unnoticed by all but the most eagle-eyed observer. About an hour past midday of the next day after their encounter with Madame Esmerelda, tell the characters that they hear the howling of wolves somewhere in the woods up ahead of them. If they stop and listen, successful Intelligence or Wisdom checks reveal that it's neither approaching nor receding. Any character with Animal Lore can recognize that note peculiar to a pack which has run down prey but is unable to reach it.

The howling represents no immediate danger, but it does have a noticeable effect on any PC werewolf. He or she quivers and must make a Wisdom check at a -4 penalty or immediately begin howling in return—no doubt much to the dismay of his or her companions, who might fear that the sound has triggered a transformation. No such danger exists, however, and the character regains control (after a final, heartfelt "Arroooh!") 1d6 rounds later, or in half that time if someone has the presence of mind to clap hands over the PC's ears. In any case, the howling wolves seem to stay where they are, coming no closer. Unless the characters make an extremely wide circuit around the spot, read them the following when they eventually investigate:

Up ahead, just off the road, you see a handsome bearded man sitting in the branches of a large oak tree, playing softly on a lute. Three wolves scabble at the trunk, howling up at him. The music of his lute is sweet and clear, and soon one of the wolves sits down to listen. The others shortly follow suit. The man continues to sing to the wolves as he hops down from the tree. Once on the ground, he strokes the wolves and speaks soothingly to them. Then he straightens up, slings his lute over his shoulder, and walks toward your group, beckoning for the wolves to follow him.



If any character asks, tell them they recognize the music as the same sound they heard during Madame Esmerelda's fortune-telling the night before. Any werewolf in the party finds all of the bard's songs trite and annoying, due to the enmity that exists between werewolves and wolfweres. Likewise, the wolfwere is inexplicably irritated with such a character. Other player characters will probably put this down to some side-effect of the bard's charming spell on the wolves.

If the group hails the "bard," he greets them jauntily and seems glad for a chance for a little civilized conversation. He introduces himself as Jovan, a wandering bard, and will be particularly attentive to any female party members. He will happily play them a song upon request; if none is requested, he volunteers one for "m'lady" (or m'lord, should there be no female characters). Use the prerolled saving throws, imposing a -2 penalty for each character who states that he or she is "listening closely" (as instructed by Madame Esmerelda in the preceding encounter, see page 24). If they confide in him or ask specifically about the Hermitage, roll percentage dice to fake a Legend Lore check; then have the bard say that he knows a song about it. He encourages them to make themselves comfortable and let him serenade them. He then begins to sing a very funny song about a vile, cowardly werewolf named Isengrim, crooning away until the party are all charmed or until one of them realizes the situation and tries to attack. He then signals his wolves to attack, changes into wolfman form, and joins in the attack.

If the characters show no inclination to let him sing for them, he seems disappointed but still converses with the group for a round or two, dropping hints as to his extensive knowledge of local legendry. If they still flatly refuse to hear his repertoire, he surreptitiously signals the five hidden wolves to attack the group, then says "Here come some more—don't hurt them; I'll take care of it," and, stepping behind the front line of characters for cover, begins to strum and sing. Out of concern for the lives of his wolves, he croons only until they begin taking serious losses and then attacks (hopefully from behind with surprise). The three "charmed" wolves attack when he does.

If at any point the characters attack him, he begins to croon immediately. Once in melee, he changes to wolfman form and attacks, urging all his wolves to do likewise. If at all possible he focuses his attacks on any werewolves in the group, enraged by their very scent.

If the PCs wait in hiding or try to avoid him, he signals the five hidden wolves to attack the party. He then pretends to hear the noise from the attack and rushes to the party's aid, crooning all the while. Use the pregenerated saving throws each round for the characters to see if they succumb to the wolfwere's song. When he judges the time is right Jovan assumes wolfman form and joins in the attack, once again focusing on werewolves as much as possible.

Jovan the wolfwere: AC 3; MV 15; HD 5+1; 31 hp; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2d6/1d6+1 (bite/rapier); SA magical song (all within earshot are overcome with lethargy and *slowed* for 1d4+4 rounds on a failed saving throw vs. spell), wolfman form can both bite and attack with weapon in same round; SD immune to nonmagical weapons; SW cold iron, wolfsbane; MR 10%; SZ M; Int high (14); AL CE; XP 1,400. Chr 18.

Wolves (8): AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; 18 hp each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (bite); SD +1 bonus to saving throws vs. *charm* spells; SZ S (4' long); Int low (6); AL N; XP 120 each.

Androsphinx

Four days after the encounter with the wolfwere, the party arrives at the foothills of the Spikey mountains. The trees begin to thin out and the land becomes rocky and dry.

An androsphinx named Huttucilege is currently living in this area. He has been avoiding the advances of Helen, a gynosphinx, for some time. Knowing that Helen was on his trail, Huttucilege went to the only local source of magic for sale—the bandit castle (these are the same bandits, in fact, that tried to hijack the silver weapons shipment). They sold Huttucilege a magical girdle which they assured him would provide an excellent disguise. That much was true. The item was a *girdle of femininity*. Huttucilege is very annoyed. As a gynosphinx, "she" is a failure. She retains her spell abilities, but her roar is much reduced in effect and she finds it difficult to scare anyone with it. She does not have the gynosphinx's spell powers, nor a gynosphinx's higher Intelligence and Wisdom. And she is **not** good with riddles.

Huttucilege's current lair is a cave in a bluff right above the trail. When the PCs approach, the sphinx is rummaging through her treasure looking for an item that might help her out of her current predicament and not finding anything. The party will be alerted to the sphinx's presence when a helmet, hurled in anger, sails out of the cave and clatters onto the rocks below, right before their feet. When the PCs look up, they see a large pile of discarded armor and other assorted treasure blocking the mouth of a cave. Totally frustrated by her lack of success, Huttucilege roars.

As you walk along the narrow, rocky trail, out of the corner of your eye you catch a glimpse of some small metallic object hurtling downward toward you. It lands a few yards in front of the party with a ping and a bounce. When the object comes to rest, you see that it is a helmet.

Looking up, you spot a large cave in the bluff above you, its entrance choked with quite a pile of metal items in a careless, haphazard stack. As you try to dis-



cern the exact contents of the pile, a female voice cuts loose with an ear-splitting, mind-numbing scream. It sounds to you like frustration personified—not a pleasant noise.

Huttucilege's cave is 60 feet above the ground. The ledge outside the cave is 40 feet wide by 15 feet long, the cave mouth itself 15 feet high and 20 feet wide. Huttucilege has a *wyvern watch* blocking the route which is easiest to climb; the spell effect is clearly visible to the characters as a shimmering patch in the midst of the path. Climbing any other path requires a climbing roll at a -10% penalty. The cave mouth itself is protected by two *glyphs of warding*, arranged in bands stretching across the cave mouth. The outer band does 12 points of electrical damage when triggered. This spell goes off with an audible boom! and bright flash of light, both of which alert the sphinx that he/she has company. The inner band is a *glyph of paralyzation*.

Inside, the cave is 90 feet deep by 60 feet wide. Its roof is 30 feet high in the middle, sloping down to 20 feet high near the perimeter. Around the rear edge of the interior is a 15-foot-deep shelf, 10 feet from the ground. The shelf is littered with large boulders, carefully positioned by Huttucilege to provide cover for spellcasting (giving her a -4 bonus to AC). Unless magical silence is in effect, Huttucilege will be alerted to the presence of intruders when the first glyph is triggered. She takes cover behind her boulders and puts up spells, then deals with any intruders remaining after the second glyph. Any PCs who immediately climb up to the cave and try to sneak into it may surprise Huttucilege inside at normal surprise chances, provided that they somehow silently bypass the glyphs. In this case, they find her still going through her items. After a few minutes she gives it up as a bad job and slinks outside. Characters who simply wait on the ledge or on the path below also see the same sight:

Moments later, a gynosphinx squeezes past the pile of assorted metallic objects and slinks dejectedly out onto the ledge. She throws herself down in the sun, front paws outstretched. Heaving a deep sigh, she rests her chin on her paws in an attitude of despair. Never have you seen a sadder-looking creature—she is misery personified.

If the party tries to converse with Huttucilege, she listens listlessly to whatever they have to say. She assumes that they want something, so if the party does not immediately ask for information or a favor she snaps at them to stop beating around the bush and get to the point. If the PCs attack, Huttucilege will roar again. This second roar is louder than the first. All creatures within 30 yards must save vs. breath weapon or be overcome with pity. Those failing the save will be unwilling to attack the poor crea-

ture. When Huttucilege sees these results, she becomes even more depressed. She fights to defend her lair, employing her abilities as best she can, though she ignores any characters who are not attacking or invading. If she is clearly getting the worst of it, she gives up in despair.

Before the characters can continue, however, Barney the Criosphinx arrives on the scene. Barney is afflicted with the standard crush all criosphinxes have on gynosphinxes and sees this as an opportunity to look good in front of a lady. Barney swoops down on the PCs, surprising them unless at least one character has been acting as lookout. Give him the normal +2 attack bonus for a charge; a successful hit causes the victim to take 3d6 damage from the butt and be knocked off the ledge. Falling damage is 6d6, and all items on the victim must make item saving throws vs. crushing blow or be smashed to flinders. A character with Tumbling may attempt a proficiency check and, if successful, suffers only half damage from the fall and need not roll for items.

After the initial butt, Barney lands and charges. Victims take normal damage and are knocked into the cliff wall (save vs. normal blow for items). If he fails to gain surprise, Barney attacks by butting as he comes in for a landing, then attacks any characters on the ledge first as he follows up with his paw attacks. Barney is a card-carrying member of the nerd club, shouting uninspired challenges ("Nyahhh!") after his first attack. Once on the ground, he stays there and melees normally, saying hackneyed things like "Take this!" before each attack, and "That'll teach you to pick on a girl!" whenever he hits. Barney has a thin, reedy voice with something of a stutter and is an unimpressive, though capable, foe.

When Huttucilege sees Barney coming to her "rescue" she will be very embarrassed and even more irritated. She roars immediately. This will be her second roar if the PCs have not tried to attack her, or the third if they have. The effect of a second roar (moving the listeners to pity) is described above. It will not have any effect on the melee with Barney, but it will make him want to "rescue" Huttucilege even more. If it becomes obvious that Barney is winning and Huttucilege actually is being "rescued," she roars once more in despair, burying her head under her paws. All within range of the third roar (240 yards!) must save vs. spell or lose 1d8+1 points of Dexterity for a like number of rounds. In addition, any creature within a 30 yard radius of Huttucilege at the time must save vs. breath weapon or go catatonic for 2d6 rounds. A catatonic character stands motionless, blinking irregularly, mouth hanging open. He or she can walk a few steps if tugged but stops again as soon as the outside pressure is removed. All glass, crystal, and ceramic materials (including potion bottles) within 30 yards of the sphinx must save vs. disintegration or be shattered.

If Barney is within range of the third roar, he is affected by the Dexterity loss. Assume that he was charging for a head butt at the time, and that the roar causes him to miss



his target and run into the nearest cliff wall, bloodying his nose ("Ow!"). This causes him to fly away, clutching his wounded nose and hurling abuse back at the characters. Likewise, if the characters do serious damage to Barney, he flees, threatening dire punishment if he ever finds them again.

Once all the shouting dies down, Huttucilege will try to find out what the characters want. She refuses to discuss Barney. Huttucilege will mumble to herself while the characters introduce themselves, "All this and adventurers too!" "Onto every life a little rain must fall, but I live under a waterfall!" and other pithy complaints. Finally, she says resignedly, "All right, out with it. What's **your** problem?" Resting her chin on one paw, she listens in a distracted manner, nodding tiredly now and then, and muttering, "Yeah, everybody's got problems" and so forth. When the PCs finally make their request for information about the Hermitage, Huttucilege gets irritable.

"What do you think I am?" snaps the sphinx, "A gyno . . . Oh. Guess I am. Sorry. Okay, um, right," she mumbles. Then she perks up and says clearly, "Okay. What has four legs . . . oops" she interrupts herself. "Nope, used that one on the lame guy last week. Wait here," she commands. Then she slips back into her cave. She returns only a moment later clutching a scrap of parchment. Glancing at it, she speaks again,

"All right, there were these four thieves, see." She pauses to look at the parchment again. "So one of these four thieves stole something from, umm, from you. All right, here we go! You've got these four thieves in front of you and you know that one of them lifted something from you. It doesn't matter what it is. A vase. Say it's a vase. So you get to ask each of them a question . . . no, that's not right. Wait." She looks at the parchment again. "Okay, right. Their names are Tom, Dick, Harry, and Fredregar. And each of them says something on his own behalf. Now then, which of them stole it?" She looks at you expectantly. "Oh, right, sorry," she says after a short pause. "One of them lies to you, but the other three tell the truth, that's a given, see. Now Tom says that Harry took it. Dick says that he didn't take it. Harry says that Tom is lying. And Fred says that neither Dick nor Harry took it. There, now you figure it out!" says the sphinx with finality.

If the players have difficulty, repeat the main part (the thieves' statements) as many times as necessary. It won't help. The riddle is not solvable as stated. Huttucilege thinks that the guilty party is Tom. But there is no way to figure this out with any certainty. Huttucilege has muffed the last statement, Fred's, which should be "Tom did it." If the characters are stumped, Huttucilege will eventually tell them that it was Tom, because Fred's telling the truth. Further explanations may include "Fred is telling the





truth because Tom and Harry's statements directly contradict each other, and only one person is lying." Huttucilege will frown and knit her eyebrows when she gives this explanation but will stand by it. Clever players may realize at this point that they have been given an unsolvable riddle.

If they happen to guess the "right" answer, Huttucilege will demand that they explain how they arrived at the answer. Since there is no logical way to reach the answer, the DM should have no problem picking it apart and declaring the answer unacceptable. If the players realize that the riddle is unsolvable, Huttucilege hems and haws, then covers herself by saying that she was just testing them. In any event, Huttucilege will want to "forget the riddles" as she shreds the parchment with her claws, and move on to the next order of business. The next order of business is a trip to the bandit fort. Huttucilege wants the party to go there, get a djinni bottle that is rumored to be there, and bring it back. She hopes to regain her original sex with the wish that she hopes the djinn can give her.

"All right, well, forget riddles. You guys are too dumb/sharp for that nonsense. Let's talk about the Hermitage." The sphinx pauses, waiting for you to agree. "Tell you what, you do a job for me and I'll tell you how to get there. A tit for a tat, so to speak."

If the party agrees, Huttucilege tells them how to get to the castle and describes the djinni bottle well enough for a *locate object* spell to work. If the PCs ask, she tells them that the "castle" is owned by a local noble named Baron Brant (she won't add that he's a bandit who makes his living by extorting passers-by and selling the loot along with an occasional spell or cure from his resident spellcasters). If the party should ask for something with which to buy the djinni bottle, Huttucilege refuses to supply any cash (she spent all her liquid assets on the girdle). She is also unwilling to accompany the PCs (saying "Oh no, once was enough"). However, she may allow the PCs to borrow a few items from her hoard to aid them in retrieving the bottle, on the condition that they promise to return them when the trip is completed. Each character may borrow one item, choosing from the following: *hat of disguise*, *slippers of spider climbing*, *wand of earth and stone* (15 charges), *eversmoking bottle*, *Quaal's feather token—tree*, *horn of fog*, *dust of tracelessness*, *wand of flame extinguishing* (14 charges), *ring of clumsiness* (appears to be a *ring of jumping*). Clever PCs will go for the bottle, hoping to make a substitution for the djinni bottle at an opportune moment.

If the characters ever realize that Huttucilege is not the gynosphinx they were sent to find, and tell her so, she snaps, "Never mind who I am! I can still tell you where the Hermitage is. Is the deal on?" If they refuse the deal, Huttucilege slinks back into her cave in a huff. Proceed to the encounter with Helen.

Huttucilege, former androsphinx: AC -1; MV 15, fly 24 (D); HD 12; 54 hp; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4+2/2d4+2 (paw/paw); SA scream, spells; SD spells; SW diminishment of androsphinx abilities; SZ L (8 feet tall at shoulder); Int exceptional (15); AL CG; XP normally 7,000, currently 5,000. Spells (as 6th-level cleric): *command* ×3; *aid*, *hold person*, *wyvern watch* (already cast); *dispel magic*, *prayer*.

Barney the criosphinx: AC 0; MV 12, fly 24 (D); HD 10; 45 hp; THAC0 10; #AT 3; Dmg 2d4/2d4/3d6 (claw/claw/headbutt); SW nerd; SZ L (7½ feet tall at shoulder); Int average (8); AL N; XP 5,000.

The Better Half

If the PCs pass by Huttucilege, they stumble upon Helen the gynosphinx's lair instead. Helen was hot on the trail of an androsphinx that she knew was in the area, but then his trail suddenly disappeared. She is now casting about for some other clue to his whereabouts. Currently, she is resting on a cliff, studying her map.

A few more hours of travel find you still skirting the base of the mountain range. Rounding a corner, you see another gynosphinx ahead, resting on a rock outcropping and muttering to herself as she stares at something between her paws. Her tail switches back and forth angrily.

The characters are able to make out her words if they move closer. She ignores them unless they address or attack her.

"Let's see," she says to herself. "He was at the fortress just two days ago. He couldn't have gotten more than this far," she says decisively, dropping a huge paw onto the sheet of parchment in front of her. "At least, not without strong magic. Now he would have to have gotten water, which means he would try to move through here . . . Nah, too many adventurers through the forest . . . unless he went up into the mountains . . ."

If addressed, she looks up in a preoccupied manner and says, "Yes?" If the PCs ask her what she is doing, she answers hotly, "Looking for an androsphinx, you dope." Then she adds, suavely and insinuatingly, "Have you seen one?" If the party asks about the Hermitage, she will be equally irritated. "Yeah, what about it? It's a worthless place full of silly celibates." Then she adds coolly, "I can tell you how to find it if you can tell me what I want to know." If simply hailed, she will be very irritated: "You had better have a good excuse for interrupting me or



you're all cat food" about sums it up. If attacked, she uses a *symbol of hopelessness*, then tries to capture a character for questioning.

Otherwise, she offers to tell them where to find what they seek if they can take her to the androsphinx for whom she is searching. Or, if the characters deny having seen an androsphinx but tell her that they have seen another gnosphinx, she demands that they take her to this rival in exchange for the information ("Oh yeah? She can't have him! I mean . . . who's trying to move in on my . . . territory? Take me to her, and I'll tell you what you want to know"). If the characters suspect the sex change and tell her their deductions, she is incredulous and refuses to believe it ("No, no—you're crazy," she says, stretching out a claw. "He told you to say that, didn't he? That's all right, you just take me to him, or whatever he's pretending to be"). Helen will not give the characters any information on the Hermitage until they have escorted her to Huttucilege's lair. Once there, a truly awful scene erupts:

As soon as you reach Huttucilege's ledge, Helen snaps "Right. I'll take it from here—just stay out of the way." She then flies to the ledge, calls out a sweet nothing ("Yoo-hoo") or a challenge ("Hey, you!"), depending upon whether she believes that an androsphinx or a gnosphinx is inside. An audible groan escapes from the cave. Helen issues another call, then proceeds carefully inside. Moments later, a stream of epithets in an unknown language blisters the air. The volume level drops, and another voice joins into the conversation. Shortly, the two gnosphinxes emerge from the cave, flop down onto the ledge, rest their chins on their paws, and sigh heavily.

Both will ignore the party until addressed. If asked again about the Hermitage, Helen raises her head, fixes the group with a disgusted look, and says, "That way. It's that way, over the first peak and follow the trail north. Down into Sharptooth Valley and out the pass at the other end. You can't miss it." She points with her paw to emphasize her words. Then she turns to Huttucilege. "You potato-brain," she growls. "What did you do that for? Never mind, I'll think of something. Men are so helpless on their own . . ." etc., etc., as the characters depart.

Helen the gnosphinx: AC -1; MV 15, fly 24 (D); HD 8; 36 hp; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/2d4 (paw/paw); SA spells; SD spells; SW androsphinx; SZ L (7 feet tall at shoulder); Int genius (18); AL N; XP 3,000. Spells: *clair-audience*, *clairvoyance*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *legend lore*, *locate object*, *read languages*, *read magic*, *remove curse* (each once per week), and *symbol—death*, *symbol—discord*, *symbol—fear*, *symbol—hopelessness*, *symbol—insanity*, *symbol—pain*, *symbol—sleep*, *symbol—stunning* (each once per week).

Brant's Bandits

Baron Brant's Fortress

The characters need not come here, but they may come on an errand for the sphinx or be misled by rumors into thinking that the folk here can help them with information or magical items. With the exception of the guard captain, all the major NPCs here are evil and know nothing about the Hermitage, though they do sell "lycanthropy cures." These consist of simple sleeping drugs, which they feed to lycanthropes in order to capture them for later sale. The troops are neutral.

If the characters agree to obtain the djinni bottle for Huttucilege and do not encounter or ignore Helen, they may try to penetrate the fortress, which rests on an outcropping overlooking the main road. The Baron and his men extort money and magic from passing travelers in exchange for safe passage through the area. Anyone who refuses to pay is beaten and robbed, even slain if they fight back. No fool, the Baron keeps his fees low enough so that paying them is less ruinous to merchants than a long detour, striking out through the wilderness, or building a new road. He supplements his income with the spoils of raids on various caravans passing through the territory that refused to pay protection money. One such raid was attempted on the wagonload of silver the PCs were assigned to escort earlier in this adventure.

Valuables gained through raiding and extortion are kept locked in the tower room inside the walled complex. Among them is the djinni bottle that Huttucilege seeks. The Baron and his men sell the magic and other valuables for whatever price they can get, and they advertise their wares regularly on the regional "black market" grapevine. The PCs may use any tactics desired to obtain the bottle, from a sneak and grab to politely knocking at the gate and asking. Anyone is welcome—the Baron is not particular—but he can't abide competition, and anyone caught trying to walk off with merchandise they haven't paid through the nose for will have to fight their way out. Visitors or uninvited guests recognized as lycanthropes are targeted for capture, for later sale as curiosities.

The fortress personnel consists of Brant himself, his chief advisor (the wizard Grim), the chaplain (Bertram), a half-orc lackey (Ghrunge), the guard captain (Ryan), three lieutenants (3rd-level fighters—use the soldier stats from page 16), the garrison (50 men at arms—use the 1st-level fighter stats from page 5), and thirty-five women and children (wives, children, and camp followers of the garrison, some of whom work as servants within the castle—cooks, maids, scullions, and the like). Thirty of the guards live outside the fortress walls in small huts, some with their families; this shanty town is currently in the process of evolving into a small permanent village. The other twenty guards stay in living quarters inside the castle (see page 33). At the time of the characters' initial arrival a raiding party of ten guards and one officer will be away,



returning with spoils in 1d6 hours.

Between the baron's charisma and Ryan's efficiency, morale is high and security tight. The duty roster consists of two guards posted at each of the seven watch towers, with two more walking up and down on each section of the wall between. The gate itself is guarded by four men, who only signal for the crude drawbridge to be lowered when they are satisfied of the bonafides of any visitor. Anyone admitted will be escorted by two of the guards while the other two remain at the gate. All subsequent visitors will be held at the gate until escorts arrive. All weapons must be checked at the gate, to be returned upon departure. Receipts are issued, and there have been no reports of problems with getting one's weapons back from previous customers (the ones who had trouble never had a chance to report it to anyone before their unfortunate demise).

Most of the traffic through the gate consists of merchants and private individuals interested in purchasing food and lodging for a night within safe walls or in purchasing magic items reported to be for sale at the fortress. The Baron advertises through guilds in various large cities throughout the region. Currently, a trader named Phumatigo the Great is lodging within the fortress while bargaining for a large quantity of goods, which includes the djinn bottle and the minimal. The characters arrive the day before his bargain is sealed and the bottle taken out of the fortress.

Guard shifts last 6 hours, and changes are carried out under the supervision of the watch officer. All guards coming on shift must give a secret hand signal to prove their identity. Any bandits who survived the raid on the silver weapons shipment at the beginning of this adventure have now returned here. They will of course recognize any undisguised characters they see and immediately report this to either Grim or Ryan. If the survivors saw the characters change to wereform, they bring the news directly to the baron himself.

If the characters are recognized as lycanthropes by any means (remember that Grim may have seen them transform while scrying their progress), the Baron will issue orders to have them captured and detained in silver chains and manacles. Such curiosities have a good market value to certain buyers. How the capture is engineered will depend to some extent upon how the characters have gained access to the fortress. If they have come in as lodgers or buyers, they will be urged to eat with the household and their food will be laced with a sleeping drug (save vs. poison or fall asleep). They awaken later in the dungeon, bound hand and foot with silver manacles and stripped of all gear, with springs of wolfsbane hung around their necks for extra security (their nonlycanthrope companions meet with the same treatment, Grim having advised the baron to take no unnecessary chances). Any characters resisting the drug are swarmed by their messmates. The guard forces will be alert to the menace, armed with silver-studded bludgeons. In addition, the fortress spellcasters

will put aside their differences for the time being and wait nearby out of sight, ready to *charm*, *command*, and otherwise magically persuade as many characters as possible to surrender.

If the characters have made their way into the fortress by stealth and are caught in the act, whoever catches them sounds the alarm forthwith and the fortress personnel, starting with the men at arms, try to take them by force, calling in the "heavy guns" (the spellcasters and Brant's henchmen) if they recognize the intruders as lycanthropes at any point.

The Villains of the Piece

Baron Brant, 10th-level Fighter: AC -1 (plate mail +2, Dexterity bonus), MV 12; 76 hp; THAC0 11 (7 with long sword +2, Strength bonus, and specialization bonus); #AT 2 (specialization); Dmg 1d8+7 (long sword +2, Strength bonus, specialization bonus); SA weapon specialization; SD *potion of gaseous form*, *ring of free action*, *ring of spell turning*; SZ M; AL LE; XP 3,000. Str 18/04, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 12, Chr 17.

The Baron rose through the ranks of the military until he discovered that private enterprise was far more lucrative. Now 55 years old, the Baron is lean and hard-muscled, with gray streaks in his black hair. His gray eyes are piercing and cold. He bears the scars of several battles, plus the small but distinctive brand on his cheek which denotes a thief once caught in the act and punished (a Local History roll is necessary to identify its significance). A shrewd businessman, he knows exactly how much can be charged without making the product completely undesirable. The Baron is unmarried, with an eye for the ladies. He can be quite charming when he wishes, though his penetrating gaze misses little. Baron Brant's success over the years has been due in large part to his quick wit and keen eye. He assesses situations quickly and takes decisive action, but does not overreact. It should be very difficult to catch him off guard.

Grim, 9th-level Wizard: AC 7 (*cloak of protection* +2, *ring of protection* +1); MV 12; 19 hp; THAC0 18 (15 with dagger +3); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+3 (*dagger* +3); SA spells, *wand of fire* (34 ch); SD spells, *ring of feather falling*; SZ M; AL NE; XP 4,000. Str 10, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 15, Chr 16. Spells: *charm person*, *detect magic*, *magic missile* x5, *unseen servant*; *detect invisibility*, *pyrotechnics*, *web*; *fly*, *slow*, *suggestion*; *Rary's mnemonic enhancer* (already cast for three extra *magic missiles*), *wizard eye*; *wall of force*. Special Equipment: *crystal ball*.

Like most serious dabblers in sorcery, this one goes by a nickname, and never gives his real name away. Grim was given his nickname by fellow adventurers in his youth because of his disconcerting habit of wearing a



perpetual friendly smile while committing vicious acts of mayhem. Grim takes a keen interest in any travelers or traders entering the fortress. Talkative and friendly, he cheerfully escorts any visitors around the buildings and grounds, chatting companionably the whole time. He attempts to extract as much information as possible from the strangers in the process and is exceptionally good at spotting inconsistencies in what he is told. For this reason, Grim is usually given custody of any visitors who plan to stay longer than an hour or two. If he becomes suspicious, he unobtrusively signals the nearest guards, who pass word to the Baron within one turn. The Baron does **not** take Grim's warnings lightly. In any event, Grim reports everything he learns to the Baron as soon as is appropriate—immediately if he is suspicious, otherwise that evening. Suspicious activities include mapping the complex, lying about the magical nature of items whose aura Grim has already detected, contradicting each other or themselves, appearing not to have legitimate business (i. e., posing as traders and not wanting to buy or sell anything), eating a caged songbird, raiding the chicken coop, making all the dogs in the castle howl, rummaging through the trash heap, and other unsociable behavior. Once his curiosity has been aroused, Grim tries to arrange a one-on-one with a PC and *suggests* that said character tell him exactly why the party is really there. Grim's say-so is sufficient reason to instigate a full alert-and-capture procedure.

Bertram, 6th-level Cleric: AC 3 (banded mail & shield); MV 12; 29 hp; THAC0 18 (16 with *mace* +2); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (*staff of command*, 21 charges) or 1d6+3 (*mace* +2); SA spells, *staff of command*; SD spells; SW malfunctioning *staff of command* (its *human influence* powers only work on characters of opposite alignment to the wielder's); SZ M; AL LE; XP 975. Str 14, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 16, Chr 9. Spells: *command* ×2, *detect poison*, *purify food and drink*, *sanctuary*; *aid*, *hold person* ×3, *know alignment*; *dispel magic*, *prayer*.

Bertram takes himself and his position quite seriously. Most of the men in the complex consider him pompous and stuffy, which he is. He becomes quite irate when anyone calls him "Bert" (Grim, of course, calls him Bert constantly, and the Baron calls him "Bertie"). Bertram glowers suspiciously at all visitors who encounter him, but he warms up considerably if flattered and treated with respect. Getting on his good side, however, is something of a mixed blessing, as he will not leave that character alone thereafter but insists on parading about the complex advising him or her, in order to show the other residents how he ought to be treated. He is full of fatherly advice on health, spiritual welfare, how equipment should be carried and cared for, proper foods, etc. Despite his attitude, Bertram is not nearly as perceptive as Grim; he spends more time worrying about whether he is being

treated with proper deference than about possible infiltrators.

Ghrunge, 4th-level Cleric/4th-level Thief: AC 3 (*leather armor* +2, *ring of protection* +1, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; 27 hp; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1+special (*dagger of venom*); SA spells, *dagger of venom* (victim suffers 15 additional points of damage on a failed saving throw vs. poison), *backstab* (+4 bonus to attack roll, double damage), *rope of entanglement*; SD spells, thief abilities; SW hates Bertram; SZ M (4 feet tall); AL CE; XP 2,000. Str 13, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 15, Chr 9. Spells: *cure light wounds* ×3; *aid*, *silence 15' radius*. Thief Abilities: Pick Pockets 30%, Open Locks 50%, Find & Remove Traps 40%, Move Silently 50%, Hide in Shadows 35%, Detect Noise 30%, Climb Walls 65%, Read Languages 25%.

This unhappy creature is overshadowed by Bertram in his clerical functions, and the Baron's activities easily outstrip the half-orc's small efforts in thievery. Being outperformed in both of his professions has given the half-orc a strong persecution complex. If approached, his first words are either "It's not my fault!" or "I suppose you could do better?" before he slinks away, mumbling in orcish, no matter how the PCs reply. If, for some reason, the PCs persist in trying to speak with Ghrunge, the only thing of interest they learn is that he hates Bertram. He will do anything to "puncture the stuffed shirt." Ghrunge is very wary of openly opposing the cleric, however, as Grim will almost certainly find out the whole truth after the fact, and Ghrunge is terrified of the mage.

Ryan, 7th-level Fighter: AC -1 (bronze plate mail, *shield* +1, Dexterity bonus, *boots of striding and springing*); MV 12, jump ahead 30 feet, back 9 feet, or up 15 feet (*boots of striding and springing*); 83 hp; THAC0 14 (10 with *broad sword* +2, Strength bonus, and specialization bonus); #AT 2 (specialization bonus); Dmg 2d4+7 (*broad sword* +2, Strength bonus, specialization bonus); SA weapon specialization (broad sword), can strike and spring away in same round of combat when wins initiative (*boots of striding and springing*); SD *boots of striding and springing*; SW a military mind, 8% chance of stumbling when jumping; SZ M (5'10"); AL LN; XP 2,000. Str 18/12, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 15, Chr 15. Special equipment: *potion of cloud giant strength*.

Ryan is Captain of the Guard and actually in charge of all the troops here. She normally has nothing to do with visitors or the shady merchants that have begun to frequent the spot, and ignores these distractions to her task of running a flawless military operation. She pointedly ignores arriving PCs unless they do something to catch her attention (e.g., unless she thinks they might threaten her command's security). Characters who betray, to her well-



trained eye, signs of posing a danger to “her men” are a different story. In this case, she makes a point of keeping an eye on the strangers until satisfied that they are harmless (at which point she goes about her duties) or a genuine danger (in which case she alerts both Grim and the baron). If a fight or other trouble actually breaks out, she gathers her forces with great speed and efficiency. Ryan can assemble a team consisting of herself, Grim, Ghrunge, and 15 to 20 guards and have it anywhere in the fort within four rounds. Her tactics will always be determined by two overriding concerns: to contain a crisis as swiftly as possible and to minimize casualties among her men. Ryan is the only person at the castle who knows the general location of the Hermitage (she can direct them as far as the Sisters of the Claw—see page 43) and may share this information if it does not conflict with her strong sense of duty or if the PCs are inflicting great losses on her troops and this seems the easiest way to get rid of them.

The Complex

The fortress is constructed of heavy timber on a rocky outcropping overlooking the main road. The outer wall is 20 feet high, with watch towers (actually wooden platforms) placed to command a view of every approach. A 10-foot-deep forward trench surrounds the whole structure; 20-foot-high ramparts lead up from the bottom of the trench to the base of the walls.

A. Tower

This three-story building, the heart of the fortress, is obviously new; its chambers are detailed below.

B. Stables

In addition to a smithy for making horseshoes and a storage area for grain and hay, this large barnlike structure holds dozens of box stalls where several grooms tend the bandits’ mounts. Some twenty horses will be here at any one time. The Baron’s special pets, two young minimal woolly mammoths named Snatch and Grab, have the run of this place as well. These dog-sized tricksters have been trained to Pick Pockets and will nuzzle characters, attempting to filch an item every second round. If attacked or alarmed, the little mammoths trumpet wildly, attracting 1d8 grooms the next rounds.

Minimal Mammoths (2): AC 7; MV 9; HD 3+4; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 5; Dmg 1d4+2/1d4+2/1d4+1/1d3/1d3 (tusk/tusk/trunk squeeze/stomp/stomp); SW fear of fire; SZ S (3 feet high at shoulder); Int semi (4); AL CN; XP 120 each. Special Ability: Pick Pockets (38%).

C. Kitchen

Four servants are always at work in the kitchen during daylight and early evening, tending the large cooking fire and bank of brick ovens. At night, two servants sleep

here, in part to keep an eye on the large store of perishable foods and more durable foodstuffs. Small exits lead toward the well (G) and into the great hall (D).

D. Great Hall

Essentially one huge room with a large double entrance in the middle of the north wall and two smaller doors leading into the kitchen, the hall is used for feasting, audiences, and divvying loot. When in use it is lit by banks of torches. Trophies from the baron’s battles—mostly captured banners, armor, and weapons, along with the occasional head—festoon the bare rafters of the hall.

E. Drawbridge

This crude but functional drawbridge is little more than heavy planks nailed together, hosted and lowered by manpower hauling on ropes. Replacing it with a proper gatehouse is high on the baron’s list of planned home improvements.

F. Watch Towers

These are log platforms on stilts, reached by a wooden ladder leading from the courtyard 25 feet below. Atop each platform is a large pot full of heated sand (the heated sand works just like boiling oil, without creating any fire hazard).

G. Well

This deep stone-lined covered well provides all the water for the castle’s inhabitants.

The Tower

The prison area is dark and damp. There are several ratholes around the walls, and an occasional rat will wander through, minding its own business. The rats may befriend any wererat in the party if he or she attempts to communicate with them. A persuasive PC may be able to convince them to bring such a character a bit of wire for use as a lockpick. Use discretion in evaluating the success of any escape plans, but remember that the bandits take special precautions once they’re aware of what they have imprisoned.

1. Guard Room

The walls of this room are featureless except for a posted schedule of guard shifts (characters consulting this can see that each watch lasts six hours). The furniture consists of a desk, a table, two chairs, and a chest. If the characters are imprisoned, all their nonmagical equipment is stashed in the chest. Two guards are on duty here at all times, and they will be alert if they know there are dangerous werebeast locked up not far away. If attacked by escaping prisoners, they rap on the trapdoor above with a spearbutt to raise the alarm. Two short raps means



"send help"; three means "all clear." Characters who overpower these guards quickly and quietly may be able to surprise the men in the barracks above or perhaps even escape unnoticed while those guards sleep. Naturally, the barracks guards investigate if loud noises (howls, screams for help, the clash of swords, and the like) come from below.

2. Plain Storage Area

A clear path winds between the boxes, bales, coffers, and chests piled in this room. The material stored here is of little value: food items such as hard tack and flour, nested together with tools, extra weapons, carpet tacks, empty jewelry boxes, and the like.

3. Maximum Security Holding Area

This room is bolted from the outside. Six sets of manacles are set into the walls, each having recently been coated with silver. The PCs will be kept here if they are recognized as lycanthropes and captured.

4. Torture Chamber

This small room features most of the standard torture equipment, though it is not too elaborate or expensive. The Baron is no sadist, but he's not squeamish about doing whatever's necessary to gather information he wants, either.

5. Jail Area

The PCs will be kept here if they are captured without being recognized as dangerous werebeasts. The seven cells in this room are featureless except for a straw mat in each. Cell A is occupied by a boy who identifies himself as Giles Trendlef, the 12-year-old son of a wealthy merchant from Thornburg. If released he asks their aid in escaping from the complex. "Giles" is actually a gypsy who snuck into the castle in a misguided attempt to impress his clan by stealing something from the baron's room. Brant hasn't decided yet exactly what to do with the young fool—letting him go scot-free might encourage future trespassing, while too-harsh punishment might damage the bandit-gypsy alliance. On Grim's advice, he's leaning toward imposing a tax on the gypsies, making sure they know it's because of Giorgio's stunt, and then releasing the youngster to stern family discipline. Once out of the complex, Giorgio will be able to make his way back to the gypsies with no trouble, pick pocketing an eye-catching item if he can before he departs.

Giorgio, fledgling gypsy thief: AC 6 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12; 2 hp; THAC0 20 (18 with darts, 16 on backstabs); #AT 1 (dagger) or 3 (darts); Dmg 1d3 (dart) or 1d4 (dagger); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, double damage); SD thief abilities; SW impetuous youth; SZ S (4 foot tall); AL CN; XP 35. Str 8, Dex 18, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 6, Chr 15. Thief Abilities: Pick Pockets 45%, Open Locks 25%, Find

& Remove Traps 10%, Move Silently 30%, Hide in Shadows 35%, Detect Noise 40%, Climb Walls 75%.

First Floor

6. Guard Barracks

Twenty of the Baron's men are garrisoned here at any time. Each has a bed, a chest, and a table. There are twenty-five chairs in the room—one next to each bed, and the remaining five surrounding a card table in the northern section of the room. A trapdoor in the floor leads down to the dungeon level. If the alarm sounds from the guard post below (room 1), one of the lieutenants comes running. If the prisoners are known to be werebeasts, he reads a scroll of protection from lycanthropes, centering its ten-foot-radius area of effect on the trapdoor. Note that lycanthropes will not be able to pass through the opening while the protection remains in effect, allowing the guards to open the trapdoor and clear the area below with missile fire before proceeding in with appropriate weapons to recapture the prisoners.

7. Lieutenant's Quarters

These rooms are furnished sparsely, but the beds are more comfortable-looking than those of the soldiers quartered in area 6. Each of the rooms has a table with a pitcher and basin for washing and a chest containing personal effects.

Second Floor

8. Guardpost

Two guards are stationed here at all times to watch the stairs. Passwords, which change twice a day, are required from anyone wishing to get past this point to the second or third floors.

9a & 9b. Guest Rooms

Each of these rooms is furnished in style, with a down bed and blankets, finished oak table and chair, and tapestries depicting famous scenes from legend. Each has a fireplace with a bedwarmer nearby. Both rooms are lit by candle brasses. Phumatigo the Great is currently staying in room 9a.

Phumatigo the Great, 8th-level Thief: AC 10 (no armor, bracers, or ring will fit him); MV 3; 31 hp; THAC0 17 (15 with throwing knives, 13 with backstab); #AT 1 (dagger) or 2 (throwing knives); Dmg 1d4 (dagger, throwing knives); SA backstab (+4 attack bonus, triple damage); SD thief abilities (see below); SW bulk (cannot squeeze through normal-sized doors, movement-related thief abilities reduce by half); SZ L; AL N; XP 975. Str 9, Dex 18, Con 4, Int 16, Wis 10, Chr 6. Thief Abilities: Pick Pockets 60% (30%), Open Locks 55%, Find & Remove Traps 55%, Move Silently 60% (30%), Hide in Shadows 50% (25%), Detect Noise 60%, Climb Walls 70% (35%), Read Languages 60%.



Phumatigo was once a force to be reckoned with in the dark side-streets of a certain large city, but he long since decided to give up skulking in dark corners after falling through an old warehouse's rickety roof in the course of casing the place. Acquiring a business in the process of selling off its assets, he parlayed it into a profitable enterprise that has made him wealthier than he once believed possible. He never carries cash, experience having taught him to deal in vouchers instead. Phumatigo is quite certain that the characters are here to bargain for the same item he has come to purchase—or, at the very least, to steal it and sell it later to the highest bidder. He therefore watches them carefully and stalks them (as best he can, wheezing all the way) as they tour the complex. If caught, he pretends to have business wherever they are (for example, in the stables he pokes at the minimal, quoting "fair market prices" for the beasties).

10a & 10b. Main Vaults

These maximum-security rooms are triple-locked, *wizard locked*, and trapped. They contain all the highly valuable and magical treasure of the complex, including the "djinn" bottle, which is in 10a. Also here are a *dagger +2*, *longtooth*, nine bolts of green silk (worth 450 gp each), a long sword, a suit of plate mail with several ominous holes punched in it, a cloak, nine gold candlesticks (worth 250 gp each), 9,000 cp, 200 sp, and 2,100 gp. The long sword, plate mail, and cloak all detect as magical, thanks to a *Nystul's magic aura* placed on each by Grim. In addition, any items taken from the characters that Grim identifies as magical will be stored here for later identification.

The traps involve twelve darts which fire straight up from the floor. Each has a 50% chance to hit a character standing in front of the door (roll separately for each character). Each dart inflicts 1d3 points of damage if it hits. In addition, each dart is poisoned (allow the characters to roll for saves); failure causes the afflicted character to fall on the floor writhing in pain for 1d10 rounds. This is unfortunate, as each door is also rigged with a second trap: a small bucket of oil (equal to about 3 flasks) that spills oil onto the floor, covering the area shown by dotted lines on the map. Mere seconds after the oil drops, a torch falls from a sconce on the wall and ignites the oil, setting afire every character in the area of the oil spill for 2d6 points the first round and 1d6 points the second round, plus continuing damage if the characters do not put out flaming hair and clothes. The oil traps are Ghrunge's brainchildren. They really offend Bertram ("Every time somebody goes near those doors the whole place catches fire!"). The fire hazard does not bother the Baron, however, as Grim simply puts any fires out, using *pyrotechnics*.

11. Brant's Room

This room is furnished like the guest rooms, only more lavishly, with a thick carpet on the floor (worth 4,500 gp) and a huge bed with a panther comforter (worth 850 gp).

A locked chest holds clothes and some momentos, but Brant carries his treasure with him and stores the excess in the vaults. A decanter with two fine goblets (the set worth 200 gp) are for when the baron entertains intimate company. A fine crystal mirror stands against the north wall. Should any male except Brant look into it, a *magic mouth* on the mirror screams "GOTCHA!"—a sound sure to bring the guards running.

12. Storage

This room is the storage area for broken, bent, and otherwise unusable or uninteresting materials. Broken plates, bent weapons, copper ingots, buckles, dolls, children's toys, torn books, stained fabric, and half-used candles are typical of what can be found here. The room is locked to keep guests from seeing the mess.

13. The Chapel

Bertram holds regular mandatory services for the troops here (the Baron forces them to attend, since he wouldn't want to offend deities—you have to be careful in his business). Opposite the entrance stands an altar with prayer beads and a religious book on it. To the right of the altar is a font and basin for baptisms and the creation of unholy water (500 gp value); to the left is the lectern from which Bertram speaks.

14. Grim's Room

This once well-furnished room is now in a state of neglect: the fine carpet rolled-up and shoved against one wall, the large comfortable bed is stripped of covers except for two old saddle blankets. Dust covers the benchful of alchemist's equipment. Grim is not interested in research, just the practical results of his magic. And in Grim's case, "practical" means the ability to kill or maim. A case in point is the small black pudding Grim keeps in a stoneware crock. When he gets bored, he opens the crock and shoots *magic missiles* at the pudding. When he has reduced the pudding to small enough pieces he destroys all but one small piece, feeding it small slivers of wood and offal until it gets big enough to "play" with again. The current piece has only 18 hit points.

The room also contains miscellaneous personal belongings of negligible value. Grim keeps his spellbooks hidden in a secret niche behind the headboard of the bed; the niche can't be found until the bed is pulled away from the wall.

Hapless Black Pudding: AC 6; MV 6; HD 10; 18 hp; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d8 (corrosion); SA acid dissolves wood and metal; SD immune to cold, acid, poison, split into smaller puddings by lightning and blows from weapons; SW fire and *magic missiles* inflict full damage; SZ S; Int non (0); AL N; XP normally 2,000, currently 500 due to weakened condition.



Third floor

15. Ryan's Room

This sparse, spartan room is almost painfully neat. The bedsheets are so tight that you could bounce a copper coin off of them, there isn't a trace of dust, and everything is in its place. This is obviously the room of someone who doesn't see any reason to keep items around if she doesn't use them often. What few personal effects are here (a necklace and bracelets made of dinosaur teeth) are stowed away in an orderly fashion. When off duty, Ryan spends much of her time in this room, sharpening her sword, cleaning her gear, or thinking of ways to improve the duty roster.

16. Maxwell's Room

Maxwell, the Baron's artillery specialist, lives here. The bed and night table are in total disarray, the walls covered with sketches of trajectories and diagrams of new siege machine designs. Notes on weight limits of shot and composition of special ammunition (incendiary loads and the like) litter the desk and fall to the floor if disturbed. Over the bed hangs a large floor plan depicting the fortress as seen from above with small circles drawn in on each tower. Dotted circles elsewhere seem to indicate possible locations for semi-mobile defense.

Maxwell is currently away, purchasing ballistas and hiring assistants to man them. These will arrive one month after the player characters begin the adventure. Thus, if they delay too long in visiting Brant Castle or leave and then later come back, they find a newly installed siege weapon atop each of the seven towers, plus a heavy catapult on top of the main keep.

17. Bertram's Room

This place is a disaster area, with dirty clothes heaped in the corner and dishes with bits of moldering food clinging to them stacked next to the door. The servants despise Bertram and, though they can be bullied into bringing him his meals (he considers it beneath his dignity to eat in the hall), they conveniently forget to collect dirty plates afterwards. The same neglect extends to his laundry and shoes. Rather than polish the latter himself, Bertram simply buys a new pair whenever he goes to town or selects a pair from the loot brought back from caravan raids. Fully fifteen pairs of dirty shoes can be found tucked away in various nooks and crannies here. The cleric thinks the door is protected by a *glyph of warding*, not knowing that Grim dispelled it weeks ago out of sheer malice.

Bertram keeps a diary of his woes hidden underneath the mattress. Unbeknownst to him, Ghrunge has recently picked the lock on his rival's room, found the diary, picked the lock on it, and edited the material—making notes in the margin in a good imitation of Grim's hand, crossing out whole sections and writing scathing comments beside them. Ghrunge then replaced the diary and is now waiting for the inevitable explosion when Bertram discovers the additions. So far none has occurred, as

Bertram usually only opens the book to write down some new indignity or grudge and hence does not reread old material often. Nonetheless, an explosion is coming—it's only a matter of time.

18. Ghrunge's Room

The door to this room is locked and trapped with drugged needles (Ghrunge likes to "keep his hand in"). The needles are not particularly well-hidden (+20% to Find Traps rolls) but more difficult to remove than would appear on first glance (-10% to Remove Traps rolls). If the trap is sprung, the victim must save vs. poison or fall into a deep sleep for 1d6+1 hours. This room is sparsely furnished, with a small, hard bed, a wooden stool, and a small chest for personal items. The room is quite clean—not as inhumanly tidy as Ryan's, but clean enough to make Ghrunge feel superior to Bertram.

19. Storage

This room holds fighting equipment and supplies. Among the crates, bales, and bundles are stored assorted pieces of armor (no complete sets), bundles of arrows, lengths of rope, grappling hooks, extra bowstrings, and the like.

20. Armory

This room contains ready fighting equipment: crossbows, complete sets of armor, polearms, flasks of oil, saps, extra swords, and other weapons.

21. Barracks

This room, currently empty, will soon become the living quarters for the artilleryist's assistants.

Tower Top

This area, not shown on the map, can be reached from the tower's main stairs. Four men at arms are always on guard here, each equipped with a horn that he sounds at the first sign of trouble. As mentioned under the description of room 16, the baron has plans to install a heavy catapult here in the near future and would then replace the watchmen with trained artilleryists.

The Djinni Bottle

Lhannahi, female jann: AC 5 (no armor); MV 12, fly 30 (A); HD 6+2; 29 hp; THAC0 15 (14 with Strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 2d8+3 (scimitar, Strength bonus) or 1d8+3 (punch, Strength bonus); SD jann abilities (see below); SW humorless; MR 20%; SZ M; Int high (14); AL N; XP 3,000. Str 18/23. Special Abilities (as 12-level spellcaster, unless otherwise noted): *Speak with animals* (at will), *invisibility* (thrice per day), *enlarge or reduce* (twice each per day), *create food & water* (once per day, as 7th-level priest), *go ethereal* (once per day, maximum duration one hour), *elemental travel* (can travel to any elemental plane with up to six willing passengers, must return to



Prime Material after 48 hours or suffer 1 hp damage per hour thereafter).

This creature has been in the Baron's possession for years, but since she can't do anything that the Baron and his men can't handle on their own she spends most of her time bottled-up. Lhannahi's bottle is a tall, decorative decanter made of opaque lavender crystal. It has a stopper of barely gem-quality ruby (value 30 gp). If Huttucilege has sent the PCs to get the bottle, simply describe it as a tall purple bottle with a ruby stopper; successful Appraising or Gem Cutting skill checks will reveal its actual rather modest value. If the characters retrieve the bottle and open it, read them the following:

When the bottle is opened, a cloud of purple smoke issues forth, coalescing slowly into the shape of a lovely woman in a harem costume. "Oh, it's another set," she says. Producing a list from goodness knows where, she begins to read from it. "Okay, Number one: no calls after midnight. Number two: decent clothes. Number three: no you-know-what. Number four: service contract terminates after the standard 1,001 days. Number five: overtime for desert holidays. Number six: a new stopper—diamond if possible. Well, what are you all staring at? Haven't you ever seen a genie before? And I Don't Do Wishes," she declares firmly, tossing her head and glaring defiantly.

Lhannahi is tired of everyone who lets her out of the bottle asking for *wishes*, *major creations*, and other powers possessed only by the more powerful djinn. She's looking for a mortal who will appreciate her for what she is—probably an ordinary (zero-level) human would be her best bet. She knows little about lycanthropy (the disease does not exist among her people, who are immune to its curse), and even less about how or where it can be cured. However, if told about the sphinxes, she will demand to be taken to them immediately, since they are at least desert creatures. She's a competent warrior but loathes fighting on behalf of mere humans; if forced into battle she complains bitterly. If damaged heavily she uses etherealness to escape and return to her bottle.

Hermits and Antihermits

Dolmin

A rakshasa named Dolmin has maintained a lair in these hills for many years. He preys on travelers through the mountains, posing as a trader, a mountain woman, a woodsman, or whatever seems appropriate. His favorite disguise, however, is that of an old hermit. About noon every day Dolmin turns invisible, activates his *fly* spell, and cruises the foothills looking for potential dinners. Today, he spots the PCs toiling up through the hills and

drops down to investigate. Trailing them invisibly for a while, he uses his *ESP* to find out who they are and why they're traveling through these parts. Once he's satisfied, he flies on ahead and prepares his deceptions.

Just up ahead, in a small clearing beside the road, you see a tiny hut surrounded by a vegetable garden. A sign on the front gate reads: "PrIvAtE! KeEp OuT!" As you approach, the door creaks open and an old, weather-beaten man shuffles out. He pauses in the open doorway and scans the sky before stepping into the garden. When he sees the cabbages, a fatherly smile lights up his face. "How are we all this afternoon, my lovelies?" he asks the plants as he picks up a watering can and begins to sprinkle them. As he reaches the end of a row he grows stern "Now, Herman, don't pout! You were first this morning and now just have to wait your turn. No more of your sass boy—you know the rules." Nonetheless, you notice that he does give this area of the garden a little extra water. The old man moves on sprinkling and talking to the plants, calling each of them by name and fussing over them like a loving parent. He's near the middle of the garden when the next outburst occurs.





"Herbert! Whatever is the matter? Arrrgh, a WEED!" shouts the old geezer. "Out, you filthy beast," demands the old man as he picks up a hoe. "Avaunt," he cries as he approaches the offending weed, hoe raised menacingly. "Die, foul thing," he finally screams as he attacks the weed with the hoe. Clods of earth fly in all directions as the hapless weed is thoroughly murdered. The killing done, the old man drops to his knees and begins caressing a cabbage. "Now, now, don't fret my pretty," he coos, "The bad old weed is gone and can't bother you any more." He comforts the plant as a mother might soothe a child that has had a bad fright, and the plant actually seems to stand taller and look greener at the end of the process.

When the party finally disturbs him, he plays the role of the recluse in order not to seem too eager to see them:

The old man snorts. "Might as well open a toll booth; there's enough traffic through here," he says in disgust. "Why just last year it was all those disgusting plague victims coughing and dying all over the place, not even good for fertilizer. Then it was those fanatic werebeast hunters! Aren't any werebeasts around here anyway. Nearly tramped on my babies with all those horses, and that mud-faced fellow was so impolite . . ." "So what do you want? A cure for warts?"

If the PCs tell him that they are looking for the Hermitage, Dolmin's manner changes abruptly. He looks intently into their eyes for a few seconds and draws in his breath sharply. "Lycanthropes, eh? Show me your amber!" he orders (even if they are wearing theirs openly). When the amber is presented, Dolmin pretends to stare at it with his age-clouded eyes. "Humph," he declares, "legitimate pilgrims after all. Well, isn't that a change." He then draws himself up to his full height (5'3") and announces that he is the Guardian of the Hermitage and Keeper of the Guest House (it's hard to pronounce capital letters, but somehow he manages it). The luxurious accommodation they see before them is kept some distance from the main site so as not to Tarnish the Hermitage with the presence of the Unpurified—and to keep the Temptation of Worldly Luxuries away from his fellow hermits, of course, he adds, casting a baleful glance at any female PCs. With that, he invites them inside.

The interior of the hut is cold and dark, a single room with a dirt floor obscured in part by a pile of dry straw. There is no furniture except an old three-legged stool and a plain wooden chest with a shiny lock. Half a dozen unglazed clay bowls sit in two rows near the stool; these contain water, berries, unidentifiable roots, and some brownish paste (cabbage fertilizer; it tastes just like you'd expect cabbage fertilizer to taste). "Drop your stuff," com-

mands the hermit in a clear voice, "It looks like you're gonna be spending the night."

The trapdoor leading to the cave complex that is Dolmin's real lair is hidden under the pile of straw: the PCs cannot find the door unless they look under the straw. The cave is furnished in some comfort, rather out of keeping with Dolmin's guise as a simple hermit. The only damning evidence, however, is the bowl of raw meat next to the bed. If the PCs discover the cave Dolmin tries to cover himself by explaining that the soft bed is one of the perks of the job, but one must "keep up appearances." As for the meat, he says some dratted woodsman keeps bringing him game and the only way to get rid of the fellow without listening to hours of his inane comments is to accept his offerings, bless him, and send him about his business.

When the characters admit they have lycanthropy (and Dolmin continues to refer to them as lycanthropes whether they admit it or not), he yanks a battered piece of parchment out of his soiled tunic and scrabbles something on it. Then he whistles. Moments later a white dove appears. Dolmin places the parchment in her beak and the dove flies away. The whole episode is illusory, of course. If the PCs claim they're here for some other reason besides seeking a cure for their lycanthropes, Dolmin gazes fixedly at them, takes out a little tablet, and writes "First Demerit: Lying to a Man of God . . ." Other possible demerits can be given for "Lacking the Virtue of Patience," "Resisting Correction" (i.e., balking at any of his orders), and the like.

After the dove flies away, Dolmin tells them to make themselves comfortable until it returns. He explains that they'll probably have to wait until the following morning to get to the Hermitage proper. Meanwhile, he'll begin their ritual purification. Then he mumbles something about finding his key and begins feeling vaguely in pockets for it, eventually finding it on a silver chain around his neck. He asks if they want to eat before or after their bath, explaining that they must bathe and don proper garments before they can be purified. He then unlocks the chest with the silver key, takes out a pile of white robes, and puts them on the stool. "Drop all of your clothes and gear in here," he says. "It's all tainted. Here—you'd better hang on to this" he says, offering the key and chain to one of the PCs. Out of some pocket he produces a lump of foul-smelling material and holds it out: "This is soap with special herbs. Wash up with it out back at the water barrel. You'll have to share. I'll be out in a few minute to rinse you off with holy water."

If the player characters actually strip off their things, lock them in the chest, and go wash, the rakshasa eats them all. Play out the sad scene, but an unarmed party is bound to lose to the rakshasa (perhaps one or two might escape by shifting to wereform and running for their lives). If the party is smart (or simply modest), only one of them will be unarmed at a time. In this case Dolmin offers them his



drugged food, then waits until most of them fall asleep before attacking.

If the characters seem willing to bathe but refuse to put their things in the chest, Dolmin allows them to hang their gear on the walls of the hut. If they balk at bathing altogether, Dolmin gives them another demerit (for "Rejecting Cleanliness and thus moving Further away from Godliness") and tells them that they must bathe and be purified before they can go to the Hermitage. Period. They may bathe one at a time if they wish, but they must all be purified together. If they neglect to keep watch while sleeping, he will try to disarm and devour them in the night. If they do post a guard, he attempts to silently disable that character before attacking. If they keep a double watch, he waits until morning before sending them on their way, washing his hand of them (so to speak) as too tricky to fall for his lures. If it comes to an open melee, Dolmin fights until seriously wounded, whereupon he turns invisible and tries to fly away.

Dolmin the hermit (rakshasa): AC -4; MV 15; HD 7; 36 hp; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d4+1 (claw/claw/bite); SA spells (as 7th-level wizard and 2nd-level priest); SD spells, ESP, immune to normal weapons and all spells of less than 8th level, half-damage from magical weapons of +1 or +2 bonus; SW instantly slain by a blessed crossbow bolt; SZ M; Int very (12); AL LE; XP 3,000. Wizard Spells: *color spray*, *phantasmal force* x3; ESP, *improved phantasmal force*, *invisibility*; fly x2. Priest Spells: *bestow fear*, *command*, *cure light wounds*.

Caleb

If the PCs get this far, they discover another shabby hut containing a real hermit. This fellow has little interest in the outside world (including the party) but will converse with them, so long as they don't disturb his meditations too badly. If asked about the Hermitage, he can set them on the right trail.

"Well, y'see that high mountain over there?" he asks, pointing to a peak many miles distant, deep within the mountain range. "That one over there with all the mist around it? To get there, you have t'cross this big valley—Sharptooth Valley, they calls it—then work yer way up this pass to a plateau on the north face of the mountain, near the top. The Hermitage on the Lake is on that plateau."

The old man, whose name is Caleb, explains that he once joined the Hermitage many years ago but left because he's essentially a solitary hermit (he actually snorts at the idea of "hermits" living together, but then shrugs and says "to each his own"). Caleb will offer the group food (dandelion greens, dried berries, and the like) and shelter for the night if they wish.

Caleb the hermit, 3rd-level Cleric: AC 10; MV 12; 10 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (cane); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M; AL CG; XP 175. Wis 13. Spells: *create water*, *protection from evil*, *sanctuary*; *augury*.

Rude Awakenings

This encounter can overtake the PCs at any point. Throughout the adventure the characters are running against the clock and, inevitably, at some point the full moon overtakes them, with a consequent forced change to wereform of any infected party member. Characters may have changed to wereform before (upon being wounded in battle, for example), but now all lycanthropes in the party will change, and all at the same time. Since not all the party members may be infected, and those who are might be of antagonistic types, it might be wisest to separate before moonrise. Attempts to restraint infected characters by tying them up before transformation should fail (lycanthropic strength will snap any ropes they're likely to have with them). Characters who don't realize that the change is triggered the night before the full moon as well may be in for a nasty surprise. Resolve any fights between werePCs and note losses of clothing and equipment (virtually irreplaceable out here in the wilderness). If the PCs have infected any NPCs in the course of the adventure, the DM can bring one of these onstage now after a PC has "gone were" and fled into the night; players won't know that this ravaging werebeast isn't their own friend and thus will very probably be reluctant to use deadly force in defending themselves.

Awkward Moments

The DM should take each infected character aside and describe what he or she sees upon awakening. Tailor their situations to each character's specific affliction, using the following options as guides. At least one character (such as the weretiger in the descriptions below) should be in the small, grassy clearing they chose as their campsite the night before, bordered on one side by a chilly babbling brook and on the others by trees, brambles, and berry bushes:

The sun is too bright this morning, but still it's chilly. There's an awful taste in your mouth. Groaning, you open your eyes and discover why you're cold. You're not wearing any clothes. Last night was the full moon . . . it all seems fuzzy to you somehow. The campsite is a disaster area. Shredded clothing, bent and broken pots, and the grisly remains of numerous small animals are strewn from one end of the clearing to another. It looks as though "the other you" put in an appearance last night. The sound of hoofbeats and occasional shouts brings you wide awake.



The following paragraphs can be adapted and read aloud to appropriate weretypes:

Werebear: You wake up covered with leaves, leaning against the base of a huge old tree. The leaves stick to you as you move—it feels like you've been dipped in honey. Your face and chest are covered with what look like bee stings—funny, they don't hurt a bit. A familiar buzzing sound draws your gaze upward to see bees flying in and out of a hollow some twenty feet overhead. Your mouth waters as you think of all the honey just going to waste up there . . .

Wereboar: You sit up groggily. You feel like the fourth day of a three-day binge, a sure sign that your pig-self has been out and about. The carcass of a magnificent wild boar lays stretched out at your feet. Its wounds indicate that you probably killed it in a fight. A group of swine has gathered around you, squealing and snuffing. You stare up at the leaves of the forest and consider things. It slowly dawns on you that you are now the leader of a herd of pigs.

Werefox: You awaken in near-darkness. As your eyes grow accustomed to the dim light, you see that you're inside a cave. You spit out a mouthful of feathers, and your stomach feels as if you swallowed several handfuls of the wretched things. Two pairs of eyes stare at you out of the darkness, and you hear an angry hissing.

Wererat: You awaken to find yourself crammed into a crevice on a ledge high up in the rocks on a cliff face. Your mouth is full of straw and dirt, and there's something gooey all over your face. Sitting on a bare rock above you is what looks like a very angry eagle, watching your every move. Are those pieces of her nest between your teeth?

Weretiger: You're blind! All you can see is darkness. All you can smell is fresh earth. Wait—perhaps you've been buried alive! No, you can feel the sun on your bottom. Yes, that's it—you're lying with your head in a hole. You pull loose, scraping your cheeks and bloodying your nose. Looking about, you can see several more fresh holes in the nearby underbrush. Your naked body is covered with dry earth and streaked with blood, but none of it seems to be your own.

Werewolf: Just as you're waking up, something warm and furry nuzzles your face. You open your eyes and find yourself being presented with a dead rabbit by a wolf—a rather attractive one, you can't help noticing. Looking around, you find yourself at the bottom of a ravine. Bits of fur and broken bones from several small animals litter the ground around you. Your body is smeared with mud and blood and you have burrs in your hair, but otherwise you seem to be whole.

Other weretypes should also wake up in appropriate situations—a wererat might be nestled with dozens of real bats in a tight-squeeze cave or a werecrocodile submerged in the freezing creek (suffering from hypothermia, with just the nose showing above water level). In the examples given above, the werebear must make a Wisdom check at a -4 penalty or climb the tree for more honey, inviting the vengeance of the angry bees. The wereboar's fourteen adoring pigs follow him or her faithfully—as pigs are very stubborn, it'll take some heinous act (like trying to eat one of them) to drive them away. The werefox must deal with the two angry giant weasels which have returned after being expelled from their lair the night before. The eagle attacks the wererat as soon as he or she moves. Meanwhile, the weretiger must wait in suspense, wondering who or what he or she ate last night. Finally, the werewolf's wolf friend will not attack but leaves dejectedly if the love-gift is refused. Anyone actually in the clearing or near the campsite must handle the approaching horsemen.

Lycanthrope Hunters to the Rescue!

Muldoon the druid (see pages 21–22) has grown concerned about the number of normal animals being killed off by Vandric's men and local peasants on suspicion alone. If there are no more wolves, so the false logic goes, they can be sure that all the werewolves are dead. Therefore, Muldoon is taking the endangered species north until the lycanthrope scare blows over. He uses his shape-change power to assume the form of a wolf, which facilitates long-term communication and enables him to lead





them less conspicuously. But eventually Vandric, always ready to protect helpless villagers, became suspicious of the stories about a huge wolf that was frequently seen leading packs northward. All it took was a trader's tale of seeing a wolf of that description turn into a man for Vandric to dispatch a detachment north to trail the wolf and slay it.

The group is led by an aspiring young ranger in Vandric's entourage who calls herself Cazpar the Giant-Killer. Cazpar is eager and zealous but inexperienced. She has been tracking the wolf for quite some distance and is convinced that it is nearby, for the tracks are fresh. Actually, she has lost the trail of Muldoon, who assumed bird form to fly back for the next load of creatures. The young ranger is now following the trail made last night by the party's werewolf (or by the werewolf that attacked their camp last night, if the DM chose that option). Vandric's men recognize PCs who have been to Cold Springs. They consider the characters heroes in the anti-lycanthropy campaign, and may even ask them to join in the hunt (they need someone to hold all that wolfsbane, after all . . .).

Cazpar's patrol approaches the clearing from the south at a gallop. Cazpar has her sword out and is ready to leap off of her horse and attack the wolf as soon as she sees it. Give the players two rounds of action before the horsemen enter the clearing—time to grab up a piece of clothing or a weapon, but not both. It's also not enough time to take proper cover, though a character can partially duck behind a bush.

"This way! The filthy werewolf is hiding in here," cries a voice from the woods. Moments later, horsemen in Vandric's livery come thundering into the clearing. The leader, a young woman of about eighteen, stops her horse and scans the area carefully. "Quiet, men. I know it's here. Be careful! Those lycanthropes are a vicious lot. Stay together now. Don't let it hear you."

Cazpar is so intent upon finding the werewolf that at first she barely notices the condition of anyone standing in the clearing. If attacked, she and her men fight back with enthusiasm, striking to kill with their silver weapons, but they will break off combat if they recognize the characters or the PCs call for a halt. Note that Cazpar is fairly naive and will be highly embarrassed by the appearance of unclothed or partially clothed characters, once she notices them. Her men, however, are more worldly. Confronted with any nude female player characters they are bound to make a few earthy remarks; at the very least, consider them distracted. Unsure how to handle the situation, Cazpar will grow very angry with them, in part to cover her own embarrassment.

Initially, however, Cazpar cautions any visible PCs to be quiet, not noticing their bruised and bloody state until her examination of the area is finished or until someone brings it to her attention. She dismounts and looks at the ground to pick up the wolf tracks she has been following, waving aside any characters who approach, declaring that they will "disturb the spoor." She finds what she's looking for (exactly whose tracks these are is up to the DM) and points dramatically "It went thataway!" (i. e., in exactly the direction any werewolf PC took).

When that her examination is complete, she stands in the center of the clearing and announces: "This clearing is now secure. Assume guard positions." The fighters move to the perimeter and take up evenly spaced positions around the edge, facing outward, silver weapons glinting in the morning light. Cazpar continues following the tracks of the wolf (which, of course, lead straight into the ravine to the spot where the werewolf PC was sleeping). However, she becomes puzzled by the additional tracks of any other were-animals, should different PCs suffer from different types of lycanthropy (e.g., she may mutter "Boars? Tigers? No, only one of each. Hmmm. A fox, too. Very strange.").

When Cazpar encounters any character, she issues a stern warning:





"Now folks," says the young woman in an officious tone, "I have some bad news for you. There are lycanthropes (that's 'werewolves' to you civilians) loose in this territory. I've just tracked a werewolf into this very camp. Those tracks are no more than a few hours old, and I see several other sets of suspicious tracks as well. I see you put up a valiant fight. Pity you've been so severely mauled. Here. You'd better take some of this wolfsbane. The monster may still be in the area." With that, she reaches into her shirt and pulls out a wad of the noxious herb. Rubbing some on her neck, she quickly breaks it up into small chunks and hands one to each of you.

If anyone recoils from the herb or refuses to accept it, Cazpar takes a closer look at everyone present and recognizes them at last:

"I remember you now! You're the heroes who brought the silver weapons to us from Thornburg. They've been real useful. I've done for at least a dozen of those foul shapeshifters with mine. Glad to see you're still on the job. So, did you kill it? Where's the body? You didn't let it get away, did you? We'd better see to those wounds. Come with us; we'll escort you back to the clerics in Cold Springs. They'll make sure you aren't infected." She signals two of the guards, who come forward holding their silver weapons at the ready.

Cazpar questions anyone she can find about the disposition of the werebeast. Any information in conflict with the footprint evidence will raise her suspicions. She demands to see the body if the characters claim it is dead, as she'll want to cremate the remains ("no sense taking chances"). She has a description of Muldoon in wolf-form and wants to see if this werebeast is the one she was looking for. If the PCs claim that it escaped, she wants to see the trail. She'll be extremely upset if the trail has been disturbed. She gives them a description of Muldoon, and asks if they have seen such a man, explaining that this man is the one suspected of being the werewolf.

In any case, once she realizes that the PCs are adventurers rather than ordinary travelers, she questions them on where their equipment is, why they are in their current sorry state, and exactly where all of them spent the night (assuming the clearing shows no signs of having been slept in to a trained eye like hers). If they cannot come up with a reasonable explanation, Cazpar assumes that they have been mauled by werebeasts and have lycanthropy. She orders them to go back to Cold Springs with her men and be examined. She evades questions about what will happen to them if they are found to be lycanthropes, though she knows that the penalty is death.

If the characters do not cooperate, Cazpar and her

men attack and attempt to take them into custody by force. They do not hesitate to inflict actual damage, but they do offer quarter when the characters look severely damaged. Note, however, that Cazpar is preoccupied with her mission (the capture of that huge wolf) and easily distracted if the characters put her on a different path (i. e., "It went thataway!"). If the characters are captured, they will not be guarded as closely as they should be during the trip back, as Cazpar assumes they are honorable folk who have only just been infected with the foul disease. She assigns half of her men to escort the PCs back to Cold Springs, continuing on with the rest. If the characters request permission to collect their equipment for the trip back, Cazpar allows this as only reasonable (heaving a sigh of relief as they get clothed again)—after all, they are heroes. Surely they wouldn't cause any trouble. If they do not make an effort to regain their equipment, they will be taken back as they are, with Cazpar confiscating any abandoned equipment she finds.

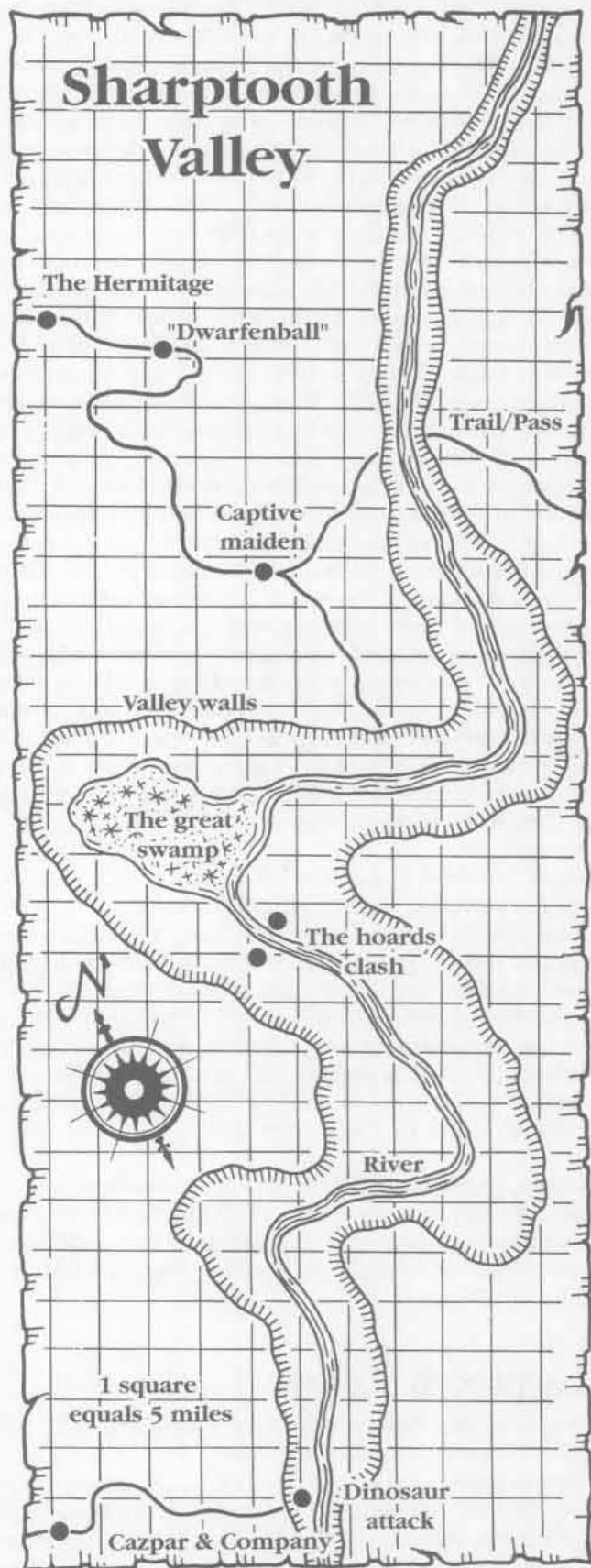
Cazpar and her men will spend the remainder of the day casting about for the trail of the large wolf, then camp for the night, placing the equipment in the center of their campsite and posting one guard per four-hour shift through the night. If the characters figure out who the "large wolf" in question really is and explain this to Cazpar, she will be highly disappointed. After they mention it, she remembers that druids can do that sort of thing and asks if they are quite certain that the description she has matches that of the druid. She then apologizes profusely and departs for Cold Springs.

Cazpar, 3rd-level Ranger: AC 3 (*bracers of defense* AC 4, *ring of protection* +1); MV 12; 24 hp; THAC0 18 (15 with *long sword* +1 and Strength bonus); #AT 2 (bow or sword and dagger); Dmg 1d8+3/1d8+3 (*sheath arrows* and Strength bonus) or 1d8+4/1d4+3 (*long sword* +1 and dagger with Strength bonus); SA fight with two weapons without penalty; SD ranger abilities (move silently in woodlands 27%, hide in woodland shadows 20%); SW naive; SZ M; AL LG; XP 175. Str 18/73, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 14, Chr 15.

Soldiers, 3rd-level Fighters (12): AC 3 (banded mail & shield); MV 12; 18 hp each, THAC0 18; #AT 1 (long sword, spear, dagger) or 2 (short bow); Dmg 1d8 (long sword) or 1d6 (spear, arrow) or 1d4 (dagger); SZ M; AL LG; XP 65 each.

Sharptooth Valley

Hidden in the Spikey Mountains range, ringed by tall peaks and cliffs, is an isolated valley populated by barbarian cavemen and dinosaurs. The valley floor is relatively flat and full of lush vegetation. In the center is a large marshy area—a favorite dinosaur bathing and feeding area. Several clans of human barbarians live here in



the prehistoric style. Homes are temporary lean-tos; food is any animal, large and small, that they can overcome, plus gathered roots and berries. The two largest tribes, the Stonefists and the Sisters of the Claw, have been at odds for many years over rights to the prime hunting territory at the heart of the valley. Several smaller tribes have split off from both of these, but all are generally allied with one faction or the other. Expanding population has brought the matter to a head, and the valley population has divided itself into two large hordes. Both factions are preparing for war. Recently the Sisters of the Claw received a vastly favorable omen: word has it that a god has come down to lead them to victory. The Stonefists prayed to their own divine powers not desert them, and are watching the omens closely, hoping for one or more gods of their own to appear. Enter the PCs.

One Big Lizard

The mountain pass you have been following grows narrower day by day, but you're clearly on the descent again. Suddenly the path stops atop a sheer cliff of crumbling sandstone. The cliff appears to have plenty of hand and foot holds, making it an easy climb for mountaineers and professional thieves, but the challenge is far beyond the rest of the party. At the base of the cliff, 100 feet below you, is a river valley. A lush garden of unspoiled greenery spreads out before you as far as the eye can see. The soft mists shrouding the jungle vegetation make the valley look cool and inviting.

The cliff face can be climbed by any character with Climb Walls or Mountaineering skills at a -10% penalty (due to the uncertainty added by the crumbly rock). The other characters must use a rope (or other climbing aid improvised by the PCs) to descend. Remind the characters that the maximum load a normal rope can take is two unarmored characters or one armored character. Descent time with the rope is 5 rounds (20 feet per round) for unskilled climbers; skilled climbers can make the climb in 4 rounds unaided or in 3 rounds with a rope.

While the PCs struggle with the climb, trouble is approaching in the form of a teratosaurus looking for lunch. This nine-foot-tall, twenty-foot-long carnivore was making its way along the perimeter of the valley browsing for a meal. When it heard the party, it froze and began trying to locate its prey, confused since it can neither see nor smell the party as long as they are at the top of the cliff. On the other hand, the PCs can't see the dinosaur from the top of the cliff, as it is motionless and obscured by the greenery and mist. Once the PCs start climbing they will be too busy watching handholds and footholds to spot it. The dinosaur, however, will spot the characters dangling like fat spiders at the end of a wepline. When the character gets to within 10 feet of the ground, it attacks from its hiding place with



surprise (it cannot make its claw attacks against a character off the ground, only its bite). If the target is climbing without a rope, the character loses any shield or Dexterity benefits to Armor Class and is considered defenseless (+4 to the dinosaur's attack roll); furthermore, any successful bite requires the target to make a saving throw vs. breath weapon or fall. The character cannot fight while dangling from a rope or clinging to the cliff-face and must wait until he or she reaches the bottom, one way or the other. A character climbing with a rope cannot use a shield (giving the teratosaur a +2 bonus to its attacks), but in such cases Dexterity bonuses to AC do apply.

PCs might spot the dinosaur if they use a *fly* spell to reconnoiter the area, or if they stop in mid-climb to look around. In this case, the critter sits at the base of the cliff for hours staring hungrily up at the characters. It will eventually lumber away, but it will not go far. When the party finally comes down, the dinosaur charges to the attack. No matter when the fight with the dinosaur occurs, any character that goes "were" during the fight will try to escape: their animal natures tell them that fighting such a powerful creature is a bad idea.

Teratosaur: AC 5; MV 18; HD 10; 45 hp; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/3d6 (claw/claw/bite); SZ L (9 feet high, 20 feet long); Int non (0); AL N; XP 1,400.



The Long-Expected Gods

If the characters defeat the carnosaur, they can complete the descent in peace. Once all are on the ground, however, allow them all Intelligence checks to notice the solemn faces staring at them out of the bushes. The barbarians cautiously emerge, allowing the characters to see that the right hand of each has been painted with gray clay, giving it a decidedly stone-like appearance. They stop only a few feet from the PCs, slam the butts of their spears into the ground, bow deeply, then spring away in backflips, using the spear-shafts for support. This action is repeated several times until there is a large group all doing it in unison.

Thereafter the barbarians follow the player characters everywhere. Communication should be extremely difficult, even by sign language (the barbarians' culture is simply too different). Every time the characters stop, they notice that more followers have joined the throng, until they lead a great multitude of several hundred barbarians—both men and women, from grizzled elders to babes in arms. They intently watch the PCs' every move but never, ever look a PC in the eye. Attempts to escape them will be unavailing, due to the Stonefists' tracking abilities and knowledge of the terrain. Any barbarian who seems to anger or displease the gods is set upon by his or her fellows and promptly beaten to death.

Typical Stonefist barbarian (2nd-level Fighter): AC 7 (Dexterity bonus); MV 15; 20 hp; THAC0 19 (18 with Strength bonus when stabbing with spear, 17 with Dexterity bonus when throwing spear); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (spear, Strength bonus); SZ M; Int low (5-7); AL N; XP 65 each. Str 17, Dex 17, Con 18.

The Hordes Clash

The site of the upcoming battle is on the party's way; they can't really avoid it except by climbing back out of the valley the way they came and abandoning their quest. After three days' travel, accompanied by an ever-growing throng, they come to a wide river. On the far side wait the Sisters of the Claw, an Amazon horde just as large as PCs' following, who hoot and scoff at the Stonefists. The Sisters' ornaments consist mostly of lizard-claw and lizard-tooth necklaces and bracelets. Suddenly both groups sit down and stare up into the sky expectantly. A winged shape swoops over the crowd, wheels, and dives right at the PCs, yelling "Nyahhhh!"

Characters who battled Barney at Huttucilege's ledge will recognize the nerdy criosphinx from that earlier encounter. Barney charges the party on his first attack, gaining a +2 bonus on his headbutt. From then on it's a straight fight, with Barney making wing-assisted leaps of up to thirty feet in an attempt to bypass the front line and get at spellcasters; the rapt spectators ooh and aah with each blow struck. Any PCs who go "were" during the



fight attack Barney in a berserk fury but retreat if reduced to one-third or less of their total hit points. If reduced to 20 hp or below, Barney tucks his tail between his legs and flees. Once one side's champion has defeated the other, a low moan breaks out from vanquished tribe, who then abase themselves before the victorious champion(s). Should the PCs be the victors, it is up to them how they resolve the conflict between the Stonefists and the Sisters of the Claw; the barbarians accept any solution they propose (assuming they can somehow convey it).

Barney the criosphinx: AC 0; MV 12, fly 24 (D); HD 10; 45 hp; THAC0 10; #AT 3; Dmg 2d4/2d4/3d6 (claw/claw/headbutt); SZ L (7½-feet tall at shoulder); Int average (8); AL N; XP 5,000.

Typical Sister of the Claw, Amazon barbarian (2nd-level Fighter): AC 7 (Dexterity); MV 15; 20 hp; THAC0 19 (18 with Strength bonus when stabbing with spear, 17 with Dexterity bonus when throwing spear); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (spear, Strength bonus); SZ M; Int low (5–7); AL N; XP 65 each. Str 17, Dex 17, Con 18.

Leaving the Valley

Caleb's directions tell the PCs to locate the one pass leading north out of the valley. If they didn't talk to the hermit, they'll have to just find this by themselves. This pass is similar to the entrance pass but difficult to spot as it's a hundred feet overhead (i.e., they'll walk right by without ever seeing it unless they look up). A thief or mountaineer must climb up its almost sheer cliff (this time without any penalty to the roll) and lower a rope for the other characters. If the party misses the north pass, they might find the west pass, a small cave that leads to a narrow chimney with a natural staircase. All the characters can climb these stairs without difficulty.

The Mountain Pass

The Test

Leaving the valley with its huge lizards and crazy barbarians far behind, you have gone for several days without seeing anything more dangerous than a loose pebble falling. You feel strangely satisfied and secure. As another night passes uneventfully, you feel that your quest is turning into a carefree hiking trip. As you start getting your gear together after breakfast, however, you discover that you don't have these mountains to yourselves: your lookout spots a curl of woodsmoke rising from behind the next ridge.

Investigating with care, you find that the smoke is coming from a small camp of humans. Five men clad in worn leather armor and hunters' garb sit around a fire

roasting strips of meat and drinking heartily. Off to one side a human woman stands bound hand and foot to a sturdy pole. Her long blonde hair gleams in the morning sun. As you watch, one of the hunters takes a piece of meat from the fire, blows on it to cool it, and hand-feeds it to the woman. As she turns her head to take the food you see that she is wearing something around her neck. It looks like a necklace decorated with amber.

The hermits are, by this point, well aware that the PCs are coming, having been warned by auguries and prophetic dreams. Wishing to know whether the curse has corrupted their natures yet, the holy men send Yaccra, a silver dragon, to test the pilgrims' worthiness. Yaccra allowed herself to be seen polymorphing from fox to human form by some hunters, whom she let capture her after a merry chase. Sure that their ship has come in, these men plan to carry their captive to Vandric, having heard exaggerated rumors about the rewards the paladin is offering for news about lycanthropes. If the party approaches the hunters carefully, they automatically gain surprise (the bounty-hunters celebrated a little too much the night before to be as alert as they should be). Otherwise the hunters see the PCs coming and rise to their feet, hands on their weapons.

The PCs have several choices here. If they sneak into camp and somehow smuggle Yaccra out, she is impressed with their avoidance of the easy, violent solution. If they negotiate with the hunters, they might spot the flaws in the story and be able to convince the hunters that their captive is not a lycanthrope (difficult but possible, especially if the characters play their "heroes of Thornburg" role to the hilt). This also counts as a victory. Attacking the hunters angers Yaccra, who lambasts the PCs as beasts for choosing brute force. Whether freed by the reluctant hunters or the PCs, she either praises or rebukes the PCs, as the case may be. Those who have passed her test are warmly congratulated ("You have proved you are worthy: the Hermitage awaits you just up ahead"); she even warns them of the danger from avalanche. Those who failed are scolded and told to scourge the evil from their hearts before soiling that holy place. In either case, she then uses her *control weather* power to create a small cloud, steps out on it (using her innate *cloud walk* ability—note that the cloud remains vaporous for anyone else) and summons a wind (using *control winds*) to sail away, leaving the slack-jawed hunters staring in amazement.

If at any point the characters attack her for some reason, she begins to sparkle and shimmer, then changes shape to a beautiful silver dragon (the hunters, if they are still around, take one look and run for their lives). Convinced by this display that the PCs have been totally corrupted, Yaccra does her best to put them out of their misery. She therefore uses her *control weather* and *control winds* to summon up a monster of a storm and, under cover of its darkness, attacks. She prefers spell attacks to



melee and so generally uses her breath weapon, *reverse gravity*, and the storm conditions (perhaps augmented by *lightning bolts*). A generous DM might have her opt to slay only those PCs who actually attacked, sparing those who held back or tried to dissuade their rasher colleagues, merely giving them a strong piece of her mind before departing.

Hunters (5): AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; HD 1; 5 hp each; THAC0 20; #AT 1 (short sword, spear) or 2 (bow); Dmg 1d6 (short bow, spear) or 1d4 (dagger); SZ M; Int low (5-7); AL N; XP 15 each.

Yaccra, very old silver dragon: AC -8; MV 12 (in human form) or 9, fly 30 (C); HD 20; hp 90; THAC0 1; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8+9/1d8+9/5d6+9 (claw/claw/bite); SA spells, breath weapons (either *cone of cold* 80 feet long for 18d10+9 damage or a cloud of paralyzation gas 50 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 20 feet high that lingers for 1d8+9 rounds); SD fear aura (35 yard range, save vs. petrification at -1 or suffer -2 penalty to all attack and damage rolls), keen senses (detect invisible, 90-foot radius), immune to cold; MR 45%; SZ M (human form) or L (dragon form, 101 feet long, plus 47 foot tail); Int exceptional (16); AL LG; XP 21,000. Wizard Spells: *protection from evil*, *unseen servant*; *blindness*, *ray of enfeeblement*; *lightning bolt* x2; *confusion*, *shout*. Priest Spells: *cure light wounds*, *protection from evil*; *heat metal*, *know alignment*. Special Abilities: universal communication, *cloud walk* (at will); *control weather*, *reverse gravity*, *wall of fog* (each once per day); *faerie fire* (twice per day); *control winds*, *polymorph self* (each thrice per day).

Avalanche!

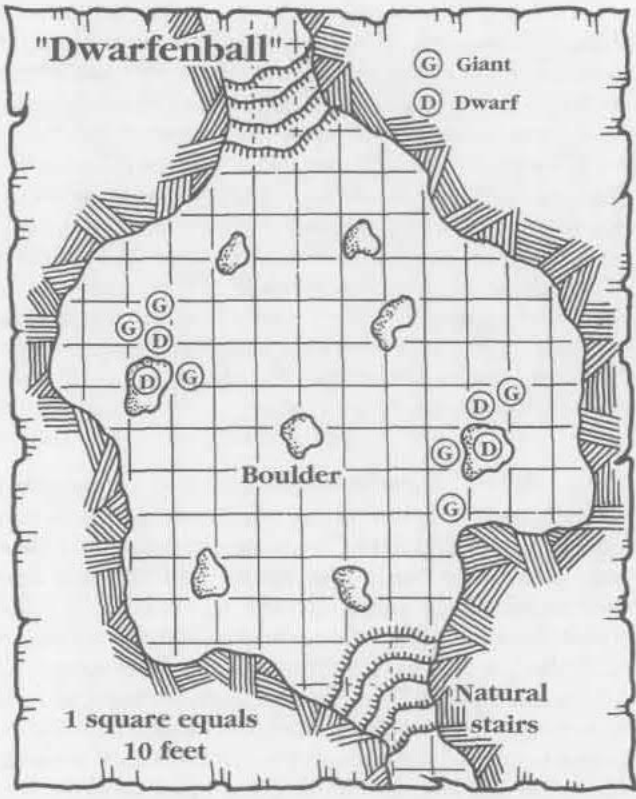
You follow the pass farther into the mountains, climbing ever upwards. The minor rockslides that you observed earlier are becoming more frequent now, and you are becoming concerned about the possibility of a full-scale avalanche. To make matters worse, the pass begins to twist and turn, making real progress very slow. After several days of this, you are ready for an encounter just to break the monotony. Then something does happen. A loud, baritone shout rings through the pass.

The players have just been warned about possible avalanches: count silently to five to give them a chance to react. After the slow count, read the following:

As the last echo of the shout fades, it is replaced by a deeper rumbling. The rumbling grows to a crashing.

Count to five silently again, then read the following:

The sound has triggered an avalanche.



If any player has **not** stated that his or her character is retreating or taking cover, that character is caught in the avalanche. Asking the DM questions like "Where did the yell come from?" or "Do I recognize the language?" indicate that the character in question is indulging curiosity at a time when he or she should be running for dear life and must unfortunately suffer the consequences. Getting caught in the avalanche inflicts 5d8 points of damage (no save) on each person in its path. Furthermore, each victim must then save vs. petrification or be buried. If a character survives the damage but is buried beneath tons of snow, he or she loses one hit point per round until freed. At least 30 points of Strength must be applied for 1d4 rounds to free a character. If 30 Strength points are not available, treat the shortage as one extra round of time per point under 30.

Do not be afraid to kill characters here; the players were given ample warning.

"Dwarfenball"

After the avalanche has ended, tell any surviving character who speaks any form of giantish that he or she recognizes the language of the shout as stone giant. He or she thinks the words were "A hit!" The PCs have heard an exclamation from a player in the game. After the survivors pick their way across the rubble left by the avalanche, they find a small dale just ahead.



The pass opens out into a bowl almost 90 yards across at its widest point. The depression is littered with all manner of loose rock, obviously leftovers from many avalanches. Two particularly large boulders stand at opposite ends of the area. Spread-eagle against each boulder lies a bound dwarf. A second bound dwarf lies huddled near the base of each boulder. Three young stone giants are gathered near each boulder. As you watch, one giant picks up a large rock and hurls it at the bound dwarf opposite him. Before the dwarf gets squashed, however, a giant near the dwarf's boulder reaches up and catches the rock. As soon as the giant catches the first rock, one of his companions hurls a second rock back at the opposing side's dwarf.

This rather odd game, popular among young giants, continues until only one dwarf is left alive, at which point it goes into "sudden death" overtime. The giants tie the remaining dwarf to one of the smaller boulders and begin throwing him back and forth. The giants have half their normal chance to catch the boulder without crushing the dwarf; the last side to catch the dwarf without killing him wins the extra point. The giants are keen on their game and will not stop except to return attacks from the PCs. Callous PCs can wait until the game is over to sneak past or can try to cross the playing field during the game (any hits by a stray missile will be followed with angry shouts of "Foul! Foul! Interference!" from the giants who threw it). Attempts to rescue the dwarves cause the outraged giants to attack the "bad sports," hurling rocks from all sides with deadly accuracy.

Immature stone giants (6): AC 0; MV 12; HD 12+1d2; 40 hp each; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 (stone clubs) or 1d6 (punch or kick); SA hurl boulder (2d8 damage, range 200 yards); SD catch boulders (90% chance); SZ L (16 feet tall); Int average (9); AL N; XP 6,000 each.

Mountain Dwarves (4): AC 10 (no armor); MV 0 (currently bound) or 6 (if untied); HD 1+1; 7 hp each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (currently weaponless, proficient in pick); SW currently bound, weaponless, and about to be crushed; SZ M (4½ feet tall); Int very (11); AL LG; XP 65 each.

The dwarves know where the Hermitage is and gladly direct their rescuers to it after first offering the hospitality of their mining tunnels for as long as the characters would like to stay.

The Hermitage

The Hermitage is not actually a place but a group of people who periodically shift from site to site within the

same general area. Currently, they are staying in a classic mountain meadow. The thirty-odd hermits spend their days meditating, communing with the powers that be, or working out the solution to some grave human or demi-human problem. Each lives apart in a small cave, grove, tree, or other natural abode, as suits his or her temperament. This plateau is cold, being high and exposed to the mountain winds, but the hermits pay little attention to such inconveniences, having no need for creature comforts or the artificial contrivances of civilization (*endure cold* and similar effects don't hurt either). Despite what the visitors might think, not everyone here is a cleric: wizards, paladins, and monks can also be found among their numbers. No vegetable gardens or livestock pens are to be seen, as they subsist entirely upon *created* food and drink.

The pass gradually widens out into a grassy, tree-lined mountain meadow, complete with babbling brook. The clear blue sky, soft grass, fresh air, and sense of nearing journey's end combine to give you a feeling of peace and tranquility. Ahead you see an old codger dressed in a simple sleeveless tunic. He seems to be waiting for somebody, judging by the way he's tapping his foot impatiently.

Zephram, a 22nd-level cleric, has been assigned to greet the characters when they arrive. He's rather put out by this, as it disturbs some serious metaphysical speculations he's been pondering over for the last decade or so, so he doesn't beat around the bush but comes straight to the point. A man who doesn't believe in taking foolish chances, he has a number of spells running at the time he encounters the supplicants, including *sanctuary*, *true seeing*, *detect lie*, *resist cold*, *resist fire*, *endure cold*, *prayer*, *bless*, and *protection from evil*. Zephram greets them with a brusque "Well, it's about time you got here. Took your time, didn't you?" If asked to point the way to the Hermitage on the Lake, he informs them that they've arrived (the lake is an underground one). His fellow hermits? They're "out and about, praying and suchlike, minding their own business. That's one of the good things about being a hermit." Can he help them with their little problem? Yes, but only if each sincerely atones for any ill deeds done while in wereform and agrees to undertake an appropriate *quest*.

If the characters attack Zephram at any point, they must first penetrate his *sanctuary*. If they succeed, he lets loose with his spells. If they fail, he berates them for assaulting a helpless old man and leaves. The PCs cannot thereafter find any of the hermits but will just wander around the mountains having random encounters with more giants, avalanches, and bad weather until they are finally overtaken by pursuing were-hunters from Vandric's group. By then their lycanthropy will have progressed to the point that anyone afflicted will no longer view it as a curse but as the way he or she wants to be.

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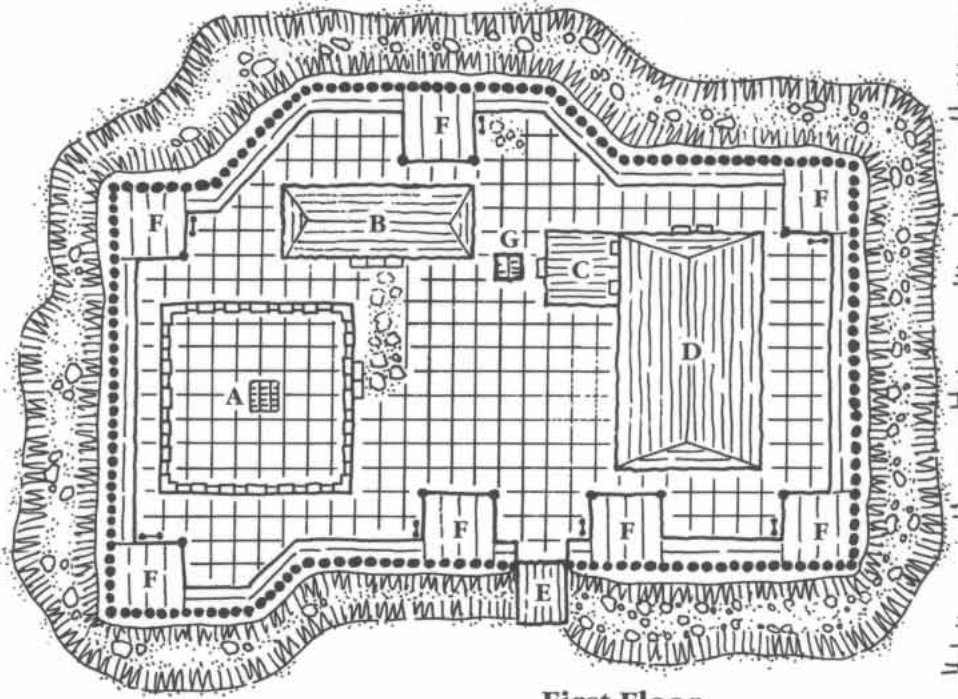
Brant Castle

Castle Grounds

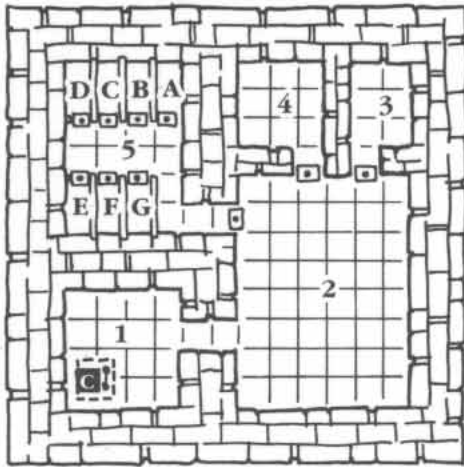
One square equals 10 feet

Key

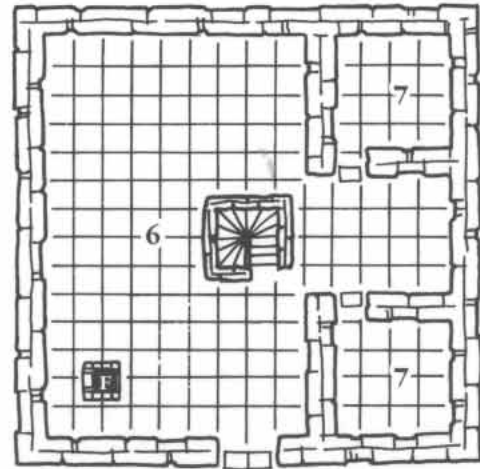
	Door
	Locked door
	Stairs
	Ladder
	Trap door in floor
	Trap door in ceiling
	Barred window
	Trap



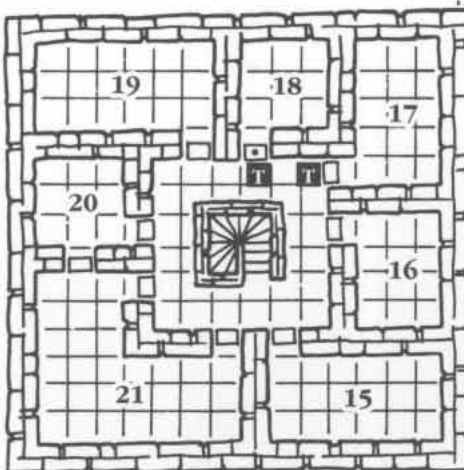
Dungeon



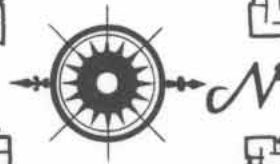
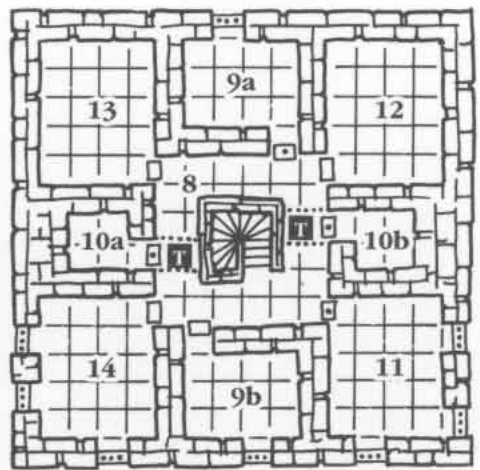
First Floor



Third Floor



Second Floor



One square equals 5 feet

Wilderness Map

■ Brant Castle

Spikey Mountains

● Hermit

● Anti-hermit

Gynosphinx

Androsphinx

● Bard

● Gypsy

▲ Pixie run

The Coldwater

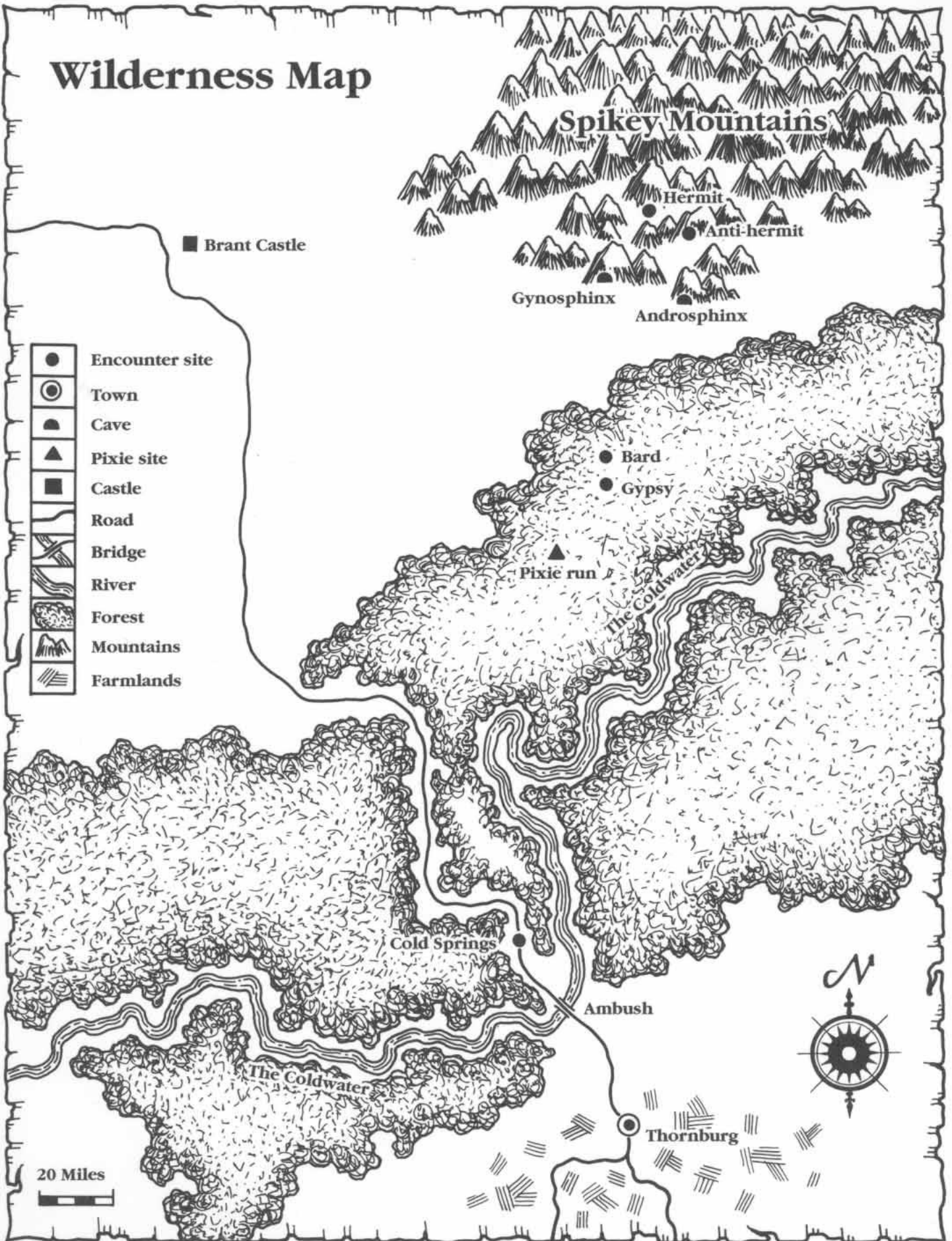
● Cold Springs

Ambush

○ Thornburg

- Encounter site
- Town
- ◐ Cave
- ▲ Pixie site
- Castle
- Road
- Bridge
- River
- Forest
- Mountains
- Farmlands

20 Miles



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