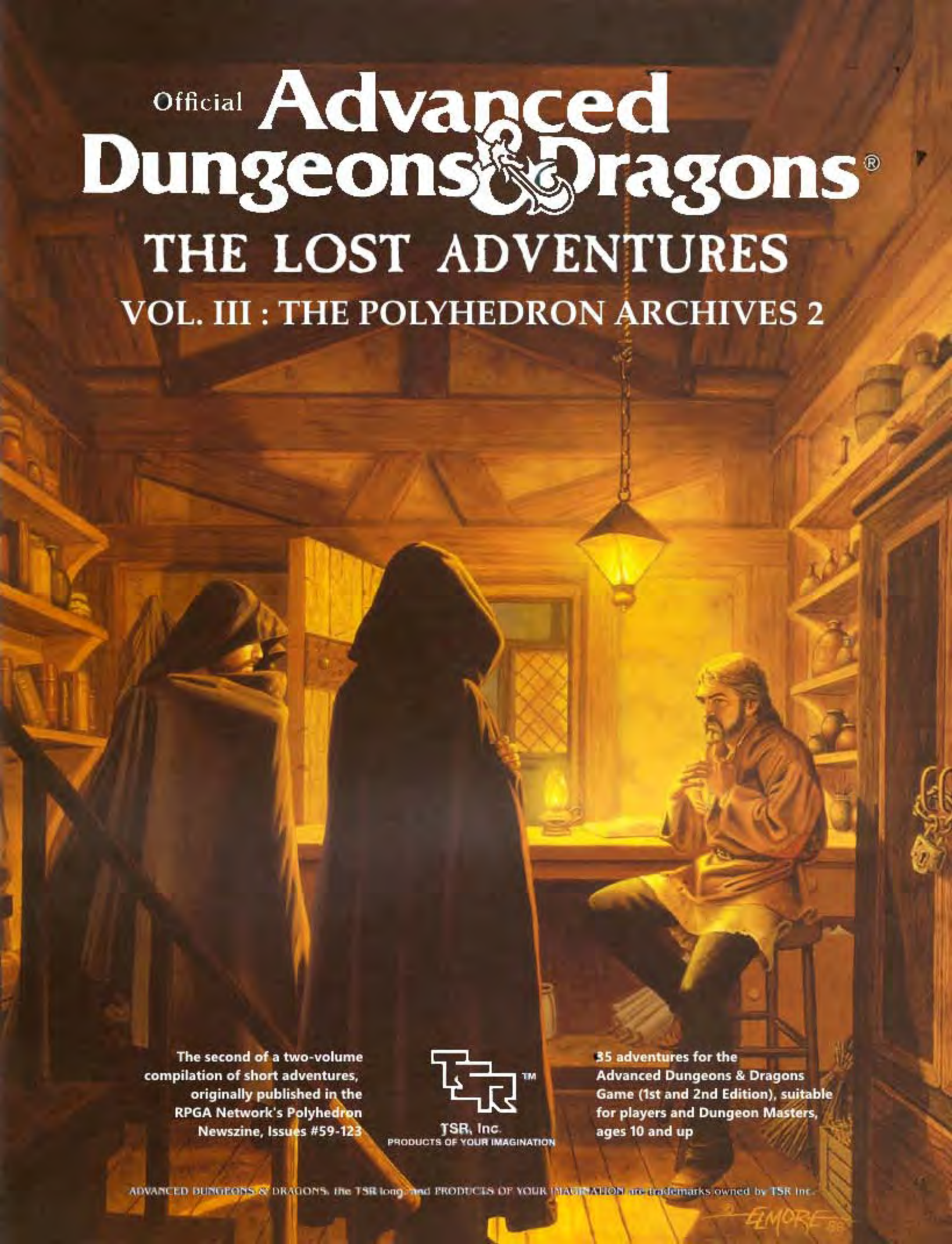
Official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®
THE LOST ADVENTURES
VOL. III : THE POLYHEDRON ARCHIVES 2
The second of a two-volume compilation of short adventures, originally published in the RPGA Network's Polyhedron Newszine, Issues #59-123
TSR, Inc.
PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION
35 adventures for the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Game (1st and 2nd Edition), suitable for players and Dungeon Masters, ages 10 and up
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ELMORE

It's hard for me to imagine, but the earliest issues of the *Polyhedron Newszine* didn't come with a free module.

The RPGA Network was founded in 1980 "to promote role-playing in all its forms and provide activity centers for its members to engage in this terrific hobby." It helped players keep in touch and find new groups (an especially useful feature before the Internet), ran tournaments, and generally advocated the spread of the hobby. It also – starting in 1981 – offered its own newsletter – the *Polyhedron Newszine* – which featured reviews, articles, playing tips, and – most memorably – a free adventure in every issue.

But it is the modules that I remember most fondly, and what I most associate with the publication; a *Polyhedron* without an adventure seems as incomplete as peanut butter without jelly or a beholder with only nine eyes. The other articles were well written and often useful, but receiving a "free" adventure every other month was the reason I remained a member of the RPGA, even though I made almost no use of its other benefits.

Not surprisingly – as both the RPGA Network and *Polyhedron* were owned by TSR, Inc. - the bulk of these adventures were written for TSR's own game-systems, the most prominent of which was the immense Advanced Dungeons and Dragons game. But there was also a smattering of adventures for other systems – ranging from TSR's own Boot Hill, Top Secret and Marvel Super Heroes games – to games from competing companies, including adventures for TORG, Paranoia, and Star Wars d6. These mini-modules were great introductions to the alternatives available at the time.

The adventures themselves ranged from short encounters to full-blown campaigns that spanned multiple issues. Many of the earliest adventures were reprints of tournament games used in RPGA-hosted conventions. A few were even given that ultimate honor of being re-published as stand-alone modules and sold in bookstores alongside other TSR offerings like S1 Tomb of Horrors. While a few were written in-house, the majority were submitted by the readers, and their settings ranged from generic fantasy campaigns, to the Forgotten Realms, Greyhawk, Al Qadim, Ravenloft and even the Spelljammer setting.

By the mid-80s, however, *Polyhedron's* unique offerings were eclipsed by its sister publication, *Dungeon Magazine*, which was offered two to four new adventures in each issue. By the early '90s, it was becoming more common for issues **not** to include a new module and ultimately, *Polyhedron* itself was rolled into *Dungeon Magazine*. It was an unfortunate loss since, while *Dungeon* may have bested in quantity and equaled it in quality, it never quite matched the *Polyhedron* adventures in variety.

Lost Adventures Volume III is the second of two in the Polyhedron Archives and includes all the D&D and AD&D adventures first printed in *Polyhedron* issues #59 through issue #123. Earlier adventures were compiled in Volume II, and Volume IV will round out the set with the adventures for systems other than Dungeons and Dragons.

So enjoy this first round of eclectic and imaginative quests from the lost annals of *Polyhedron*.

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A Friend In Need

An AD&D® Game Adventure for Six Unusual Characters

Illustration by Laura Kagawa

by Jim Wade and Michael Selinker

Adventure Background

Romance is alive (but not altogether well) in the Land of Avalon. Good Prince Gallant has declared the most beautiful woman in the land will become his bride.

Alas, the handsome prince knew that he could not possibly view all of the women to decide who was the fairest. His despair turned to joy, however, when the sorceress Esmerelda invited him to her tower to scan the princedom's lovelies with her magical mirror. He and his retinue cut through the Peaceful Forest on their way to her tower, and stopped to rest by a sparkling pond. Night would soon fall, and a mighty storm was brewing, so the prince decided to take a swim before the rain came. Unbeknownst to him, the dryad Mahogany had also come to the pond's edge to bathe. When the handsome prince swam to Mahogany's bank, the two were captivated by each other, staring at each other longingly, the prince's charms enchanting Mahogany almost as much as hers attracted him. Neither noticed the coming of the storm. When the first thundercrack resounded, Mahogany told her smitten prince that they must hurry back to her tree. But at that moment, the loudest thunderclap was heard, and Mahogany collapsed in Gallant's arms.

What Gallant did not know was that Mahogany's tree, also named Mahogany, had been struck by lightning. The lightning severed a major branch on the tree, and through their symbiosis, felled the dryad. Not knowing the dryad was anything but a woman with red hair (the season being autumn), the prince quickly brought Mahogany back to his camp. He noted the vicious burn on her shoulder, but did not understand its source, as he had not seen lightning strike his sweetheart. The prince and his retainers decided to hie to the sorceress at once, for she could certainly cure the fallen beauty. As they went further from the dryad's tree, however, the dryad became sicker and sicker, falling into unconsciousness.

When the retinue reached Esmerelda's tower, the prince threw himself on the mercy of the sorceress. He would pay any riches, he swore, to have the lithesome lass restored to health.

Esmerelda agreed, but she had a much more sinister plot in mind, for she, too, wished to become his bride. Though beautiful herself, Esmerelda could not tear his eyes from the stricken dryad. She resolved to capture the prince's heart by concocting a *philter of love*, an elixir for which she required the hair of a dryad. With the prince's permission, she snipped a lock of Mahogany's hair, promising a potion that would heal all her ills. While the prince waited in sorrow by the dying dryad's bed, the evil sorceress began to brew a draught that would steal his heart forever.

Mahogany's only hope lies with a group of her friends who have come to visit her for a fine morning picnic. Though anything but adventurers, this group of woodland creatures must return Mahogany to her tree by shortly after sundown or she will die. Mahogany's friends are Cassius, the centaur; Thistledown, the sprite; Glimmerwing, the sylph (and Mahogany's half-sister); Dylandwyriel, the wood elf; Cygnythia, the swanmay; and Benthroewyn, the werebear.

Mahogany and Mahogany

Mahogany is both a dryad and a massive oak tree. They share a symbiotic relationship. Mahogany is 200 years old, as evidenced by the size of the tree. The dryad is an extension of the oak tree's soul, and as such cannot survive if the tree dies or she is taken too far away from the tree itself. The dryad only can go 360 yards from the tree without feeling ill effects. The 360 yard radius is called the terel. Within five rounds of leaving the terel, the dryad rapidly suffers exhaustion, starvation, and depression. She will die in 6-36 hours if nothing is done.

If the tree is destroyed, the dryad will die, which is why Esmerelda has sent her gargoyle minions to find the tree and destroy it.

For more information see *The Ecology of the Dryad,* an article by Shaun Wilson that appeared in DRAGON® Magazine issue #87, July 1984.

Mahogany, the dryad: Int Exceptional; AL N; AC 9; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA spells; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 12; XP 1,400.

Spell-like powers as 9th level priest at will: (Level One) *detect snares and pits, entangle, locate animals,* (Level Two) *charm person or mammal* x3, *locate plants, trip,* (Level Four) *plant door, speak with plants,* (Level Five) *commune with nature, pass plant*

The Peaceful Forest

The Peaceful Forest is a massive woods in the land of Avalon, the princedom of Good Prince Gallant. The inhabitants include several clans of elves (wood, high, and valley), a tribe of sprites, and several camps of centaurs. Some of the more exotic residents, such as sylphs, dryads, and lycanthropes, tend to live alone. There are a number of monsters in the forest, but none of major power (such as dragons, giants, thessalhydrae, and so forth). There are no organized bands of humanoids in the forest.

The forest is temperate; in the autumn, the temperature is a comfortable 70 degrees. There are hundreds of encounters possible in every mile, as birds, squirrels, and plants are everywhere.

There are only two permanent buildings in the mapped section of the forest. One is Esmerelda's tower, which is location 9. The other is Benthroewyn's shack, where the PCs started this morning. There is nothing there that would help the PCs, as Ben lives rather simply. He brought his cooking pot and his picnic basket, which are the most interesting things he owns.

The PCs begin near Mahogany, the tree (1). From there, they should hear the fighting (2) between some centaurs and Esmerelda's gargoyles, who have come to level the tree. After perhaps going to the centaurs' cave (3), the PCs may go to Prince Gallant's abandoned camp (4), where the brownies Fudge and Nut frolic. From there, they should trail the prince's horsemen to Esmerelda's tower. On the way they will have an encounter with some needlemen (5), and then with Ollie Ogre (6), who is looking for his brother Eugene. Eugene will meet the PCs in the forest (7). The PCs should follow the prince to the edge of the forest, and then north along the treeline to the tower (8). There, they should meet the prince's retinue, and go inside the tower (9) to face Esmerelda.

Tracking Mahogany is difficult, since time and rain have washed away most signs of her trail to the pond. Cygnythia's chance to track the prince's party is 10.

Players' Introduction

Once upon a time, in a magical land called Avalon, there were seven friends who lived in the Peaceful Forest in the land ruled by Good Prince Gallant. There was Cassius, a noble centaur; Dylandwyriel, the wood elf, who could play beautiful songs all day long; Cygnythia, a stunning woman whose magical collar of swan feathers allowed her to turn into a graceful swan; Benthroewyn, a gentle man who could cast spells of healing and could also turn into a giant bear; and Glimmerwing, a pretty sylph whose butterfly wings carried her to the treetops. And there also was Thistledown, a sprite who could disappear and fly just like Glimmerwing. Last of all, there was Mahogany, the beautiful dryad who lived in a tree that was also named Mahogany.

The friends were happy, and though they lived some distance from one another, they frequently got together for picnics and frolicking. One morning in early autumn, all the friends, except Mahogany, were gathered at Benthroewyn's spartan hut. The friends had to gather here because they knew Mahogany could not travel far from her beloved tree, for if she wandered more than a thousand feet from it, she would get sick and die with the setting of the sun.

As evening neared, a fierce rainstorm struck the area, and thunder shook the house. The friends were worried that the next day would be gloomy. But in the morning, the clouds had disappeared, the sun shone brightly, and fresh dew was on the leaves. Smiling, the friends packed a big picnic basket and set off for Mahogany's tree. After a brisk walk through the woods, the friends neared Mahogany's tree. And there they found the damaged oak.

1. The Wounded Oak

The PCs begin the round coming through the trees that surround the big oak. Morning dew is still on the ground, but the birds and animals in the area are skittish. The PCs get a feeling that all is not right, a feeling emanating from the tree.

The PCs see a sad sight. The big oak is still there, resplendent in its red and

brown leaves. But a large section of the top leaves and a major branch are lying among the undergrowth. Careful examination of the huge branch shows that it was cleaved off, and is seared at the break. The tree shows similar signs. Birds, animals, and other plants in the area know that the tree was struck by lightning, and that a big crash was heard when the branch hit the ground. Nothing further can be determined unless the tree is questioned, via a *speak with plants* spell. There are, of course, no other druids or dryads in the area, so the only such spell the PCs have is on Benthroewyn's scroll.

If *speak with plants* is cast, the cleric will hear the tree saying "Mahogany" and "Ouch" in long syllables. Mahogany will answer questions, but clearly is in great pain. When conversing, Mahogany speaks very slowly, roughly one syllable every five seconds. It wants to know where its dryad is, for she is needed to tend its wounds. The oak can explain all of the information in the "Mahogany and Mahogany" section, though even a brief summary will take several hours. The dryad is not dead or exorcised. Most importantly, the tree will say that if Mahogany has left the terel and does not return by "no-more-sun," the dryad will die, leaving the tree soulless. The tree does not have the same perception of time as the PCs, so it only knows that Mahogany left during "water," and that "pain" happened during "water" as well. When "sun" came, she was not in the tree. She has not responded to the tree's calls. The PCs cannot help the tree. Cure spells will be useless, as the cleric should know. The tree will encourage the PCs to look for Mahogany, the dryad.

Mahogany's treasure cache is buried in the tree's roots. It contains a thick leather stringbag with 250 gp and 10 gems worth an average of 50 gp each. The tree knows where the bag is, but will not take kindly to the PCs digging it up.

About 20 minutes after the PCs begin their search, they hear a crashing sound. See Encounter 2.

Mahogany (in its present state): Int Exceptional; AL N; AC 2; MV 0; HD 20; hp 120 (60); THAC0 Nil; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SZ H (70') XP Nil.

2. The Winged Woodsmen

The thrashing comes from a fight between three centaurs and four gargoyles. The centaurs include Cassia and her children, Claudius and Cassandra. They were out gathering berries for Cassia's sick mate, Chiron. The gargoyles—Grewsum, Ugli, Grotesk, and Meen—are all carrying hatchets. They have been sent by Esmerelda to find and chop down the dryad's tree. They are looking for a big oak tree near a pond, and have already taken their axes to a couple of likely candidates. They have not finished chopping any down, however, because they were distracted by the arrival of the centaurs.

The PCs are drawn into this encounter when Claudius crashes through the bushes, hurtling headlong into the party. The boy cries, "Help! They're going to kill my mother and sister!" Claudius is bleeding from a wound to his shoulder. Right on his tail is a gray-skinned, muscular creature with sharp claws, teeth, and a horn on its head, wielding a hatchet. Its wings get tangled in some branches as it emerges from the trees. Seeing the PCs, the gargoyle shouts, "You tell Grewsum where be tree!" and rushes to attack.

One of Grewsum's claw attacks is replaced by a hatchet swipe. He is certain that the PCs cannot hurt him, but if they do, he may try to flee toward the other gargoyles. He cannot really fly in the forest because of all the branches.

If rescued, Claudius will be thankful but will resist attempts at healing until his mother and sister are saved. The PCs may intervene any way they desire.

If the PCs defeat or drive away the gargoyles, the centaurs will be pleased. The mother centaur is concerned about her children, and will demand that they be healed before her. Unless she is severely wounded, she will not be concerned about her own injuries. She is more worried about her husband and the spilled bowl of berries she was bringing to him. Chiron is lying in their cave, suffering from some disease she does not understand. The cave is at point 3, about 15 minutes away. If she knows the PCs have a healer, she will entreat him to help Chiron. If the PCs refuse to help, let them continue on their way.

Cassia: Int Average; AL CG; AC 5; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SA SZ L; ML 13; XP 175.

Claudius: Int Average; AL CG; AC 5; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 14 (9); THAC0 18; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SA SZ L; ML 12; XP 120.

Cassandra: Int Average; AL CG; AC 5; MV 18; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SA SZ L; ML 12; XP 120.

Grewsum, Ugli, Grotesk, and Meen: Int Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9, Fl 15 (C); HD 4+4; hp 24 each; THAC0 17; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3/1-4/1-6/1-4 (one claw attack replaced with axe attack); SD +1 or better weapon or 4+1 or more hit dice to hit; SZ M; ML 11; XP 650 each.

3. The Centaur Cave

If the PCs follow Cassia and her children back to her cave, they see a very muscular centaur shivering beneath a blanket on a bed of leaves. He is afflicted with a form of horsepox, which, fortunately for his family, is not contagious. It makes him lethargic and unable to move very far. He is unable to talk. Benthroewyn could use his *cure disease* ability on Chiron, but it will take 1d4 days to have full effect. However, Chiron will feel slightly revitalized at once if it is cast, and he will be able to walk and talk.

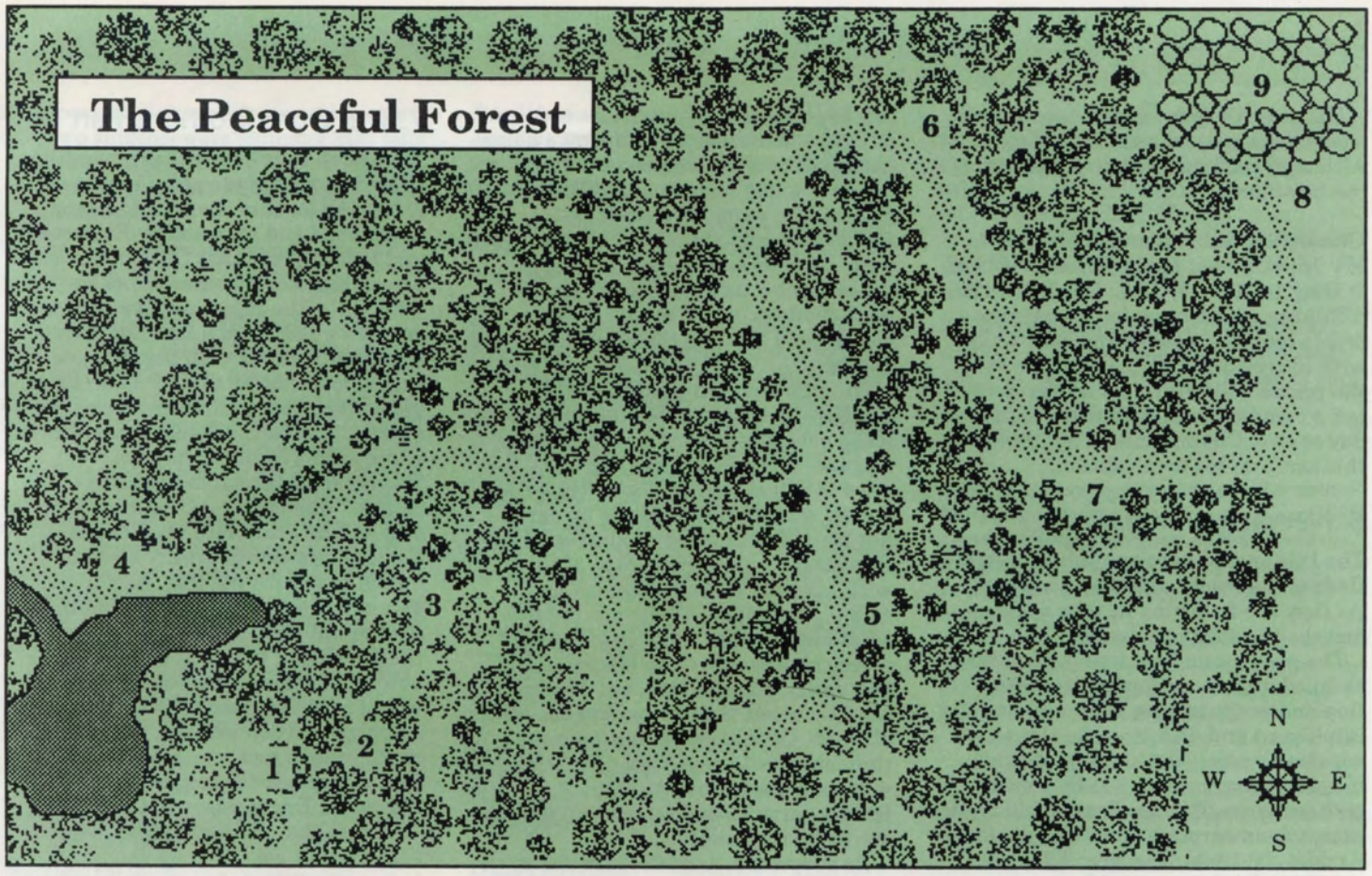
In return, the centaurs reveal they noticed the remains of a deserted human encampment. Cassia will offer to guard the dryad's tree while the PCs are gone.

Chiron: Int Average; AL CG; AC 5; MV 18; HD 4; hp 28 (18); THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-8 (morning star); SA SZ L; ML 13; XP 175.

4. The Prince's Camp

If the PCs journey to the camp the centaurs mentioned, they can find it easily; it is next to the large pond where the prince and Mahogany met. The centaurs' tracks are evident here, but the rain last night destroyed the prince's trail to the campsite. However, the prince's trail from the campsite to Esmerelda's tower is easier to discern.

From a distance, the prince's camp seems deserted—just like the centaurs said. It is a collection of eight tents, one much larger than the rest. The tents contain two or three cots each, except the prince's; it contains a temporary bed with a heavy blanket. It also contains a mirror, a chest of clothing, and a spare royal robe. A number of cots have been turned over, one of the tents has collapsed, and equipment is scattered all about. Currently, the camp has three inhabitants: Fudge and Nut, the brownies, and a warhorse. Fortunately, the



PCs arrive just as the brownies figure out a whizbang way to use this leftover equipment.

As the PCs approach, they hear clanking and a horse's whinny. Those flying overhead see a knight in full plate armor and royal robes on his horse, ready to ride out. The knight is kicking the horse into ungainly movement. Of course, the suit of armor contains only Fudge and Nut, with Fudge controlling the suit's arms and Nut moving the legs. If Fudge and Nut see or hear someone to play with, they move the horse toward them and stand defiantly to let the majesty of the royal robes, armor, and horse sink in. Fudge uses his *ventriloquism* to declare in a low voice, "Oho, evil varlets! Thy base magics do not impress one with my fantastical knightly virtues! Behold and tremble!"

After this impressive outburst, Nut kicks a bootspur into the horse's side, causing it to whinny and charge forward. The knight appears to wobble as Fudge spins the horseman's mace in the suit's right gauntlet. As the horse gets closer, Fudge's twirling of the mace causes it and the gauntlet to fly off. Suddenly off balance, Fudge crashes into the left side of the breastplate, knocking the helmet and torso armor off the horse. The horse, still attached to the armor leggings, gallops away. The helmet and torso separate, with "oofs" and "oohs" coming from the breastplate. Momentarily, two brownies stagger out, clutching their heads from dizziness. A blow to the mounted armor results in the same spectacle, and will not damage the brownies.

After getting their bearings, the brownies introduce themselves: "I'm Fudge!" "I'm Nut!" "We're heroes!" and so forth. Fudge and Nut are boyfriend and girlfriend, and are brave heroes—at least by their own reckoning. They mean no harm, as they are just out to have a little fun. They talk constantly, overlapping their speech and finishing each other's sentences.

They are out to see the world, and came here by secretly hitching a ride with this prince's party. They woke up when the storm began to rage, and saw the prince carry in a "bee-you-ti-ful woman." If pressed about what happened, they say the prince brought the woman into camp and everybody stood around her and shook their heads back and forth. (They will imitate.) The men decided to take her to the sorceress, whoever that is. Then everybody jumped on all the horses but one and rode away, leaving Fudge and Nut alone in the camp. They have found lots of neat things to play with, but must soon get about with their dragon slaying.

The brownies can provide information about the prince, his retinue, the woman, and their many travels. They are, however, prone to much exaggeration. If the PCs talk the brownies into coming along, they will find that the two are more trouble than they are worth.

The tracks of the prince's horsemen will be easy to find. Cygnythia can track the group, though she must check every hour (modified tracking score, 10) to see if she loses the trail.

Fudge and Nut: Int High; AL LG; AC 3; MV 12; HD ½; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA spells; SD Never surprised, invisible in natural surroundings; SZ S 1½'; ML 11; XP 175 each.

Fudge and Nut save as 9th level clerics; use natural cover to become invisible; speak Brownie, Common, Elvish, Halfling, Pixie, and Sprite; and cast spells as a 9th level magic-user. Each has the following spells:

Ventriloquism, dancing lights, protection from evil, continual light, mirror image (3 images), *confusion,* and *dimension door.*

The prince's spare mount is a white heavy warhorse named Champion. Although good-natured, it is not fond of the brownies.

Champion: Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/1-3; SZ L; ML 7; XP 120.

Talking with Champion reveals the prince took the woman and rode away with his retinue. Champion knows that the prince will return, as he has never left a camp untended for more than a day or two. Champion will not leave this camp on his own volition.

5. Needleman Ambush

The PCs should have minimal trouble finding the tracks of the prince's party. As they are following it, they will be attacked by four needlemen.

The needlemen look like light green-skinned humans suffering from starvation and acupuncture. They are actually intelligent and disagreeable plants, which will smell the elvish and sylvan blood flowing through the PCs' veins—it bothers them. The needlemen will try to attack from surprise and from all sides. Amidst the trees, they are 75% undetectable and the party suffers a -7 to its surprise chance. This decreases to -4 if Cygnythia is leading the party in human form, and -1 if she is in swan form.

The needlemen fire 1-6 needles each round. Each needle can fly up to 20' and causes 1-2 points of damage. Note that Thistledown is immune to the needles, but not to squeezing and punching attacks (1-4 points of damage). Anyone attacking the needlemen hand-to-hand will also take this damage. Though they are immune to spells which only affect mammals, such as *charm person*, the needlemen take triple damage from damage-causing spells. They only can be communicated with through a *speak with plants* spell.

The needlemen have no treasure, as they are a nomadic band.

Needlemen: Int Low; AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 3+4; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 1-6; Dmg 3-12 or 1-2; SA fire needles 20', 75% undetectable in the forest, -5 to opponents surprise rolls if undetected; SZ M; ML 12; XP 120 each.

6. The Ogre Brothers, Part I

Ollie Ogre is looking for his older brother Eugene. He and Eugene always pal around together, but lately Eugene has been hanging out with some dame. Ollie doesn't understand this; it's a fine kettle of chickens when a gal comes between a guy and his buddy, Ollie thinks. The dame, of course, is Esmerelda, and she came between them with a *charm monster* spell. Ollie doesn't know this; he just misses the good old days, when he and Eugene would bash through the forest like ogres should.

The PCs hear Ollie calling to his brother. "Yooooooo-gene!" he yells, as he looks behind trees and under rocks for Eugene. If the PCs follow the calls, they see a 9' tall muscular humanoid with yellow skin. He is definitely an ogre, but he will not appear menacing. If the PCs attack him, he will rush at them with his club. If they approach him calmly, however, he demands to know what happened to Eugene. He speaks in a very gruff voice. Ollie is very stupid and easily manipulated, and he can tell the PCs about the woman Eugene went off with. Ollie is sexist, but no more than one would expect an ogre to be. He will go out of his way to be polite to female party members, but will ignore anything they say.

He cooperates with the PCs if they agree to help him locate Eugene. He is having trouble finding the tower where he last saw Eugene. Ollie does not know a *hallucinatory terrain* has been cast over the area, nor would he understand it even if it were explained to him a few dozen times. If the PCs go with him, he demands to be the leader. He will have lots to talk about along the way, especially about things he and Eugene have bashed. Every now and then a tear will well in his eye for his long lost brother. As ogres go, Ollie is very nice, which means he probably won't try to eat any of the PCs.

The PCs, of course, are free to let Ollie go off on his own. In this event, Eugene will find the PCs shortly after Ollie leaves. See the next encounter.

Ollie Ogre carries a stone club; a belt pouch filled with 35 gold pieces is on his waist. Ollie's command of Common is fair, but he is more fluent in Ogrish, Troll, Orcish, and Stone Giant, the last of which Benthroewyn speaks.

Ollie: Int Low; AL CN(E); AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 27; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8+2 (strength bonus); SZ L; ML 12; XP 175.

7. The Ogre Brothers, Part II

Eugene Ogre is looking for his brother Ollie, but not for the same reason Ollie is looking for him. Eugene has been *summoned* and *charmed* by Esmerelda, and is trying to enlist Ollie in the sorceress' service. Whether or not they are with Ollie, the PCs hear "Awwww-lee! Awwwww-lee!" and a familiar tromping. If Ollie is not with the PCs and they allow Eugene to find them, Eugene gives them the same third degree. However, he will be much less polite. On the slightest provocation, he says, "Esmerelda warned me about you tree things!" and attacks. If calmed, Eugene still will be gruff with the PCs, as Esmerelda's charm is very strong.

If Ollie is with the PCs, he will run through the trees to meet his brother, hooting all the way. Eugene will return the hoots, and they will embrace each other. They perform an ogrish chant which involves some intricate hand slapping and sounds like: "Ooog a rocka, ooog a rocka, ook bokka booga rocka!" repeated three times. However, afterward Eugene says in Common, "Enough that kid stuff, Ollie, we gots real work ta do!" Eugene demands to know why Ollie is hanging around with the "evil tree thingies." Eugene will not forgo his new loyalty to Esmerelda, despite Ollie's complaints about "dat dame you ben hangin round wit." If Eugene fights the PCs, Ollie will, too. Eugene wields a huge battle axe.

Of course, Eugene has been to Esmerelda's tower and knows that it has been covered by an illusion of a forest, which he has been told not to touch. He has seen the humans and their horses gathered around the tower, but does not know why they are there. Eugene is looking for Ollie without Esmerelda's knowledge.

Eugene: Int Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 33; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12+2 (strength bonus); SZ L; ML 12; XP 175.

8. The False Forest

Esmerelda has cast a *hallucinatory terrain* spell over the area around her tower, making the land appear as continuous forest. The *terrain* affects a 110' square area, but Esmerelda has sculpted the effect so that a 70' square clearing in the center. To find the edge of the *terrain*, Cygnythia must track the horseshoe prints, where they abruptly

disappear. If Cygnythia makes a successful tracking check, she can tell that the abrupt ending has no *physical* cause. If anyone touches the *terrain,* it disappears, alerting everyone within. The PCs only can avoid dispelling the effect by going above the 70′ high tree line and coming down the hole in the center, as the gargoyles will have done if they survived their tree-cutting expedition.

Inside the *hallucinatory terrain* clearing are the prince's sixteen soldiers and seventeen horses. All of the soldiers have been ordered by the prince to stay put and be ever vigilant against those who would steal his princess away. It is hard for them to be vigilant, though, as all of them have colds from riding and sleeping in the rain all night. Despite this grumbling, they are unswervingly loyal to Prince Gallant, and will defend him with their lives.

If the forest suddenly disappears, they will assume they are under attack and take up arms. They will be very suspicious of anyone who comes to the tower—and especially suspicious of the PCs because of their appearance.

Two sergeants direct the troops to stand between the party and the tower. They will tell the PCs to go away, then fire a volley of arrows if they do not. They will not chase the party into the real woods. If the sergeants are neutralized, the regulars will become disorganized. They can be dealt with in many ways, the most obvious being *charm* and *sleep* magic. The PCs also may try to bluff their way past the soldiers, but they will have to be very convincing to fool the skeptical sergeants.

If the PCs attack the soldiers, one will try to rush inside to warn the prince. However, Good Prince Gallant is magically asleep inside the tower.

The soldiers are at the locations marked "M" on the detail map, and the sergeants are located at the positions marked "S." Each is dressed in chain mail and carries a long sword, composite short bow, quiver of arrows, shield, and dagger. Their mounts are medium war horses, and are at locations marked "H" on the map. The prince's mount is a white, heavy war horse named Hero, at location PH.

Sergeants (2): Int Very; AL N(G); AC 4; MV 9; HD F1; hp 8 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg By weapon; SZ M; ML 13; XP 65 each.

Soldiers (14): Int Average; AL N(G); AC 4; MV 9; HD 1-1; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg By weapon; SZ M; ML 10; XP 35 each.

Horses (16): Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-3; SZ L; ML 7; XP 65 each.

Hero: Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 26; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/1-3; SZ L; ML 7; XP 120.

If the PCs fly above the *hallucinatory terrain,* Edgar, Esmerelda's raven familiar, will see them. Edgar is a vicious bird, contemptuous of most beings. He cackles once, then goes in his entrance in the tower roof and warns Esmerelda.

Edgar: Int Very; AL N(E); AC 7; MV 1, Fl 36 (B); HD ½; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA 10% chance to poke out an eye on any hit; SZ S (2′ wingspan); ML 9; XP 35.

Esmerelda

Esmerelda lives in her tower with a few magical beasts, including the gargoyles met earlier. If the PCs wish to thwart her, they must fight her here. Esmerelda knows the PCs are coming, as she has been warned by the gargoyles (especially if they did not return), Eugene, the dispelling of the *hallucinatory terrain,* the prince's men, Edgar, or all of them. Depending on how early she received a warning, she may have used her *magical mirror* to watch the PCs' progress and assess their strength.

Esmerelda: S 8; I 17; W 14; D 16; C 15; CH 15; AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; HD W11; hp 39; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg By weapon; SZ M; ML 15; XP 5,000.

Spells carried: (Level One) *magic missile, shocking grasp, unseen servant,* (Level Two) *darkness 15′ radius, web, wizard lock* x2, (Level Three) *clairaudience, dispel magic, phantasmal force, protection from normal missiles,* (Level Five) *animal growth, passwall*

Esmerelda is a beautiful elven woman who dresses in black. She does not appear elven, as her small pointed ears are covered by long white hair. She carries a packet of *dust of appearance,* an *amulet of proof against detection and location,* a *ring of feather falling,* a *ring of spell storing,* (see the paragraph on Esmerelda's tactics for the spells contained within), a black *cloak of protection +3,* and a silver dagger. She has other items in the tower, including various potions and a *broom of flying* in the roof vestibule. Her high elven abilities give her a 90% resistance to sleep and charm, 60′ infravision and normal elven chances to move silently and find secret doors. She speaks Common, Elvish, Gnoll, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Hobgoblin, Ogrish, and Orcish.

If attacked in the tower, her tactics will depend on the PCs' method of entrance. To Esmerelda, the PCs are only an annoyance. Her main goal is to gain the prince's love through the potion she has not yet finished brewing. Accordingly, she will do nothing to jeopardize his opinion of her as a kindly witch. When the PCs near the tower, Esmerelda will first cast her *unseen servant* and have it draw the shutters and lock all the windows. Next, she will give the prince a magical, poisoned apple to cast him into a deep *sleep.*

If the PCs ask for an audience, she meets them in the entrance, says the prince is occupied, and tells them to leave at once. She slams the door, *wizard locks* it, and prepares her defenses as detailed below.

If the PCs try to attack the tower from the ground, Esmerelda gives the *unseen servant* her packet of *dust of appearance* and has it hover over the doorway. She casts *protection from normal missiles* on herself, followed by *clairaudience,* to monitor the PCs' actions. If the PCs break down the door and enter, the servant will sprinkle the *dust* over them, revealing any invisible characters for 2-20 turns. Esmerelda next casts *web* over the PCs and opens the trap door to the basement, releasing three huge spiders. The spiders cannot move into the magical *web.* However, they can walk along the outside of the *web* and will attack the PCs as they emerge from it. Esmerelda will not wait around to watch the combat, preferring to set up her next trap.

If the PCs enter through the roof, or Esmerelda escapes up the stairs, she will open the door to her catbox chamber. Inside the small chamber are five housecats, all black. She casts *animal growth* on them and directs them to attack the PCs. In further rounds, she casts and maintains a *phantasmal force* of 10 more semi-giant cats, so PCs will have only a 33% chance of hitting one of the real cats.

The PCs have other methods of entrance, including using the sylph's *Nolzur's marvelous pigments* to create a door or window. They also can combine

a number of tactics, and the Dungeon Master must adapt Esmerelda's strategies to fit the situation. Her overall goal in fighting the PCs is to trap the flying creatures inside and the landbound creatures outside, neutralizing their own best abilities. If she still has a *wizard lock* spell left, she may use this to forcibly separate the party, having each group fight some of her pets. If the fight begins to go against her, she runs to the roof vestibule and mounts her *broom,* shouting, "I'll get you another time." She flies cackling into the wind, though the PCs may still fight her there. She has six *magic missiles* and a *shocking grasp* spell in reserve on a *ring of spell storing,* but will be loath to use them except as a last resort. She can use her *darkness* and *passwall* spells to escape, although she will only damage or abandon her tower in the direst of circumstances. If Esmerelda casts a spell while on her *broom,* she must make a Dexterity check. A failed roll means she has fallen from her *broom.* She can recall the *broom* to her, however. In addition, if a PC successfully attacks Esmerelda on her *broom,* she must make a Dexterity check or fall.

Esmerelda's Tower

The stone tower is 40' in diameter, with a 5' wide stairwell with landings ringing the inside rooms. There are windows on the landings, but none in the rooms. The windows all can be shuttered and locked from the inside. Every interior room above the cellar has several well-placed *continual light* spells for illumination.

There are several permanent *wizard locks* on various doors; PCs with magic resistance may be able to negate these.

The first floor has one entrance, the front door. The double doors are not normally *wizard locked,* but can be locked physically. The entire floor is taken up by the entrance hall, which contains three plush chairs, a coat rack, a small table with two wooden chairs and alternating black and white wall hangings. Stairs lead up around the tower, which Cassius can navigate with his *horseshoes of surefootedness.* The floor is partially carpeted by an ornate rug with designs of lightning flashes. The rug covers a *wizard locked* trap door to the cellar.

The cellar is one room with a ramp leading down from the trap door. It used to contain wooden crates, wine casks and furniture, but the three huge spiders which live here have pretty much eaten it all. They are Esmerelda's pets, and they cannot open the trap door. However, if it is opened, they will rush out and attack anyone except Esmerelda.

Huge spiders (3): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA poison, surprise on a 1-5; SZ M; ML 8; XP 270 each.

Victims who do not save vs. the poison attack take an additional 1-6 points of damage.

There are 8 gp, 7 sp, and 15 cp scattered throughout the cellar, which has a 6' ceiling.

The second floor contains a full stairwell circle and three rooms: the alchemistry, the catbox chamber, and the library. All of the doors to these rooms are *wizard locked.* The alchemistry is where Esmerelda brews all her poisons and potions. A massive black cauldron has something foul steaming in it, with animal remains floating therein. On a table containing numerous beakers and alembics are some of the ingredients for a *philter of love;* the most notable components of which are several locks of Mahogany's red hair laid neatly on a sheet of vellum. There are also jars containing eye of newt, wing of bat, and fillet of fenny snake. Books on alchemy are spread throughout, one of which is open to the recipe for a *philter of love.* It begins: "This bewitching elixir will encircle the heart of even the most handsome prince around your little finger. . . ." Also in the room can be found a *potion of extra-healing, philter of persuasiveness,* and a *poison apple.* The apple is bright red and if completely eaten has the effect of a *suggestion* spell. If only a bite is consumed, the eater instead falls into a deep sleep for 4-40 turns. The sleeper can be awakened by a kiss from a comely member of the opposite sex.

Behind the *wizard locked* door, the catbox chamber contains Esmerelda's five pet cats, as well as scratching posts and some torn up upholstery. A silver tray with milk bowls and scraps of meat is in the corner. The cats love their mistress Esmerelda, but they tend to hate anyone else. If Esmerelda casts an *animal growth* on them, it lasts 11 rounds.

Cats (5): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15 (18); HD 1-1 (1+2); hp 3 each (6 each); THAC0 20; #AT 2 (3); Dmg 1-2/1 (1-2/1-2/1-2); SZ S; ML 10; XP 15 each (35 each).

Statistics in parentheses refer to the cats after receiving the *animal growth* spell.

The library also is guarded by a *wizard lock* because it contains Esmerelda's spell books. Also in this room are various books on gathering spell components. On a long table is a *helm of comprehending languages and reading magic,* and a book on woodland creatures, entitled *Mean Things You Can Do To Forest Denizens.* It is open to a page on dissection of dryads, which contains most of the generic information in the "Mahogany and Mahogany" section. Many of the other books in the library have the same tone: *How To Be A Really Evil Wizard, Undead As Conversational Partners,* and *Poisons You Can Concoct.* This last contains the details on the *poison apple.* The spell books contain the following spells: (Level One) *charm person, comprehend languages, detect magic, find familiar, magic missile, read magic, shocking grasp, unseen servant,* (Level Two) *continual light, darkness 15' radius, knock, levitate, vocalize, web, wizard lock,* (Level Three) *clairaudience, dispel magic, feign death, phantasmal force, protection from normal missiles, suggestion, water breathing,* (Level Four) *charm monster, hallucinatory terrain, magic mirror, wizard eye,* (Level Five) *animal growth, monster summoning III, passwall.*

The third floor contains the stairs and landing, an archway which leads into an inner gallery, and the guest chamber. The inner gallery shows a long line of individuals in Esmerelda's elven family. Most of them look a lot more like elves than she does. Many of them look like sorcerers, and some look very evil indeed. The inner wall is covered in many-colored tapestries, behind one of which is the door to the guest chamber. Dylandwyriel has his normal chance to find the concealed door, but it is just as simple to yank the tapestries down. The guest chamber is described below, under the section titled Sleeping Beauties.

The fourth floor contains Esmerelda's room and the stairwell which leads to the roof vestibule.

The roof vestibule is an empty chamber at the end of the stairwell, with the only ornamentation being a broom in a wall sconce. This is actually a *broom of flying* with the command

phrase "my pretty." The trap door on the top has a small hatch for Edgar to enter through. Neither it nor the trap door is *wizard locked*, but the main trap door can be barred from the inside.

Esmerelda's room has a *wizard locked* door. Inside, the room is dominated by a huge black-canopied bed against the southern wall. Next to the northern wall is a rack of black dresses, robes, cloaks and suits, a chest of drawers with sundry clothing, three pairs of black boots, and a full-length silver mirror. On a table by the bed is a crooked witch's hat. Edgar's perch is near the mirror. The only item that is magical in the room is the mirror. This item is activated with the command phrase "mirror, mirror," and works as a *crystal ball with clairaudience.* When Esmerelda uses it, it has no viewing limits and scrying chances are +15%, and the chances of detecting the scrying are one third normal.

The roof is a normal battlemented tower, where the gargoyles live. If any gargoyles made it back from the earlier encounter, they will be frozen in crouched positions at their normal posts as labelled. A trap door leads down into the roof vestibule. The trap door has a smaller hatch which Edgar can open with his beak.

Sleeping Beauties

When the PCs find the entrance to the guest chamber on the third floor, they will have to deal with the *wizard lock* that Esmerelda placed there. Once the PCs enter the room, they see a huge white-canopied bed, surrounded by white curtains. Nothing can be seen or heard inside. If the PCs round the foot of the bed, they see the beautiful Mahogany sleeping in it, her skin and hair turning white. In a chair, an incredibly handsome man in princely purple robes and gleaming chain mail is fast asleep, his outstretched arm laying across Mahogany's stomach. In his hand is a bright red apple with a large bite taken out of it. The apple is one of Esmerelda's poison apples, but the magic has gone out of it. The prince can simply be awakened by a *slow poison* spell or a kiss from a beautiful woman (Glimmerwing and Cygnythia qualify), but Mahogany will not respond to anything until returned to her terel.

If awakened, the prince initially will be suspicious, but will plead with the PCs to help Mahogany. He will explain what happened amid his royal sobs, and will listen to whatever the PCs have to say. He will follow their instructions if they seem to know what they are talking about. If his men are up for riding, he will tell them to follow along to Mahogany's tree. He will not, under any circumstances, let her out of his sight. If the PCs kidnap her while he is asleep, he will hunt them down when he awakens.

If Mahogany is brought to her tree by sundown or shortly after, she will become much healthier. See The Happy Ending below.

Prince Gallant: S 17, I 11, W 12, D 15, C 16, CH 18; AL NG; AC 0; MV 12; HD F9; hp 90; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2; Dmg By weapon; SZ M (6′ 3″; ML 15; XP 3,000.

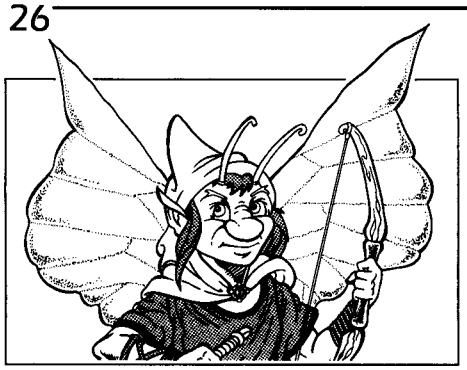
Prince Gallant is a stunningly handsome young man. His armor is *chain mail +4*. He wears a *long sword +3* and a belt pouch which contains 30 pp and a 500 gp gem. He also has a brooch of shielding (77 charges) around his neck, and a *potion of super heroism* in another belt pouch. He is an incredibly nice guy and his manner is very regal, as his charisma is so high.

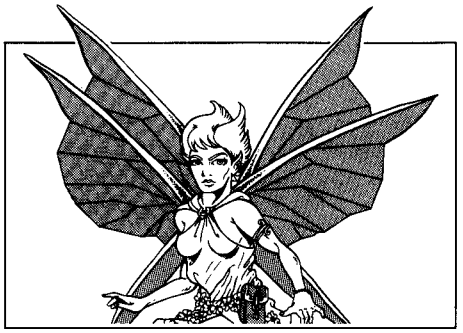
The Happy Ending

And so, the friends found the beautiful Mahogany in the evil sorceress Esmerelda's tower. They were surprised to find Good Prince Gallant asleep at her side, with Esmerelda's poisoned apple in his hand. But an impulsive kiss from Glimmerwing roused the prince from his magical slumber. The friends, along with Good Prince Gallant and his men, took Mahogany back to her tree, where she returned to health. She was happy to see her friends, and even happier to see the handsome prince. With the color of autumn flush in her cheeks, Mahogany said that she wanted to have the picnic, and invited the prince and his men to stay. The goodies from Benthroewyn's basket were produced and everyone ate their fill of his splendidly seasoned vegetarian dishes. All the while, Mahogany watched her dear prince with loving eyes. As he ate, the prince told everyone that after searching for a very long time, he had found the most beautiful woman in the land. Everyone listened closely as he leaned across the bowl of cherries and asked Benthroewyn if he would perform the ceremony. And all the prince's men were happy as Benthroewyn turned to Mahogany and asked her if she was going to marry the handsome prince. Mahogany just smiled, and Benthroewyn prepared for a wedding ceremony. Then the prince started talking about how he would cut down most of the Peaceful Forest to put in a palace, and a big city, and a whole bunch of roads so he could be near his Mahogany. Mahogany dropped her bowl of nuts, and took her darling prince aside. After a few moments, the prince came back, smiled dashingly and said, "Saddle up, men, we have a beautiful bride to find! She must be out there somewhere!" As the prince and his baffled men rode out of the forest, Mahogany sat back down and told the friends that nothing, not even a handsome prince, was going to come between her and a good picnic. And the seven friends finished their meal, frolicked a little more, and lived happily ever after.

THE END ❑

Illustrations by Gary M. Williams





Thistledown

3rd Level Male Sprite Thief

STR: 6
INT: 12
WIS: 8
DEX: 18
CON: 13
CHA: 17
AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 21
THAC0: 19
Move: 9 Fl 18 (B)

Alignment: Neutral Good
Height: 2′ 1″
Weight: 6 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Evershifting hues
Age: Unknown

Weapon Proficiencies: Sprite sword, sprite bow
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Singing (17), dancing (18), rope use (18)
Languages: Sprite, Common, Burrowing Mammal
Racial Abilities: +1 "to hit" with sprite sword and bow, *invisibility* at will, *detect evil or good* in a 50-yard radius at will, 90% resistant to *sleep* and *charm* spells

Magic Items: *Blouse of protection from normal missiles* (continuously functions as the 3rd level wizard spell), *stone of dancing lights* (creates lights as the 1st level wizard spell 3x/day), *oil of sharpness +1* (2 applications)

Other Equipment: Sprite sword and scabbard, sprite bow, quiver with 12 sprite arrows (each coated with sleep drug, creatures hit must save vs. poison or fall asleep for 1d6 hours)

Thief Skills:

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW
60	37	35	99	85	55	72

All your life you've had fun. You are rarely serious. In fact, you usually try to keep others around you from becoming too serious—unless a situation gets dangerous. You are more adventurous and curious than the other members of your clan. Not that you are a mischievous little trouble-maker (what some call your pixie friends), though. You are just plain happy all the time, whether flitting about the forest, playing hidey-seek with some birds or chipmunks, or enjoying whatever presents itself.

Glimmerwing

7th Level Sylph Wizard

STR: 5
INT: 16
WIS: 11
DEX: 16
CON: 10
CHA: 19
AC Normal: 8
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 14
THAC0: 19
Move: 12 Fl 36 (B)

Alignment: Neutral Good
Height: 4′ 8″
Weight: 86 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Platinum blond/Pale blue-green
Age: Unknown

Weapon Proficiencies: None
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Singing (19), animal lore(16), direction sense (11)
Languages: Sylph, Common
Spells/day: 4 3 2 1
Racial Abilities: *invisibility* at will, 50% magic resistance, *conjure air elemental* once a week

Magic Items: Pot of *Nolzur's Marvelous pigments*, 3 handfuls of *faerie dust.* (When sprinkled on a human or animal, the victim falls into a deathlike slumber and cannot be awakened for six hours. Creatures with 4+1 or more hit dice or levels gain a save vs. spells.)

Other Equipment: Pegasi hair paintbrush, small belt pouch and two eagle feathers, caterpillar silk blouse, wildflower skirt and belt

Spells Carried: (First level) *charm person, detect magic, reduce, sleep;* (second level) *audible glamer, detect invisibility, ESP;* (third level) *gust of wind, slow;* (fourth level) *charm monster*

How wonderful it is to flit and glide about the high peaks, playing tag with the birds and hitching rides on clouds. The world is so pretty from way up there, and there is almost never anyone to bother you. You enjoy solitude, so thank goodness you can reach places where few others can tread.

You abhor violence and prefer to flee from danger. However, if there is nowhere to run, or friends are in trouble, you use your spells and other magic to neutralize opponents.

Dylandwyriel

4th Level Male Wood Elf Bard

STR: 12
INT: 13
WIS: 12
DEX: 17
CON: 14
CHA: 18
AC Normal: 7
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 18
THAC0: 19
Move: 12

Alignment: Neutral Good
Height: 4′ 11″
Weight: 90 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Copper-red/Light brown
Age: 164

Weapon Proficiencies: Short sword, short bow
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Singing (18), mandolin (17), juggling (17)
Languages: Elvish, Common, Treant, Woodland Mammal
Spells/day: 2 1
Racial Abilities: +1 "to hit" with sword and bow, 90% resistant to *sleep* and *charm* spells

Magic Items: *short sword +1 vs. evil opponents, ring of spell storing* (contains *faerie fire, goodberry, purify food and drink,* and *shillelagh* all cast at 6th level), 6 *goodberries*

Other Equipment: Short bow, quiver and 12 arrows, belt pouch and song book, vellum, quill pen and ink, rosewood mandolin, story books, back pack, spell book.

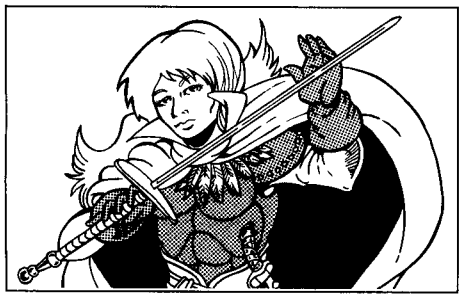
Bard Skills:

PP	DN	CW	RL
40	25	90	25

Spells Carried: (First level) *shield, jump;* (second level) *mirror image*

You were born and raised in a distant part of the forest. You were such a fine poet, songsmith, and storyteller that soon you ran out of original tales to retell. So you struck out into the greater world to seek the finest songs, stories, and poems to bring back.

You embrace the unknown, for it is the best source of material for the verses you seek. Though you sing of epic battles, you try to avoid participating in them. Sometimes evil must be vanquished, however, and you must encourage your friends to take up arms.



Cygnythia
3rd Level Human Swanmay Ranger

STR: 13
INT: 17
WIS: 15
DEX: 15
CON: 14
CHA: 16
AC Normal: 5
AC Rear: 6
Hit Points: 25
THAC0: 18
Move: 15

Alignment: Neutral Good
Height: 5′ 5″
Weight: 132 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Brown
Age: 22

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, dagger, composite short bow
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Tracking (16), blind-fighting, endurance (14)
Languages: Common, Brownie, Dryad, Elvish, Pixie, Swan, Sylph

Swanmay Abilities: Shift to swan form and back (one shift/round); swan form statistics: AC 5; MV 3, Sw 3, Fl 19 (D); #At 3; Dmg 1/1/1-2; SA 50% likely to blind or confuse opponents, making attacks impossible on the following round; SD hit only by +1 or better weapons; MR 6%

Magic Items: *Ring of protection +2* (becomes leg band in swan form), collar of swan feathers

Other Equipment: Leather armor, long sword and scabbard, dagger and sheath, composite short bow, quiver and 20 arrows, leather back pack, 50′ rope, small steel mirror

Ranger Skills:

MS	HS
20	27

Can attack with two weapons at no penalty, +4 "to hit" vs. trolls.

You don't know how you came to be a swanmay, except that your mother was one. You grew up in these woods, sharing the company of swans, learning to love the plants and animals. Your mother taught you her trade as a ranger, and respect for all creatures, great and small.

You believe there must be some good in everything and everyone, and you try to find that goodness before you judge the creatures you meet.

Cassius
5th Level Centaur Stallion Fighter

STR: 18/61
INT: 10
WIS: 9
DEX: 16
CON: 15
CHA: 12
AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 32
THAC0: 16
Move: 18

Alignment: Neutral Good
Height: 7′ 5″ (4′ 10″ at the shoulder
Weight: 1,027 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown
Age: 25

Weapon Proficiencies: Medium lance, club, composite long bow, hand axe, spear
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Running (9), endurance (15), hunting (8), fire-building (8)
Languages: Centaur, Common, Elvish

Racial Abilities: Attack with two front hooves for Dmg 1-6/1-6 in addition to weapon attack; or with two rear hooves for Dmg 1-8/1-8; double damage when charging with lance, but no hoof attacks when charging

Magic Items: *Horseshoes of Surefootedness* (Allows wearer to maintain movement rate of 18 for 12 hours a day without tiring; wearer never trips, steps into snares, or becomes *entangled;* wearer can climb slopes and traverse unstable surfaces without falling), 10 *arrows +1*

Other Equipment: Medium lance, oaken club and holster, composite long bow, quiver and 10 normal arrows, leather shoulder bag, 6 wooden stakes, 100′ rope, belt and harness, oats and foodstuffs, large waterproof blanket

You are a powerful centaur, a combination of two of the finest beasts on the earth. You have been blessed with great strength and stamina, making you a fine athlete and fighter.

You exercise regularly to maintain your fine physique, and you eat only the most nutritious of foods. Of course, you require large meals at regular intervals so as to provide your massive frame with sufficient energy.

Benthroewyn
5th Level Human Male Werebear Cleric

STR: 17
INT: 15
WIS: 17
DEX: 13
CON: 17
CHA: 12
AC Normal: 10
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 35
THAC0: 18
Move: 12

Alignment: Chaotic Good
Height: 6′ 9″
Weight: 297 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown
Age: 34

Weapon Proficiencies: Quarterstaff, Sling, Staff Sling
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Herbalism (17), cooking (15)
Languages: Common, Bear, Centaur, Elvish, Satyr, Stone Giant
Spells/day: 5 5 2

Werebear Abilities: Heal at three times normal rate, cure disease in other creatures (requires 1-4 weeks); shift to bear form and back (one shift/round); bear form statistics: AC 2; MV 9; THAC0 13; #At 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/2-8; SA if both claws hit can hug for 2-16 points of damage; SD hit only by +1 or better weapons

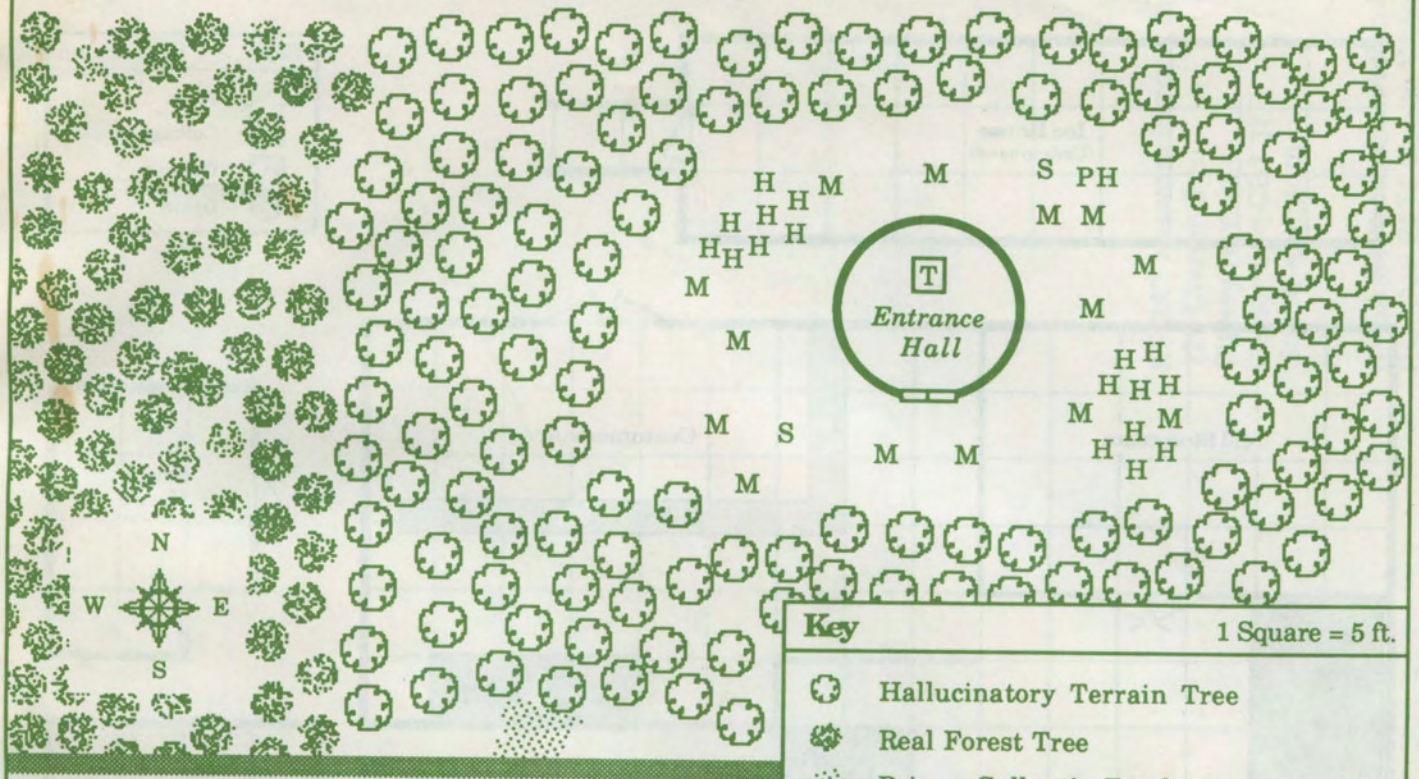
Magic Item: *Scroll* (contains *speak with plants* cast at 8th level)

Other Equipment: oaken quarterstaff; sling and 12 stones; belt pouch and spell components; various herbs, leaves, and fungi; small cooking pot, ladle, picnic basket and food

Spells Carried: (First level) *cure light wounds* (x3), *light;* (second level) *augury, find traps, resist fire, slow poison, speak with animals;* (third level) *create food and water, dispel magic*

It was several years ago, almost a decade, when you barely survived a vicious mauling from a bear. It was not long before you exhibited the signs of lycanthropy. Despondent about your condition, you fled from society to these woods. Here, given time to reflect, you eventually grew to accept and control your affliction. Living with such violent, destructive impulses has taught you great wisdom, compassion, and restraint.

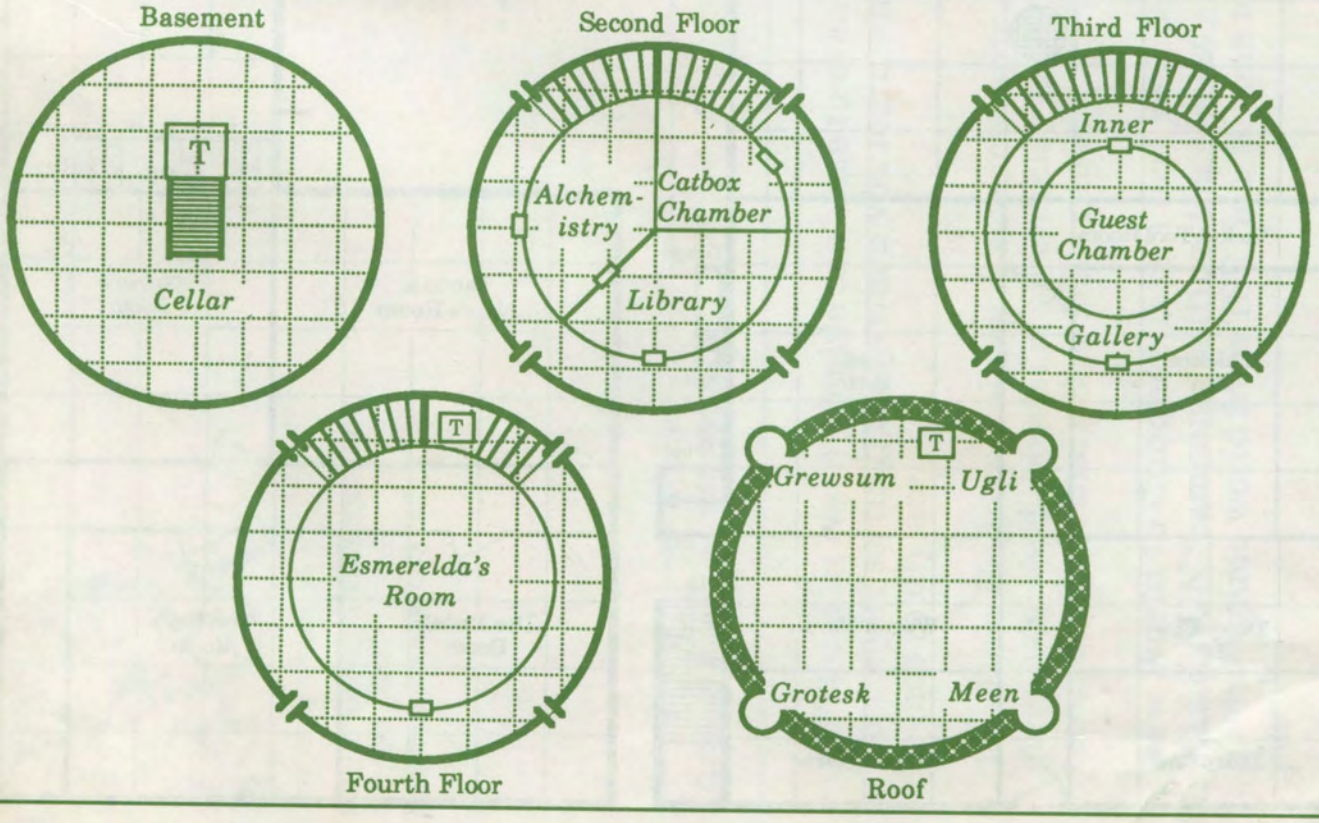
Esmerelda's Tower and Environs



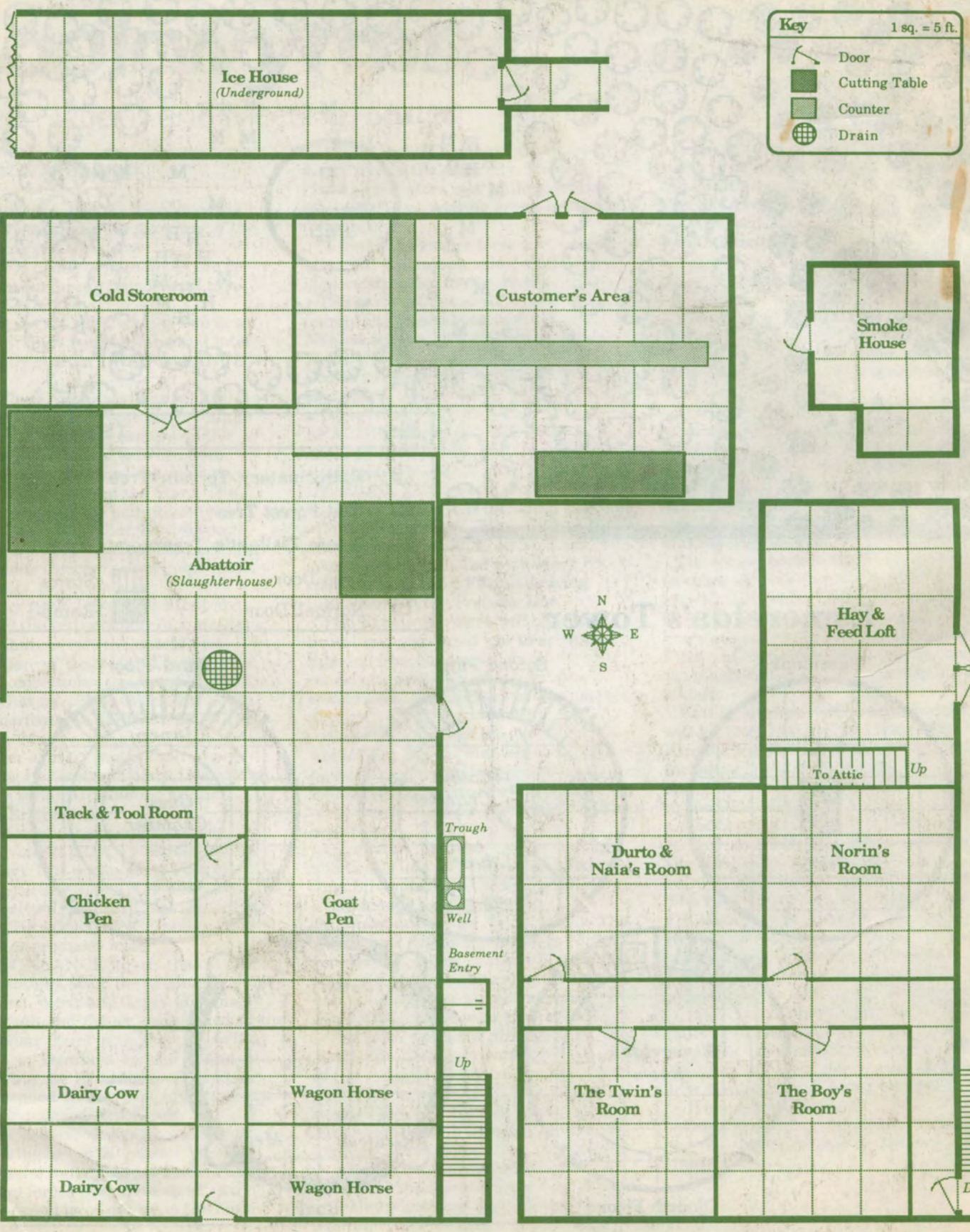
Key 1 Square = 5 ft.

- Hallucinatory Terrain Tree
- Real Forest Tree
- Prince Gallant's Tracks
- T Trap Door
- Normal Door
- Stairs
- Ramp

Esmerelda's Tower



The Two Brothers Butchery



The Jade Monkey

An AD&D® 2nd Edition Game Adventure

Illustration by Stephen Schwartz

by Carl Buehler

Terrain: Ravens Bluff (or another city in the Forgotten Realms)
Party Levels: 42 (Average 7th)
Monster X.P.: Kill: 15,000 Defeat: 20,000
Retreat: 7,500
Adventure goal (restoring Macon) X.P.: 5,000

SetUp

* The player characters learn that a well-known wizard in town—Macon The Monkey Mage—sells potions and scrolls at very reasonable prices. The characters also know that he will be going away soon, so they better get to Macon's mansion fast before the bargains leave with him.

* A player character wizard receives a letter from Macon stating The Monkey Mage is interested in teaching the character new spells in exchange for watching his home while he is away. Macon states the PC wizard is welcome to bring friends to help protect the place.

* The player characters hear a rumor that the famed Monkey Mage will be attacked by another sorcerer of considerable power. It is up to them to save Macon.

DM's Background

This is the saga of how a brave adventuring band—the player characters—intruded into a friendly contest of wits and magic between two wizards: Macon, The Monkey Mage, and Serialla, The Snake Sage.

As the action unfolds, the friendly rivals have just completed their opening gambits in the garden courtyard of Macon's residence. Macon's first move was to cast a *magic jar* from a scroll. Serialla's first move was to laugh as Macon triggered the *sepia snake sigil* inscribed at the end of the scroll. The result was that Macon's body became encased in an amber force field a mere instant after his life force shifted into the jade monkey worn as a piece of jewelry by Na-na (his monkey familiar.) Na-na had been watching the proceedings.

Macon next tried—and failed—to possess Serialla. Serialla continued to laugh. Then, inspiration struck Macon. He possessed Na-na and would at least be able to move around of his own free

will until he could find a way out of his predicament.

He stretched his new simian arms and looked about the room. Before he could act further, he heard knocking on his door—enter the player characters.

The Monkey Mage, wanting to be careful, and not wanting any neighbors to see him like this, scoots into one of the many monkey-sized passages riddling his home. Serialla, confident the visitors will give up and go away, retires to Macon's lab to search for his spell books.

Macon considers the PCs intruders. He will try, throughout the scenario, to defend his home without destroying it.

Serialla, absorbed in trying to find Macon's spell books so she can put *sepia snake sigils* in them, is unaware of the action going on in other areas of the house—until the *Mordenkainen's faithful hound* guarding the lab barks.

To further complicate the situation, there is a creature in the basement—an angry water elemental who means to do in The Monkey Mage and retrieve a *decanter of endless water* Macon has been using.

Statistics for Serialla, Macon, and Wilbur, the main NPC, are listed at the end of this adventure.

Players' Introduction

You stand outside the front door of Macon The Monkey Mage's home. The dwelling is a single-story structure with smooth gray stone walls and a black slate roof. Set into a frame is a solid mahogany door with shiny brass fittings. The handle is a rendition of a brass dragon's head. The knocker resembles Death poling a boat. It is obvious the boat pole swings up and back to strike the side of the boat to produce a knocking noise. You must find Macon. You hope he is at home.

Entranceway

If someone uses the knocker or touches the door handle, the Death figure makes a sound, "that chills you to the very marrow of your bones." It is simply a magical effect. The door is unlocked. No one will answer it no matter how many times the PCs knock. When the characters eventually open the door, continue with the following:

As the door swings quietly open, you hear a munching sound. In front of you is a metal pig. It stands one foot tall at the shoulder. It is chewing on a metal wine flask.

It looks up at you and snorts between bites.

"Slurp, galump, chomp, chomp. Uhm, hi there. I'm Wilbur. Who are you? Chomp, chomp. Uhm, got any rusty scabbards or bent iron spikes? I could use a little desert."

The characters have encountered Wilbur, a kind of iron golem shaped like a pig. Wilbur does not know where Macon is, but he is concerned about the mage. Wilbur saw him earlier today and knows he hasn't left the residence.

Storage Room

The oak door to this room has a little swing door, apparently for the pig. Inside the room you find wooden boxes stacked haphazardly, barrels standing on end, and bags laying around.

Wilbur remembers he left an unfinished snack in here. He darts into the room and returns a minute later with the furless tail of a rat sticking out of his mouth. After swallowing the rat, Wilbur comments on its taste, texture, and how much he likes to eat dead rats.

Guest Room

The oak door to this room has a little swing door, apparently again for the pig. As you go inside you see an undisturbed bed against the south wall. There is a pine table against the west wall with two stools sitting next to it.

Wilbur waddles into the room, pokes his head under the bed, retrieves a shoe, and begins to eat it.

If the PCs enter the room, continue with the following:

You watch the pig devour the leathery snack. Then, you catch sight of an unusual flowery fragrance. A sparkly powder drifts from holes in the ceiling, covering you and the room's contents.

Put on your best concerned look and ask the PCs to save vs. poison. Those who fail (including elves and half-elves) fall into a deep sleep. Make sure that at least one PC remains unaffected. Tell that character he or she recognizes this powder as a variety of pixie dust that can be neutralized by washing off the victim with wine. This should get the characters into the kitchen and pantry.

The pixie dust was triggered by Macon, who caught up with the PCs in this room and triggered the trap. Because Macon does not have a working knowledge of the monkey tunnels in his home (only the monkey does), his arrival at the rooms the PCs visit is simple coincidence.

Bedroom

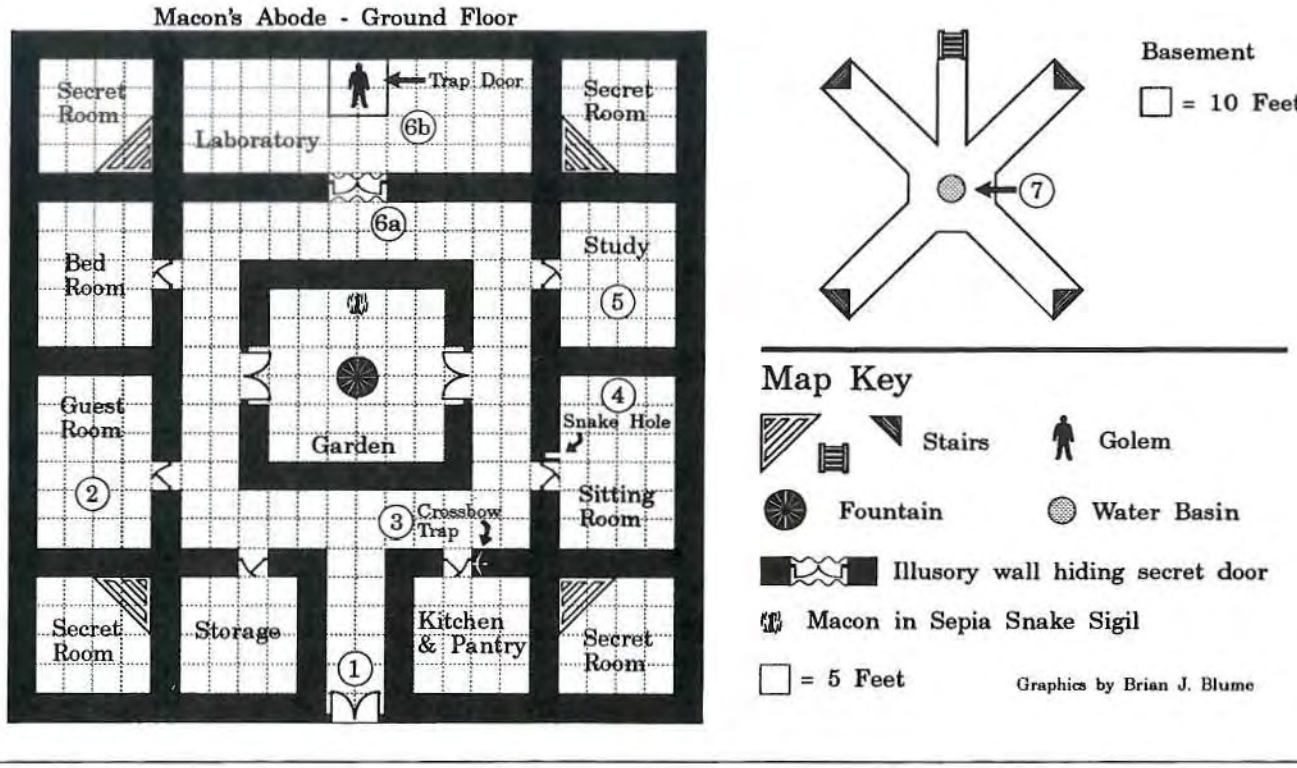
The oak door to this room also has a little swinging door for Wilbur. As you open the door you see an unmade, ornate four-poster bed with a red silk canopy over it. There is a teak table artistically carved with woodland scenes against the west wall. A matching chair sits beside it.

There is no trick or trap in the room. However, if the PCs linger here for a moment, Wilbur runs around the room looking for something to eat. He encourages the PCs to sit on the chair—all of them sit on the chair so it will break, be considered ruined, and therefore fair game for his next meal. If the PCs won't break the chair, he encourages them to break the table or a poster off the bed. If the PCs ask, tell them the furniture looks expensive.

Kitchen And Pantry

The door to this room has a little swinging door for Wilbur, which he quickly uses. You look into the room and see a fireplace. A large, black kettle with a ladle in it hangs inside the fireplace. You can tell it has been several hours since a cooking fire burned here.

Shelves of wine cover the west wall, and shelves of dry and potted goods line the east. A chopping block, with a cleaver imbedded in it, sits halfway between the wine shelves and the cooking pot. Bits of meat and cheese sit on the block—Wilbur has noticed these. He sits on the floor beneath the counter and sniffs up at the block.



Macon has reached this room, via the monkey tunnels, and is upset that the characters are blatantly wandering through his house. He casts *unseen servant* and directs the *servant* to swing the meat cleaver around, threatening the PCs. He especially wants to keep them away from his prized wines. Macon has researched a special version of this spell; the *unseen servant* will continue for two hours unless dispelled. It will follow the PCs out of the kitchen, around the wizard's house, wherever they go. The *unseen servant,* cannot be destroyed by physical means. However, there is nothing to prevent the PCs from physically taking the meat cleaver away from it.

If the meat cleaver is taken away from the *unseen servant,* it will continue to harass the PCs, attempting to trip them by pulling up rugs, etc.

Macon triggers another trap as the PCs leave the kitchen. The second PC out the door hears the thwup of many crossbow strings. Ten hand crossbow bolts have been fired at this PC. Each bolt has a THAC0 of 12, and the victim does not get the benefit of Dexterity or a shield. Each bolt that hits does 1d3 points of damage. Plus, each does an additional point of damage when it is pulled out because of its barbed point.

Sitting Room

The polished oak door to this room has a little swinging door for Wilbur. The room reeks of spilled wine and spirits. The floor is covered with brightly colored pillows that sport a great variety of equally colorful stains. Wilbur snatches one of the pillows and begins to gnaw at it, sending feathers everywhere.

As soon as all of the PCs—or most of them if there are a few holdouts—enter this room, Macon triggers another trap.

You hear an ominous click and hissing sounds as snakes begin pouring out of a hole in the wall near the door. The snakes slither to attack.

Snakes (4 each round for five rounds): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+1; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA Poison (save or take 3d4 damage after 1d6 rounds); SZ S; ML 8; XP 175 each.

Macon released the snakes. If the PCs successfully plug up the hole, that will limit the number of snakes coming out.

Study

The carved oak door to this room does not have a little swinging door for Wilbur. As you peer into this room you see a large oak desk on the far side of the room. The desk is facing the door, and a fine oak chair is behind it. Along the southern wall is a scroll rack. The north wall is decorated with a painting of a mage and a monkey.

There is an *edgeless dagger* on the desk. The PCs might confuse it with a letter opener. It is an intelligent magic item that possess the ability to cast convincing audio and visual illusions. The *dagger,* named Winston, will put the PCs through their paces when they explore the room.

As you enter the room, you see a brilliant flash of light from the top of the desk. While you sort out the spots dancing in front of your eyes, you see a long sword hovering above

the desk. It has a gleaming blue metallic sheen and is emitting an azure aura in a 10-foot radius. Almost as soon as it appears, it begins to speak.

"I am Winston, the blade of paladins, avenger of the most holy. Defend yourselves, intruders."

Winston uses an illusion of a dancing holy avenger to fight the party until the illusion is disbelieved, he reduces a character to less than 10 hit points, or until he becomes bored.

If the PCs believe the illusion is really a sword, it does 1d12 points of damage every time it hits; its THAC0 is 9, and it can attack twice each round. The PCs actually suffer the damage because they believe the illusion. However, after the sword vanishes, Winston—if not already found out—will continue with a second illusion.

Winston next creates an image of Macon, who talks to the PCs.

After dealing with the sword, it seems you have another problem to handle. A stately wizard materializes behind the desk. Wait, it's Macon. He looks up and regards you with gray, rheumy eyes.

"Hmmmm. How did you get in here? Who are you? What do you want? Speak up before I decide to turn you into tree toads."

Winston does indeed want to know who the PCs are, what they are doing here, how powerful they are, etc. He continues to ask questions until the PCs tire of answering them or until they start asking questions in return.

If the PCs mention they heard Macon is in danger, Winston immediately wants to know why. If the PCs sound convincing, Winston drops his illusion, explains to the PCs that Macon really is not there—that he was just creating an image of him.

Winston is concerned about his owner. He tells the PCs he hasn't seen Macon for several hours. However, he knows something was up, as Macon was busy studying spells. Winston also remembers hearing a woman's voice. Then he heard the woman laughing maniacally.

Winston does not know what room the woman or Macon were in. Because he is so concerned about his owner, he asks the PCs to take him with them.

Winston: The dagger is a cursed artifact. Its curse is it has no sharp edge and therefore cannot be effectively used as a melee weapon. However, Winston has the ability to cast near-perfect visual and audio illusions. He is also virtually indestructible. Even Wilbur can't eat Winston—Winston's too tough. Winston has been around for ages, and he has many stories to tell about the deaths of his previous owners. He loves to tell these stores because it gives him a feeling of superiority to have survived them. Winston's other ability, which can be quite annoying, is *teleportation without error* to visit whomever he likes—up to five times a day. Winston is Chaotic Neutral, has an Intelligence of 15 and enough Ego that people can't force him to do things against his will.

Winston should accompany the party whether they want him to, preferably by attaching himself to the least active PC to try to liven up the character.

Garden

Through this door is a beautiful fountain with a riot of jungle plants and trees growing near it. This is the most exquisite tropical garden you have seen . . . even though it seems out of place in Ravens Bluff. On the far side of the garden you see the amber outline of a man. You also see another door.

The man is Macon. If Winston or Wilbur is with the party, they recognize him. If the *sepia snake sigil* that trapped Macon is dispelled, his body slumps to the ground—apparently in a coma.

This tropical garden is maintained through the use of various spells. It was created so Na-na would have a place to go when she became homesick. The fountain has been *stone shaped* over a *decanter of endless water* in fountain mode. The water flows into a basin in the basement, which is drained in turn by three *bags of devouring.*

Laboratory

Wilbur eventually leads the characters here. When a PC touches the lab door that is concealed by an illusionary wall, read the following:

Your hand passes through the wall in front of you, as if the stone is nothing but air. As your fingers probe and find a bound wooden door hidden from your sight, an eerie barking comes from behind you. Something is biting your leg. What do you do?

The character touching the door has just been attacked by a *Mordenkainen's faithful hound.* The *hound* continues to attack the character until the character loses consciousness, shrinks to the size of a cat or smaller, or moves around the corner on either end of the hallway.

Faithful hound:: Int Semi; AL N; AC Nil; MV 12; HD Nil; hp Nil; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18 (can only attack from behind); SA Attacks are equal to a +3 weapon; SD Takes no damage, must be dispelled to be eliminated; SZ M.

The *hound* is automatically dispelled after 12 rounds of activity.

When the characters get through the iron-bound door to the lab, read:

You have passed through an illusionary wall and the door it was hiding into a stone cage 12 feet square. Through the bars in front you see a stone statue of a warrior. Through the bars to your left you see a shimmering sphere 10′ in diameter covering a dark-haired woman with pale skin and crimson lips. What do you do?

Serialla has formed a crude 12′ by 12′ stone cage around the door using her *wall of stone* spell. She just cast her *minor globe of invulnerability*, and her *polymorph self* spell (which allowed her to get past the *faithful hound*) just ended. In addition, her *protection from normal missiles* spell is running and will remain in effect for nine rounds.

As the PCs stand in the cage, she introduces herself as Serialla the Snake Sage. She wants to know who the PCs are and what they are doing here. If the PCs ask about her, she says she is a friend of Macon's and she is working on a surprise for him (true). After she has talked with the PCs for several minutes—and refuses to take down the cage because she isn't sure of them—read the following:

There is a loud rumbling and you feel the floor move beneath your feet. It is followed by an eerie growl. Serialla screams. Then, suddenly, everything becomes quiet.

She looks at you. "I believe your intentions are good, so I will dispel my *wall of stone*. All I ask in return is that you help me investigate what lurks below in the basement. I think that the secret entrance is in this room, but I have not been able to find it. I just hope that we can stop whatever is down there before it does too much damage.

"I'm don't know if I can fully trust you. But I must (sniffle). Please say you will help me. The thing in the basement sounds frightfully nasty."

If, for some reason, the PCs attack Serialla, she casts a few damaging spells at them and then casts *teleport* to take herself home. She figures the PCs are Macon's problem, and she doesn't have the time to deal with them.

After several minutes of searching, the PCs cannot find a way into the basement, and Wilbur and Winston have no clues how to get down there.

However, about this time Macon has found a way to join the group. By now Macon realizes the PCs are there to help him.

While you continue to look about, you spot a small monkey with a neckchain dart into the room. The monkey is jabbering animatedly, although you can't understand it. The monkey keeps pointing to himself, then the surroundings, then jumps up and down and points at himself some more.

The monkey can understand the PCs, so if they ask him questions he can nod, shake his head, or make other gestures. He can even write if the PCs provide paper and a quill. When the PCs realize that the monkey is Macon, the monkey brings them a scroll with a *levitate* spell on it. The monkey points to the scroll, then to a block of stone in the floor. If necessary, the monkey uses hand gestures to indicate the block rises. This is the way down into the basement.

If the characters opt not to use the *levitate* scroll, allow other reasonable ideas for lifting the slab to work.

The monkey/Macon wants the thing in the basement checked out before the PCs help him regain his true body. Serialla, if she is still present, will not admit to being the cause of Macon's predicament. However, Macon the monkey will not be reluctant to blame her.

The Basement

Walking down the mildewy stairs from the laboratory, you hear falling water and breaking waves. The air is thick with humidity as you proceed down a corridor toward the sounds of the deadly surf. As you near the water basin, which you suspect is beneath the fountain in the garden above, the hairs on the backs of your necks act like little wires, standing straight up.

Give the PCs a few rounds to cast spells for the coming battle—if they think to do so. Then, as they move forward, read the following:

You move closer until you see water falling from the fountain basin above. The water is flowing into a broken collection basin and through a hole in the ground. A bag lies open on the floor. It is similar to two bags attached to the collection basin. Reaching up toward an object lodged in the center of the fountain's base is the arm of a deep green water elemental. You hear the whooshing sound white water rapids make, as the elemental turns to fight you.

The water elemental was appointed by its community to rescue the *decanter of endless water* embedded in the bottom of Macon's fountain.

Serialla, if she is around, will only help in the fight if it looks the PCs can't handle the elemental.

Water Elemental (1): Int Low; AL N; AC 2; MV 6, Sw 18; HD 16; hp 128; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 5-30; SA −1 point from each die of damage if out of water; SD +2 weapon or better to hit; SZ H; ML 9; XP 10,000.

After the battle, the PCs would do well to leave the bag laying on the floor alone, as it is a *bag of devouring*.

A Happy Ending

Macon the monkey tries to get the PCs to put him back into his comatose human form. The real monkey probably would like this, too, as it would free him. If necessary, Macon the monkey will fetch a few scrolls of *dispel magic*.

After Macon and Na-na are their rightful selves, the mage makes some quick repairs to his fountain's drainage system. A quick *wall of stone* spell patches the basement floor.

Soaking wet, Macon meets you up in his study. He shakes each of your hands. Serialla giggles at the sopping mess he is making of the rug. He explains Serialla won this go round of their friendly contest, as putting a *sepia snake sigil* on his scroll of *magic jar*, was very successful—unfortunately.

"Serialla and I have been having these magical contests for quite some time. However, it will be quite some more time before the next one. I will win the next competition.

"Thank you very much for all of your help. I don't know what I would have done without you. Well, I promise to see each of you later this week and return the favor. Now you must excuse me. I need to talk to Serialla to see just how she effected her victory, and I want to find out where that water elemental came from. Oh, yes . . . and I must get back and study my spell books."

As you leave, you see a playful grin spread across Serialla's face.

Macon The Monkey Mage

12th Level Male Human Wizard

STR: 13
INT: 17
WIS: 10
DEX: 16
CON: 15
CHA: 15

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 40
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Gnoll, Orcish, Gnomish, Halfling, and Sylph

Age: 42
Height: 5′ 11″
Weight: 143
Hair/Eyes: Black/Black
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, staff
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Ancient history (16), astrology (17), ancient

languages (17), reading/writing (20)

Magic Items: *Dagger +2, boots of striding and springing, gauntlets of swimming and climbing, bracers of defense AC 5*
Spells/day: 4 4 4 4 4 1

Spell Books

Level One

Cantrip
Comprehend Languages
Detect Magic
Identify
Magic Missile
Mending
Spider Climb
Taunt

Level Two

Blur
Detect Evil
ESP
Fog Cloud
Levitate
Magic Mouth
Improved Unseen Servant
Web

Level Three

Blink
Delude
Dispel Magic
Hold Person
Infravision
Item
Secret Page
Tongues

Level Four

Confusion
Dig
Evard's Black Tentacles
Fear
Fire Shield
Fumble
Polymorph Self
Remove Curse

Level Five

Avoidance
Chaos
Cone of Cold
Feeblemind
Passwall
Wall of Force
Wall of Iron
Wall of Stone

Level Six

Conjure Animals
Geas
Glassee
Legend Lore

Na-na, spider monkey familiar: Int Low; AL N; AC 5; MV 12, 9 in trees; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4; SZ S; XP none.

Macon is known as the Monkey Mage because of his unusual familiar, Na-na. Macon makes his living dealing with cursed items. He has a penchant for pranks, which usually go wrong, but his rugged good looks, sharp wits, and winning smile have always pulled him through trouble. Macon cannot stand eating bananas because he once ate three dozen of them in one sitting as a kid.

When he occupies the form of Na-na, he is only able to cast his version of *unseen servant* because he is so familiar with that spell. Na-na's unfamiliar body makes other spells too difficult.

Serialla The Snake Sage

10th Level Female Human Wizard

STR: 10
INT: 16
WIS: 11
DEX: 12
CON: 16
CHA: 16

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 35
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Gnomish, Halfling, Stone Giant, Storm Giant

Age: 35
Height: 5' 3"
Weight: 110
Hair/Eyes: Black/Green
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, staff
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Reading/writing (17), animal handling (snakes) (12), spellcraft (14)

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 5, slippers of spider climbing, ring of warmth, ring of sustenance, brooch of shielding* (67 charges)
Spells/day: 4 4 3 2 2

Spell Books

Level One

Cantrip
Charm Person
Comprehend Languages
Detect Magic
*Magic Missile**
*Shield**
Spook
Unseen Servant

Level Two

*Knock**
Levitate
Locate Object
*Mirror Image**
*Shatter**
Spectral Hand
Strength
*Web**

Level Three

Dispel Magic
*Feign Death**
Non-Detection
Secret Page
Sepia Snake Sigil
*Slow**

Level Four

Emotion
Extension I
Plant Growth
Polymorph Self
*Polymorph other**
Vacancy

Level Five

Animal Growth
Dream
Sending
*Telekinesis**
*Teleport**
Wall of Iron

* Indicates spells in her memory when the PCs begin the adventure.

Serialla is known as the Snake Sage because of her expertise with snakes. She has been Macon's friend since childhood, and she is the one who first proposed the secret yearly contests. She is a sweet woman who appears sinister because of her gruff voice, dark hair, penetrating eyes, and pale skin.

She can be overly competitive, as she wants to prove her worth as a prankster to Macon. This is why she resorted to the *sepia snake sigil* trick when she learned Macon had a purchased a scroll with a *magic jar* spell on it.

Wilbur the pig-iron pig golem

Int Low; AL N; AC 3; MV 9; HD 5; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA see below; SD see below; SZ S; ML 20; XP 750.

Wilbur was presented to Macon as a gag gift. He is the household trash disposal with legs. his original weight was 833 pounds, but it has been reduced through enchantment to 83 pounds. This keeps him from crushing people's feet if he accidently steps on them.

In addition, Wilbur can talk.

Special Attack: Wilbur counts as a +5 magic weapon for purposes of hitting things. This allows Wilbur to eat almost anything.

Special Defenses: Wilbur is only affected by +3 or better weapons. Magical electrical attacks slow him for three rounds. Magical fire attacks repair 1 hit point of damage for each die of damage they would normally do. Wilbur is affected by rust monsters, and they scare the . . . out of him.

Wilbur is an easy-going golem who has a limitless capacity for eating trash (which he does with relish when he can get it). He is not very bright, but he can carry on conversations even if what he says does not always make sense. Some favorite topics are:

* Why he can talk. He claims he can talk so he can ask people to move out of the way while he is cleaning.

* What it would be like to be a flying pig. Wilbur really wants to learn how to fly.

* Why are people so squeamish about what they eat. Wilbur likes to eat everything and anything.

Wilbur knows where all the rooms are on the ground floor (except the secret ones). However, he will have trouble finding the lab until the PCs have explored the rest of the house. ❑

Crisis In The Cragmoors

An AD&D® 2nd Edition game scenario

Illustrated by Dave Zenz

by Chris Doyle

Terrain: Swamp/Moor
Party Levels: 42 (Average 7th)
Monster X.P.:
Kill: 9,000 Defeat: 11,000
Retreat: 4,500
Adventure goal X.P. (rescuing captive): 2,000

SetUp

* While the PCs were celebrating their most recent mission, a sorceress they know was captured by a giant troll. He grabbed her and ran toward the Cragmoors, killing one watchman and wounding another who came to her rescue.
* While on an extended wilderness adventure, the PCs have reason to consult a local sorceress (perhaps to get a magical item identified). When they arrive in her home village, however, they discover she has been kidnapped by a giant creature.
* The PCs stop at an inn for the night and are awakened when a marauding giant creature slays a watchmen and carries away the local sorceress. The townspeople are quick to enlist the PCs' aid in bringing her back to safety.

DM's Background

The PCs begin this adventure tracking the creature to its lair.

You can use this as a timed adventure to add suspense and excitement to your gaming session. If you do so, allow the players four hours of game time to find the sorceress. If they do not reach her within the time limit, the giant troll eats her for dinner (as that's what giant trolls do).

The numbered sections of text refer to places on the map where the PCs will have encounters.

1. The Tracks Begin

> It is a short walk to the town's front gate. The gate has been torn off its hinges, probably by the giant who came for a visit last night. Large tracks are clearly visible.

If a PC with tracking ability examines the tracks, he or she can tell they head west and then gradually move to the

north. Be aware of the PCs' marching order, and consult the map as they travel.

2. The Cragmoor Swamp

After a brisk half-hour walk, you note the solid ground is slowly becoming boggy. Soon the fetid stench of the swamp fills your nostrils. Mosquitoes swarm about you.

Patches of fog appear along the dotted landscape, and visibility is reduced by about half. The giant's tracks lead to a small game trail that enters the swamp. The trail is about five feet wide, and it only can be traversed single file.

The party has entered the Cragmoor Swamp. The characters must switch to a single-file marching order. Because of the dense foliage and boggy conditions, any character moving off the trail suffers the following penalties: −2 to hit, −1 on damage, and a movement rate of one-third normal. Any character spending more than three turns off the trail becomes stuck in the thick mud and begins to sink; The PC has four to five rounds to devise a way to get out of the mud. Otherwise, the PC drowns. Workable methods for getting free might include: Struggling out by sheer power (check vs. ½ Strength score) using a convenient vine or tree branch or perhaps a staff, military pick, or other weapon to get a purchase on firmer ground. The trapped character might wiggle free by shedding his heavy equipment (Dexterity check) and squirming/swimming out of trouble (½ Dexterity check). The wisest course, however, is getting a fellow PC to pull the trapped character free.

3. The River

The game trail, and the tracks, end at the bank of a sluggish river. The river spans perhaps 350 feet, with the game trail continuing on the opposite bank. The water is fairly murky, but you can see the bottom well enough to tell the riverbed is covered with fine sand. You also spot a school of fish.

If the PCs look, they can find a suitable place to ford the river. While the game trail does indeed continue on the opposite bank, the giant's tracks do not. (See the map for his true course.)

If the PCs follow the game trail, they accomplish nothing. After they have traveled for awhile point out they do not see the giant's tracks. To find the giant's tracks they have to return to the river and search along the banks until they find the trail (encounter 7).

4. The Bullywug Ambush

You are scouring the muddy river bank for giant tracks, being careful not to become stuck in the deep mud. The river, when you can see it through the patches of reeds, swirls lazily by, the water moving so slowly the sandy bottom is not disturbed. The insects are in greater force near the banks. They bite and annoy you. Several slime-covered willows can be seen a short distance from the bank.

A small tribe of bullywugs attacks the party. If the PCs blindly followed the game trail and had to return to the river to search for tracks, the bullywugs get a free ambush attack, *and* have a normal chance to surprise the party and get a second free attack. If a PC was watching the river, the party still gets ambushed, but the PCs get a +2 bonus to the surprise roll (see PHB, page 111). A bullywug scout noticed the PCs some distance back, and the bullywugs are ready. If the PCs were smart enough to search for tracks immediately after crossing the river, the bullywugs still attack, but the ambush fails. Roll normally for surprise, but the PCs still get a +2 bonus if somebody was watching the reeds.

On their first attack round, the bullywugs rise from the reeds and throw their spears. In the next round they close to melee. The party can flee at any time, as the bullywugs move slowly out of water and cannot keep up.

Bullywugs (20): Int Average; AL CE; AC 6; MV 3, Sw 15; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3 or 1 (weapon); Dmg 1-2/1-2/2-5 or 1-6 (spear); SA Hop; SD Camouflage; SZ M; ML 10; XP 65 each.

Bullywug Leader (1): Int Average; AL CE; AC 3 (thick leather armor); MV 3, Sw 9; HD 1; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 3 or 1 (weapon); Dmg 1-2/1-2/2-5 or 1-6 +1 (spear +1); SA Hop; SD Camouflage; SZ M; ML 12; XP 65.

The leader carries a pouch with 15 gp, and three gems worth 25 gp, 50 gp, and 85 gp.

5. Dropped Dagger

You continue following the river to the east. It' nearly noon, and the river sparkles. Near the bank, a piece of metal gleams in the sun, too. The river at this point is apparently deeper. You can see large dark spots in the water, indicating depth.

The sorceress dropped her dagger here, hoping any rescuers would find it, and that is the metal gleaming in the sun. Originally, she pointed the blade to indicate the direction of the giant's travel. However, the dagger has been discovered by a pair of river otters, who are taking turns moving the dagger to see which one of them can produce the most sparkles on the water. They also like the sparkling jewels in its hilt. The dagger is worth 1,200 gp.

The otters are friendly, curious, and hold their ground when the PCs approach. They have no intention of giving up the dagger. If the PCs take it, the otters pursue them, nipping at their heels, undoing their boot laces, and generally being annoying. The otters will settle for unusual food items or another shiny object in exchange for the dagger.

If a PC can *speak with animals*, the otters explain that a tall man with reddish-brown skin waded through the river and continued north. The man was carrying a club and a girl. The man wouldn't stop and play with them, but the girl was kind and dropped this nice, shiny object for them.

Otters (2): Int Semi-; AL N; AC 5; MV 12, Sw 18; HD 1-1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SZ T; ML 8; XP nil.

6. Crayfish Attack

The otters from encounter five have disturbed a pair of giant crayfish, which are waiting for the otters to come back in the river and provide dinner. However, when the PCs arrive the crayfish forget the otters. The giant crayfish are hungry and see the PCs as a meal. They lie in wait in the reeds along the bank and attack as the PCs come close. If one crayfish is killed, the other attempts to retreat into the river.

You continue to head along the river, looking for the giant's tracks. Your water logged feet begin to tire. You notice the dark patches in the river are becoming more common. You've passed several of them in the past few minutes. The river must be very deep here. Suddenly, two gray shapes rise from the water and move toward you. They are very large crayfish, and they brandish nasty-looking claws.

Giant Crayfish (2): Int Non; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 4 + 4; hp 32 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12/2-12; SD Surprise; SZ L; ML 13; XP 125 each.

7. The Tracks Continue

After dealing with the crayfish you press on, being slightly more cautious of your surroundings. Then, along the bank, you see it, a large footprint in the mud—the giant's tracks. The tracks head north into the swamp. Obviously you're on some sort of ancient road, as cobble stones become visible when you inspect the ground closely. No one has been on this road for years, it seems.

The PCs have found the correct tracks. The ancient road was used by traders before the swamp lands became too dangerous to travel. It is now used by the giant troll and many wild animals.

8. The Bridge

It has been nearly an hour since you found the road. The swamp now appears very gloomy, and the environment begins to dampen your spirits. This deep into the swamp, you're surrounded by moss covered, overfed trees that loom above and blot out the sun. You feel clammy and slimy and the swarms of pesky insects are worse than ever.

The giant's tracks follow the road right into the heart of the swamp. Eventually, you arrive at a clearing with a wooden bridge, approximately 50 feet long. It spans a particularly large mire of mud flats. The mud does not look safe and appears to be quite deep. The bridge is old, yet is in good condition. Its wooden timbers are covered with moss and foul smelling swamp plants. The giant's tracks lead across the bridge.

Normally, the bridge would be safe. However, Gruck, the giant, has turned the bridge into a trap. He weakened the center supports with an axe, while the mudmen living in the mire futilely attacked him.

When 200 pounds of weight are on the bridge, it will collapse, sending party members into the mud. Those standing at the edge of the bridge can make checks vs. Dexterity −2 to avoid falling into the mud. PCs do not suffer damage from the fall, however PCs in the mud have to deal with the mudmen.

The mudmen begin their assault by hurling blobs of mud. The mud is three-feet deep, and characters in the mud suffer the following: lose one-third their movement rate and −1 on all to hit, and damage rolls.

Mud-man (8): Int Non; AL N; AC 10; MV 3; HD 2; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg Special; SA Mud-throwing, suffocation; SD immune to mind-affecting spells, *transmute rock to mud* slays (no save), *dispel magic* and *dig* act as *fireball;* SZ S; ML Special; XP 175 each.

Mudmen hurl blobs of mud at their opponents, who are considered AC 10 (modified by Dexterity). The mud hardens on impact and slows the target's movement rate by 1 for each hit. A mudman, if within 10 feet of a target, can hurl itself at the target. A successful hit means the death of a mudman, but slows the victim's movement by 4. Once a victim has a movement rate of 0, he becomes immobilized and suffocates in five rounds unless the mud is removed from around his nose.

On the other side of the bridge, the giant's trail splits, one set of tracks (which is older) lead to the east and to Encounter 10. The other set continues to the north and likely will lead the PCs to Encounter 9.

9. Lizardmen No Matter What

Following this branch of the trail, you see the giant's tracks veer to the east. Another set of tracks goes to the northwest. Which do you follow?

A pair of lizardmen spotted the PCs moving through The Cragmoors, noted they were following large footprints, and set up a false trail that leads to the northwest. Lizardmen like to take human captives for slaves, and have determined that this bunch would make a good group of laborers.

Farther along their falsified trail the lizardmen have placed moss, branches, and small blobs of mud over a deep pit. If the PCs follow the false trail, they fall into the pit. The 15-foot deep pit is set up so that the top will not collapse until several characters walk on it.

Once the PCs are in the pit, the lizardmen point spears at them and throw large blobs of mud to keep them from climbing out.

If the PCs do not follow the false trail, the lizardmen group together, follow the PCs, and attack to subdue. Dead humans make bad slaves, so they want to keep the PCs alive.

In either case, when the lizardmen have the advantage over the PCs, continue with the following:

"Humans. Drop your weapons and surrender to us. We want you as slaves, not dead humans."

Also in the lizardmen band is a lizard king who was wounded in a one-on-one fight with a warrior. The king won, but was seriously hurt in the process.

The only way the PCs can get out of this encounter with their necks intact is to bargain for their release. For example, if the PCs offer to heal the lizard king, they will be allowed to leave. The PCs might also win their freedom by concocting a plausible story about a vast treasure, a village full of potential slaves, or something else that might induce the lizard men to take the PCs away from the village with something less than 50 guards.

Lizard Men (50): Int Low; AL N; AC 5; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 2 + 1; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-6; SZ M; ML 14; XP 65 each.

Lizard king (1): Int Average; AL N; AC 3; MV 9, Sw 12; HD 8; hp 50 (8 currently); THAC0 13; #AT 1; D 5-20; SA Skewer; SD Nil; SZ L; ML 16; XP 975.

If the PCs help the lizard king, the lizardmen ask what they were doing following the giant's tracks. The lizardmen tell the PCs they saw a giant tak-

ing a female captive to the north. They point out the trail. The lizardmen had no desire to fight the giant for one woman.

10. The Trail Ends

The trail continues on the opposite side of the bridge.

The area becomes increasingly overgrown, and the trees—magnificent willows—are becoming more abundant and more wholesome-looking. Brambles fight with marsh grass to dominate the terrain. The trail becomes harder to follow and eventually disappears.

There is nothing of interest here. The PCs will have to double back to the bridge and pick up the trail to continue.

11. Snagged

Shortly after you leave the lizardmen and pick up the giant's trail, you come upon another sluggish river. This one is larger and slightly deeper, with few fish swimming about. You find a ford, however, and cross easily. On the opposite bank you notice the trail is becoming more difficult to follow. The ground is hard-packed here, making the giant's tracks tough to see. Many vines climb up the trees and hang all about. The foliage is thick, with dark shapes—likely large clumps of leaves, scattered in the trees. You've entered a very dense and quiet part of The Cragmoors.

Starting with the first character in the marching order, have each PC make a Dexterity check. The first one to fail the check is caught in a snare. A snared PC is held about four feet off the ground, one foot firmly caught in a web loop. If all PCs successfully avoid the snares, they likewise avoid this encounter.

If a PC is caught, two giant spiders climb down webs to attack the party. At the same time, an ettercap hiding above in a tree drops a net on a PC; treat this net as a *web* spell since it is made of spider webs. The net can only catch one character. If successful, the ettercap reels in the snared victim, taking two rounds to reel, and a third round to bind the character in sticky webs high in a tree. Snared characters can attack the ettercap once before becoming immobilized, at −2 to hit.

Ettercap (1): Int Low; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA Poison; SD Traps; SZ M; ML 13; XP 975.

Ettercaps have a poisonous bite. The poison is highly toxic. If the victim does not successfully save against poison, he dies in 1-4 rounds.

Giant Spiders (2): Int Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, Wb 12; HD 4+4; hp 22 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA bite has type F poison; SZ L; ML 13; 650 each.

11. Watch Lizards

As you continue to press north, following the giant's tracks, the swamp becomes even more dense. The tracks made by the giant turn off the trail and head right into the marsh. After a quick search, you determine these tracks are fairly fresh. The giant must be close.

After what seems like forever, you see a very unnatural clearing. Several trees have been chopped down in a crude fashion to form the clearing. On the opposite side is a large mound of mud, rocks, trees, dirt, and clay. There is a large opening in the makeshift hill.

The giant's tracks lead right into the cave, and more of the same tracks can be seen scattered about.

This indeed is Gruck's lair. He built it himself and is quite proud of it. The clearing is roughly 60 feet across. No unusual sounds can be heard in the area. However, if the PCs make noise, the sound will certainly carry.

Gruck has a crude, but effective alarm system. He captured two giant lizards while they were young and keeps them for pets. They live on the hill and are hiding up there now. Each has a 15-foot rope tied about its neck. This is secured to the hill itself, near the opening. The rope prevents them from wandering off.

Gruck doesn't feed the lizards as often as he should, so when a PC enters within range of the ropes, the lizards leap to attack, alerting Gruck in the process.

Giant Lizards (2): Int Non; AL N; AC 5; MV 15; HD 3+1; hp 18, 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Special (double damage is scored on a natural 20); SZ H; ML 8; XP 270 each.

12. Gruck's Lair

The cave is quite damp and it slopes downward gradually. The corridor walls glisten with dampness. After about 50 feet of twisting and turning, you enter a dark chamber. The chamber is perhaps 40 feet across at its widest point, and its walls are very irregular. There is a large pile of mangy furs at the far end of the room. Next to the furs is a crude table but no chairs, a small chest, and two buckets. A few crates of moldy food lie nearby.

The buckets contain drinking water, and the furs smell bad (Gruck's bed). Characters watching the furs should attempt a Wisdom check. Success reveals movement. Gruck is hiding there. Gruck, if unnoticed, attacks with surprise any character who comes close to the table or the chest. He will first reach out with claws, then melees with his club.

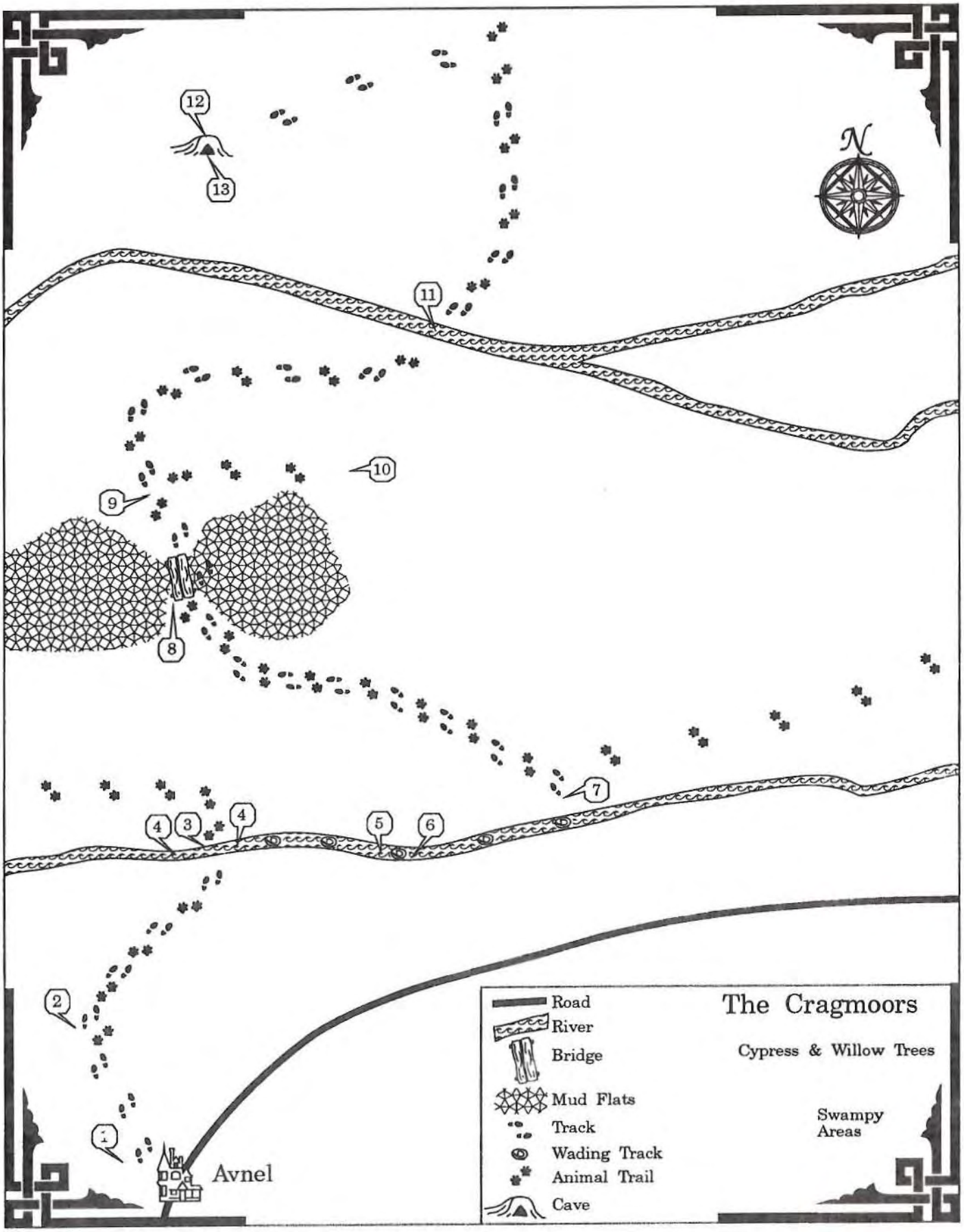
Giant Two-headed Troll (1): Int Average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 12; HD 10; hp 68; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/1-12; SA Special; SD Regeneration; SZ L; ML 16; XP 3,000.

Gruck regenerates 3 hit points per round beginning in the third round after he is damaged. He wears thick, crude skins, which improve his armor class, and he carries a pet rock the size of a grapefruit (a *luckstone*).

Gruck lost one of his heads several years ago, and it never grew back

When Gruck is dealt with, the sorceress can be found in a shallow alcove—gagged, bruised, but otherwise unhurt (unless the adventure took longer than four hours of game time, in which case she's been eaten).

The troll's chest is unlocked and contains his treasure: 2,576 gp, 941 sp, two necklaces (one gold, one silver) worth 4,880 gp and 1,950 gp respectively, a *dagger +3*, a *short sword +2*, and a potion bottle of green liquid. This is swamp water, if tasted the imbiber must save vs. poison or be ill for 2-5 days. ❑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Avnel
Road
River
Bridge
Mud Flats
Track
Wading Track
Animal Trail
Cave
The Cragmoors
Cypress & Willow Trees
Swampy Areas

Short People

with thanks to Robert Jones and Jim Lowder

An AD&D Game 2nd Edition scenario for six diminutive adventurers

by Tom and Matt Prusa

Adventure Background

Following this scenario are characters that can be used with the adventure. The characters are members of a well known adventuring group, "Short People." The company is vacationing in Burrowville when they are summoned to the town council by Malakii Farseer. It seems that the fields which produce Burrowville's main cash crop, Burrowville Blueleaf Tobacco, were mortgaged last spring. Malakii had assured the council that, after three years of bad crops, the harvest this year would be enough to cover the cost of the mortgage. He was right. However, Burrowville is located in northern Amn, and the Zhentarim, a noted evil organization, is attempting to get a foothold there. The valley of Burrowville would be an excellent start. And in Amn, the golden rule prevails: "He who has the gold, makes the rules."

Hence, the Zhentarim purchased the mortgage. If it is not paid off within two weeks, the town of Burrowville will be ruined. To save the town and pay off the mortgage, 12,000 danters (gold pieces) must be raised in that time. The town has been able to harvest and cure 2,000 pounds (one full wagon) of Burrowville Blueleaf, the best and rarest tobacco in this part of the world. It only can be grown in Burrowville, and to have some Blueleaf is a status symbol among the wealthy of Amn.

Ordinarily, traders offer 5 to 10 danters a pound for it, but this year only one trader came, and he offered the ridiculous price of 1 danter a pound. The Zhentarim scared the other traders away.

A brave party must take the wagon south across the Ridge to Keczulla to sell the tobacco, and return to pay the mortgage. In a major city like Keczulla, it would be easy to get 10 danters a pound, possibly more.

The party has a wagon, owned by Badger Thistledown. He is the youngest wagon-owner in town, and the only one willing to risk his wagon. The wagon is pulled by four mules: AC 7, HD 3, HP 20. If one of the mules is lost during the adventure, it can be replaced by a pony, adding one extra day to the trip for each mule lost.

Each of the four members of the "Short People" company has a pony: AC 7, HD 2, HP 13.

Players' Introduction

It has been a quiet vacation here in Burrowville. You are members of the famous adventuring company "Short People."

Adventuring is a risky business, but you are quite good at it. Ally, the bold halfling fighter; Murphy of Moradin, the priest; Shirl Jeweljan, the illusion specialist; and Verna Burrtoes, the hard-living thief. But today the vacation may be over. You have been summoned to the town council meeting.

Malakii Farseer, a member of the council, asked you to attend the meeting on a matter of grave importance. Farseer also asked "Badger" Thistledown, Ally's younger brother to come.

You report to the town hall, where the mayor is waiting. He ushers you in, and you are seated at the end of the long table.

"Welcome adventurers," greets Ned Burrower, the mayor of Burrowville. "I have some bad news. As you all know, Burrowville's main cash crop and chief export is the fine tobacco we grow. Of all the varieties grown, the most valuable and sought after is Burrowville Blueleaf. It can be grown only in our valley.

"The past three years the weather has played heck with the crop, yielding almost nothing. It put the town in a real financial bind. So, this spring, we had to borrow money—and we had to mortgage the Blueleaf fields to do it. Malakii assured us the crop this year would be enough to pay off the mortgage. He was right—as usual.

"But what he didn't foresee was that the Zhentarim would be out to steal our land! They purchased the mortgage, and they have scared off the traders who usually come. So far, only one trader has reached Burrowville, and he offers only 1 danter a pound—a tenth of the true value. His offer was met with the scorn it deserved, but it leaves the town in a tight spot.

"We have two weeks to come up with 12,000 danters, or we must forfeit the best lands in the valley. The normal trade routes would take almost a month to get a load of Blueleaf anywhere. So that is not an option. Our only hope lies with you.

Your brave party must take a wagonload of Blueleaf over the trail through the Ridge. In Keczulla you will be able to sell a full wagonload for 20,000 danters or more. 12,000 must go to pay the mortgage, half of anything over that you may keep.

Will you do it?"

The mayor answers any questions put to him, as far as his knowledge goes:

- There is a wagon trail leading south to a main road, which in turn leads to Keczulla. It has not been used in recent years. Most traders take a much longer route east and then south (a 25-day trip at least).
- The territory to the south is rumored to be overrun with trolls, bugbears, and giants. Especially trolls.
- Malakii will accompany you as official representative of the council.
- Theodore is here because he is the only one in town who was willing to risk his wagon in the Ridge.

If pressed, the mayor can sweeten the offer in the following ways:

1. Add another 25% of the profits over and above the mortgage.

2. Allow Murphy to build a shrine to Moradin in the village.

3. Offer Shirl a fine set of silk clothes.

4. Offer Verna and Ally places on the town council.

5. Offer Badger a lucrative long term hauling contract.

Wandering Monster List

Use these wandering monsters in the hills of the Ridge, either on the PCs' way to Keczulla, or if time permits, on their way back.

1. Bugbear (7): Int Low; AL CE; AC 5 (10); MV 9; HD 3 + 1; hp 16 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (2d4) or by weapon; SA Surprise, +2 to damage; SZ L.

The bugbears believe they have found easy pickings. They will attempt to ambush the party, fleeing if more than three of them are slain.

2. Leprechauns (3): Int Very; AL CG; AC 8; MV 15; HD 1/2; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg Nil; SA Spells; SD Spells, never surprised; MR 80%; SZ S.

Abilities: *Invisible* at will, *ventriloquism* at will, *polymorph inanimate objects, create illusion* (as *improved phantasmal force*) may snatch objects on a 75% chance.

The leprechauns want some Burrowville Blueleaf. They use *ventriloquism* to sound like ogres, and demand that a big handful of Blueleaf be left on the trail for them.

3. Giant-kin—Cyclops (4): Int Low; AL C(E); AC 3; MV 12; HD 5; hp 25 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (weapon) +4 (Str bonus); SZ L.

Little guys. This should be easy pickings.

4. Wolf (9): Int Semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SZ S.

This pack of wolves is after the ponies and mules. They can be driven off if flashy magic (*fireball, lightning bolt* or *pyrotechnics*) is used.

Encounter One: But, Mother!

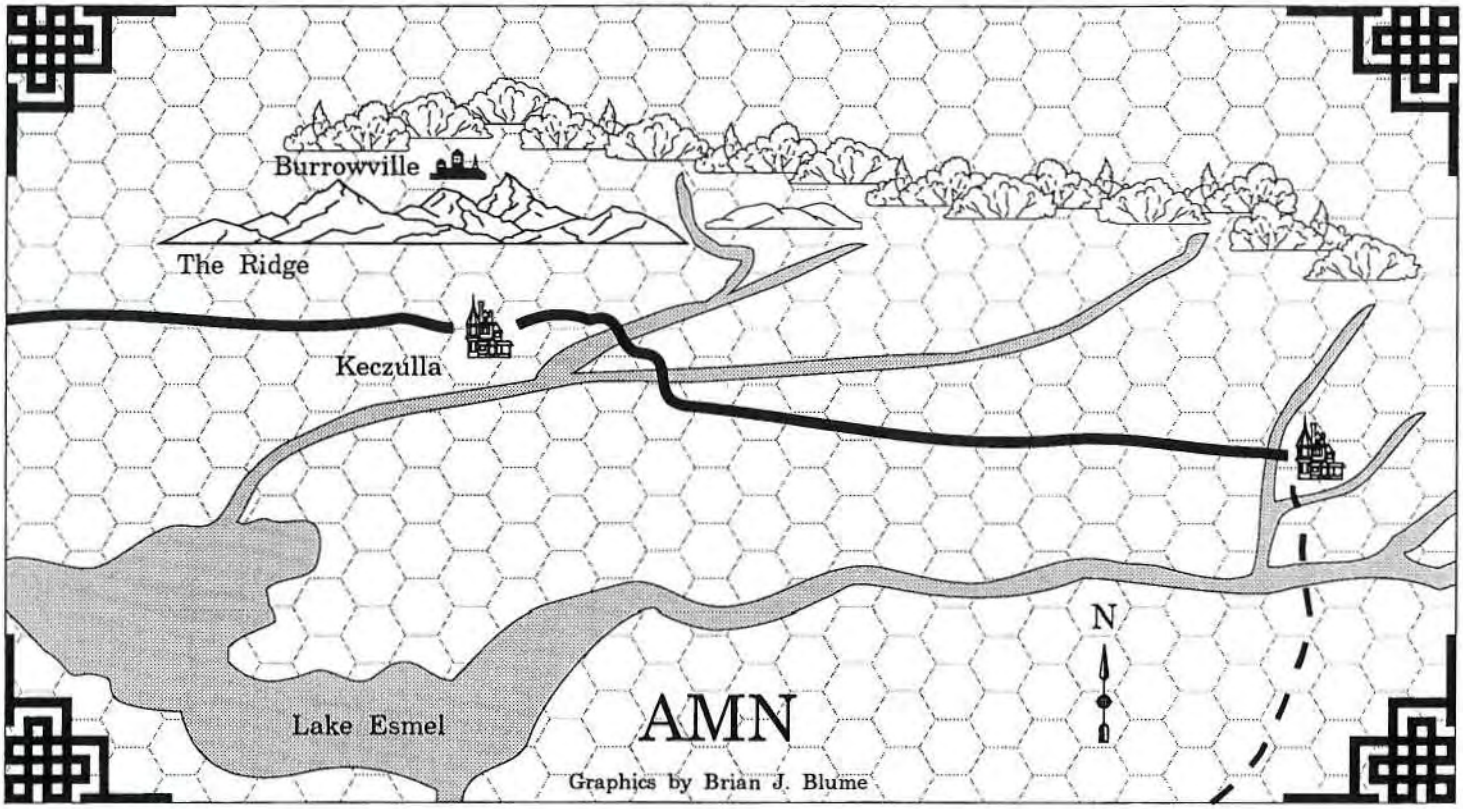
The PCs are shown to Badger's wagon, which is already loaded and hitched. There are four mules pulling it. It is a normal trader's wagon, loaded with four 500-pound bales of cured Burrowville Blueleaf. Supplies and three tents are stored in a space under the seats. The PCs are reminded that they must be back in two weeks with at least 12,000 danters, or the tobacco fields and the town will be gone.

The trip will take at least a week—if good time is made. The PCs will be advised to sell the wagon and buy ponies to make the trip back faster.

As your group nears the edge of town, a shrill feminine voice cuts through the cool air. "THEODORE! T-H-E-O-D-O-R-E! Theodore Thistledown! Just where do you think you are going?"

It is Elenor Thistledown, Ally's and Badger's mother. She is upset with Badger and wants him to come home—immediately. After all, he just turned 31 and is still a baby. He could be injured.

Elenor is a frightened mother. She will not listen to reason, at least not at first. She must be calmed down and convinced no harm will come to Badger.



She insists that he take his raincoat, umbrella, and a fresh handkerchief. She also brought a fresh handkerchief for Ally and Murphy. Finished passing out the items, she begins to weep, kissing all the characters and telling them she hopes they save the city. If the other characters let Badger be hustled off for home, he sneaks out and joins the party in an hour.

Encounter Two: Toll Road

You have been traveling for two days and are well into the ridge. For the past 18 hours there has been a steady drizzle. You are wet, cranky, and miserable (Except Badger, if he's wearing his raincoat). As you crest a hill, you see the path leads through a narrow passage between two huge boulders. There is a tree trunk across the road, and three dwarves stand behind it. The trunk has ropes attached, to move it, if necessary. The dwarves wave to you as you approach.

As you near the pass, you can see a sign on the left boulder. It reads:

Toll Road: Walkers 10 gp, Horses/ponies 50 gp, Wagons 50% of contents.

The dwarves offer to move the tree trunk—if the party will pay up. They cannot be talked down from their prices, and will not budge from behind the tree. As soon as it is apparent that the party will not pay, the dwarves shout: "Thieves!, Bandits!" and attack.

This is not a toll road. It is hardly even a path. A Zhentarim cleric hidden on top of the right boulder is in charge of this assault. The Zhentarim are aware of the attempt to raise the gold for the mortgage, and have sent several agents to stop the party. The cleric also wouldn't mind having the Blueleaf, since it is quite valuable.

Combat is inevitable, and once it breaks out, the PCs find themselves confronted by the following:

Doppleganger (3): Int Very; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; hp 30, 28, 20; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; SA Surprise; SD Special; MR Special; SZ M.

Until they are killed, they appear as dwarves, swinging battleaxes.

Troll (2): Int Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 36 each; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 5/8-5/8-6-12; SA Special; SD Regeneration; SZ L.

While the trolls and dopplegangers keep the PCs occupied, the Zhentarim cleric begins casting spells from the top of the right boulder.

Zhentarim Cleric, Priest of Cyric: AC 2 (Plate and shield); MV 6; HD 5; hp 23; THACO 16; Dmg 2-8 +2; SA Spells; SD Spells; SZ M.

He carries a *flail +1*. Spells in memory: *cause light wounds, curse, cure light wounds* x2, *sanctuary, hold person* x2, *silence 15' radius, heat metal, cause disease, animate dead.*

The cleric will have his *sanctuary* cast before the battle begins, and anyone trying to attack him must make a saving throw versus spells to do so.

All of the creatures except the cleric fight to the death. Note that the trolls have a −4 to hit any of the characters.

Encounter Three: Amnish Outpost

It is the evening of your fourth day of travel. You have made your way through the ridge, and are now on a main crossroads. There is an Amnish outpost here, a small tent-town that has sprung up outside the garrison. Several caravans are stopped here. There is a garrison of several hundred guards nearby, apparently keeping the trade roads open. You are stopped and asked your business.

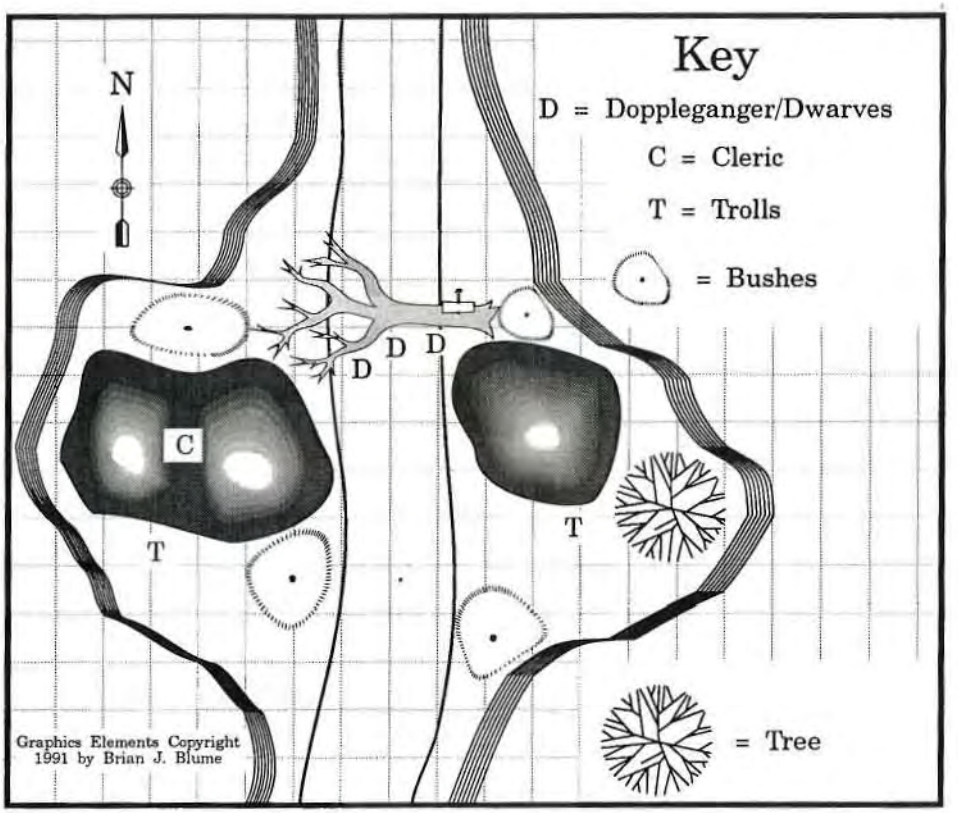
If the party mentions trading, the guards invite them to camp in the caravan area. Business rules in Amn, and no one knows who might be the next millionaire. If Burrowville Blueleaf is mentioned, eyebrows will be raised. There hasn't been Blueleaf in Amn for three years.

The party will be invited to set up their wagons in between a caravan of leather goods and a mule train belonging to a gem merchant. The leader of the leather goods' caravan, a human named Hulsef Micadot, is friendly and talkative. The gem merchant is sullen and silent. The mule train has 20 guards—half of them are alert and watchful at all times.

Hulsef invites the characters to eat with him, and all the while he talks animatedly of leather working and the joys of cowhide. He is friendly, but incredibly dull. Just remember, on any comment made or question asked, Hulsef immediately thinks of how it relates to leather. For example, if asked about the road to Keczulla, Hulsef will recall the fine leather he purchased in Keczulla three years ago.

After finally getting Hulsef off to bed, you are hailed from the dark. A clear voice, speaking Halfling, rings out: "Hello the wagon. Would you allow a couple of fellow halflings the honor of sharing your fire?"

The halflings introduce themselves as Murrey Undervale and Horace Willowwood. They lie that they serve with a sling company in the garrison and are out looking for someone to drink with.



"We don't see many of our kind here," they say. "What brings you out this way?"

Upon hearing about the Burrowville Blueleaf, they become excited, crying out "Drinks are on us." They dig for corncob pipes and sit looking expectantly. They produce a wineskin full of fine ale, and another of fine dandelion wine. They both drink plenty of each, and even if no Blueleaf is forthcoming, will share the ale and wine with everyone. They have stories of the gem mines to the northeast, the trolls to the east, and the road to the south, which is said to be clear and in fine condition. If the characters have lost any mules, Murrey and Horace offer to sell replacements for just a few pounds of the Blueleaf. The party should be prepared to enjoy an evening of fine drinking, smoking, and companionship.

Murrey and Horace are 6th level neutral halfling thieves, who have been *geased* by a Zhentarim wizard to deliver a wagonload of Blueleaf to Zhentarim headquarters. The thieves do not wish to kill anyone, so they have laced the wine and ale with a very strong paralytic poison. Anyone drinking it will fall into a deep sleep for 2-8 hours. If a saving throw versus poison is made, paralysis is only 2-12 turns. Murrey and Horace have built up a tolerance to this poison over a number of years, and will suffer no effects from it.

What to do if one of the characters won't drink: As the characters begin to fall asleep, Horace attempts to use a sap on any characters not poisoned. Murrey uses poisoned darts. As a last resort, the wizard, who is lurking *invisibly* nearby, can use a *power word stun* from a scroll to subdue the fighting character. Additional spells on the scroll are *hold monster* and *hold person*.

Horace Willowwood: Int Average; AL Neutral; AC 5; MV 6; HD 6 (T6); hp 23; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg D 1-6 (short sword), 1-4 (dagger), 1-3 (sling); SZ S.

Horace carries 20 sling bullets and a heavily-weighted sap.

Murrey Undervale: Int Average; AL Neutral; AC 4; MV 6; HD 6 (T6); hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SZ S.

Murrey carries a *short sword +1* and 10 darts coated with sleep poison.

Zemenar, Zhentarim wizard: Int Exceptional; AL Lawful Evil; AC 2; MV 12; HD 11 (M11); hp 19; THAC0 17; #AT 1; D 1-4 (dagger); S M.

Zemenar wears *bracers of defense AC 2* and carries a *wand of paralyzation* (11 charges), and a scroll with: two *power word stun*, and one each of *hold monster* and *hold person.*

Spells: *Magic missile* (x3), *detect magic, spook, blindness, blur, invisibility* (x2), *web, hold person* (x2), *lightning bolt* (x2), *wall of fire, polymorph other, fire charm, hold monster* (x2), *wall of force.*

Zemenar does not want to kill anyone this close to the outpost. A murder might start a bigger uproar than the Zhentarim want. He will use disabling spells as needed, and will try to escape if his life seems in danger.

Encounter 4: The Morning After

You awake with splitting headaches. All of the ponies, the mules, the wagon, and the blueleaf are gone. You have been robbed! Halfling thieves!

If they ask Hulsef about the incident, he says that the wagon pulled out some hours ago. He was asleep in his wagon and only heard it leave.

Inquiries of the guards reveals only that the wagon left early this morning, driven by two "short guys." It headed east.

If Ally uses his tracking ability he can find the wagon's trail; it is heading east toward the Troll Mountains. The party will not be able to buy ponies at this outpost, although they are told that Keczulla is sure to have some, just five days walk to the south.

Encounter 5: Smoke Gets in Your Eyes

As you head east in pursuit of your stolen wagon, you see an ominous sight. A pillar of blue smoke reaches into the sky ahead of you. You hurry forward the next few miles and come upon a horrid sight. Badger's wagon is tipped over on its side, with the mules laying dead and burnt. The blueleaf is still in the wagon, but it is charred and useless, too. Several bodies appear to be strewn about the wagon.

Investigation reveals that Horace Willowwind is dead, as is Zemenar (possibly unknown to the players, until now). The wizard is lying torn and broken about fifty feet away from the wagon. There are several large red scales laying in the area, and holes where some sort of acidic substance has burned into the rock.

If the characters search the wagon they find the wounded, but conscious, Murrey Undervale. He pleads with the characters not to kill him, as the wizard made him steal the Blueleaf. With the wizard dead, Murrey is free of the *geas*, and he can tell the whole story.

The wagon was accosted by a young and rather foolish copper dragon. The dragon attempted to talk to Zemenar, wanting to share riddles. Zemenar panicked and hit the dragon with a *lightning bolt* at point blank range. The dragon fell and broke his wing, but his claws and teeth were still more than a match for the wizard. After the wizard was dead, the dragon breathed acid on the wagon, killing Horace. Murrey rolled under the wagon at the last minute. Wounded severely, the dragon headed for his lair on foot.

Murrey tells the PCs the truth about last night, the poison, the wizard, and the Zhentarim involvement. He is not a member of the Zhentarim, and neither was Horace.

If no one thinks of it, Murrey will suggest the PCs follow the dragon, and he offers to go along and help. He wants revenge for Horace, who was his cousin. (He also wants an equal share of the dragon's treasure.)

Encounter 6: The Climb In

You have been following the dragon for an hour now, and have found a lot of bloodstains. Suddenly the bloodstains end, and so does the trail. You come to a cliff face, 200 feet tall. The bloodstains stop 50 feet from the cliff face.

The rock face is unbroken, although the bloodstains stop at the base of the cliff. If the party looks around they notice that about 60 or 70 feet straight up, the rock is scratched, and there are bloodstains. Investigation reveals an *illusionary wall* spell that is hiding the entrance to a tunnel. The scratches indicate the place where the dragon scrambled into the lair. The rock face can be climbed normally by the thieves. Several of the party members have ropes, and the party should be able to ascend without serious mishaps.

The tunnel you finally reach is about 30 feet wide and 40 feet high. It has numerous branches, but the bloodstains continue to lead you, this time down.

Encounter 7: Tricks and Traps

After about 150′ of winding tunnel, the party encounters a deadfall trap. There is a section of the floor which appears to be a buried boulder. If more than 20 and less than 400 pounds is placed on this boulder, a huge rock drops from the ceiling, doing 4-40 points of damage to anyone in a 10′ radius below. Allow affected characters to roll under their Dexterity for half damage.

If the thieves or the dwarf are actively searching, they will have normal chances to detect this trap. It can be easily negated by having all the characters step on it at once, thereby exceeding the 400 pounds.

The party next reaches a very deadly trap—for humans.

You continue along the tunnel when you here a voice shout, "Now!" and a large scythe whips through the air above you.

Murphy feels the blade pass just above him, and then the scythe hits the wall with a "thunk." Anyone taller than five feet would now be a head shorter.

Encounter 8: Bullseye

You continue down, pausing only when you hear a loud "kaboom!" It is followed by resonant, rough laughter. Deep voices are speaking in an unknown language. As you proceed forward, the tunnel opens into a large cave. There are four gray and tan-skinned giants here, two on each side of the cave. As you peek into the

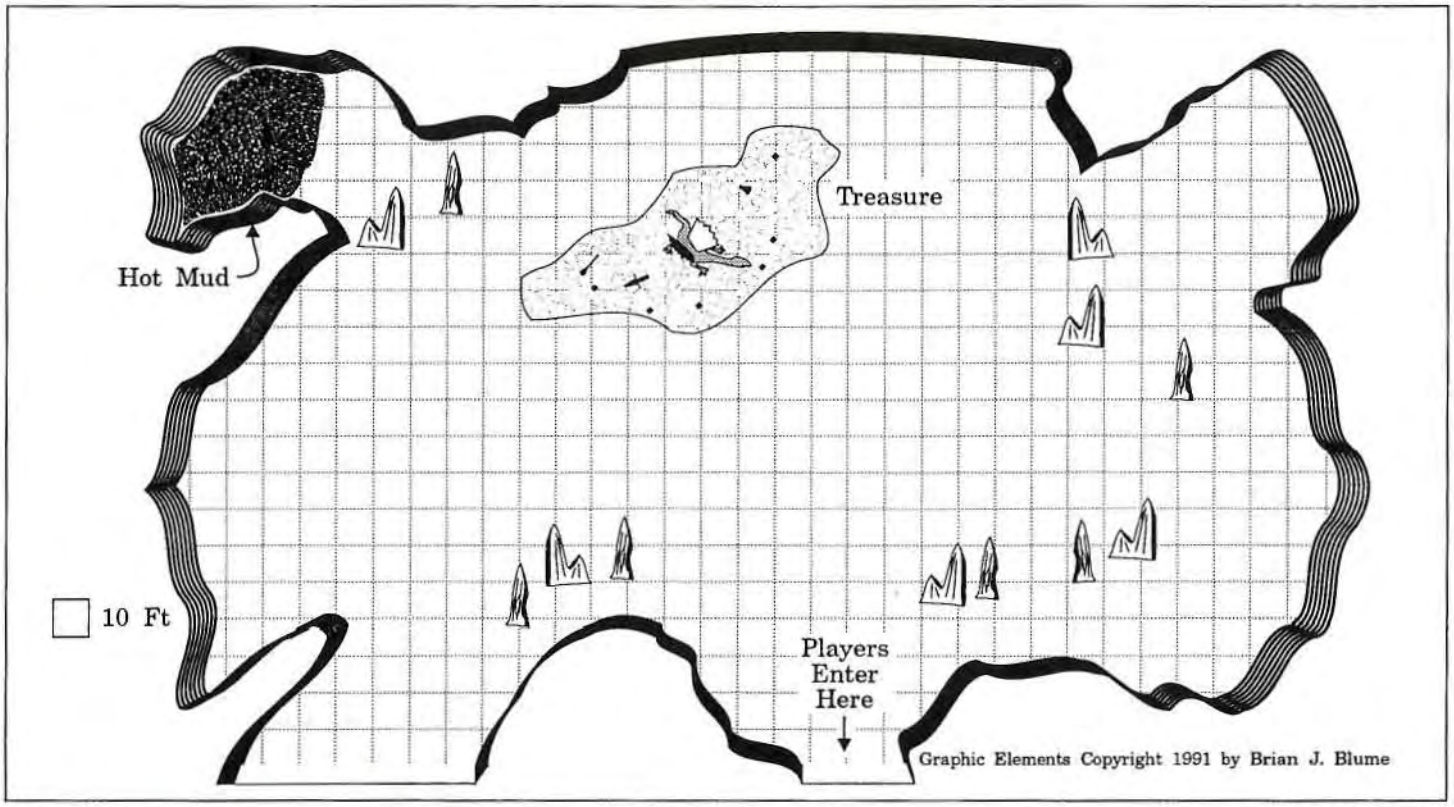


Photo Credit Here

chamber, you see one of the giants wind up and throw a boulder at another giant. The target ducks, but is hit. The giant who threw the rock cheers loudly, while another giant next to him slaps him on the back. The giants have not noticed you. Across the cave the tunnel continues, sloping sharply down.

These stone giants are the dragon's friends, and they help guard his cave. The giants, despite their game, are very alert and will certainly spot the party if they try to sneak across the cave.

When the giants spot the party, they will not attack immediately. Instead they yell in very crude Common, "Little guys. Hey, guys, watcha want in a dragon's cave? Can you guys throw rocks?"

Since the halflings can certainly throw rocks, they are challenged to a rock tossing contest. At first the giants suggest hurling rocks at each other, but the characters probably won't go for that. If they do, go ahead and let them. It could hurt, though.

Then the giants suggest throwing rocks at a bullseye. If the party can win, they won't get eaten.

The Throwing Contest

One of the giants scratches a pair of crude circles on a wall of the cave. The bullseye is a full foot across, and the outer ring is four feet wide. The thrower's line is 150 feet away from the target. Each participant gets three throws. Bullseyes count 2 points, and a hit anywhere else in the target is worth 1 point. The team with the highest total will be the winner.

The party must choose four team members. The size of the target means that a bullseye is equivalent to AC 6, and the target itself is AC 10. The distance is considered long range (−5), but the PCs can find plenty of small stones perfect for throwing. All of the halflings receive a +1 bonus to their "to hit" rolls.

For the giants, the bullseye is much smaller, figuratively speaking, and will be harder to hit. The bullseye is AC 0, and the target is AC 4. The giants are at short range.

Giant, Stone (4): Int Average; AL Neutral; AC 0; MV 12; HD 14 + 1-3 hit points; hp 78, 70, 70, 66; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 or by weapon (2-12+8); SA Hurling rocks for 3-30 (3d10); SD Special; SZ H.

If the party wins, the giants immediately begin blaming each other, and soon begin throwing stones at each other. The party may slip out unnoticed now.

If the party loses, the giants begin clapping each other on the back and congratulating each other. They will take huge drinks from wineskins. If the party acts quickly they may slip out while the giants are occupied.

When the giants notice the little guys are gone, they assume the party went back outside.

Encounter 9: Dragon At Last

You continue to descend. You have detected and bypassed two more of the deadfall traps. You must be getting close. Then you hear breathing. It is the rasping of something large gasping for air. You hear a voice, speaking Common. "Oh no, now it's little adventurers! This is turning out to be a really bad day." You round

the corner and see a coppery-hued dragon laying on a bed of gold and silver pieces.

Dragon, Copper (Florizzilikar) (1): Int Very; AL Chaotic Good; AC −2; MV (currently 9); HD 14; hp 98 (currently 12); THAC0 4; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 1-6+5/1-6+5/5-20+5; SA Special; SD Immune to acid; MR 10%; SZ G.

Florizzilikar can breathe every three rounds. The breath weapon can be either a 30′ by 20′ by 20′ cloud of *slow* gas, or a 70′ long by 5′ wide spurt of acid for 10d6+5.

Spells: *Spider climb, neutralize poison* (x3), *stone shape* (x2), *magic missile* (4 missiles), *charm person*

The dragon knows that ordinarily the party is no match for him, but in his wounded, flightless state, he will be careful.

Allow the players time to react. Depending on their actions, there are several possibilities:

- If the PCs attack, the dragon will not be surprised and immediately breathes on the largest number of PCs possible. He then uses *magic missile* on a spell caster, while closing with any fighter types. He attempts to finish off the toughest fighter quickly (probably the dwarf), and then uses his claws and his bite on the remaining spell casters.
- If the PCs try to talk to the dragon, he will use *clairvoyance* on them. Play the dragon as arrogant, very sure of himself, and amused at an adventuring party of short people. He is also hurting and cranky. But he has lost a lot of his foolishness today, and will put up with comments that ordinarily would dare him to use his breath weapon. If the PCs tell him of their plight, he offers a contest. If they can win the riddling game, he will lend them enough gold to pay off the mortgage. The party must swear to return in a year with three times that amount. If they lose, he gets to keep their magic. The dragon realizes he is very hurt and won't willingly fight. He is sure he could take the party, but if he missed just one, a lucky spell could finish him off. He is wearing an amulet with a *dimension door* on it. If seriously threatened, the dragon uses the amulet to reach the stone giants for help.

Encounter 10: The Riddling Game

The riddling game is an old and honored custom, especially among copper dragons. Tell the players their characters are familiar with it. Both sides will come up with a riddle. The party must answer the dragon's riddle correctly, and then stump the dragon with their riddle. Five minutes is all the time allowed to come up with the answer.

Riddle 1: In your eyes causes blindness,
In your nose,
just a sneeze,
Yet some suck this down
As they please.

Answer: Smoke

Riddle 2: What is there, full and lively,
but not there at all.
Can't be touched, felt, or handled,
but can do all of those to you.

Answer: Illusion

Riddle 3: This stands alone,
with no bones or solid form.
Adamant, it prospers, never wrong,
though it may hurt.
Twistable, malleable,
but always straight and true.

Answer: Truth

If the party wins, the dragon will be delighted, because he will have learned a new riddle. He demands a strict accounting of any monies being taken. If one of the thieves attempts to filch something extra, you may roll a normal pickpocket roll. If it succeeds, the thief may leave with the treasure. However, in three days the dragon will notice something missing and will show up on the PCs' trail. He will ask for it back—now.

The Dragon's Treasure

20,000 silver pieces (5,000 of them Tarans); 10,000 gold pieces (6,000 of them Danters); 1,500 platinum Roldons (in 3 large sacks); 10 trade bars marked 500 danters each from a well-known trading house; 12 matched turquoise studded drinking cups worth 150 gp each; 27 various gems (turquoise, agates, catseyes) worth an average of 72 gp each; two wagonloads of silk worth 2,000 gold pieces; *short sword +2*; scroll of *protection from cold; elixir of health;* cursed scroll, save vs. magic or be *polymorphed* into a dragonfly; 15 *arrows +1;* and a *ring of shocking grasp.*

When the characters have successfully defeated the dragon, they make their way back to Burrowville.

If time permits, one of the monsters from the random list may attack the characters on the way back.

Home As Heroes

The party is welcomed back as heroes. The feast of the year is thrown, and all of the characters are made Honorary Town Council members and Knights of Burrowville.

Malakii returns to civilian life, happy to have adventured one more time. He serves on the town council for many more years, and eventually is elected mayor.

Badger begins to realize there is a time and a place for pranks, and is then invited to join the adventuring company, rising to become a valuable member of the group.

Shirl finally forgives Badger for the gooseberry incident and the two become great friends.

Verna never does learn to control her "sticky fingers," but continues to improve as a thief. She, Shirl, and Badger get into more trouble than ever.

Murphy is awarded a lifetime supply of Burrowville Blueleaf, although this does not quite make up for having another thief and troublemaker in the party. Still, they are basically good kids at heart.

Ally goes on to become one of the most famous halfling fighters on the Sword Coast. But his mother still brings him fresh handkerchiefs.

And then there's the matter of 36,000 gold danters they owe to a copper dragon. ❑

Murphy Ironfist

7th Level Male Dwarf Priest of Moradin

STR: 18
INT: 11
WIS: 17
DEX: 11
CON: 16
CHR: 10

AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 2
Hit Points: 53
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Halfling, Gnomish, read/write Dwarvish, Halfling
THACO: 16

Age: 167
Height: 4'1"
Weight: 165 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown

Weapon Proficiencies: Warhammer, mace, flail, hammer (thrown)
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Weaponsmith (7), stonemasonry (15), blindfighting, religion (17), cooking (11)

Magic Items: *Plate mail +1, shield +1, warhammer +2,* scroll with the following spells at 12th level: *cure disease, barkskin, cure critical wounds, bless, detect evil*
Spells/day: 5 5 3 1
Equipment: Backpack, two bars of soap, two sets of clean clothes, small silver hammer (holy symbol), three flasks of oil, tinderbox, two vials holy water, ivory pipe in the shape of a hammer, wineskin, two bottles of rum, pouch of Burrowville Blueleaf.
Wealth Carried: 65 silver tarans, 33 gold danters, 16 platinum roldons.

As a priest of Moradin, you have major access to the spheres of Combat, Guardian, Healing, Necromancy, and Elemental (stone and fire related only) and minor access to Protection, Divination.

Additional Daily Spells: *bless, detect evil, purify food & drink, light, detect lie*

Altered Spell: The 2nd level spell *flame blade* becomes a *flame hammer* for priests of Moradin

Restriction: May not turn undead

Weapon Specialization Bonus: Because priests of Moradin concentrate on the warhammer, a priest receives the effect of weapon specialization with a warhammer only. Bonuses are +1 to

Malakii Farseer

7th Level Male Halfling Diviner

STR: 16
INT: 18
WIS: 16
DEX: 12
CON: 15
CHR: 10

AC Normal: 8
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 20
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Languages: Common, Halfling, Thorass (Amn trade language), Gnome, Read/Write Common, Halfling, Thorass
THACO: 16

Age: 96
Height: 2'7"
Weight: 70 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Gray/Brown

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, staff, sling
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Astrology (18), spellcraft (19), appraising (18), herbalism (19), weather sense (16), gaming (10)

Magic Items: *Ring of protection +2, wand of lightning* (10 charges), scroll with the following spells at 11th level: *fireball, vampiric touch, enchanted weapon, spectral hand, telekinesis*
Spells/day: 4 3 2 1 (plus one extra divination spell of each level)
Equipment: Cloak, beltpouch, wineskin, soap, washcloth, towel, spare astrology charts, tarot deck, set of knucklebones, corncob pipe, pouch of Burrowville Green, five days' rations, leather backpack, spell components, traveling spellbooks, paper and ink, quill pen, tinderbox.
Wealth Carried: 15 silver tarans, 12 gold danters, two pearls worth 100 gp each.

Traveling Spellbooks

Level One

detect magic
feather fall
identify
read magic
audible glamer
light
hypnotism
Tensor's floating disc

Level Two

continual light
detect invisibility
magic mouth
ESP
levitate
detect evil

Shirl Jeweljan

7th Level Female Gnome Illusionist

STR: 10
INT: 18
WIS: 12
DEX: 17
CON: 16
CHR: 14

AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 4
Hit Points: 19
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Gnome, Halfling, Dwarf, Elvish, read/write Gnome, Halfling, Elvish
THACO: 19

Age: 86
Height: 3'1"
Weight: 80 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, staff, dart
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Seamstress (18), appraisal (17), ventriloquism (19), gem cutting (19), spellcraft (19), sculpture (12)

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 4, wand of paralyzation* (9 charges remaining), *Nolzur's marvelous pigments* (two jars), *bag of holding* (weight limit 500 pounds, 70 cubic feet), scroll of five spells at 13th level: *seeming, burning hands, glitterdust, improved invisibility, disintegrate*
Spells/day:4 3 2 1 (plus one per level from the school of illusion)
Equipment: Cloak, beltpouch, wineskin, perfumed soap, washcloth, towel, traveling spell books, two sets of fine clothes, spare cloak (stained purple), needle and thread, five days' rations, 20 darts (in a case), leather backpack, silver jeweled dagger, spell components, hammer and chisel.
Wealth Carried: 52 gold danters, 14 platinum roldons, two agates worth 120 gp each.

Traveling Spellbooks

Level One

detect magic
phantasmal force
read magic
taunt
feather fall
hypnotism
sleep
spook

Level Two

alter self
blur
levitate
blindness
invisibility
summon swarm

Level Three

flame arrow
hold person
Sepia snake sigil
invisibility
phantom steed
spectral force

Level Four

dimension door
improved invisibility
Evard's black tentacles
rainbow pattern

You are a happy-go-lucky gnome. After all, life should be fun, but neat. If it can't be done without getting messy, it shouldn't be done at all. That's why you took up illusions. It allowed you to adventure without getting all messy. And your illusions are so pretty.

As a member of the "Short People" company, you are the resident mage. The others all depend on you, and you always know just what to do. You four have been together for five years now, and have been very successful. Right now you are on a vacation in Burrowville, the home town of Ally and Verna. It's been fun, but with the summons to the council meeting, it sounds as if your vacation is over.

The others summoned to the meeting are: Ally Thistledown, the leader of your group; Verna Burrtoes, your best friend in the whole world; Murphy, the straitlaced dwarf; Malakii Farseer, the old halfling mage; and Theodore "Badger" Thistledown, Ally's kid brother and a real brat. The little creep once ruined one of your outfits by dumping a bucket of gooseberries on your head.

Level Three

clairvoyance
dispel magic
tongues
clairaudience
hold person
Melf's minute meteors

Level Four

magic mirror
wizard eye
detect scrying
fumble

You are unique. A halfling mage. And a divination specialist at that. Of course, you didn't start out that way. You were once a human mage. But then you decided you were knowledgeable enough to start making your own potions. Something must have gotten switched in the mixing process, because when you tried out one of the potions you ended up like this. You thought that you would just have to wait until it wore off, but that was 40 years ago. For a while you tried to dispel the magic every day, but always unsuccessfully. Now you wouldn't know how to be a human anymore. And you get more respect as a "halfling" seer than you ever did as a human. In fact, the whole town comes to you for advice.

Fortunately, your experiences have taught you much about life. You never hesitate to share your wisdom with anyone who asks. Or who doesn't ask. Looking at both sides of the story is your strong suit. Many of the younger halflings look up to you as a father figure, and you enjoy the attention.

As the smartest person in town, you have been a member of the town council almost since you first settled in Burrowville (40 years ago). Now, the town is in trouble.

hit, +2 to damage, 3 attacks every 2 rounds.

You are a priest of Moradin, and you serve the Soul-Bringer above all things. But when you can, you like to help your friends. The halflings of Burrowville have been good to you. Two of the members of your adventuring company were born here. They have families here. You don't know what all the excitement is about, but you are willing to check it out. As a servant of the great Moradin, you place your faith in the law above all. The Soul-bringer does not allow straying, in either word or deed.

You were a young dwarf, headed for a career as a fighter. Then you got into a drunken fight with another dwarf over a gold cup. You punched him and broke his neck! That experience changed you. You swore you would never lift a hand against another member of your own race. You took up the worship of the Soulforger, and began adventuring for the greater glory of Moradin. You have not returned to your home in more than 100 years. Now that you have found a friend like Ally, you may never need to.

As an adventurer in the "Short Persons" adventuring group, you find yourself in a unique situation. You are the tallest one in the party. This is great! And as often as you hear it, you'll never get tired of "How's the weather up there?" The group consists of yourself, Ally (the leader), Shirl Jeweljan (a gnome), and Verna, the thief in the party. At first you were uneasy about traveling with a thief. Verna has been an honorable thief, never stealing from the poor, but instead using her skills to help you thwart lawlessness.

Verna Burrtoes

7th Level Female Halfling Thief

STR: 11
INT: 12
WIS: 12
DEX: 17
CON: 15
CHR: 14

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 6
Hit Points: 28
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Thieves' Cant, Halfling, Dwarvish, Gnomish, read/write Halfling
THACO: 17

Age: 62
Height: 3'4"
Weight: 62 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Sling, Short sword
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Appraisal (12), riding (pony) (15), drinking (15), gaming (14), forgery (16)
Magic Items: *Dagger +2 longtooth, bracers of defense AC 6, ring of spider*

Ally Thistledown

7th Level Male Halfling Fighter

STR: 17
INT: 14
WIS: 12
DEX: 16
CON: 15
CHR: 15

AC Normal: -1
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 63
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Halfling, Dwarvish, Gnomish, read/write Halfling
THACO: 14

Age: 49
Height: 3'4"
Weight: 165 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Black/Brown

Weapon Proficiencies: Short sword (specialized), short bow, sling, dagger, throwing knife
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Blind-fighting, fire-fighting (13), tracking (12)
Magic Items: *Chain mail +2, short sword +1, buckler +1, sling of seeking +2, potion of invulnerability*

Theodore "Badger" Thistledown

Male Halfling Fighter/Thief 4th/5th

STR: 18
INT: 10
WIS: 10
DEX: 18
CON: 16
CHR: 14

AC Normal: 4
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 40
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Common, Thieves' Cant, Halfling, Thorass (trade language of Amn)
THACO: 17

Age: 30
Height: 3'5"
Weight: 71 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, knife, hand axe, short bow, short sword, sling, hand axe, throwing knife
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Riding (pony) (10), tightrope walking (18), wagon driving (16), appraisal (11), animal

handling (mules) (9).
Magic Items: *Dagger +1, +2 vs. larger than man-sized creatures, potion of extra-healing, potion of polymorph self* (You are saving this for a really big joke on someone)
Equipment: Short sword, throwing knife, handaxe, sling, 20 sling bullets , 50′ rope, two flasks of oil, leather backpack, five small sacks, tinderbox, waterskin, thieves' picks, leather armor, two overripe tomatoes, jar of huckleberry jelly, two loaves journey bread, small live garter snake (your friend, Larry), spare set of trousers.
Wealth Carried: 37 copper fandars, 12 silver tarans, (you also count your wagon and four mules among your riches).

Thief Abilities

PP	OL	MS	HN	H S	CW	RL
30	45	35	60	50	60	—

Note: On your caravan travels, you picked up enough Thorass to be understood. It's a very tough language for you to learn, and you are told you speak it with a terrible accent.

Golly, a summons to the town council meeting. This could be exciting. Maybe you'll finally get a chance to show your brother and his friends just how great you are. You've been trying to get them to let you join the "Short People" adventuring group for a while now.

Normal Equipment: Backpack, belt-pouch, waterskin, two throwing knives (one in back of collar, one on belt), two sets of spare clothes, five days' rations, two flasks of elderberry wine, dagger (on belt), 20 silver sling bullets, "Short People" company charter, tinderbox
Wealth Carried: 25 silver tarans, 12 gold danters, 3 platinum roldons.

As the leader of the "Short People" adventuring company, you have a lot of responsibility. And you take it seriously. Your adventuring group consists of Verna, a halfling thief, Shirl, a gnome mage, and Murphy, a priest of Moradin. Because of their skills, and your leadership, you have done well. You are almost as well known as Halfling Inc., the most famous adventuring group of your race.

You enjoy being the leader, but once in a while it is nice to kick back and have fun. This vacation has been excellent, but now it may be over. Your group has been summoned to the town council meeting this morning. The mayor requested that you bring your pesky kid brother "Badger" along. Geez Louise, it's bad enough to have to cut your vacation short, but to have a guy's kid brother along just isn't fair. You left a note for your mom. She may have something to say about this.

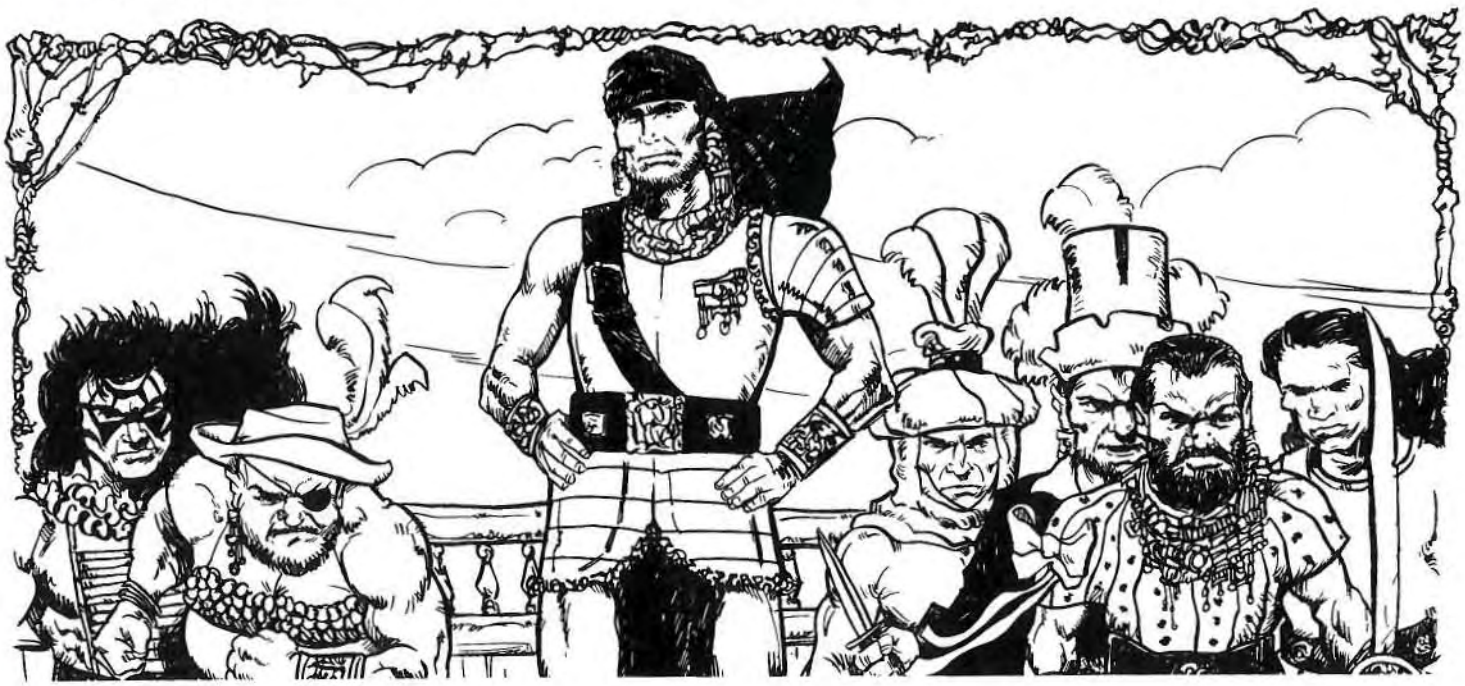
climbing (35 charges), *pouch of accessibility, potion of healing*
Normal Equipment: 50′ rope, two flasks of oil, leather backpack, five small sacks, tinderbox, waterskin, two sets of thieves picks (one hidden in hair), 20 sling bullets, sling, two bottles of cheap wine, bottle of brandy, quill pen, two bottles of ink, two sets of dark clothes, set of partying clothes (bright blue), set of knucklebones, set of loaded knucklebones (roll 7's 75% of the time).
Wealth Carried: 17 gold danters, small opal (48 gp), ruby (1,000 gp), jeweled silver hairpin (32 gp).

Thief Abilities

PP	OL	MS	HN	HS	CW	RL
75	55	65	70	45	55	5

You are a working thief. When you work, you work hard. When you party, you party harder. You can outdrink anyone in town except maybe the dwarf. And he's so stuffy, he probably couldn't get drunk if he tried.

You are a natural con artist. If it wasn't for that straitlaced dwarf, you could be extremely rich by now. He's always spoiling your cons, insisting on truth above all. You keep in practice by pickpocketing stuff and then putting it back! It's gotten you in trouble a few times, but you don't care.



Caravan

An AD&D® Game Adventure for 5–8 characters of levels 1–2

by James M. Ward

Adventure Background

The characters are on their way to Ravens Bluff, the Living City. To get there, they have joined a caravan, believing it safer than making the trip alone across unfamiliar territory.

Several encounters in this adventure are staged events designed strictly to provide color and tension; their outcomes are predetermined, but the DM should not reveal this. It is the DM's responsibility to present these events to the players in a dramatic and entertaining manner.

Players' Introduction

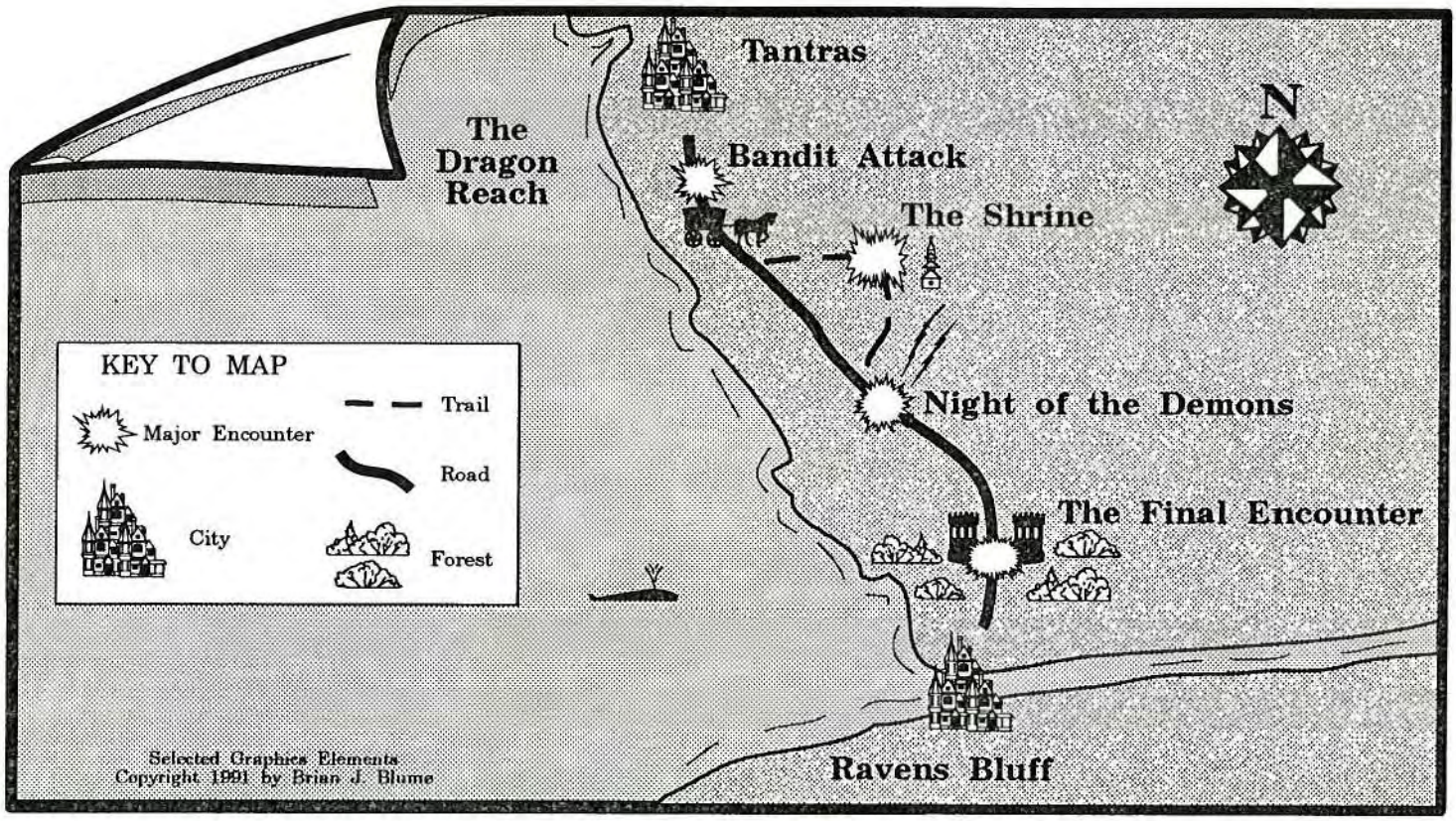
Ravens Bluff, the Living City, that is where you are going. It should take less than a week to get there, especially in the company of this caravan. The group of wagons likely will go by way of Tantras on The Dragon Reach, which is just north of Ravens Bluff.

The caravan is lead by Kantal Kantinole, a brave paladin who is going to the Living City to start a new temple. He is a veteran of many combats, so you feel safe with him. He has cautioned you, however, that someone may be after him. "So keep your head down and stay out of the way if too much trouble starts," he advises. Kantal also intends to make a short side trip to an isolated shrine, probably to secure a blessing for his temple.

Kantal is a tall, proud man of middle age. He has a very commanding presence and has attracted several other adventurers to the caravan. You are very glad to travel in Kantal's company, especially since hearing rumors about the death of D'war Ghee, a mysterious spellcaster from the east who reputedly was torn to bits by wandering tanar'ri. Since then, so the rumor goes, certain travelers on the road south have been plagued with D'war Ghee's curse—vague premonitions about the future. Worse than that, the tanar'ri, if they exist at all, still are at large.

Also with the caravan are:

* Stenius, a mysterious merchant who apparently adventured for many years. Stenius usually keeps to him-



self, but seems willing to talk if approached. He is very business-minded.

* Anton, the wizard. You have not seen his power demonstrated. But if he is half as mighty as he claims, he surely must be a force to fear.

* Tarten, the fighter, is a bit of a rogue. He never dresses well, but his blades are always clean and polished. He doesn't go out of his way to be friendly, but he has never refused a good conversation or a handshake.

* Del Sonora and Adominus, the female and male clerics, respectively, are perhaps the friendliest of the crew. They conduct regular services and seek out the companionship of your group and others in the caravan. Unfortunately, you've heard they charge for healing spells.

* Lance and Thorin are fighters with a few years' experience under their sword belts. They are quick to start up a game of chance, are friendly, and often share their ale.

* Hoarthgar, the barbarian, keeps with the fighters. He avoids Anton whenever possible. You get along with him all right. As a matter of fact, he is heading your direction now.

"Watch it. Stenius is upset. I'd stay away from him if I were you. He's ranting again. But if he rants too much he isn't going to have a head to rant with," Hoarthgar says as he puts his hand on his battle axe and stomps away.

Before you have time to react, you see Stenius approach. He is red-faced and is waving his fist in the air. "Robbed! I tell you I've been robbed. I insist we search every wagon, every saddlebag, every person in this caravan until I find my gold. I will not tolerate thievery. I joined up with this caravan to be safe. I would have been better off to go alone. Then there wouldn't have been anyone around to swipe anything.

"Hey you," he shouts, indicating your group. "Check your stuff now. Make sure it's all there. Maybe I should check it for you in case you have more than you came into this caravan with."

Stenius proceeds to examine the PCs' belongings—if they let him. Otherwise, he storms off to inspect the NPCs' possessions.

The Robbery

During the entire first day, Stenius continues to rant, rave, and shout that someone in the party has stolen almost all of his gold.

Stenius is lying about the theft and is attempting to make others believe there is a thief about so he will appear blameless when others notice items missing. Stenius is the real thief.

The Dream

The first night the PCs all have the same dream. They see a vision of Anton dying horribly with 30 arrows sticking out of his body. They also dream that Tarten has his head chopped off in a bloody battle. D'war Ghee's curse is real, and it is affecting them. The curse will continue to plague travelers on the road until the tanar'ri who slew him are slain or banished back the Abyss. The PCs will have a chance to do this in the Night of the Fiends encounter (see below).

If the PCs attempt to tell the NPCs about any dream, they are laughed at. No one believes the dreams have any significance.

Bandit Attack

Late in the morning after your dream, dust rises from the terrain east of the caravan. There is no wind, so whatever is causing the dust is a mystery.

The caravan members slow the wagons, circle them, and ready their weapons. Kantal suggests you get in the center of the circle and "keep your heads down."

Within a few moments you note what is causing the dust storm. It is many men on horseback. They are riding forward, weapons drawn. They appear to be bandits.

If the party goes to the center of the circle, they will not take any damage, and the tough NPCs will quickly dispatch the bandits. If the party tries to help with the fight, run combat normally.

Bandits (50): Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 or 1-6; SZ M; ML 13; XP 35 each.

Bandit Leader (1): Int Average; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 4; hp 38; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 or 1-6; SZ M; ML 15; XP 120.

All the bandits are armed with long swords and short composite bows.

All of the NPCs fight in the battle, but the caravan guards do most of the work. Make the battle sound perilous, with bandits everywhere and large flights of arrows raining down on the party. In the end, however, all of the bandits are killed.

During the course of the battle, the wizard Anton dies bravely. He takes many arrows in the chest after successfully blasting a group of bandits with a *fireball.* The wizard's magic items are divided among the caravan. The player characters get Anton's *scarab of protection;* Kantal tells them it has three or four charges left.

Also toward the end of the battle a wagoneer dies of a heart attack in Del Senora's arms. With his last breath he prays the young adventurers will take his wagon to the Living City and deliver it to a certain address. He offers all its contents to the group if they will only deliver the wagon.

If the party agrees, they find six long boxes in the wagon; each box is made of a rare wood:

Box one: Black Oak, 4′ long by 3′ wide. The box is half-filled with black earth, and there are five *potions of healing* in delicate glass bottles hidden in the earth.

Box two: Teak, 5′ long by 2′ wide. The box is half-filled with an earth/sand mixture. There are 11 small oil paintings of lovely undead females. The paintings look pretty good, but they are worth only 1d10 sp each.

Box three: Purple Sandalwood, 6′ long by 4′ wide. This box is half-filled with black earth, and there are 19 well-made chalices imbeded in it. Each chalice has a different castle scene etched on the side. Each chalice is worth 200 gp.

Box four: Natural ironwood, 4′ long by 3′ wide. This box's lid is a piece of carved plaster showing a series of ancient pictograms. The story they tell is of a brave prince who died at an early age of a blood sickness. A successful *read languages* roll by a thief or a *comprehend languages* spell reveals the story. The box contains a large collection of ancient toys, worth 15-20 gp each to a collector.

Box five: Black oak, 4′ long by 5′ wide. The box is half filled with black dirt, and in the dirt is a collection of 500 copper coins. If the coins are scratched, the copper rubs off to reveal platinum coins.

Box six: Natural sandalwood, 6′ feet long by 3′ wide. When this box is opened, an unearthly spectral mist rises from the interior, accompanied by an eerie moaning sound. The bottom of the box is covered by a layer of foul-smelling dust. The mist, moaning, and dust all are harmless magical effects.

The wagon itself is made of strange, ebony wood and is extremely light for its size. The wood cannot be cut, but the full force of a mace blow can create a small dent. When magical detections of any type are used on the wagon each one detects a void where the wagon should be.

On the first day the group searches the wagon they do not find any type of secret compartments, but if they search on any other day they find a hidden panel that covers an extra-dimensional space the same size as a *portable hole* (a cylinder 6′ in diameter and 10′ deep). This space is the lair of a vampire, who, like the PCs, is traveling to the Living City. The extra-dimensional space cannot be removed from the wagon without destroying both it and the wagon.

Vampire (1): Int Exceptional; AL CE; AC 1; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 8+3; hp 37; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 5-10; SA Energy drain, gaze causes *charm* save at −2, can shapechange to bat, wolf, or gaseous form at will, summon rats, wolves, or bats; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to sleep, charm, hold, poison, and paralysis, half damage from cold or electricity, regenerates 3 points per melee round; SZ M; ML 16; XP 3,000.

When found, the vampire will try to *charm* his attackers starting with the most powerful characters; he commands *charmed* victims to attack (or at least restrain) the others.

If the PCs find the vampire during the day, they can destroy him just by opening the wagon to the light of the sun.

Until found, the vampire appears each night to drink blood, but he tries not kill anyone or drain levels, as he wants a safe, steady supply of blood until he reaches the city. If detected, the vampire uses his *charm* and shape changing abilities to evade pursuit.

The Robbery Part II

The night after the bandit attack, Kantal says your group has guard duty. You're responsible for one section of the caravan.

Answer the players' questions, and get them to set up a watch schedule. During the night one or more PCs who were on guard fall asleep, and one of them has all his gold stolen. Stenius has used a *sleep* spell on the PCs and randomly picked one to steal from. In the morning, Stenius just as loudly proclaims again that everyone should have their things looked at. However, if the PCs do not announce the theft, Stenius will claim to have been robbed of a few silver chains. The NPCs will vote against any search. Stenius tries this trick twice more during the trip.

Hoarthgar And The Sting

The next day, Hoarthgar shows the PCs some land grants for pieces of Ravens Bluff that he will happily sell for 100 gp each. He talks to the PCs all day and tries to get them to buy these grants. Each grant is special in its own way and sounds attractive—land next to the mayor's palace, land next to the arena, land on the beach, etc.

All of these grants are fake and use-

less, but look quite real. If and when the PCs search Hoarthgar's things they discover many more fake deeds.

That night the PCs dream of an NPC dying horribly at the fangs of a huge black dragon. If the PCs try to convince the NPCs, no one believes the dreams are important.

Dreams of Death

During the third night all of the PCs dream that the caravan members die in attacks from the sky.

On the next day, when the party has stopped for the midday meal and Kantal is visiting his shrine, the characters are surprised when fire beetles spring from the ground.

Naturally, the NPCs will pay no attention to the warnings that the PCs might want to give. In fact, after the battle several of the NPCs will quite rightly point out that the PCs' dreams were wrong and the caravan members didn't get threatened from the sky, but from the ground.

Hoarthgar becomes particularly upset if the PCs have been spouting off about their dreams; he will begin to accuse a few of the player characters of being witches, since no one else seems to have these dreams of death. He suggests abandoning the characters or tying them up so the dreams can get them. None of the other caravan members, however, will go along with this. Hoarthgar will have nothing to do with the characters after this.

Fire Beetles (3): Int Low; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 1+2; hp 7, 5, 4; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ S; ML 12; XP 35 each.

When the fire beetles appear, only the PCs are close enough to attack them, and it will take the NPCs two rounds to join the melee.

The night after the fire beetle attack, all the PCs dream of Kantal getting ripped apart from some type of dragon creature that comes out of the sky. If any of them tell the NPCs, most of them scoff at the idea. However, Hoarthgar will believe them and leave the caravan.

The Night of the Fiends

When you awake from your terrible dreams, the morning sun is shrouded in dark clouds, and there is an odd green lightning flashing in the sky. The cleric Del Senora becomes agitated and begins throwing several spells. She announces that everyone will be in terrible danger when the sun sets. Adominus begins working feverishly on the ground tracing out huge star patterns on the road. He says that all who stay in the patterns will be safe for the night. These patterns are easily large enough to handle all the horses and your wagon.

Throughout the day Adominus works on his patterns. If the PCs think of running, the cleric tells them there is no escape. All during this time Del Senora refuses to come close to the patterns. She maintains she will not go inside, and because of this Kantal the paladin decides to remain outside the protections as well. Kantal will now approach the party:

"I am sought by an evil priest who seeks to destroy me because I have thwarted his plans for the past many years. I did not believe he would attack in this manner, sending his fiendish minions. He is powerful, and he may destroy us all.

"I believe Adominus's patterns will protect everyone here. And I trust you will stay within the patterns. I must remain out here to protect Del Senora. Do not leave the patterns.

"If I fall, wait until morning to head to Ravens Bluff. Take my body, and the body of Del Senora if she, too, falls. We will be raised by friends. You have acted bravely for adventurers so young."

With this he leaves and begins to talk to Del Senora.

The green lightning flashes brighter and brighter all day long. As the sun sets a new, dark line appears on the horizon and all too soon you can recognize a horde of fiends flying down on the group. There must be hundreds of the evil creatures, and the sizes range from man-sized to one that must be 40 feet tall.

It is not necessary to detail the evil priest involved, as he does not appear in this adventure. Nor is it necessary to detail the fiends (assorted tanar'ri), as the NPCs will deal with them. The PCs play a secondary, but important role in this encounter.

Del Sonora will not retreat to the patterns, as she believes evil should be met head-on, even if her own life is in jeopardy. The patterns keep out the tanar'ri, as they generate a *protection from evil* effect; however, this does not keep out undead.

The tanar'ri are here to scare the stuffings out of the party. The scene should go something like this:

1. The monsters fly down from the skies, and Adominus's patterns begin to give off blood red sparks. The creatures initially ignore Del, Kantal, and any PCs who might have stayed with them. For the first few minutes the tanar'ri try to blast their way into the patterns with magic and physical force—all to no avail. Then they turn to attack Del and Kantal.

2. Some of the smaller monsters notice the outside group, while the other monsters batter away at the magical patterns. The patterns begin to show some strain. Green lightning bolts flash from the patterns at the tanar'ri, and cracks in the pattern lines appear and start growing. The lesser tanar'ri begin fighting everyone on the outside. If there are PCs out there, they should be hard pressed but take only slight damage (1d8 each), because most of the monsters are more interested in getting pieces of Del and Kantal. The two NPCs outside melee the tanar'ri and drive a few away. The NPCs inside attack the horde fiends with spells and missile weapons, except for Lance and Thorin, who rush out to melee the retreating Tanar'ri. Unfortunately, Lance and Thorin are promptly torn to shreds.

3. Skeletons and zombies march into the area. Adominus asks the PCs to take care of these minor undead, while he concentrates on the patterns. The skeletons and zombies can step through the patterns.

Skeletons (17): Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (weapon); SD half damage from type P or S weapons, immune to fear, cold, sleep, charm, hold, and death spells; SZ M; ML Special; XP 65 each.

Zombies (8): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Always lose initiative; SD fear, cold, sleep, charm, hold, and death spells; SZ M; ML Special; XP 65 each.

4. Del begins casting spells and slays several tanar'ri, but she is knocked unconscious by a large tanar'ri. Any PCs outside the pattern are likewise knocked unconscious.

5. The PCs inside the protective pattern should be encouraged to rescue Del and the rest of the characters outside the pattern. They should know that Del has fallen near the pattern, and if some diversion could be arranged maybe there is a chance Del can be pulled in.

If the group isn't buying this and doesn't want to go out, Adominus tells them that if something isn't done soon the tanar'ri will shatter the patterns. If the group still isn't interested, eventually the tanar'ri break in. If this happens, some PCs might escape by hiding in the extra-dimensional space in the wagon. Adominus is too busy maintaining the patterns to do anything else, and the other NPCs aren't about to risk their necks "for that fool Del Sonora."

If Del is saved, the protective magics she casts help fortify the magic of the pattern, preventing the tanar'ri from getting in. The monsters try several tactics to get characters outside the pattern, but the fiends are finally forced to leave.

The Challenge

The next morning, your fifth day on the trail, what's left of your party continues along the road and into the path of three huge men who are dressed like thieves. They challenge Kantal to a life and death battle. He talks terms with them and then comes back and offers the rest of the party great rewards if any of them will fight with him.

All of the remaining NPCs refuse—after seeing the hordes of tanar'ri they have no stomach for taking on any more of Kantal's enemies. If any of the PCs go for the deal, Kantal gives each one a scroll tube. Each tube's contents is up to the DM, but here are some suggestions:

* A letter of introduction which will gain the bearer recognition (and perhaps assistance from an important Ravens Bluff resident or official, such as Lord Mayor Charles Oliver O'Kane, Chief Prelate Sirrus Melandor, or Lady Lauren DeVillars, a powerful noblewoman.
* A map showing the location of a large treasure which is hidden in Sarbreen, the ruined underground city that lies below Ravens Bluff.
* A scroll with a valuable spell.

When the battle begins the PCs discover the enemy is using poisoned weapons. The PCs are free to withdraw from the fight, but most likely will succumb to the poison anyway. If this happens, Del Sonora drags them to safety and *neutralizes* the poison—for free this time.

Once again, the foes in this encounter are just window dressing—the real test for the PCs here is whether they have the courage to stand by Kantal. For game purposes, the thieves have a THAC0 of 15 when fighting the PCs, they are armed with short swords coated with a paralytic venom that causes a save vs. poison at −3. If the save fails, the victim loses 1d10 hit points each round until he is reduced to one hit point—the venom does not kill and *cannot* reduce a victim to zero hit points or less. Victims reduced to one hit point are paralyzed for 1d4 + 1 days.

Kantal slays two of the thieves, and kills the last one as he is slain himself.

Del doesn't have the power to resurrect Kantal or any slain PC. However, she vows to take Kantal's body to friends in Ravens Bluff who will raise him and "his gallant comrades." She comforts the PCs:

"The road to Ravens Bluff really isn't dangerous, but Kantal attracted trouble on this trip because of his last go-round with an evil priest. I don't know the priest's name, but I think we'll not hear from him again this trip, since both the tanar'ri and the thieves have been defeated. The priest might not even know Kantal has fallen.

"I realize now that you would have been much safer traveling alone, but what is past, is past. Some great good force must have been watching over you for you to have survived when seasoned warriors fell. Come, let me heal your wounds—no charge—and please stay on guard so I can sleep, pray, and regain fresh spells."

If the PCs agree to stand guard while she sleeps, Del heals them completely.

The Last Dream

The curse of D'war Ghee is fading, but it's still potent enough to give the PCs one more vague warning about what is in store for them. The night after the challenge, each PC dreams that the group has arrived in front of the gates of the Living City, but a lovely woman in red comes to them and stabs each of them with a red dagger. Then a kindly old man dressed in green bashes each of them on the head, forcing them to crawl on hands and knees. Next, a giant dressed in blue picks them up and throws them miles farther from their destination. Finally, a black cloud covers their bodies, and they are forced into the land of the unliving forever.

The Final Encounter

Your group comes over a small hill and you see a forested plain. Down the road about two miles is a pair of towers, which obviously defend the road. There are several men in front of them, presumably gate guards. Several bright banners fly from the towers. Behind the towers is a huge forest, and the road continues past them.

There is nothing stopping the PCs from entering the forest, going around the towers, and finding the road again. If they do this tell them the adventure is over and they have successfully completed the quest to reach Ravens Bluff, as the city lies just beyond the woods.

However, if the party goes to the tower they face a set of fired Ravens Bluff watchmen who can easily determine the party is a bunch of hicks who have never been to the city before:

"Ho!" shouts an unkempt guard as you near the tower. "Stop right there good folks. You've reached the great port of Ravens Bluff, which lies just beyond those trees. Of course, entry into the city isn't allowed without the proper permit, and since I see that you have no such permits, I'm afraid the law says I must confiscate half of everything you have before I allow you to pass."

If the party pays this outrageous toll without complaint, another guard steps forward and demands half of what they have left. If the PCs pay again, the "guards" let them pass. If the PCs look to the NPCs for advice, they sarcastically tell the PCs and the guards that they are pilgrims and therefore immune to tolls and permit requirements, and the "guards" will happily comply if they wind up with three quarters of the PCs'

loot. The guards attack to kill if the PCs refuse to pay at any point.

Each tower holds five archers, and these fire from arrow slits. The doors to the towers are barred. There are five gate guards outside the towers.

"Guards" (15): Int Average; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg By weapon; SD +5 AC bonus when using arrow slits; SZ M; ML 11; XP 35 each.

The "guards" are armed with long swords and short bows.

Stenius, if he's still with the group, flees into the trees if a fight breaks out; he intends to abandon the party. Tarten charges after the coward. If the DM is feeling generous, and the PCs have made an effort to befriend Tarten, the ranger returns after the fight with the guards is over and presents the PCs with the loot Stenius took from them. If he doesn't have Stenius to chase, Tarten calmly uses his bow to pick off archers, trusting the PCs to keep him out of melee.

Del Sonora and Adominus do not fight unless the guards melee them. Del heals the PCs as the need arises—no charge.

The towers are messy and hold nothing valuable. Each guard, however, has a chest filled with a few personal items and some copper coins, 1,500 cp in all.

Major NPCs

Del Sonora

9th Level Female Human Priestess of Deneir

STR: 13
INT: 18
WIS: 16
DEX: 12
CON: 14
CHA: 17

AC Normal: −1
AC Rear: 0
Hit Points: 42
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Goblin, Hill Giant
THAC0: 16

Age: 27
Height: 5′ 4″
Weight: 110 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Red/Green

Weapon Proficencies: Mace, hammer, club
Nonweapon Proficencies: Spellcraft (16), read/write Common (19), religion (16), etiquette (17), riding, land-based (19)
Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 0,* three *potions of extra healing, Kheogtom's ointment* (four applications), *boots of striding and springing, footman's mace +3*

Spells carried: *cure light wounds* (x4), *protection from evil* (x2), *slow poison* (x2), *know alignment* (x2), *silence 15′ radius, aid, speak with dead, dispel magic, prayer, neutralize poison, protection from evil 10′ radius, flame strike*

Del is polite, attractive, and generally a delightful traveling companion. Currently, however, her order desperately needs money, and she has agreed to wander throughout Faerun collecting alms and selling clerical services. She hates the task, but understands why it is necessary. Her charges go as follows: for every point of healing she requires a donation of 10 gp. She can give advice about anything for 100 g.p. per question. If she doesn't know the answer to a question she doesn't charge.

Once Del begins to look upon the PCs as comrades rather than "customers," she won't charge them anymore—this change of heart definitely will occur if the PCs rescue her from the tanar'ri.

Tarten

9th Level Male Human Ranger

STR: 18/01
INT: 14
WIS: 16
DEX: 16
CON: 16
CHA: 15

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 81
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Goblin, Ogre
THAC0: 12

Age: 31
Height: 5′ 10″
Weight: 187 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Spear, Long sword, broad sword, dagger, long bow, hand axe
Nonweapon Proficencies: Tracking (19), read/write Common (15), animal lore (15), blind-fighting, mountaineering (50%), hunting (15), fishing (15)
Magic Items: *Cloak of protection +3, bag of holding* (1,500 lbs./250 cu. ft. capacity), *spear +3, broad sword +2 giant slayer,* 20 *arrows +2*

Spells carried: *Entangle, invisibility to animals*

Ranger Skills

HS	MS
56	70

Tarten tends to keep to himself most of the time. The only time he really becomes assertive or aggressive is during encounters or other important events—then he speaks firmly, but politely, and even cracks a joke or two.

Thorin

Third Level Male Human Fighter

STR: 17
INT: 11
WIS: 13
DEX: 18
CON: 18
CHA: 12

AC Normal: −2
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 27
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Dwarvish
THAC0: 18

Age: 19
Height: 6′
Weight: 191 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Heavy lance, long sword, knife, mace, short bow
Nonweapon Proficencies: Endurance (18), riding, land-based (16), hunting (12)
Magic Items: *Long sword +2, ring of animal friendship, potion of levitation*

Thorin is the third son of a minor noble family in Tantras. Since his family is poor, Thorin has already received his inheritance, knighthood, a warhorse, and a squire (Lance). The young knight, who still hasn't gotten used to being called "sir," is on his way to Ravens Bluff to seek service with Lord Mayor O'Kane. Thorin is very eager to perform a heroic deed that will build his reputation and help land him a good job.

Stenius

Male Half-Elf Fighter/Wizard Level 2/2

STR: 17
INT: 18
WIS: 15
DEX: 15
CON: 15

CHA: 15

AC Normal: 9
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 16
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Orc, Goblin
THAC0: 19

Age: 47
Height: 5′ 5″
Weight: 112 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Ash Blond/Blue

Weapon Proficencies: Long sword, daggers, light crossbow, sap
Nonweapon Proficencies: Appraising (18), reading lips (16), read/write Common (19), riding, land-based (18)
Magic Items: *Long sword +1, dagger +1, potion of healing*

Spells carried: *sleep, magic missile*

Stenius is greedy and self-serving. He spends all his time during this adventure playing the role of the paranoid and oft-robbed merchant.

Adominus

9th Level Male Human Priest of Deneir

STR: 10
INT: 18
WIS: 18
DEX: 10
CON: 10
CHA: 16

AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 1
Hit Points: 57
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Goblin, Hill Giant
THAC0: 16

Age: 28
Height: 5′ 7″
Weight: 122 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Black/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Mace, hammer, club
Nonweapon Proficencies: Spellcraft (16), read/write Common (19), religion (16), heraldry (17), riding, land-based (19)
Magic Items: *Chain mail +4, footman's mace +3, scroll of protection from fiends, wings of flying, boots of elevnkind*

Spells carried: *cure light wounds* (x4), *protection from evil* (x2), *find traps* (x2), *know alignment* (x2), *hold person, silence 15′ radius, speak with dead, dispel magic, prayer, glyph of warding, feign death, cure serious wounds, protection from evil 10′ radius, quest*

Unlike his colleague, Del Sonora, Adominus has no trouble charging for his services, though even he will relent if the PCs swear fealty to Deneir or agree to perform a service for the church (Adominus regards Kantal as a servant of the church, since he's escorting the two priests). Most of the time, Adominus is content to let Del do all the talking, since she's so good at it.

Kantal

Male Human Paladin/Cleric, Level 7/9

STR: 17
INT: 17
WIS: 18
DEX: 16
CON: 18
CHA: 18

AC Normal: −2
AC Rear: 0
Hit Points: 84
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Thorass, Gold Dragon
THAC0: 14

Age: 34
Height: 6′ 2″
Weight: 172 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Chestnut/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Long sword, spear, heavy lance, dagger, short bow, bec de corbin, mace
Nonweapon Proficencies: Dancing (16), navigation (15), animal handling (17), heraldry (16), riding, land-based (21)
Magic Items: *Plate mail +3, long sword +3, dagger +3, heavy lance +3*

Spells carried: *cure light wounds* (x2), *command* (x2) *enthrall* (x2), *augury, aid, hold person, locate object, cure blindness/deafness, dispel magic, prayer, cure serious wounds, free action, detect lie, true seeing*

Kantal is a cleric of Ilmater and has an unusually sunny disposition and outgoing personality for a person dedicated to the crying god. He is well aware of his enemies' desire to take revenge on him and is quite uncomfortable with finding himself in charge of this impromptu caravan. It is not the responsibility he fears, but the very real possibility of failure.

Hoarthgar

Eighth Level Human Male Fighter

STR: 18/51
INT: 15
WIS: 10
DEX: 18
CON: 18
CHA: 9

AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 90
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Common, Kara-Tur Trade
THAC0: 13

Age: 35
Height: 5′ 6″
Weight: 157 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Black/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Short composite bow, light lance, scimitar (specialist), hand axe, knife, lasso
Nonweapon Proficencies: Riding, land-based (x2) (14), survival-plains (15), running (12)

Hoarthgar is a steppe warrior from the Hordelands turned adventurer. He has little understanding of things such as legal documents and property ownership, and a dishonest merchant in Mulmaster recently sold him a huge pile of bogus land deeds in Ravens Bluff.

Lance

Third Level Male Human Fighter

STR: 15
INT: 10
WIS: 12
DEX: 10
CON: 18
CHA: 14

AC Normal: 4
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 27
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Dwarvish
THAC0: 18

Age: 17
Height: 6′ 11″
Weight: 171 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Heavy lance, long sword, knife, mace, short bow
Nonweapon Proficencies: Endurance (18), riding, land-based (16), hunting (12)
Magic Item: *Long sword +1*

Lance has been Thorin's servant almost since birth, and the two are accustomed to doing everything together. Lance will never abandon Thorin or contradict him in public. ❑

Hero

An AD&D® 2nd Edition Game Adventure for 4–7 Characters, Levels 7–9

Illustration by Kevin Ward

by Don Bingle and Jay Tummelson

Introduction

This scenario is designed for use with the accompanying player characters. DMs can substitute player characters of similar levels from their own campaigns. If you use your own PCs, you'll find it helpful to include the Sonnet character as an NPC. The scenario begins when the PCs arrive at an inn after successfully completing an adventure. They are happy, but tired and looking forward to a good night's rest in a warm bed. Their wish is not to be granted, however, as each of them experiences a dream about a maiden. The maiden is in a predicament, and when she sings a song the PCs learn she is waiting for a hero to rescue her.

> Weary grins appear on your faces at first sight of the inn. It has been four and twenty days since you last slept in a warm bed with clean, fresh sheets. It has, in fact, been four and twenty days since you slept in a bed. Your lot has been the damp, hard stone pathways of a foreboding and evil-infested ruin.
>
> You arrive at the inn just as the sunset reaches its most spectacular moment. A neatly carved sign indicates that there are rooms available for rent. The mixed smells of beef stew and fine spirits meander out the open window from the attached tavern. What do you do?

SCENE 1: Time to Relax

Miller's inn and tavern are obviously quality establishments—not haughty or fancy, but still above the average roadside establishment. The inn stands along a major trading route between this province and the adjacent kingdom. For seven silver a night, a patron can have a room, breakfast, clean sheets, and a hot bath. A bunk in a barracks can be had for two silver. The innkeeper, Damar Miller, is a large, friendly, bear of a man. He is sharp, but honest, and he is willing to give fair value for what he is paid. He seeks to please his customers without being obsequious, booming his greetings in a loud, gravelly voice. The PCs may make whatever arrangements they would like for dinner, refreshments, and rooms.

Although the PCs passed many groups of travelers on the road, the inn is not too crowded. If the PCs inquire, Damar says: "Well, the merchant trade seems to be falling off somewhat. And the peasant travelers sleep alongside the road now, it being good weather season. Anyway, you folks look too weary to want to listen to my business problems."

The bartender is Bleke, a stout, quiet man who goes about his business with precision and efficiency. The quality of the ale, wine, and other spirits is generally quite good. The management does not encourage over-drinking; they offer no cheap specials and do not serve obviously intoxicated patrons. Bleke is a capable bouncer. His assistant is his daughter, Melony.

Melony is bright and pretty, with a mischievous grin. She deftly handles all of the customers, bringing drinks and food, clearing glasses and plates, and collecting generous tips for her efforts.

The other patrons of the tavern include:

- Two merchants huddled at a corner table negotiating price and terms on an order of fine cloths.
- Three local farm youths who spend most of their time trying to impress Melony.
- A lone traveler in a heavy, gray cloak. He has a foul expression on his face and is drinking strong spirits a slow sip at a time. This fellow does not wish to converse, but, if pressed, he mutters something about not being able to save his business. Then he scowls and turns back to his spirits.
- Two hunters (actually both thieves) who converse about the scarcity of game and keep an eye open for any easy pickings. They won't try anything hard or dangerous, as they have already paid for their rooms for the night and don't want to make a hasty exit. If the PCs start a fight, the thieves join the other side, hoping for a chance to grab some loot if the PCs are defeated.

Let the PCs role play a bit, but don't let things drag out too much. Eventually, the PCs will go to bed.

SCENE 2: Michelle's Ode

During the night, each PC has a dream. The dreamers see a beautiful woman (actually Princess Michelle, daughter of King Slaciswenz of the neighboring province of Skittledom) in a fine silk dress. She is pacing nervously in a small, dimmed room that has a bed, dressing table, washstand, and chair. Michelle looks like Sonnett's "dream girl." She looks anxiously out the narrow window next to the bed, looks again, then begins pacing anew, the beat of her footsteps fades into the beat of music. Anxious, but unafraid, she rushes to the window again and begins to sing. Read the lyrics below aloud once to the players. They should not be allowed to take any notes, since their characters are asleep.

Where have all the good men gone?
And where are all the gods?
Where's the street-wise Hercules
To fight the rising odds?
Isn't there a white knight upon a
fiery steed?
Late at night I toss and turn and
dream of what I need.

Chorus

I need a hero.
I'm holding out for a hero 'till the
end of the night.
He's gotta be strong
And he's gotta be fast
And he's gotta be fresh from the
fight.
I need a hero.
I'm holding out for a hero 'til the
morning light.
He's gotta be sure
And it's gotta be soon
And he's gotta be larger than life.

Somewhere after midnight
In my wildest fantasy,
Somewhere just beyond my reach
There's someone reaching back for
me,
Racing on the thunder and rising
with the heat.
It's gonna take a superman to sweep
me off my feet.

(Chorus)

Upon where the mountains meet the
heavens above
Out where the lightning splits the
sea
I would swear that there's someone
somewhere
Watching me.
Through the wind and the chill and
the rain
And the storm and the flood.
I can feel his approach
Like a fire in my blood

(Chorus)

Lyrics by Dean Pitchford and Jim Steinman; "HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO" — Copyright © 1984 by Ensign Music Corporation.

No doubt the PCs will be intrigued by the dream. Give them nothing else to do and they will realize this is their next quest and begin asking people at the inn about the damsel in distress. Such inquiries reveal the following:

- The maiden in the dream matches the description of Princess Michelle, the daughter of the ruler of the neighboring province of Skittledom. Michelle is rumored to be held prisoner by a powerful, evil mage named Rann Dohm who lives in the Tower of Chaos. The maiden's father, good King Slaciswenz, had decreed that the evil mage be banished from the province for committing various crimes involving random violence and chaos in the marketplace and inciting others to anarchy, assassination, theft, and miscellaneous mischief. Rann Dohm, his voice dripping with venom, had replied that he would gladly leave Slaciswenz' pitiful excuse for a kingdom if only the King would give him the hand of his daughter, Michelle, in marriage. The King coolly replied that his daughter would marry only by her own choice. Ran Dohm, in a terrible fit of rage and wrathful retribution, magically cursed both the King and his kingdom by declaring that if Michelle is not married by her next birthday, her 21st, both the King and the kingdom would be consumed by fire and brimstone. When the royal courtiers laughed at the curse, Rann Dohm declared that to prove the power of his curses both the King and the lands of the kingdom would immediately begin to wither and grow weak. Just as Rann Dohm finished speaking such words, the King fainted. In the ensuing commotion, Rann Dohm kidnapped Michelle.
- It is rumored that Rann Dohm holds Michelle in the Tower of Chaos, deep in the mountains by the sea at the outer reaches of the kingdom. A dark foreboding presence seems to hang over the tower, and nearby shepherds claim to see frequent flashes of lightning or magic through the gloom. An ever-expanding area of desolation surrounds the Tower of Chaos. Armies of evil and chaos swarm from its protection each new moon and wreak havoc on neighboring villages and passing travelers.
- King Slaciswenz has sent several parties of clerics, sorcerers, and others, including a full regiment of the palace guards to assault the Tower of Chaos to retrieve his daughter. None has returned, nor have any messages of their

progress been received. Several clerics have attempted to remove the magical curse. All have been struck dead in their attempts.

- Michelle is intelligent, beautiful, and strong-willed.
- It is rumored that, if she is not rescued in time, Michelle will throw herself from the tower just before dawn's early light on her birthday in the hope that such a noble sacrifice will prevent the curse from being fulfilled.
- The Tower of Chaos is a 12- to 16-hour ride away, depending upon the roads and any delays that may be incurred. The route does not pass through the capital city, Urmenschgefuel. A detour to see the king would add at least 10 hours to the journey.
- Michelle's birthday is tomorrow at dawn.
- The group can travel along the main highway, west to the coastal mountain pass, or they can try to go through the fields and find the fabled Tunnel of Darkness. Normally the road would be the quickest and safest route.

SCENE 3: You Can Have It All

Road and Pass Route

> As you leave, you notice there are many more travelers on the road than one usually encounters, and the travelers are not the usual blend of well-to-do merchants, bands of adventurers, and missionary clerics. Instead they are a motley assortment of peasants and townspeople heading away from the kingdom of Good King Slaciswenz. And they are carrying what appears to be their worldly possessions.

If the PCs question the travelers, they learn the following:

- All are fleeing the curse of Rann, due to be fulfilled at dawn tomorrow.
- The land has indeed been cursed with drought, blight, and locusts, since the rumored abduction of the Princess Michelle several months ago.
- The King lies near death in the palace. All but his most loyal courtiers have fled.
- Fire and looting are reported in the capital city. Bandits lurk along the highway, stealing from the overburdened and weary travelers. Occasionally, though rarely, the travelers band together to drive them off.
- Smoke billows from the mountains by the sea in the direction of the Tower of Chaos.

As the PCs progress, the number of people on the road increases steadily. Soon the PCs approach the border to the kingdom of Skittledom. Abruptly the lush greenery along the side of the road gives way to wilting bushes, dry, brittle grasslands, and defoliated trees. Stream beds are dry, and ponds are brackish and stagnant. Soon the throngs fill the road and the PCs find it difficult to make acceptable progress into the kingdom.

As they try to move through the crowd, the PCs are greeted by cries of "Turn around!" and "Get off the road!" If the PCs persist in moving along the roadway, eventually they will encounter a belligerent man (actually one of Rann Dohm's spies) in a bottlenecked area between two rocky hills. The spy yells, "They go in to join the forces of evil and chaos." This stirs up the crowd, which, if left to its own devices, erupts into cries of "They block our path to safety!" and "They have fallen under Rann Dohm's spell!" This, in turn gives rise to cries of "Get them!" "Kill the allies of Rann Dohm!" and "Stop them, before they kill more!"

The crowd attempts to surge through the bottleneck, brandishing sticks, knives, axes, and frying pans. Women and children fall down in the surging mass and scream for help. The forward members of the crowd press against the PCs' mounts or vehicles. Unless prevented, the riot blooms into full-scale pandemonium, with the crowd attempting to dismount the PCs and attacking until the party can retreat or escape, or until the PCs can intimidate or calm the crowd into leaving them alone. There are several ways to accomplish the latter, but a well-placed *sleep* spell or the bardic ability to influence crowds would work best.

Rabble Rouser: Int High; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 24; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 15; XP 120.

The rabble rouser, Ornge, is a half-elven fighter thief (level 2/3). He wears leather armor and carries a short sword and three daggers. His rogue abilities are:

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	HN	CW
55	43	30	32	30	15	87

Generic Crowd Members (150): Int Average; AL N; AC 10; MV 9 (12 if panicked); HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ M; ML 10; XP nil (individuals) 500 (stopping riot).

If the party kills or captures Ornge, they find on him an invitation to the wedding of Rann Dohm and Princess Michelle, scheduled for dawn at the Tower of Chaos. The invitation also says: "Those of you traveling to the Tower should be sure to remember that the wedding will include all of the traditional elements. Some things never change."

As the party moves on along the road the crowds thin, but it will take them 16 hours just to reach the pass through the mountains. As they move toward the mountains the air turns chilly, a brisk wind picks up, and eventually a biting, freezing rain starts.

> As the now untraveled road winds its way upward to the pass, an eerie sight greets you. White snow along the slopes has been tinted dirty gray by falling ash, and rivulets of lava pierce through the snow and flow steadily downward to fill the once lush valleys with liquid rock. The ash creates a fine gray film in the air, which swirls with the slightest movement to sting your eyes and your throat. In the distance you hear a rumbling sound grow then fade. A pack of wolves howls nearby. As you reach the crest of the pass, you see, or at least sense, the vast dark ocean in the distance down the other side of the mountains. Between you and the wine dark sea, you see a pinnacle of motion and darkness. Then random lightning splits the night.

Assuming no detours, the party must spend 12 turns moving through the pass. The PCs suffer 1d3 points of damage each turn from burning particles in the swirling ash and must save vs. breath weapon once during the trip. Failure causes a choking fit which inflicts 1d4 points of damage per round. Effective remedies include *slow poison* spells or anything that shields the victim from the ash (such as a damp cloak thrown over the victim's head).

Smart PCs will try to protect themselves from the ash before any saves fail. Characters who try to protect them-

selves by breathing through a damp cloth still suffer burn damage, but they make their breath weapon save at +4. A damp head covering negates all damage, but blinds the characters so they could stumble too close to the lava and suffer 2-8 points of damage per incident. Protective spells such as *flame walk* negate burning damage, but not the breath weapon save.

As the party leaves the pass, monitor their conversation. Unless everyone is careful to whisper, they will trigger an avalanche. At first they hear a crack, then a deafening rumble above and behind them. A wall of ice and snow rushes down from the peaks to fill the pass. So long as the PCs rush immediately for safety, let them attain it with only the knee-deep remains of the avalanche reaching them. Otherwise, the party suffers 2d10 points of damage (1/2 damage if a character falls to the ground or takes cover as the avalanche approaches). Each character who did not run for safety is buried in 2d3 feet of snow; those who make CON checks remain conscious and can dig out at the rate of one foot per round. However, it takes a Wisdom check to know which direction to dig, otherwise the character parallels the surface. Buried characters have enough air for 1d6+4 rounds, then they must hold their breaths (see PHB, page 122).

Shortly after the avalanche, a nest of snow snakes disturbed by the avalanche will attack. The six translucent white snow snakes slither and tunnel through the snow, so they are impossible to detect prior to striking.

Snow Snakes (6): Int Low; AL N; AC 8; MV 15; HD 3; hp 11 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 + save vs. poison; SZ S; ML 11; XP 120 each.

Snow snake venom is insidious, having no affect on the character poisoned until he or she gets out of the cold and warms up to normal body temperature. At that point, fever, shivering, and chills set in. The poison is not fatal, but it weakens the victim, who loses one hit point per turn until he or she reaches zero hit points and is incapacitated.

Field And Tunnel Route

> You escape the crowds by moving over the fields and shorten somewhat the distance you must travel. The fields are rough with the stubble of withered crops and with the residue of crude attempts to plow the hardened crust.

Each PC should roll percentile dice once for each hour traveling over the fields to determine if he or his horse stumbles on the rough terrain; a roll of 99 or 100 indicates a stumble. Those who stumble suffer 1d8 points of damage; 7 or more points of stumbling damage to a horse slows its movement rate by two until the animal is cured. It takes 12 hours to ride overland to the Tunnel of Darkness.

Unless the PCs ask directions from one of the few remaining citizens of these parts, they will have difficulty locating the entrance to the tunnel in the gloom of night. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that it is the night of the new moon, and there is a fine ash in the air from volcanic activity in the mountains.

A distant light in a farmhouse helps the PCs locate Kurt, a crusty old farmer who is not about to let anyone run him off his land. He's farmed dirt all his life, and he has lived in the distant shadow of the Tower of Chaos all that time. It is his land, and he means to protect it. Of course, Kurt believes the PCs are marauding evil creatures. (Who else would approach the farm at night?) They must convince him or overcome him before he will answer questions.

Kurt: Int Average; AL CN; AC 6; MV 12; HD 4; hp 26; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (pitchfork); SZ M; ML 15; XP 120.

With Kurt's assistance, the PCs can find the tunnel entrance in one hour. Without his aid, the search takes two hours. The party's mounts and vehicles cannot fit into the tunnel.

The Tunnel of Darkness is not the typical cavern with stalagmites and stalactites. It is black and fairly smooth and round, with a sometimes porous, sometimes glassy surface. The smell of steam and sulphur rises from it. In geological terms, it is a volcanic steam vent, formed as exterior lava cooled around a center of hotter rushing lava. Steam from the magma far below shaped and smoothed the tube.

> The black surface seems to suck up the light of your torches, except for the occasional bright glare off a glassy portion of the wall. At first the passage slopes consistently downward, then it levels.

> After about a quarter mile, the passageway forks, rising to the left and downward to the right. Steam rises from the right passage.

There is a Salamander living in a pool of boiling lava 300 feet down the right passage. It attacks if the PCs approach.

Salamander (1): Int High; AL CE; AC 5/3; MV 9; HD 7+7; hp 39; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12, 1-6 (weapon); SA Heat 1-6; SD +1 or better to hit; SZ M; ML 13; XP 2,000.

> Continuing down the passage, a second fork appears. You can take the right passage, which rises slightly, or take the left, which appears level.

The left passage leads to the web of a giant spider. As the party approaches, they can see the web and a number of objects embedded in it, including a parchment. The giant spider attacks as the party approaches.

Giant Spider: Int Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, Wb 12; HD 4+4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA type F poison; SZ L; ML 13; XP 650.

If the party examines the items in the web, they find several daggers, 12 gold pieces, a top hat, a shovel, a broken flask, and a wedding invitation similar to the one described in the road and pass section. If the party sets fire to the web while dealing with the giant spider, the invitation will burn up.

The party must go back to the main passage to get out.

> The right passage continues for another quarter mile, then empties out onto a narrow cliff which leads down to the main road. The wine dark sea stretches away in the distance, and in the flashes of lightning splitting the night you see darkness and motion in a pinnacle halfway between you and the ocean.

It takes at least one hour to traverse the Tunnel of Darkness.

SCENE 4: Gimme A Light

Rounding a bend in the road, the PCs finally catch sight of the Tower of Chaos. It sits atop a small rise about a half

mile away. A field of devastation surrounds it: jagged and cratered earth, twisted and blackened tree stumps, patches of glassy sheet rock. The only opening in the Tower of Chaos appears to be a tiny window near the top. A careful study of the terrain suggests a possible tunnel entrance about three-quarters of the way across the devastated field.

When the PCs get about halfway across the field, things suddenly become dark and silent. Two rounds later a *fireball* goes off in the midst of the party.

Actually, Ingmar, the guardian cleric, and Sveltt, the guardian mage, of the Tower of Chaos have cast *darkness* and *silence 15' radius* on the party, then *fireball.* This is their typical means of warding off inquisitive adventurers, as the landscape around the Tower attests. See Scene 8 for statistics on Ingmar and Sveltt. Once their spells are cast, the two characters retire into the tower, confident that intruders will be frustrated by the tower's defenses.

SCENE 5: Rann Dohm's Keep

Rann Dohm's keep is an imposing sight. It stands about 100 feet tall and is nearly the same in diameter at the base, tapering slightly as it rises from the blackened earth. The tower is constructed of huge blocks of basalt and has no doors and but one window. The single window looks out from the top of the tower, but is small and heavily barred. Anyone who attempts to scale the tower has normal climbing chances until reaching a height of 40 feet. At that point Rann Dohm has placed a magical surface that is slippery and unclimbable. To keep from falling a climber must roll under half his normal climbing roll. If this roll succeeds, the climber has prevented a fall and may climb back down using normal rolls. The slippery section is 30 feet high and cannot be climbed under any circumstances.

On the keep side of the small hillock is the concealed entrance to the passages below the keep. There is a locked and bolted trap door in the roof of the keep, but the pregenerated PCs have no way to reach it. Other PCs might attempt to fly to the keep's roof. However, this is protected by a magical field with a 60-foot diameter. It is similar to an *anti-magic shell,* as it temporarily negates all *flying* and *levitation* magics—including potions and magical items such as *brooms of flying* that enter its radius.

Carefully searching the hillock reveals that the large boulder lying on the keep side is actually a door leading to a vertical shaft that descends into the earth beneath the hillock.

The shaft is 10 feet in diameter and descends 40 feet. Firmly attached to the wall directly beneath the concealed door is a metal ladder. The ladder appears to be new and quite sturdy. The heroes can take whatever precautions they wish, but simply climbing down the ladder will work quite nicely.

At the bottom of the shaft is a tunnel that leads north for 10 feet and then arcs toward the east and the keep. The tunnel is a natural cavern; the shaft was obviously constructed to connect the tunnel to the surface. The tunnel continues eastward for about 250 feet. Along this stretch it varies from five to 15 feet in diameter, with only occasional signs of being worked at the narrow points.

SCENE 6: Rann Dohm's Traditional Wedding Gauntlet

> For 250 feet or so the tunnel continues without interruption or antagonist. Then the natural tunnel veers to the left, northeasterly toward the keep, and an ancient manmade passage connects to the tunnel from the southeast. Although both passages have had their share of traffic over the years, the ancient passage is in need of repair. What you can see of it from the fork appears to be safe, however.

SCENE 6A: The Ghost

> The left passage leads to a large, manmade cavern furnished in a glorious manner as a library in an old mansion. There are five large, oak study tables with six chairs each. Lining the walls are 12-foot-tall bookcases filled with books, rolled manuscripts, and maps. At one end of the room is a roaring fireplace, surrounded by a trio of stuffed sofas.
>
> A beautiful, thick, royal blue rug lies between the fireplace and the sofas. Over the mantle hangs a picture of a man smoking a pipe. He leans against a desk cluttered with papers (none readable).
>
> Directly opposite the entrance to the room is a large, closed oak door. The room appears warm and inviting, but unoccupied.

If the heroes enter the room, they will be immediately attacked by the occupant, Marshall Hunter Fox, the man in the picture. Marshall died a century ago and now haunts this room as a ghost. Marshall assumes a semi-material form to melee with the heroes. He focuses his attacks on any Lawful Good heroes present. (Among the pregenerated characters, these are Sonnett, Squib, Crystal, and Quantum). If he is wounded for more than a third of his hit points, Marshall breaks off his attacks and resumes his ethereal form. If the heroes leave his room without disturbing anything, he will let them go. If, however, they try to remove any books or manuscripts from the shelves, he resumes his attacks, focusing on those who disturbed his library. If he is wounded for another third of his hit points, he again breaks off his attack as before, giving the PCs another chance to leave without taking anything. If they don't leave empty handed, he will fight them to the death. Under no circumstances will he follow the PCs out of the room.

If the heroes persist and succeed in destroying the ghost, they can examine his library without further interruption. However, there is nothing interesting in the room except a secret door behind one of the bookcases. The books would be of immense value to a sage (DMs are free to set a value appropriate to their campaigns, but at least 3,000 gp). None of the books or scrolls are magical or valuable.

Marshall Hunter Fox (ghost): Int High; AL LE; AC 0 or 8; MV 9; HD 10; hp 58; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg Age 10-40 Years; SZ M; ML Special; XP 7,000.

Just seeing Marshall causes PCs to age 10 years and run in panic for 2-12 turns unless they save vs. spells. (Clerics above 6th are immune; other characters above 8th get +2 on saves). Marshall is hit only by silver or magic weapons.

SCENE 6B: Black Dragon

If the heroes choose the "old" passage (the wedding invitations hint at this), they can travel down it uneventfully for about 50 feet, where the ancient corridor continues in the southeasterly direc-

tion and a newly constructed passage leads to the northeast. It opens up after another 50 feet into a large cavern that extends out of lantern range. The cavern is 35 feet high and 100 feet in diameter. Initially, the room appears to be empty.

Unfortunately for the heroes, a black dragon is resting in a cave 20 feet over the entrance of the room. If the heroes do not specifically indicate they are looking up and behind them as they enter the room, they will be surprised by the dragon's first attack. The dragon will attack with his breath weapon when the heroes reach the middle of the cavern. About then, the PCs notice a large pile of treasure at the far side of the cavern.

After the initial breath attack, the dragon swoops to melee the heroes. If the dragon is reduced below a third of its hit points, it flies back into its cave.

If the heroes decide to leave by the north exit, the dragon will be content to lick its wounds and let them leave. If they try to follow the dragon into the cave or try to steal treasure from its hoard, it will attack with its breath twice more, using its *darkness* ability and *grease* spell in between to confuse the PCs.

Young Adult Black Dragon: Int Average; AL CE; AC 0; MV 12, Fl 30 (C), Sw 12; HD 13; hp 48; THAC0 7; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6 +5/1-6 +5/3-18 +5; SZ M; ML 16; XP 8,000.

The dragon can use its breath weapon once every three rounds; it is a 5′ × 60′ stream of acid that does 10d4 +5 points of, save for half. Three times a day, it can cast *darkness* in a 50-foot radius. It also can cast a *grease* spell. When swooping to the attack, it can strike only with its front claws, but at a +2 "to hit."

If the heroes manage to kill the dragon, they can find mounds of silver and gold (5,000 gp and 20,000 sp) and 50 small gems (10 gp each) scattered amongst the coins.

SCENE 6C: Color My World

If the heroes choose correctly and select the "new" passage, they will have another choice to make about 25 feet down that corridor. After 25 feet, the "new" passage turns north. At that point a four foot diameter hole connects to the passage from the right. Examining the hole reveals it was made by a creature that burrows in solid rock. It enters the passage about a foot and a half above the floor and leads east.

If the heroes continue north in the "new" passage, they will find the easily seen back side of the secret "bookcase" door to the library (6A).

If the heroes crawl through the burrowed tunnel, they find themselves in a room with five colored doors: red, blue, green, orange, and yellow. The orange door leads to the ghost's library (6C); the red door leads to a room with rust monsters; the yellow door leads to a room with ettins; the green door leads to the black dragon's lair (6B); and the blue door bypasses the obstacles to reach the spiral stair that leads upward to the keep.

Rust Monsters (3): Int Animal; AL N; AC 2; MV 18; HD 5; hp 32, 26, 24; THAC0 15; #AT 2; nil; SZ M (5′ long); ML 9; XP 270 each.

Any metal item that strikes or is struck by a rust monster corrodes and falls to pieces. Magical items have a base 10% chance to resist for each plus.

Ettins (3): Int Low; AL CE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 10; hp 51, 49, 47; THAC0 10; #AT 2; Dmg 3-18/2-16; SD Surprised only on a 1; SZ H; ML 14; XP 3,000 each.

SCENE 7: Gargoyles At 12 O'Clock (and 2 and 4 and . . .)

When the heroes reach the spiral stairs, they can begin their climb into the keep. The first level is about 40 feet up. When they reach the first level, Rann Dohm's gargoyle guards begin attacking. The heroes can either stand and fight or fight while climbing. If they are running out of time, they should choose the latter. Anyone fighting while on the stairs may be knocked off; a successful hit on a PC requires the PC to roll under his Dexterity or fall from the stairs. The gargoyle guards will fight the heroes all the way up or until only four are left. These four will retreat to Rann Dohm's lair to protect their leader in the final fight.

The tower's first level has a 25-foot ceiling at the south—it is open to the 5th level on the north. The room is 60 feet in diameter and sports five columns which support the upper floors. There is a five-foot-wide ledge all around the level, 15 feet above the floor. This is used as a perch for the gargoyles; they swoop to attack from this ledge and will use it for partial cover when not attacking.

The second level is open on the north and has the living quarters for the gargoyles on the south. The ceiling here is 15 feet tall, with a five-foot wide perching ledge on the north side, 10 feet above the floor. The doors to the gargoyle rooms cannot be reached from the stairs. They only can be reached by flying. There are four such doors; the one on the left belongs to the captain of the gargoyles. His name is Lyfe and that name is lettered on his door in black. His assistant, Chyl, has the door on the right; it is also labelled in black. If the heroes find a way into these rooms, they will find little of interest.

The third level has a balcony leading from the stairs to three guest rooms. They are currently unoccupied. Although Michelle has been living in the one in the center since her abduction, she is now on the fifth level with Rann Dohm. The heroes can find evidence of a young woman staying in the middle room (a strand of hair, garments, etc.). The other rooms are empty.

The fourth level is similar to the third, but there are only two rooms on this level. These rooms are the living quarters for Ingmar and Sveltt. Both doors are warded (3d10 electrical damage) and *wizard locked.* If the heroes persist in attempting to enter one of these rooms, Rann Dohm and his remaining henchmen attack them here from above.

Gargoyles (18): Int Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9, Fl 15 (C); HD 4 +4; hp 36 (Lyfe), 30 (Chyl), 4@26, 8@24, 4@20; THAC0 17; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 11; XP 650 each.

SCENE 8: Rann Dohm's Lair

When the heroes reach the fifth level, they will have to fight the evil mage Rann Dohm and his minions. Rann Dohm's spies have warned him of the heroes' coming.

If the heroes arrive before dawn, they find Michelle here with Rann Dohm and his henchmen. She is dressed in a wedding gown, but has been bound and gagged and is tied to the frame of the spiral staircase. This places her in the center of the battle and makes her very vulnerable to any area effect spells cast by either side. Rann's men have been cautioned to refrain from such spells and have planned their spell selections accordingly. The heroes will have to be equally careful to keep Michelle alive.

Of course, smart PCs will try to untie Michelle and get her out of the middle of the fight.

If the heroes arrive after dawn, they find Michelle dead, having been killed by Rann Dohm when she refused to wed him just before dawn and attacked him instead. This action foiled the curse, as it kept her from reaching her 21st birthday. The kingdom is saved, but the heroes have failed. They should still attempt to defeat Rann Dohm and his henchmen, however. This situation will be especially hard on Sonnett, as he will recognize her as the woman in his dreams.

Rann's battle plan will be much the same whether Michelle is alive or dead. The gargoyle guards attack the party's fighters, two on each if possible. Rann Dohm, Ingmar, and Sveltt use their spells as described below.

Rann Dohm and his henchmen will cast several spells before the melee to enhance their chances in the battle. Rann Dohm will cast *protection from good,* and *protection from normal missiles* on Ingmar, Sveltt, and himself; *haste* on all seven in his party; *strength* on each of the four gargoyles; *grease* on the floor surrounding the spiral staircase (avoiding the areas where Ingmar, Sveltt, and he are standing); and *globe of invulnerability* and *fire shield* (cold flames) on himself.

Sveltt will cast *shield, cantrip,* and *unseen servant.*

Ingmar will cast *aid* on both Lyfe and Chyl and *protection from good* on all four gargoyles.

As the heroes enter this level (or as the attack begins if Rann Dohm elects to attack them on the fourth level), Rann Dohm casts *slow,* Ingmar casts *silence, 15 foot radius,* and Sveltt casts *darkness, 15 Foot Radius.* Following the initial spell assault, the gargoyles will hover near the *darkness* waiting for an opportunity. Other spells are cast as the action dictates. Ingmar will move amongst the villains, curing wounds as needed.

If all of his henchmen are killed or immobilized, Rann Dohm flees using his *teleport without error* spell. Naturally, he will plan to avenge this loss another day. But that's another story.

Gargoyles (4): Int Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9, Fl 15 (C); HD 4+4; hp 36 (Lyfe), 30 (Chyl), 26, 24; THAC0 17; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 11; XP 650 each.

The gargoyles' *hasted* movement rates are 18, Fl 30 for 15 rounds. They get 8 attacks a round and a −2 initiative bonus while *hasted.* The *protection from good* gives them a −2 AC bonus and +2 saving throw bonus against attacks launched by good creatures for 16 rounds. Lyfe and Chyl each get 1d8 bonus hit points, +1 "to hit" and an additional +1 to all saves for 5 rounds. The *strength* spells give the gargoyles +1 "to hit" and damage on each melee attack.

Ingmar: Int High; AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 6; hp 29; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 16; XP 975.

Ingmar moves 18 and gets two melee attacks each round while *hasted* (18 rounds). The *protection from normal missiles* renders him immune to all nonmagical missiles. The *protection from good* gives him a −2 AC bonus and +2 saving throw bonus against attacks launched by good creatures for 16 rounds.

Magic items: He carries a *staff of curing* (12 charges), *chain mail +2, ring of mind shielding.*

Spells remaining: *Cure light wounds* (x3), *Light, Silence, 15 foot radius.*

Sveltt: Int High; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 16; XP 975.

Sveltt moves 24 and gets two melee attacks each round while *hasted* (18 rounds). The *protection from normal missiles* renders him immune to all nonmagical missiles and the *shield* blocks all *magic missile* spells originating from his front and gives him a frontal AC of 2 vs. hurled missiles and 3 vs. propelled missiles that get by the *protection from normal missiles.* The *protection from good* gives him a −2 AC bonus and +2 saving throw bonus against attacks launched by good creatures for 16 rounds.

Magic items: *bracers of defense AC 4, scarab of protection, wand of magic missiles* (21 charges).

Spells remaining: *Darkness, 15 foot radius; fireball.*

Rann Dohm: Int Genius; AL CE; AC −1; MV 12; HD 13; hp 27; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 16; XP 6,000.

Rann moves 24 and gets two melee attacks each round while *hasted* (18 rounds). The *protection from normal missiles* renders him immune to all nonmagical missiles and the *globe of invulnerability* keeps all spells of 4th level or lower from entering its five-foot radius (duration 13 rounds). The *protection from good* gives him a −2 AC bonus and +2 saving throw bonus against attacks launched by good creatures for 16 rounds.

Magic items: Wand of frost (19 charges), *ring of protection +3, bracers of defense AC 2, ring of free action, amulet of life protection, periapt of proof against poison +1, winged boots* (Fl 18 (B)), *brooch of shielding* (84 hit points), *necklace of adaption.*

Spells remaining: *Teleport without error, Otiluke's freezing sphere, cone of cold* (x2), *Bigby's interposing hand, monster summoning III, polymorph self, slow, levitate, wall of fog.*

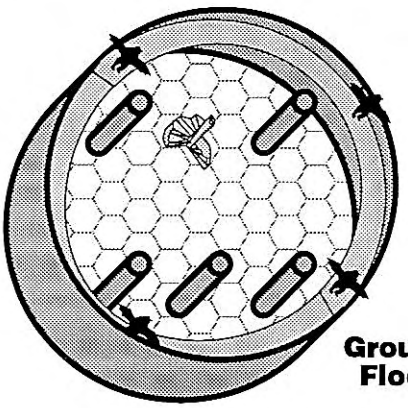
SCENE 9: The Wedding

If the heroes can defeat Rann Dohm's forces before dawn and Michelle is still alive, they still must arrange for a quick marriage (Rann's curse still threatens). Be kind; if the PCs make a reasonable attempt to talk her into it, she should agree. The Sonnett character, if present, recognizes her as his dream woman and should want to marry her. If he is unavailable, Michelle will consider a reasonable proposal from Squib or Kelf (Quantum would be OK if he could recover his lost youth, somehow). If none of the pregenerated characters are present, the DM will have to decide which PC Michelle prefers. The DM also will have to decide what effect such a marriage will have on the PC's life, which could be anything from mandatory retirement to a royal title. A cleric dedicated to a good deity must preform the ceremony. Among the pregenerated characters, Crystal is the only one qualified, and this should provide her with a difficult decision if Sonnett is the groom.

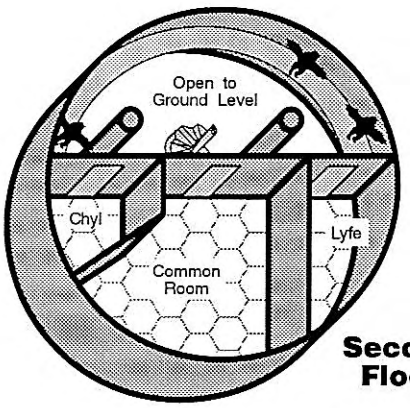
When the ceremony begins, the guests arrive. A party of 20 orcs dressed in tuxedos appear to help Rann Dohm celebrate his marriage.

Orc (20): Int Average; AL LE; AC 6 (10); MV 9 (12); HD 1; hp 10@6, 5@7, 5@8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (weapon); SZ M; ML 12; XP 15 each.

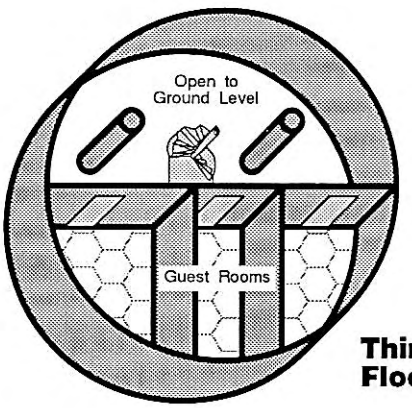
❑



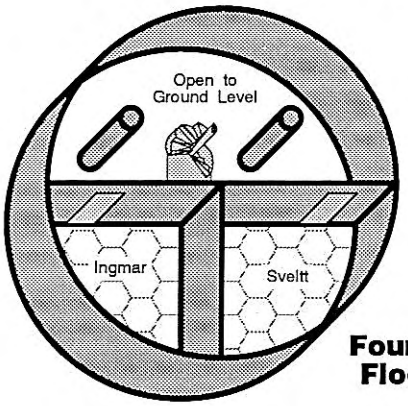
Ground Floor



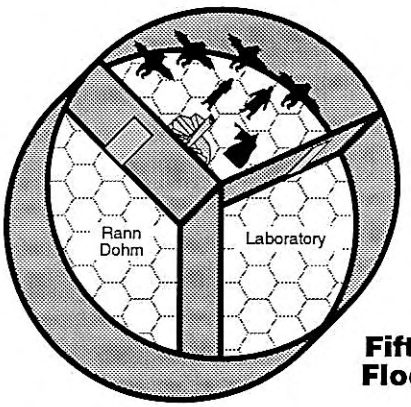
Second Floor



Third Floor



Fourth Floor



Fifth Floor

KEY

One Hex Equals Five Feet

Spiral Staircase

Rann Dohm

Ingmar

Gargoyle

Sveltt

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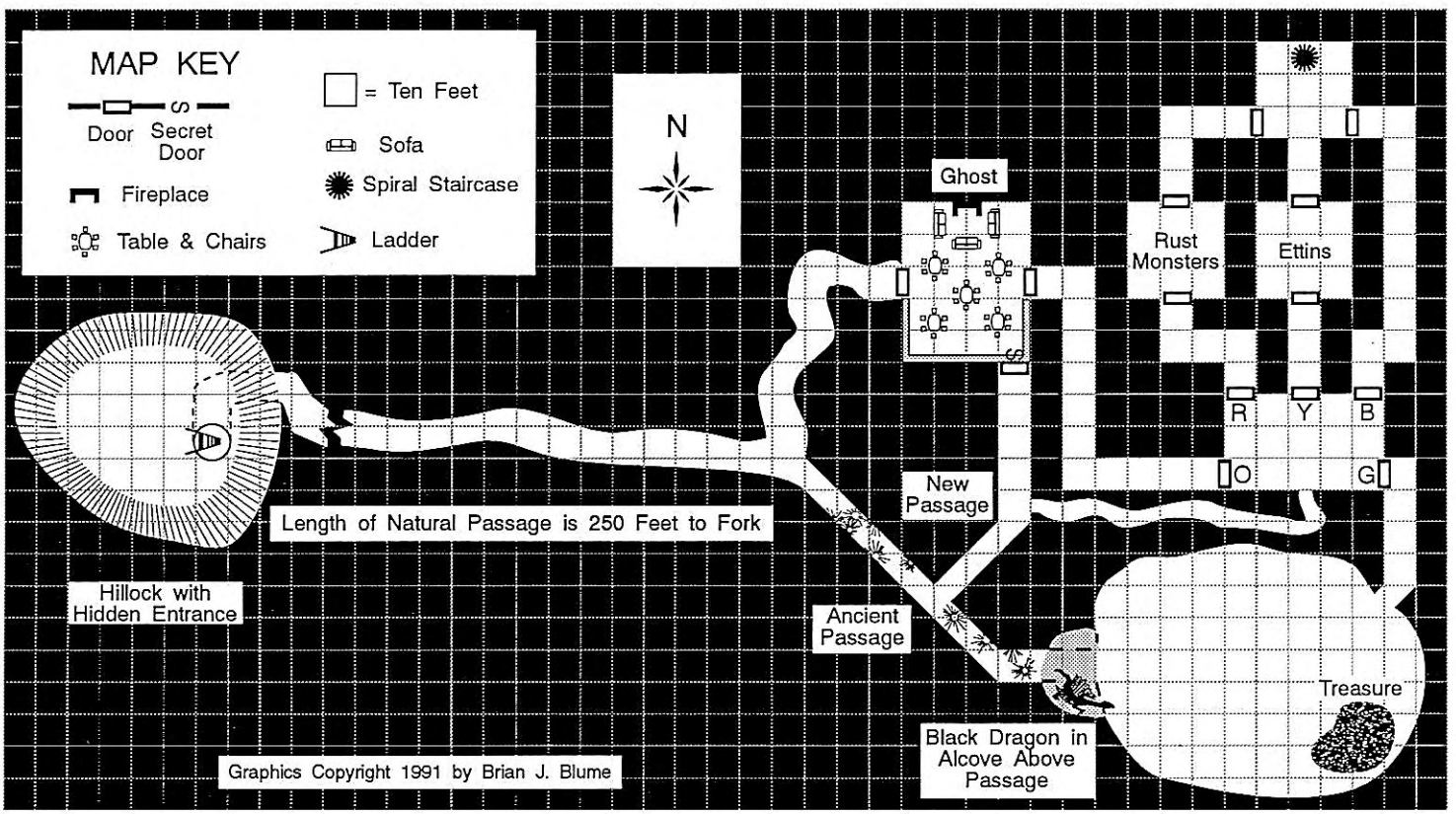


Sonnett

7th Level Male Human Paladin

STR: 18/47
INT: 15
WIS: 14
DEX: 13
CON: 15
CHR: 17
AC Normal: −4
AC Rear: −2
Hit Points: 51
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Common, Elven, Dwarven
THAC0: 14

Age: 26
Height: 6′
Weight: 185 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Steely gray

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, bastard sword, dagger, mace, staff, short sword
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Endurance (15), swimming (18), plains survival (15), religion (14), ancient history (14), riding, land-based (17)

Magic Items: *Field plate +3, shield +2, long sword +3, ring of fire resistance, ring or warmth, potion of sweetwater, potion of extra healing*
Equipment: 10 gp, 5 sp, tack and harness for mount, saddlebags, 3 days' iron rations, 1 day's grain for mount, polishing cloth and metal polish, 50′ of rope, tinder box, 3 torches
Mount: Roan medium warhorse named Will: Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SZ L; ML 7

As a paladin, Sonnett can detect evil within 60′ just by concentrating. He receives +2 to all saving throws and is immune to all forms of non-magical disease. He can heal 14 points of damage each day by laying on hands and can *cure disease* twice a week. He is continuously surrounded by *protection from evil 10′ radius.*

I am dedicated to my calling as a paladin and to my efforts to foster goodness and law. I am not the pushy, pompous, preachy type that too often joins my order. I believe actions speak louder than words and that good deeds and unselfish rescues of those who find themselves in harm's way do more to promote goodness than speechifying.

I often feel a touch of longing and

Squib

5th Level Male Human Fighter

STR: 17
INT: 13
WIS: 13
DEX: 16
CON: 12
CHR: 17
AC Normal: −1
AC Rear: 4
Hit Points: 39
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Common, Elven
THAC0: 16

Age: 25
Height: 5′ 10″
Weight: 155 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, short sword, dagger, battle axe, staff
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Endurance (16), swimming (17), riding, land-based (16), hunting (12), direction sense (14)

Magic Items: *Chain mail +1, shield +2, long sword +1, potion of extra healing, ring of swimming*
Equipment: 6 gp, 3 sp, 2 days' iron rations, battle axe, awl, spool of heavy thread, canteen, flask of oil, two tinder boxes, 4 torches, 50′ of rope, bag of salt

The others don't know it, but I'm a former 5th level paladin. I lost my paladinhood when an evil cleric enchanted me and convinced me to use the last of the party's water to clean my armor while my companions and I were attempting to cross the Desert of Despair. I can become a paladin again, but to atone for my frivolous and shameful (albeit enchanted) act, I have been assigned the task of acting selflessly in the service of another paladin (who does not know my past). I must not reveal my past or my training. As part of my service, I must "give up my desires in order to save others."

I look forward to the day when I can act the hero for the party and actively volunteer for scouting and fighting responsibilities. I'm not sure what is meant by the phrase "give up my desires." I desire strongly the freedom of being an adventuring paladin, unfettered by family ties and able to go wherever my heart and my quest leads. I am prepared, however, to be captured and thrown in prison, but I'm not sure if that is what is meant. I am outfitted as a normal fighter now, and never use or

Crystal

5th Level Female Human Priestess of Vishnu

STR: 11
INT: 14
WIS: 18
DEX: 16
CON: 15
CHR: 14
AC Normal: 2
AC Rear: 4
Hit Points: 37
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Common, Elven, Dwarven, Gnomish
THAC0: 18

Age: 26
Height: 5′ 7″
Weight: 145 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, sling, hammer
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Religion (18), healing (16), read/write Common (15), ancient history (13), pottery (14), weaving (13)

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 4, ring of water walking, staff of curing* (14 charges) *Keoghtom's ointment* (1 application), *scroll* (two *neutralize poison* spells), *scroll* (two *remove paralysis* spells)
Spells/day: 5 5 2
Equipment: Backpack, cooking spices, holy symbol, staff, sling, 20 sling stones, book of ceremonies (burial, wedding, consecration, etc.), bandages, pots and pans, tent, small horse-drawn cart
Cart Horse: Dapple gray draft horse named Snowman: Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 12; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SZ L; ML 7

As a priestess of Vishnu, Crystal can turn undead and *pacify* humans, humanoids, or demi-humans. This ability uses the undead turning table vs. the target's hit dice. **T** = break off attacks and offer friendship to the priestess. **D** = same as above but target is committed to peace for a full day; targets cannot initiate attacks, attacks against *pacified* creatures are −2 "to hit," and the creatures return such attacks at +2 "to hit." **D*** = same as above but affected creatures are −3/+3. Crystal has major access to the spheres of All, Sun, Healing, Charm, and Necromancy; and minor access to the sphere of Protection.

I do not enjoy adventure, danger, risks, or wandering about the countryside, but I travel with this party for two very important reasons. First, there is much good which needs to be done in the world, and it is not going to get done by sitting in a convent somewhere. Second, I love Sonnett and will go wherever he leads. Although he has a kind of brotherly fondness for me, Sonnett does not love me in the same way I love him. I do not know why this is so.

I continue to strive to further Sonnett's quest to bring goodness and law to the far flung lands of the known world, hoping that one day he will come to love me. If not, I am content to serve his causes and see to his happiness. Since he has shown no interest in romancing other women, except a dream girl who does not exist, I still hope.

I am devout and hard-working and do not complain or act squeamishly about the hardships the group faces on the road. I often cook to impress Sonnett. I tend toward protective and curative spells, rather than militaristic spells. I always keep one curing spell in reserve for Sonnett, but the others—including Sonnett—don't know it.

Sonnett: Brave, good, lawful, handsome, outgoing, and a born leader. His happiness is my chief concern after my devotions, though I am careful to not appear too subservient or fawning.

Squib: This man seems to bear some mysterious burden. Although friendly and outgoing, he seems strangely troubled.

Kelf: A true romantic, dabbling in this and that while he sharpens his skills as a songwriter. He seems desperately eager to experience a romantic adventure worthy of a truly epic song. The others chide him for being lazy, but I try to keep up his spirits and encourage his music.

Vasquez: I greatly admire her bravery and fighting skill. I would never be able to do the things she does to protect the party from harm.

Quantum: This dear old man seems to have seen and experienced everything in his long life. Only I know he is much younger than he appears, having been aged 40 years in an encounter with a ghost. No wonder he obtained a magical amulet to turn undead. He acts gruff and tough, but I know his life has been hard and he is enjoying what is sure to be his last bit of adventuring while he still can.

reveal my paladin's training and powers (I probably couldn't use them even if I wanted to). One of my tasks is cleaning and polishing Sonnett's armor. This grates on me, as it reminds me of my shame.

My quest is to regain my paladinhood, so I am careful not to encumber myself with close personal relationships. Although friendly and outgoing, I do not reveal too much of myself, even to my fellow adventurers. An inveterate bachelor, I neither have designs on any of the women in the party, nor do I become entangled with local women during my travels. I want nothing to distract me from my quest.

Sonnett: A capable and experienced leader, though he lacks grandiose style of my order. I respect his wishes, though I occasionally chafe secretly when I am treated as a servant. I wait anxiously for the day I can save Sonnett and the others and reveal my true training.

Crystal: Gentle and self-sacrificing, with an amazing amount of willpower. She probably does not belong in an adventuring party. She does not thrill in battle or danger, but she persists in it, because there is good to be done, and quite frankly, because she is obviously in love with Sonnett.

Vasquez: Quick and alert beyond belief, she is a formidable fighting force, although occasionally a bit wild and unpredictable. She looks for danger, then does whatever has to be done to eliminate it. I fear that if she is too near when my ultimate test comes she will sacrifice herself before I get the chance. Accordingly, I encourage Sonnett to use her as rear guard, so that she is not near when I face foes in the front.

Kelf: A lightweight of little tactical use to the party, due to his mediocre skills. I regard him as little more than a reserve force, useful mostly for fetching, carrying, and running messages to and fro. I do like to listen to his music as I shine Sonnett's armor, more to take my mind off things than because I like the music.

Quantum: Old, crotchety, and asthma prone, his magic still is powerful, even if he is not. He is wise in the ways of strategy and puzzles, and I wish for a way to have him decipher my quest without revealing my situation. He tries to teach Kelf, but Kelf apparently does not apply himself to the lessons, as the old man is constantly after him to try harder.

sadness, especially during quiet moments around the fire and during long rides in the early morning. I have an emptiness in my innermost heart of hearts. For years I have loved a woman I do not even know, a woman I do not even know exists in reality. She does exist in my dreams—so beautiful, so perfect, so self-sacrificing, that all of the women of wakeful reality pale in comparison, even Crystal, who obviously loves me. I am kind to Crystal in a brotherly way, but take care that she does not mistake my kindness or my manner as love.

I strive always to be kind, giving, and just. The others do not know it, but I also am constantly searching for the dream woman. Whenever a flash of auburn hair and twinkling green eyes catches my eye, I look intently, hoping that it will be her, and hoping that, if it is not, my gaze will not give offense or embarrassment. I remain celibate, waiting for the day I can commit myself to her, even though I know that such a woman cannot exist.

Squib: Squib speaks little of his past, so I do not know why he serves as my squire rather than seeking a more lofty station in life. Squib is a competent and skilled fighter, though he sometimes seems to be holding back. This is even more odd, as he is a willing volunteer for scouting and fighting tasks. He polishes my armor with expert care, but little enthusiasm.

Crystal: A devout and gentle woman with immense inner strength. I ease her burden of unrequited love with kindness, patience, and brotherly affection.

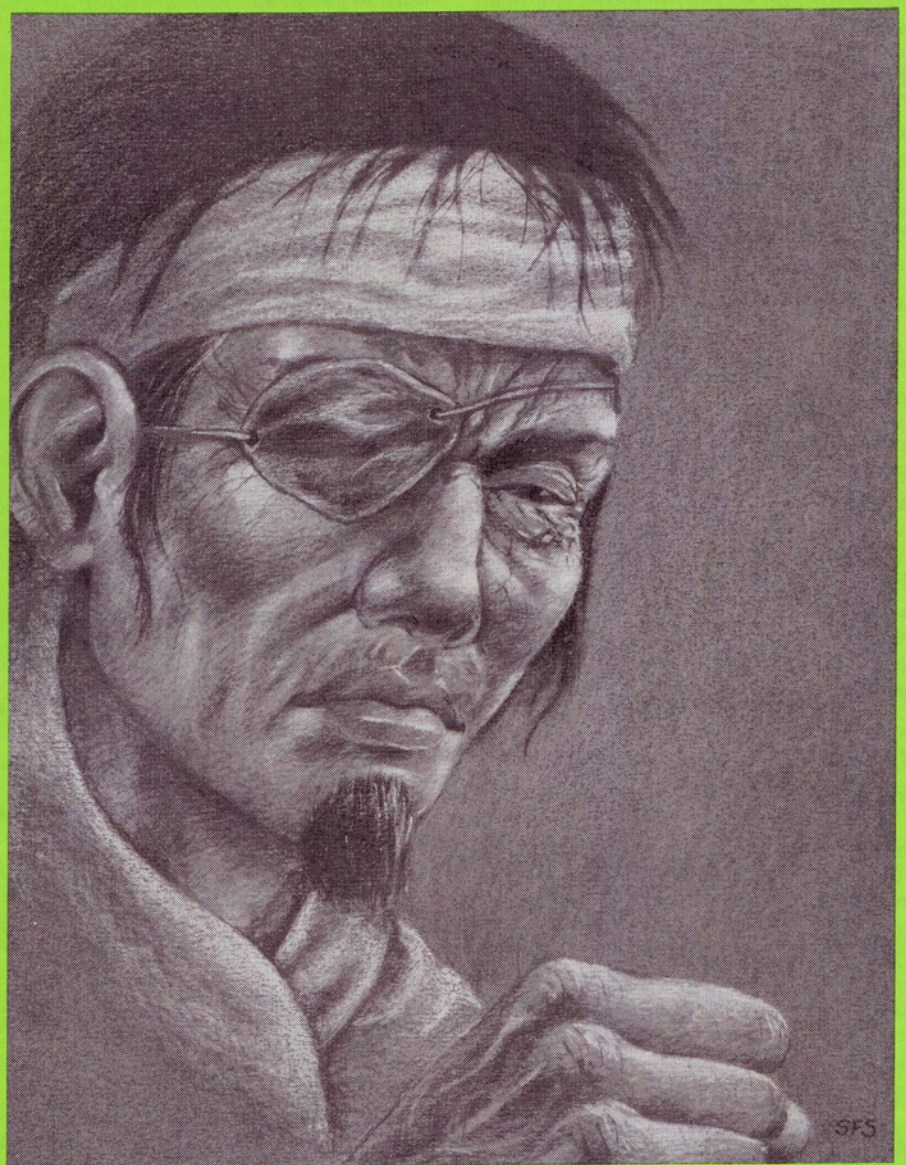
Vasquez: An incredibly capable fighter, although a bit cold and ruthless at times. Braver than any man I have ever known, she is always ready for reconnaissance and rear guard actions. She has held off pursuing enemies alone more than once.

Kelf: Not a very serious type. It's not that he's a prankster or clown, just that he has never taken his fighting, his magic, or his stealthy arts as seriously as his songwriting.

Quantum: A bit old to be gallivanting around in the damp, cold, Dungeons of the Deep (the site of the group's last adventure). He has been of great service to the group, even though he can be a bit cranky and mysterious at times.

Sea of Fire

Part One: River of No Return



An AD&D® Game Oriental Adventures Scenario for 4–6 characters levels 7–9

Illustration by Stephen Schwartz

By Robert Farnsworth

DM Background

For months, not one drop of rain has fallen on the steppes. Droughts are nothing new, but when most of the water holes also started to dry up, tribes began fighting over the smallest puddles of water. The only dependable sources of water left are the deep wells that provide water for a handful of permanent cities that dot the steppes.

Nomad tribes without access to deep wells have been forced to head for the last dwindling source of water, the Tokali River, which flows through the Quoya Desert from an underground source to empty into Lake Pakarsh.

Some of the wiser tribes headed straight for Lake Pakarsh. The larger of two lakes on the Tokali River, Lake Pakarsh is normally 33 miles long, 16 miles wide and in some places 120 feet deep. However, the lake's level has lowered 20 feet, and the river feeding the lake has shrunk to a stream.

The spring that feeds the Tokali River is not only the underground source for the river, but it also feeds the network of smaller underground streams that supply most of the water holes on the steppes.

Jeeng-dai, a powerful wu jen from the country of Wa set up a *gateway of symmetry* deep inside the spring that feeds the Tokali River. This sucks all of the water from the underground river and sends it to a matching *gateway* somewhere in the country of Wa. The river's current gradually slowed until it stopped completely, then started flowing *backwards*. This arrangement certainly makes life easier in drought-stricken Wa, but makes life pretty hard for the steppe dwellers and for the river creatures.

The river's guardian, a wise and powerful chiang lung (river dragon), decided to investigate and swam to the source of the water to find out what was drawing the river back. When he reached the source, Jeeng-dai and his servant, a gargantuan lizard, attacked and drove the dragon back to his lair. Later, the wu jen attacked the dragon in his palace and slew the dragon and his nature spirit servants.

Without a supply of water from the underground spring, and deprived of any water from rain, the river quickly shrank until what little water was left behind had either drained into the two lakes or evaporated into the dry sum-

mer air.

With the river no longer feeding Lake Pakarsh, what water is left in the lake will only last a finite amount of time. At its present level, it would take about two years for a dozen tribes and their herds to drink the lake dry. But when most of the area's 50 tribes reach the lake they will drain the lake dry in six months.

The ilkhan (mid-level leader of Khans) is currently the eldest and most powerful of the Khans at the lake. When the ilkhan learns that the steppes have caught fire, he will try to enlist the PCs to find some way to fix the river. If they don't volunteer, he will volunteer them while his power lasts.

The PCs in this adventure can be steppe barbarians who normally are loyal to the ilkhan, or travelers who discover the encampment at the lake and learn of the nomads' predicament.

The adventure begins with the PCs traveling across country.

Adventure Notes

Since the Tokali River lacks any sources of water, the party will see the river slowly dwindle away, until sometime during the fourth week of their travels when it dries up completely.

Since most of the steppe's water holes have already dried up, wild game has been driven to the last remaining sources of water in the area, the Tokali River and Lake Pakarsh, making it easier for the party to hunt for their food. The party shouldn't need to use their rations or water until the end of the third week.

Encounter 1: Lake Pakarsh

Week: 1 Day: 1

The PCs' first encounter is with Kani Mukei, a lost wu jen. Kani has been wandering across the steppes desperately searching for water for three long, dry weeks. When she finally reached the lake, she passed out from sheer exhaustion. A group of five guards found her, but when she awoke and tried to speak, the superstitious barbarians began giving her a hard time:

> As you ponder the tribes' predicament, you hear an excited shout from the encampment's landward side. "Hey! Look what the desert wind must have blown in. Looks like just another dry tuft of weeds! Strange that it is dressed. I've never seen weeds with clothing!"

If the PCs do not immediately investigate, a child runs up to the party leader and begins tugging on the character's sleeve: "Honorable sir (or lady), I think you should come with me right away. An arban (10 soldiers) patrolling the ridge to the west has found someone who wandered in off the desert. They have him surrounded, and they sent me here to get you."

When the party investigates or follows the child, they go to the outskirts of the camp, passing many yurts full of tribesmen. They pass over a small hill and see a group of warriors taunting what seems to be a slender man lying collapsed on the ground.

> When you reach the ridge, you see the patrol standing in a circle surrounding what appears to be the body of a thin, elderly man huddled on the ground. As you get closer, the tribesmen start to taunt him.
>
> The prisoner appears to have suffered greatly from the heat and thirst. His clothes are tattered and torn, and his skin is parched and burnt from too many days in the sun.
>
> As you get nearer to the group, you see the stranger try to rise, he seems to have had enough taunting, and he begins to chant and move his hands rhythmically.

The wu jen is about to cast a spell at the guards, precipitating a battle. If the PCs immediately intervene and take charge of the prisoner, there will be no fight. If not, the guards will kill the wu jen unless the PCs subdue all of them.

Guards (10): Int Average; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 1; hp 9, 8, 6, 5, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (scimitar); SZ M; ML 14; XP 35 each

Kani Mukei: S 13, I 18, W 18, D 16, C 12, Ch 14; AL NG; AC 1; MV 12; HD 9; hp 34 (14); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 16; XP Nil (2,000 if rescued from the guards)

Kani is bald, with a tattooed pate. She carries six shurikens and a kau sin ke. She can use her ki powers three times a day to gain +5 on reaction rolls (useless in this situation), or cast a 1st-5th level spell at maximum effect.

Magic Items: *bracers of defense AC 4 ring of protection +1, ring of invisibility, seal of vigor.*

Spells remaining: *Magic missile* (×2), *prestidigitation, stinking cloud, bind, fire shuriken, dispel magic, confusion, wall of force.*

Kani is desperate for water and regards the guards' taunting as an attack (she is not really thinking clearly). If the PCs don't stop the fight, she'll use her ki to cast maximum effect *magic missiles* at five guards. Then she uses her *ring of invisibility* to evade the survivors and make her way to the lake. If hard pressed, she'll use *stinking cloud.*

If the PCs question Kani, she can speak to them only a few minutes before collapsing from exhaustion again. She remains subject to these fainting spells until she has had food (she eats no meat), water, and has at least six hours of rest. She can tell the PCs the following:

- Kani came to the steppes to get magical training from various nature spirits. The drought has driven them off the steppe or into hiding.
- There is no open water to be found.
- The steppes have become prone to raging grassfires. in fact, one is headed this way right now.

If the PCs go to the top of the hill and look, they can see a shimmering curtain of smoke and haze. The steppes seem ablaze with thousands of grass fires that fill the horizon. At this distance, each grass fire becomes reduced to the size of a wave on the ocean, turning the steppelands into a sea of flames.

If the PCs don't save Kani, they eventually scent the smoke from the grassfires—which has a smell quite different from smoke generated from the tribesmen's dung-fueled cooking fires.

When the ilkhan learns of the fire, the tribe makes hasty preparations to move the camp to the far side of the lake and the PCs are not invited along:

> The ilkhan's assistant, Hang Puk, strides confidently toward you. "I am Hang Kahn," he says when he reaches you. "The ilkhan would like you to come to his tent immediately. He wants to talk to you."

Hang Puk: S 17, I 10, W 10, D 16, C 17, Ch 13; AL LN; AC 8; MV 12; HD 6; hp 49; THAC0 15; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 18; XP Nil

Hang Puk carries a dagger and a scimitar. He is a scimitar specialist (total combat bonuses +2 "to hit," +3 damage. He is very much aware of his own importance and—especially if the PCs attacked the guards—revels in rubbing the PCs' noses in his own importance. The PCs are obligated to play along with him or they each lose two points of honor for improper behavior. If they are foolish enough to attack Puk, they'll have to fight the entire tribe (1,000 mounted warriors), end of PCs. If the PCs helped Kani, but are obviously unfamiliar with the local customs, the wu jen will quietly advise them on proper etiquette.

If the party follows Hang Puk to the ilkhan's tent, they skirt the lake front to the south until they get to the last group of yurts. Since the ilkhan's tribe arrived at the lake first, they took the best spot to camp.

When you reach the tent, you see two very large guards posted in front of the entrance. The guards step aside and allow Hang Puk to enter, but step together once again, preventing you from entering the grand yurt.

"Sirs and ladies, before you enter this tent we must ask you to identify yourselves."

After the PCs have identified themselves properly, the guards politely stand aside.

When you enter the grand yurt of Tat Hyang, the ilkhan is seated on a short seat with Hang Puk seated on a cushion at the ilkhan's right hand.

"Ilkhan, I have brought (name's PC with the highest family honor score) and companions as you ordered.

"Be so kind as to introduce ALL my guests!" snaps the ilkhan, and a chastened Hang Puk does so without delay. When the formal introductions are over, the ilkhan speaks again:

"You have seen how the grass fires have spread across our homeland. It's only a matter of time before the fires reach even here, deep in the Quoya Desert.

"However, fire is not the biggest problem that our tribes face. Our biggest dilemma is that we are camping next to what is probably the last source of water for hundreds of miles.

"Just this morning, two more tribes of refugees wandered in, fleeing the drought on the steppes.

"Without the usual water holes that everyone uses in times of drought, more tribes will arrive each day. In the next few weeks, we could see the number of tribes along Lake Pakarsh increase to 40 or 50.

"You've seen how the lake has been shrinking day by day, already the level of the lake has dropped 20 feet. If more and more tribes and herds come along, they could drain the lake dry within a few short months.

"If we could keep the number of tribes down to what is here today, the water in the lake might last well into next year, by which time the drought should be over.

"We need someone to travel to the river's source and find out what has stopped the flow of water to the river and to see if there is anything that can be done to get the river flowing once again."

If one of the PCs volunteers to perform the task, everyone in the group gains an honor point. If no one speaks up, the Ilkhan Tat Hyang volunteers the party himself. The ilkhan allows Kani Mukei to remain in the camp to recover from her ordeal. (The ilkhan recognizes her value as an ally should another tribe dispute his "rights" at the lake shore.)

The party continues their travels with a string of pack horses carrying gifts from the ilkhan:

- Enough iron rations to last everyone in the party four weeks.
- Four weeks' supply of grain for feeding the horses.
- Five weeks' supply of water for both the horses and people.
- Three small tents (12′ diameter, 5′ tall).
- Hunting and cooking supplies for everyone.

Encounter 2: Desert Nomads Attack

Week: 2 Day: Random

Under normal conditions, the Tokali River is a large, quick flowing river, 25 feet deep and 100 yards wide. After months of drought and the interruption of the river's source, the river is now reduced to five feet in depth and is only 20 yards across. On either side of the river is another 20 yards of silty mud, with the outermost edges of the river bed already turning grassy.

The wasting away of the Tokali River has left behind a wide shallow valley with low ridges on both sides. If all of the party keeps to the river bed, they can travel quickly and easily, but they'll be unable to see anything beyond the edges of the valley, and anyone could sneak up on the party almost undetected.

Soon after the PCs leave the lake, a group of desert nomads begins to trail the party. The nomads keep far enough away to remain unseen. They are keeping watch over the party as they travel, waiting for the ideal time to strike. They want to steal the party's food, water, and other valuables.

At various times before the attack, the PCs get a few hints that they are being followed:

- During the day, one PC sees a flash of light in the distance.
- At night, someone hears the faint click of pebbles.
- At dusk, someone thinks he sees movement in the shadows, but he's not really sure.

Whenever the PCs go out to check the disturbances, they find no sign of anything or anyone causing them. The nomads are experts at hiding their tracks and will not be found unless they want to be found.

During one of the party's mid-day breaks to water their horses and eat lunch, the band of desert nomads approaches the river.

Whether the party is surprised depends upon how many guards they have kept on the ridges as they follow the river. For each PC traveling on the ridge, the party gains a +1 bonus on the surprise roll.

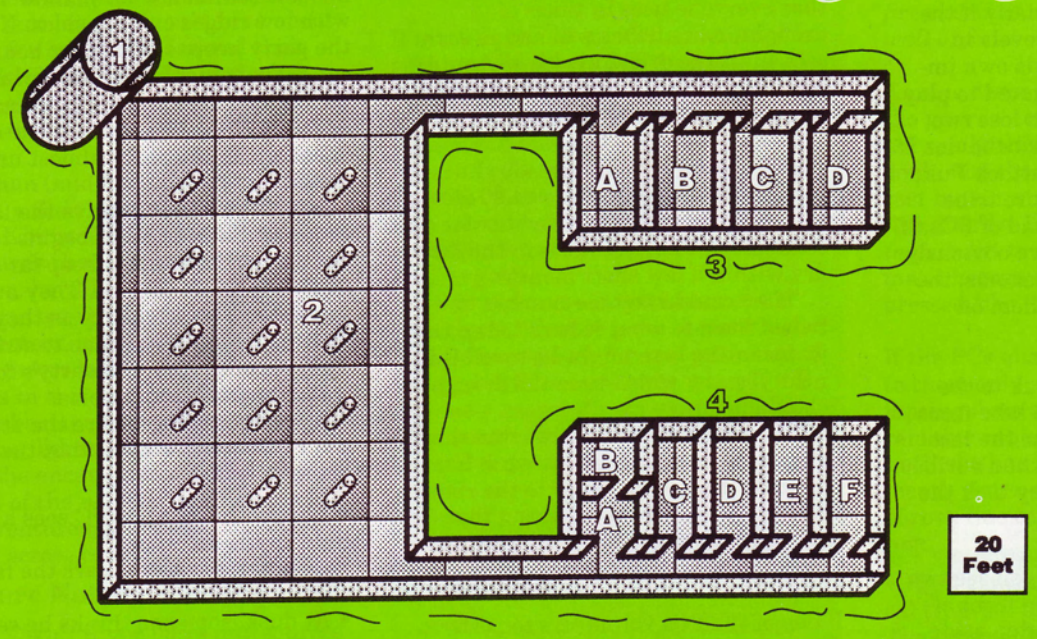
If the PCs are not surprised, they see a group of men riding camels coming over the edge of a dune to the east, approximately 100 yards from the crest of the river bank.

If they fail their surprise roll, nobody spots the nomads until they cross the ridge and stare down at the party's main body.

As long as the party doesn't move, the tribesmen just stay there. If any of the party do anything but talk, the desert tribesmen charge.

Chief: Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12 (18 when mounted); HD 5; hp 24; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10+1 (ka-

Palace of the Chiang Lung



tana); SZ M; ML 13; XP 270.

If the PCs do not immediately attack, the chief gladly will pause a moment to trade insults with the party. He'll refer to the party's horses as "skinny bundles of dog bones," and will find even less savory (but more descriptive) epithets for the characters. Any personal challenges offered to the chief draw a hail of arrows from the other nomads.

Subchiefs (2): Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12 (18 when mounted); HD 3; hp 15, 10; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1-10 (katana), 1-6 (bow); SZ M; ML 13; XP 65 each.

The subchiefs are basically cowardly, but eager to prove themselves in battle by making kills. In missile combat, they concentrate on the party's warriors, hoping to kill them before they get into melee combat. In melee, the subchiefs avoid warriors and try to attack spell casters and other lightly armored characters.

Nomads (18): Int Low to Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12 (18 when mounted); HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1-10 (katana), 1-6 (bow); SZ M; ML 13; XP 35 each.

Shaman: Int High; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12 (18 when mounted); HD 6; hp 23; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (mace); SZ M; ML 16; XP 650.

Magic item: *Bell of inspiration* (allows everyone within hearing to resist fear and confusion. Listeners receive a bonus of +4 on saving throws vs. fear or confusion.)

Spells: *Cure light wounds* (×5), *hold person, bestow curse, cause paralysis*

When the tribe charges, the shaman strikes his magic bell for all the tribe to hear, then he tries to stay to the back of the melee and heal any wounded tribesmen and cast additional spells.

No matter how the encounter unfolds, there will be one round before the nomads can close for melee, so both sides have a chance to use their bows before they close for the attack. If the nomads are charging down into the river valley they gain +2 "to hit" during the first round. After half of the nomads have died, of if the chieftain dies, the nomads must check morale (see DMG, page 70). The whole tribe turns and flees if they fail, allowing the PCs one free round of melee attacks and a free round of missile attacks before they disappear into the dunes.

Encounter 3: Discover a Young Man

Week: 3 Day: Random

When the party rounds a bend in the river, they spot the figure of a young man lying beside the river. He is dressed in typical travel clothing for a young gentleman, with a large sword strapped to his waist.

When the party reaches him, they find him half dead from overexposure to the sun. Anyone trying to lift his sword must make a *bend bars* roll to succeed.

The young man is Pok Luing, a chiang lung. To revive Pok, the party must wet him down to cool him off and get him out of the sun for four hours.

If they search him, they notice that the material of his clothing seems expensive, but a little out of style. In a pouch hidden up his sleeve are two dozen gems worth 200 tael each. (Pok keeps these gems to eat, but when he wakes he'll play the role of a lost young man by offering to trade one or two gems in exchange for sharing some of the party's food and water.)

Read the following if the party revives Pok:

"Ooooh, thank you. You came along just in time.

"I was traveling across the desert with a caravan headed for Shou Lung from Quaraband when we were attacked by desert nomads. I managed to escape with my life, but I must have been wandering lost for days looking for water. The last thing I can remember is stumbling down the embankment, but I collapsed before I could reach water."

"May I introduce myself?

"My name is Pok Liung. I'm afraid that I have lost all of my possessions except those which I am wearing.

"The river seems to have changed since the last time I came through here. I'm afraid that it's become much too bleak around here to be traveling alone. I've been trying to follow the river to its end, so I can get back to Shou Lung. Could I join up with your group as long as you follow the river?

"I can help pay my way with this small bauble, and I would also like to offer my services as a swordsman."

If the party questions Pok, he claims he does not remember anything but his name. If they ask why his sword is so heavy, he will say that it has been enchanted for his use only.

Pok has been sent by the Celestial Bureaucracy to replace the last river dragon (the one Jeeng-dai and his gargantuan lizard killed). The new river dragon has no idea what happened to the last dragon, so he is as much in the dark as the party members.

Chiang lung: Int Genius; AL LN (G); AC −2; MV 12, Fl 18 (E), Sw 24; HD 16; hp 95; THAC0 5; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8+5/1-8+5/3-36+5; MR 40%; SZ G (70′ body); ML 18; XP nil (1,000 for reviving).

Pok can *polymorph* three times per day into any form he desires; he can cast *bless, curse, omen, fate, dispel evil, control weather,* or *remove curse* once per round. In dragon form he can employ additional attacks such as *snatch* and *tail slap,* conditions permitting. When attacking in dragon form, Pok inspires *fear,* which causes most creatures to save vs. spells at +3 or attack and defend at −2. In human form, he can use his sword, a *katana* +5. Pok can breathe both water and air, and any creature touching him also can breathe water and move as if on dry land. Pok has continual *ESP* to a range of 30 feet, can expel storm clouds, and can *lower water* in a six-mile radius at will.

When traveling with the party, Pok remains in the guise of a young traveler. If pressed into combat, he stays in human form and uses his sword unless it becomes clear the party will lose if he does not assume dragon form. He will, however, cast a *curse* spell (-1 on all attack rolls) to aid the party whenever appropriate.

Pok would like to travel with the PCs. As a party member he'll try to encourage the PCs in the right direction rather than go out of his way to help (and in so doing risk detection).

One week after the party finds Pok, the river slows to a trickle and a short time later gives up all together. Small pools of water connected by muddy trails remain where a mighty river once flowed. After two more days in the sun, even the pools dry up. Following the dry river bed requires a successful tracking proficiency with no modifier each day; however, Pok instinctively knows where the river used to lie and can follow the river bed automatically.

As you follow the river bed, the flow of water along the river bed shrinks until it becomes a trickle. After a few more days, even the trickle stops, leaving a muddy trail leading deeper into the Quoya desert. From here on, you will be dependant on the water that you carry with you.

At the beginning of each day, tell the party they have one less day's supply of water, starting with five days' supply. The PCs can, however, cut their water consumption by as much as half through rationing, extending their supply to a maximum of 10 days. Getting to the next source of water (the lake where the old chiang lung used to live) will take them at least five days. Every time they lose the trail (fail a tracking roll) the party must spend an additional half day finding it again.

Encounter 4: The Smell of Water

Read the following when the party nears the second lake:

You've been following the river bed for days, and when the sun came up this morning it looked as though you had another dry, dusty day ahead of you. But the dust isn't so bad today, and now you think you know why; the river bed is getting damp again. In fact, you've found a small puddle. There it lies, shining in the early sun.

The party has in fact found a small, normal puddle of water.

As you press ahead the river bed becomes positively damp and quite easy to follow. The grass returns to a lush green and you start to find more small puddles of water dotting the river bed. Soon after you spot the first signs of water, your horses sense water up ahead, and start tugging wildly at their reins.

The party's mounts have become unruly and will bolt unless controlled. Each rider must make a riding proficiency check, failure indicates that the mount bolts straight toward the lake (non-proficient riders automatically have their mounts bolt). All riders on bolting mounts must make a second proficiency check or fall off (non proficient riders check vs. half their Dexterity scores). Falls inflict 1d6 points of damage.

Anyone who succeeds with a riding proficiency check can try to stop a runaway horse by making a second proficiency check at a −2 penalty. If this check fails, the proficient rider must make yet another check to stay on his own mount. If this fails, the rider falls and takes damage while his now uncontrolled mount bolts to the lake.

Anyone who arrives at the lake on a bolting mount must make a final proficiency or half Dexterity check to avoid being flung off the mount as it skids to halt and drinks.

When the PCs arrive at the lake, they'll spot a flock of vultures circling in the sky high above the lake. The vultures have been circling the lake for days, picking clean the dead carcass of the old river dragon.

When the PCs look out over the water, the first thing they see is the tip of a broken tower protruding from the surface. To the party's right is the entrance to a large canyon. Miles away on the far side of the lake, a thin stream of water leads off to the south. The party can also see the vultures diving into the canyon.

If they choose to investigate the tower, go to encounter 4a. If they head toward the canyon go to encounter 4b. If they skirt the lake and head toward the stream, go to encounter 5.

Encounter 4a:
The Palace in the Lake

This is the slain chiang lung's palace, which was ruined during the fight with Jeeng-dai.

> Looking down into the lake, you see the opulent walls of a small but luxurious palace. The walls and roof have been crushed in many places, as if by giant footsteps. You peer through the holes into rooms that put the emperor's palace in the Forbidden City to shame. You also see large jewels and gems glittering through the clear water.

While the party looks down at the riches of the palace below, Pok Liung removes his outer clothing down to his breechcloth and dives into the water. When he reaches the palace, he disappears from the view of the party above. Because he can eat gems, Pok dives straight for the dragon's palace to grab handfuls of gems to eat and to check for any survivors.

Characters who explore the ruins and bring treasure to the surface wind up with worthless glass and cheap copper trinkets—a chiang lung's valuables become worthless when removed from the lair unless they are freely given.

Pok returns to shore visibly shaken and disappointed. If anyone asks, Pok says he was searching for survivors. If questioned further, he explains that he was unable to find anyone and that everyone in the palace is dead.

The Palace

1. Tower: Normally 50 feet tall and 20 wide, the tower was broken when the body of the river dragon was pushed against it. When the lake was full of water, the tower allowed a person to stand waist high in water and observe the stars and all of the land around. The deceased river guardian used to turn invisible, swim to the top of the tower and stand on the platform so he could covertly observe the surrounding area.

2. Main Hall: This area is open on all sides. Opulent riches are scattered across the floor, but are so badly smashed that their component jewels and gems are all that remain. The chiang lung's six nature spirit servants met their end here. There bodies have long since faded away, but a few broken scraps of their equipment remain. Fragments of elaborately decorated furniture litter the floor. Close examination of this wreckage shows that the furniture must have been made by the most talented craftsmen. Pieces of wood still hold rare and precious gems and stones.

3. Living Quarters: These chambers were for the river dragon and any guests who stayed for a visit.

A. Master bedroom: This is sparsely furnished. The closet contains bedding and small pieces of furniture. Along one wall is a low desk with writing instruments and paper. The shelves above the desk used to hold rare and valuable books and scrolls, but Jeeng-dai took them.

B-D. Guest rooms: Each room contains a bed, a small dresser, and some small decorative knickknacks. On top of the small dresser in room B is a gold and silver mirror that will not change if removed from the lake (value 150 tael).

4. Servants' quarters and kitchen: The river dragon's servants lived and prepared meals in this area.

A. Kitchen: About half of the woks, stew pots, and sundry cooking utensils in here have been bent and crushed, but there still are several dozen intact items.

B. Storage room: This room was used to store food and other supplies. All of the food has either rotted or has been stolen or eaten by scavengers.

C-G. Servant's quarters: The only furnishings in these rooms are low wooden platforms used as beds and small plain dressers filled with simple clothing and a few combs and brushes. Each room has a shallow compartment set into the wall where formal clothing hangs. Any clothing taken to the surface will slowly crumble away as it dries.

Encounter 4b:
A Chiang Lung Skeleton

> As you near the mouth of the canyon, you can hear the beating of scores of wings.

The PCs have flushed out the last of the vultures feeding on the river dragon's skeleton. Some vultures head straight up, but some come flying straight out of the canyon toward the par

Well-fed scavengers, the v es do not intend to attack. If the party is surprised (normal chances), the vultures fly past the party quickly and are gone before the party can react. If the party is not surprised, each PC can make one attack with any ready weapon before the vultures fly by.

Vultures (20): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 3, Fl 30 (C); HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-2; SZ M; ML 10; XP 15 each.

When the PCs finally enter the canyon, they see the skeletal remains of the river dragon's tail poking out from behind a turn. Unless they turn the bend in the canyon they cannot be certain what the bones belong to. Pok is eager to investigate, and he asks the PCs to wait while he scouts ahead. If the party agrees:

> Pok walks slowly toward the bend in the canyon. Before he reaches the bend he slowly pulls his sword from its sheath. After a slight pause, he jumps around the bend to face the unknown.
>
> When he completes his bold leap, he stiffens and freezes in his tracks, shocked as if he has seen a ghost. He chokes out one word: "Noooooooo!" And collapses to the ground.

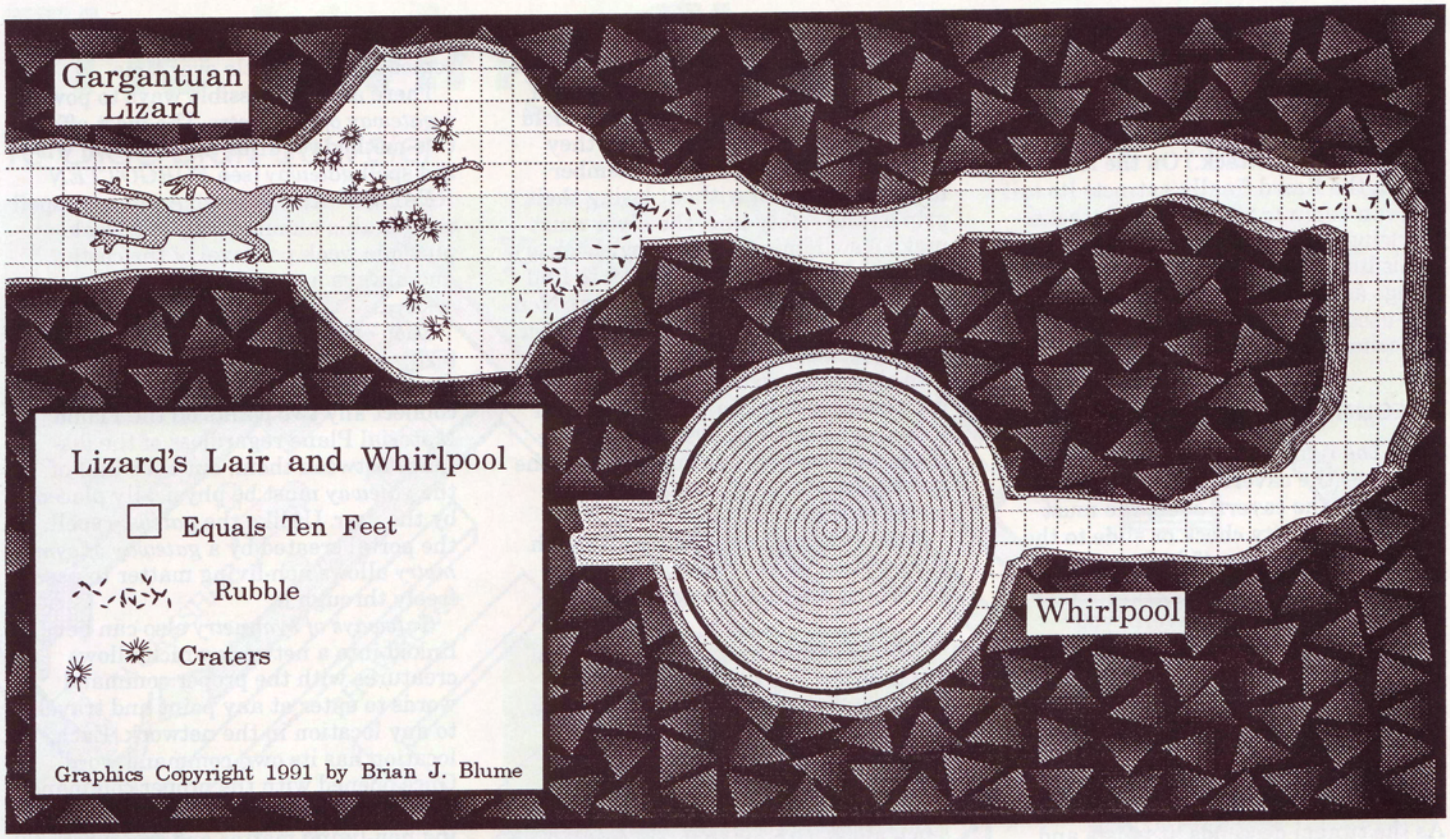
Seeing his predecessor reduced to a well-gnawed skeleton was a bit much for Pok.

When the party reaches the bend in the canyon, they also see the rest of the dragon's skeleton. The dragon's body is 120 feet long and the tail another 110 feet longer.

> The skeleton of a chiang lung, or river dragon, is stretched out along the canyon floor. Most of its ribs have been cleanly broken, and the neck has been snapped, leaving the head tilted at an unnatural angle. The flock of vultures alone could not have done all the damage.

If anyone asks, tell the party the bone fractures definitely were inflicted while the dragon was alive.

When Pok recovers (this only takes a minute or two) read the following:



Pok stumbles forward and kneels next to the skeleton. After a few moments, he rises to one knee and turns toward you.

"My friends, I knew this dragon well at one time.

"I passed through this area once, a long time ago. I found this lake and stayed here for the night. When I went to the shore to test the water, I found an elderly gentlemen sitting on that large stone right over there. When he asked me to share a meal with him, I gladly accepted.

"The next thing I knew, he was leading me toward the water's edge and into the lake itself. I stayed with him for a few days, and we swapped stories. He was immensely curious of the outside world, being secluded here for many years.

"When I saw what had happened to his river, I was afraid that this must have happened. It seems that we came along too late to be of any help. Whoever did this must be behind what has happened to the river and be the cause of this accursed drought.

"Let us leave now, there is nothing more that we can do here. I'm sure that the Celestial Bureaucracy will send someone to take proper care of his remains."

The dragon's skeleton has been picked clean, leaving nothing for the characters to find. If any of the party tries to further dismember or disturb the skeleton in any manner, they each suffer the loss of one honor point.

Encounter 5: Source of the Tokali River

The thin ribbon of water still left in the river bed makes it easy for the party to find the source of the river.

Although warm and a little silty, the water in the river can be consumed by both people and horses. Most importantly, the grass alongside the river bed is fresh and green and may be eaten by the horses. Food and water for everyone can once again be easily gathered, and the party will no longer need to use the supplies the pack horses carry.

After one week, the party reaches the source of the Tokali River. There, they find a shallow depression leading to a very large cavern.

At one time, this cavern was the outlet for the river's underground source, and it shows. Its walls and floor have been worn very smooth by flowing water, and the footing inside is treacherous.

The cavern leads down at a 30 degree angle, disappearing quickly from view. This, however, does not bother the current occupant, Jeeng-dai's gargantuan lizard. Jeeng-dai left his pet behind to guard the *gateway* that is drawing all of the water away from the river. The lizard is hiding deep inside the cavern waiting for prey. When someone gets close, it will charge out of the cavern and attack. Its bulk and clawed feet give it good footing on the slippery rock.

Gargantuan lizard: Int Low; AL CN; AC 2; MV 18, Sw 12; HD 50; hp 225; THAC0 5; #AT 3; Dmg 3-30/3-30/6-60; SZ G; ML 14; XP 43,000

When moving upright the lizard can trample (10d10 damage) and sweep its tail 90′ from side to side; anyone in the path of its tail must save vs. death or suffer 8d10 points of damage. The lizard regenerates four points of damage per round.

The creature's sheer size makes surprising the PCs impossible, but it does auto-

matically win initiative the first round. For the first two rounds of combat, the lizard can attack with claw/claw/bite. (Only after it has removed its tremendous bulk from the cavern can it perform a trample attack.) On the fourth round, the lizard finally extracts its tail and can begin to make sweep attacks.

During the fight, Pok Liung remains in his human guise until it looks like things are going badly for the party. Pok uses *bless* and *curse* when the lizard comes out of his lair.

Encounter 6: The Gateway

After the fight with the lizard, the party can enter the cavern. When walking down into the cavern everyone must make a Dexterity check or slide to the bottom of the cavern (5d6 damage).

> When you enter the cavern, you must tread softly on the slippery floor. After only a few feet you begin to hear the roar of water cascading somewhere deep in the earth.

After two hundred feet, the cavern narrows until it is 20 feet in diameter. As the tunnel descends, it twists and turns. After four rounds, the sound of the water becomes deafening. On the fifth round, the party turns around a sharp bend into a cavern that opens wide to form a large circular cavern.

The roar is coming from the large whirlpool in the center of the pool.

Once they enter the chamber, the PCs cannot communicate vocally—the roar drowns out all speech.

> The cavern is a sphere roughly 100 feet in diameter, and except for a narrow five-foot ledge that circles around the edge of the cavern, it is completely filled with water. The roar that deafens you and drowns out your speech is caused by the swiftly spinning whirlpool that fills the cavern. As fast as the water pours out of the 20-foot opening in the opposite wall, it flows into the whirlpool and is quickly gone from sight.

The whirlpool is created by Jeeng-dai's *gateway of symmetry,* which lies on the floor. When Jeeng-dai activated the *gateway* it began to divert all the water to Wa.

Anyone entering the water without a safety line is dragged under by the whirlpool and transported to Wa. If the party uses a safety line they must make a successful *open doors* roll or the whirlpool will pull the party member out of their grasp (if multiple characters hold the line, each one gets a roll). If they succeed in lowering a party member into the whirlpool without losing their grip on the safety line, the diver must make a swimming proficiency check or be too busy trying not to drown to find the *gateway,* (a large mithral ring). Non-swimmers can check vs. one third their Strength scores, rounded up.

To close the *gateway,* the party must use the correct command word (which they don't have) or physically destroy the gate. However, the current near the *gateway* simply is too strong to allow melee or missile attacks.

If the PCs are having difficulty with the *gateway,* or are reluctant to enter the whirlpool, Pok Liung speaks:

> "The Celestial Emperor has sent me to take the place of my deceased predecessor as guardian of this river. My duty requires me to find out where this whirlpool leads. If you accompany me, you will be able to breathe underwater until we can get to a place with air that you can breathe."

If the party accompanies Pok into the whirlpool, the dragon takes them through the *gateway* and into Wa.

This ends part one of Sea of Fire

New Magic Item

Gateway of Symmetry: Long before humans recorded history in the land of Kara-Tur, a powerful nature spirit residing in the depths of a volcano located somewhere off the coast of what is now the country of Wa began constructing these items to allow him quick passage between his island and the rest of Kara-Tur.

Each *gateway* consists of a bowl and a ring, each about a foot across, made of mithral (which is very rare in the eastern lands). A *gateway of symmetry's* power is dependent on measurements more precise than a mortal can make. Even the original nature spirit had to laboriously copy each *gateway* from the original, which still lies hidden in the volcano, protected by a permanent *time stop* spell. All attempts to pattern new *gateways* from existing copies fail unless a *wish* is used to make the measurements perfect, as even the best copies change a little over time.

There are two possible ways to power a *gateway of symmetry.* The most effective method requires the 8th level wizard spell *gateway* (see *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures*). A *gateway* spell used in this manner lasts one week, plus one week per level of the caster and always has a 100% chance of success.

Each end of an active *gateway of symmetry* is a vertical, disc-shaped field about 12 feet across. The two fields can connect any two points on the Prime Material Plane regardless of the distance between them, but each half of the *gateway* must be physically placed by the user. Unlike the *gateway* spell, the portal created by a *gateway of symmetry* allows non-living matter to pass freely through it.

Gateways of symmetry also can be linked into a network which allows creatures with the proper command words to enter at any point and travel to any location in the network. Each location has its own command word. Once opened with the proper command word, the *gateway* remains open, allowing non-living matter and creatures who don't know the command word to follow the same path, in either direction, that the command word user followed. A separate command word closes the *gateway.*

The second method to active a *gateway* is to place a magical item into the bowl. This destroys the item completely, reducing it to a sparkling dust that will blow away on the first breeze. The bowl does not function with artifacts, relics or holy symbols of any kind. When activated in this manner, a *gateway* remains open one round for each "plus," dose of a potion, or for each charge left in a magical item.

Using a magical item requires no command word, only a very clear thought of the destination gate. If the user does not know where the other end of the *gateway* lies, he cannot use it, though the magic item still is destroyed. However, once the *gateway* is opened and used, anyone or anything can follow the user, and the *gateway* can be kept open by placing more magic in the bowl.

Currently there are between 50 and 100 *gateways of symmetry* in the Prime Material Plane.

XP Value: 4,000 **GP Value:** 35,000 ❑

Sea of Fire

Part Two: The Sea Of The Problem

An AD&D® Game Oriental Adventures Scenario for 4–6 characters levels 7–9

By Robert Farnsworth

DM Background

In part one, the PCs searched for the source of a river that was the lifeblood of the steppes. The river had dried up because the water was shunted to the country of Wa through a *gateway of symmetry* created by Jeeng-dai, an evil wu jen.

When the party reached the river's source, they entered a whirlpool caused by water flowing through the *gateway.* The whirlpool carried the party through the *gateway* to the country of Wa.

Wa had been drought stricken. Saito Tomoya, the daimyo of the Wa mountain valley where the water was transported, hired Jeeng-dai to help alleviate the drought. In payment, the daimyo offered the wu jen a rare treatise on immortality. Since Jeeng-dai needed the book for his dark research into forbidden areas of evil magic, he eagerly agreed to help the daimyo.

When Jeeng-dai's efforts worked too well and produced a flood, the daimyo tried to get the wu jen to turn off the water. But Jeeng-dai had returned to his own castle in the mountains, and the daimyo's men have not been able to bring him back.

Furthermore, Jeeng-dai's research into immortality exposed him to poisonous vapors which have driven the wu jen insane. His evil experiments using his servants and local peasants have attracted the notice of the spirit of the Demiplane of Ravenloft. As the PCs enter Wa, Jeeng-dai is preparing another dark rite. This is the final evil act that the wu jen will perform before the Spirit of Ravenloft comes to claim him. The twisted path Jeeng-dai has followed toward immortality has made this mad, evil genius well suited for a role as a lord of Ravenloft.

Players' Background

The last thing you remember is being pulled down into a powerful whirlpool. When you reached the bottom, you caught a quick glimpse of a large silver bowl and a 10-foot-wide ring of silver. Then you passed into a darkness deeper than the blackest night. The next thing you knew, you were lifted from the bone-chilling waters of a vast mountain

lake and onto a stone ledge 30 feet long and 10 feet deep. A Chiang Lung (river dragon) had picked up each of you and deposited you, one by one, on the ledge. As your head clears, the dragon begins talking in perfect Kao Te Shou.

"It is good to see you made it through the gateway. I would have felt much sorrow if you had come to harm after rescuing me from a sure death by dehydration. Even a Chiang Lung can die from thirst if his river runs dry. Ah, but I see a little confusion in your eyes. Let me explain. When you rescued me I looked like a young man. I had to hide my true identity until I could find out what happened to my predecessor, the former guardian of what you call the Tokali River.

"When we discovered the former guardian slain, it became my duty to find his killer and restore the river. I am grateful for your companionship to the source of the river. In fact, if it wasn't for your help I would not have been able to defeat the gargantuan lizard that killed my predecessor. Now that I have returned the favor by pulling you from the chill waters of this mountain lake, I must leave. I must investigate the damage that the flooding of this valley has caused and report it to my superiors."

After the dragon finishes, he turns and with the flick of his tail disappears under the surface of the lake. As you look out over the lake, you notice you are stranded on this ledge. You are surrounded by rock and water. The nearest sign of habitation is an island at least one mile away.

Encounter 1: The Mountain Lake

The PCs' perch is on the west edge of the lake, notched into the side of a mountain that towers above them. The lower slopes of the mountains that surround the lake are covered with a forest of tall, straight birch. Some of the tops of drowned trees still poke up from the surface of the water near the PCs, but beyond these trees there is nothing but naked rock and chilly water.

Unless the PCs can fly, swim in cold water, or climb the rocky slopes, the party is stuck on the mountainside—unless they chop down trees and build a raft.

All the PCs' possessions have survived the trip, but their clothing and fire-making supplies are sodden. Standing in the cool mountain air, the characters will start to chill quickly, running the risk of hypothermia.

Encounter 2: The Island

Though there is plenty of room on your ledge, you see no way to get off, except by plunging back into the cold, mountain lake or laboriously climbing the rocky slopes. The area immediately surrounding you must have been a pleasant woodland glade, but now you see only the forlorn tops of drowned birch trees rising from the water. There are about 30 treetops, and the smell of dead leaves mingles with the scents of the alpine lake and your sodden clothing. The ledge is dry, but cold and hard, and you are starting to shiver in the mountain air. As you study the lake's surface, your eyes return to the island. It's about a mile from your ledge—too far to swim under these conditions. It is large and covered with cherry trees planted in neat rows and laden with fruit. Near the orchard you can see a thread of smoke drifting up into the cold mountain air.

Eventually, the PCs should find a way to the island. The smoke is coming from the cherry grower's minka on the opposite side of the island. It is a simple affair of wood with a thatched roof. The cherry grower has begun his harvest, but he has not been able to inform the daimyo to send someone to pick them up, so there are bushels and bushels of picked fruit with no way to get to market.

When the party reaches the cherry grower's minka, an old man and a young boy step out of the door. Both are armed. The older of the pair is carrying a tonfa, and the young boy is carrying a nunchaku.

The old man steps forward and demands (in Wa) to know the party's intentions. The old man wants to be sure they don't work for the wu jen from the mountains to the north.

Any character who can speak Kozakuran understands what the farmer is saying. Wa and Kozakuran are similar and often can be mistaken for badly accented versions of each other.

Farmer: Int Average; AL NG; AC 5; MV 12; HD 7; hp 42; THAC0 14; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6 (tonfa); SZ M; ML 14; XP Nil.

The farmer is a 7th level bushi. Once a day he can use his ki power to gain two levels for one turn; when using ki he gains 2d10 hit points and the THAC0 and saving throws of a 9th level fighter. The farmer can perform the following martial arts special maneuvers: Feint, locking block, missile deflection, and leap. He has a 32% chance to pick pockets.

Student: Int Average; AL LG; AC 9; MV 12; HD 2; hp 18; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6 (nunchaku); SZ M; ML 14; XP Nil.

The student is a 2nd level bushi. Once a day he can use his ki power to gain two levels for one turn; when using ki he gains 2d10 hit points and the THAC0 and saving throws of a 4th level fighter. The student can perform the following martial arts special maneuvers: Feint and locking block. He has a 22% chance to pick pockets.

If the PCs reassure the old man and chat with him, they can learn the following:

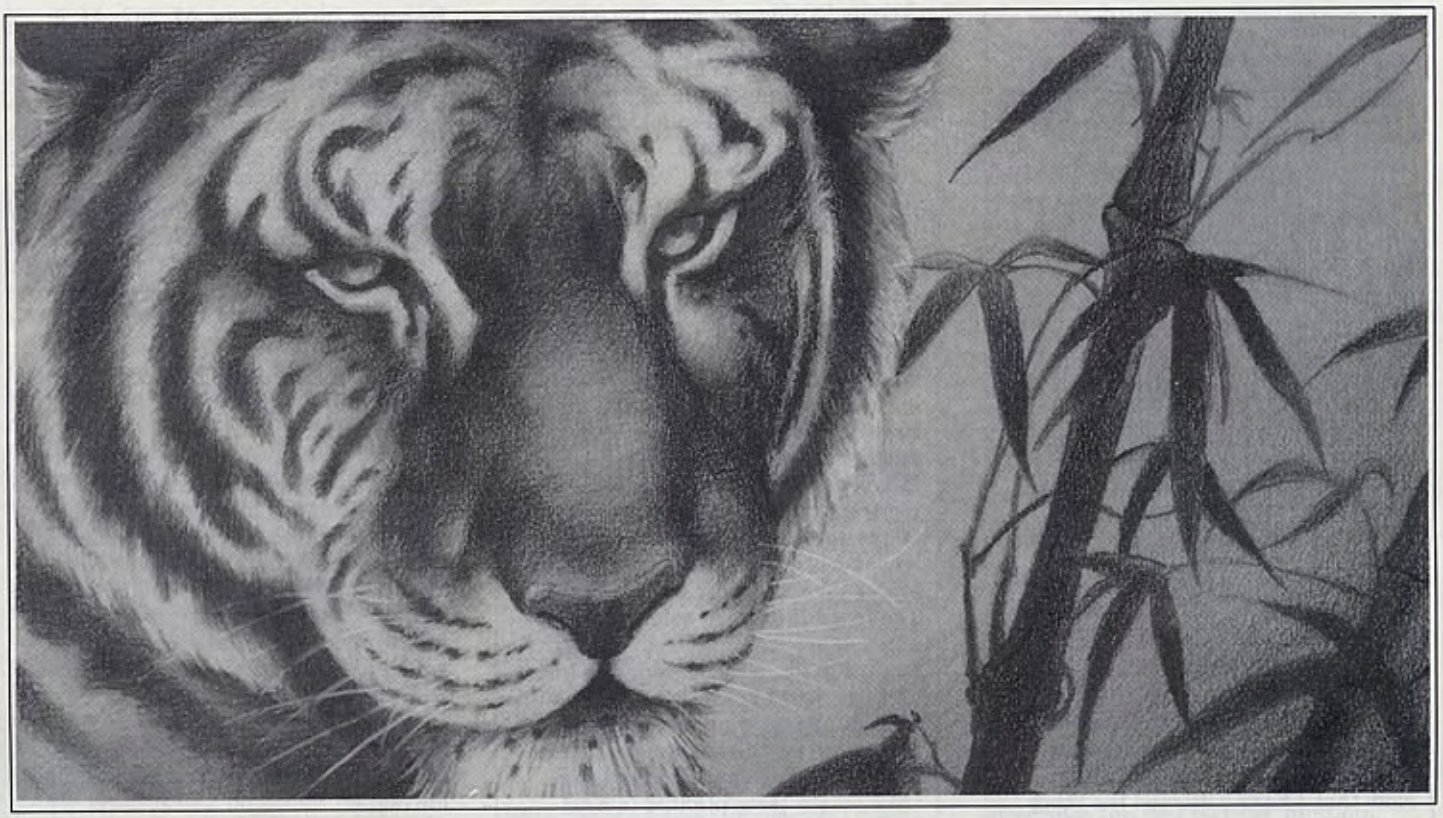
- Six months ago, the lake the PCs landed in was a mountain valley filled with rolling hills covered with pastures and orchards. A small river meandered down the valley supplying plenty of water for the herds and irrigation for crops in the lowlands. When the drought came, the stream began to dry up, threatening the water supply and causing herdsman and farmers in the valley to fight for the dwindling supply of water.

- One day, a man claiming to be a great and powerful wu jen told the daimyo that he could solve the water problem, if the daimyo made him his closest advisor.

- It wasn't long before the stream began overflowing and flooding the valley. When the wu jen couldn't stop the water, the daimyo banished him. (Actually, Jeeng-dai fled the valley long before the flood, and the damiyo has not been able to bring him back, though only the damiyo and his closest advisors know this.)

- Since the wu jen left, the lowlands have been steadily disappearing. Now what used to be hills are islands.

After the party has explained why they



came to the mountain valley, the old man invites them inside to get warm and to dry their clothes. The party is offered as much cherry-based food as they can carry with them.

Encounter 3: Off to See the Daimyo

After the party leaves the old man's island, they pass smaller, deserted islands. Some of these are covered with trees and are surrounded by the tops of drowned trees.

The largest and tallest island is located in the center of the valley. This island is crowned with a gray stone castle.

The castle's gates and walls are manned by armed soldiers who question the party extensively before allowing them to enter the castle. The guards are suspicious of the PCs, because they obviously are foreigners. And the guards are not sure whether the party could be working for the wu jen who cursed their valley.

After the party has explained who they are, Minori Wada, the sergeant of the guard, asks them if they work for Jeeng-dai:

> "You don't work for that crazy wu jen who caused this flood, do you? If you do, then we don't want your kind in our valley, so go away."

If the PCs foolishly claim to be Jeeng-dai's agents, Minori Wada and all the castle's defenses (which consist of at least 200 1st level bushi armed with bows and an assortment of siege engines, plus various high level samurai and other NPCs) drive the PCs away. If the PCs politely deny any connection with the wu jen, they are invited inside:

> "Well, if you don't work for him, then come on in, I'll get someone who can take you to see the daimyo."

Minori Wada: Int Average; AL LG; AC 5; MV 12; HD 3; hp 24; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8 (battle axe); SZ M; ML 15; XP Nil (200 if he lets the PCs into the castle).

Minori Wada is a 3rd level bushi. Once a day he can use his ki power to gain two levels for one turn; when using ki he gains 2d10 hit points and the THAC0 and saving throws of a 5th level fighter. He has a 24% chance to pick pockets, though he is very unlikely to do so in this encounter.

After the party enters the gate, the guards close the outer door, trapping the PCs inside. When the party looks for ways to get out, they notice many arrow slots filled with arrows.

When the party realizes they are trapped, the inner gate door opens and one of the daimyo's lieutenants steps into the opening, a troop of soldiers armed with bows drawn backs him up.

The daimyo's man also has a priest with him. The priest has a *detect lie* spell running and will tell the lieutenant if he believes the PCs are lying.

> "My name is Maximoto Takashi. I am the daimyo's lieutenant, and you will tell me why you would like to speak with the daimyo."

Maximoto Takashi: Int High; AL LG; AC 1; MV 9; HD 8; hp 58; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1-10+6 (katana plus strength, samurai, and specialization bonuses); SZ M; ML 18; XP Nil (500 if he lets the PCs see the daimyo).

Maximoto Takashi is an 8th level samurai. In melee he normally is +1 "to hit," +6 damage. Eight times a day

he can use his ki power to raise his Strength to 18/00 for one round (melee bonuses +5 "to hit" +11 damage). He gets a +1 to all surprise rolls, is immune to all types of fear, and can *cause fear* in creatures of 1 hit die or less (save vs. breath weapon or flee or surrender as the situation warrants).
Magic item: *O-yori +2*

Buni: Int High; AL LN; AC 9; MV 12; HD 10; hp 48; THAC0 14; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 16; XP Nil.

Buni is a 10th level shukenja. Ten times a day he can use his ki to gain a +3 bonus to a saving throw. He can perform the following martial arts special maneuvers: Choke hold and locking block.
Magic item: *Brooch of shielding* (55 hp)
Spells carried: *Augury, know history, cure light wounds* (x5), *hold person, enthrall, withdraw, obscurement, prayer, dispel magic, detect lie*, pacify, true seeing*
* cast and running at the beginning of the encounter.

After finding the party's true reason for coming to the valley, Maximoto Takashi ushers the party to an audience with the daimyo; Buni falls into step behind the party.

> The route to the castle's keep takes you through compounds filled with people forced from their homes by the flood. The deeper you travel into the castle, the less crowded and better the conditions until you get to the main keep. This is the home of the daimyo's family and his immediate relatives. Maximoto Takashi leads you to an empty audience chamber, where he and the priest kneel on rice tatami mats placed off to the right side of the chamber.
>
> Six mats (obviously for you) are lined up before a low platform, which has a padded cushion set in the center.

When the party kneels on the mats, the daimyo walks slowly into the room. Guilt and frustration have worn him down until he is willing to grasp any straw for salvation.

The daimyo is only interested in what is happening to his valley, and he ignores any news of what happens miles away. He is concerned about anything the party might do to help him, but will lend the party no major assistance because he is having enough trouble controlling a valley full of people crammed into his castle.

Assuming the party does not offend the daimyo by breaking protocol, he will discuss the following topics with the party before sending them on their way:

- When the drought started, a mysterious wu jen showed up at the castle gate. The wu jen proclaimed that if he was allowed an audience with the daimyo, he could assure that the valley would never need water again.
- The wu jen was powerful, but he seemed to make outrageous claims without explaining exactly how he would perform this miracle. The wu jen proposed to perform this feat in exchange for a rare treatise on immortality that the daimyo possessed.
- When the water started flowing into the valley, the daimyo and his people were happy, and the daimyo gave the treatise (actually a collection of ancient scrolls) to the wu jen along with a reward of 1,000 bars of silver. Unfortunately, the wu jen left before the water started to flood the valley.
- The wu jen lives in a tower high up in the mountain pass north of the lake. The daimyo sent men to take the wu jen down from the mountain pass, so he could stop the flood. However, only a few survivors returned; all of them reported attacks by wild beasts, evil spirits, and a strange and horrible malaise that inexorably sucked the life from their companions.
- The daimyo really cannot spare any more soldiers. Nor does he need to, as the PCs must deal with the wu jen to save the steppes from the drought.

The daimyo is unwilling to let the PCs question survivors from the expeditions against Jeeng-dai. There are very few of them, and most are performing menial tasks to atone for their failures.

If the PCs volunteer to seek out Jeeng-dai after their audience with the daimyo, they each gain two points of honor. However, they lose one point of honor if they insist on speaking with the disgraced survivors, all low-level bushi. The bushi can only tell the PCs that evil spirits and wild beasts are in the mountains and just getting close to the tower can be deadly. The survivors say the samurai, shukenja, and most of the bushi, died at the tower.

The daimyo will see to it the PCs receive directions to the tower, and he will lend the party boats and pilots to cross the lake and reach the pass. He is unable to offer any food or supplies.

Encounter 4: Playful Kittens

The water has risen to reach the impenetrable forest that covers the mountains. The slopes that are not covered by forest are too steep to walk across and only can be climbed with the appropriate skills and gear.

However, the north end of the lake narrows until it comes into contact with the foot of the pass. The bottom of the pass is choked with trees and undergrowth. The only landing point is a broad path leading up the pass.

The path runs 240 yards before reaching the clearing where a cabin sits:

> You easily march up the path for a few hundred yards until you reach a pleasant clearing which contains a well-kept cabin with a large herb and vegetable garden. As you enter the clearing, two young girls—about 10 years old and obviously twins—come running your way. They seem to be oblivious to your presence. In their small hands, they carry wooden naginatas. Both are absorbed in their play, laughing and fighting like two young kittens. Both girls are dressed in plain, green kimonos.

Unless the PCs immediately make their presence known, the girls won't notice the PCs until their game takes them within 10 feet of the party. The girls scream in utter terror and begin to flee. If the PCs get their attention earlier, the girls simply scream, then stop to study the PCs from a distance.

Both girls are indistinguishable from human girls, unless the party uses a *detect shapechanger* spell.

The PCs, as strangers armed and dressed in fierce armor, frighten the girls. If the PCs are calm, the girls settle down and react with timid curiosity, asking the characters where they come from, were they are going to next, what kind of food they like, etc.

Unfortunately, their mother heard the screams and bounds into the clearing to kill whoever is attacking her babies. She enters in tiger form and tries to place herself between the girls and the party. But, as far the party knows, the tiger is heading for the children:

You soon learn why these children are jumpy; a tiger, silent as a ghost, has leapt from behind the cabin and landed between you and the children. The beast's paws are almost as large as the girls' heads.

The weretigress attacks unless the PCs back away. If a fight breaks out, the girls join the melee on the second round, changing into hybrid form, jumping on the lead fighters and pleading with them not to attack the tiger. If the PCs make any attack on the youngsters—even a non-lethal one, the weretigress goes into a frenzy, gaining +2 to attack and damage rolls. The weretigress does not stop until all the PCs have backed away from the girls.

Mori-Lonata (Weretigress): Int Average; AL N; AC 3; MV 12; HD 6+2; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-12; SA Rake for 2-5/2-5; SD Hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapon; SZ M; ML 14; XP 975.

Mori-Balsan & Mori-Deso (Weretiger Cubs): Int Average; AL N; AC 3; MV 12; HD 3; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; SA Rake for 2-5/2-5; SD Hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapon; SZ M; ML 14; XP 175 each.

After the fight is over, the youngsters walk up to the tiger and speak to it. The tiger changes first to its hybrid form and then its human form. Changing back to human form heals 1d6x10% of any damage suffered in the fight. If the girls are damaged, they resume human form, too.

If any characters were injured, they have a 1% chance of contracting lycanthropy per point of damage suffered in the melee. Mori-Lanata has belladonna in the garden and will offer it to any injured character. The belladonna has a 25% chance of curing the disease, if taken within one hour. Mori-Lanata will also tell them that anyone who consumes the belladonna will be violently ill for 1d4 days.

The weretiger gives the PCs free room and board for as long as it takes to recover from the belladonna. The party can explore the surrounding forest, or they can choose not to use the belladonna because time is crucial.

If asked about Jeeng-dai, Mori-Lanata tells the party she knows only that the tower is higher up the mountain pass. She met some soldiers who tried to find the wu jen, and even helped the returning survivors recover from their injuries. The only information she got from the survivors was that the others all died horribly and painfully.

Encounter 5: Megalocentipede

After leaving Mori-Lanata's clearing, the PCs can follow the path upward for several hours:

The landscape above the tree line is barren and strewn with rocks of all sizes, though few are smaller than your fists or larger than your heads. The footing is fairly secure. When you glance back toward the valley you can see the submerged outlines of flooded roads and houses. Like the steppe dwellers, many people here have lost their homes. A frigid mountain wind sweeps over the treeless slope, chilling you to the bone. Dark clouds gather in the sky above, and a light rain begins to fall.

Before you have time feel miserable, you spot the fresh carcass of a large white elk lying on the ground.

Behind the carcass, a megalocentipede, still hunting in spite of the cold, awaits the party. The centipede is cunning, and it waits for a PC to come forward to investigate the carcass before running out and attacking. Until the party came along, the centipede had been trying to kill the elk, which really is a greater nature spirit *polymorphed* into an elk. It can't effectively bite the elk, because the spirit is immune to all but the most powerful enchanted weapons. (The spirit is lying here because it lost a fight with a rival spirit and only its *ring of regeneration* kept it alive.)

Megalocentipede: Int Animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 18; HD 3 hp; hp 22; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA Poison; SZ M; ML 10; XP 120.

The centipede injects poison on every successful hit. If the victim saves vs. poison, the venom still burns the skin for 1d8 points of damage. If the save fails, the victim suffers wracking pains and violent convulsions after 1d4+1 rounds. Once the convulsions begin, the victim is helpless and loses one point of Constitution each round. When the Constitution score reaches zero, the victim dies.

A *slow poison* spell stops Constitution loss, but does not alleviate the pain, and the victim receives a −4 penalty to all saving throws, attack, and damage rolls.

Encounter 6: The Nature Spirit

Two to five rounds after the centipede attacks the party, the nature spirit's body begins to regain its lost hit points; 10 rounds after that it rises to its feet with one hit point.

After the white elk rises, it is enveloped by a bright, white glow. The light makes it difficult, but not impossible, to see the elk change into a 10-foot-tall, perfectly proportioned man with glowing white skin. (This transformation restores 1d12 hit points to the spirit.) He is wearing a white kimono with a pale blue Ki'rin stitched into the fabric.

Greater Earth Nature Spirit: Int Genius; AL NG; AC 2; MV 12; HD 12; hp 75 (currently 1+1d12; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 1-10/1-10; MR 70%; SZ L; ML 15; XP Nil.

The spirit can use the following powers once a round at 12th level: *Invisibility, polymorph self, detect evil and good, detect magic, detect harmony, know history* and *aura.* The spirit can *shapechange* five times a day and bestow a *reward* and an *ancient curse* once a week. The spirit is immune to all earth magic and is harmed only by +4 or better weapons.

Magic Items: *Periapt of proof vs. poison, ring of regeneration, scroll* (one or more *neutralize poison* spells)

If any PCs are suffering from the megalocentipede's poison, the spirit will pull out a scroll with enough *neutralize poison* spells on it to cure every victim.

The spirit tells the party there is a tower owned by a powerful wu jen farther up the pass. He also warns them that he feels something unusual in the air and suggests the PCs finish their business and leave the area soon.

Encounter 7: Many Raindrops

As you climb higher the wispy clouds in the sky are borne away by a rising west wind. Thick, dark thunderclouds roll in to replace them. As the clouds become darker, the light rain that has been falling for the past few hours turns into a torrential downpour, cutting visibility to 100 yards. Lighting lashes the peaks surrounding you.

If the party does not seek shelter, they fight the rain for 10 more turns. Each round there is a 1-in-10 chance that a flash flood washes down the mountain pass. The flash flood only occurs once.

If a flash flood hits the party, each character must roll vs. Dexterity or lose his footing. Anyone who fails, slides 120 yards down the pass. Victims take no damage, but they must save for each of their fragile items vs. crushing blow.

After 10 turns, the clouds separate and allow a clear view of the tower:

> The clouds slowly part, and the rain fades until you can see a tall stone tower looming out of the haze 300 yards from where you stand. The tower's windows are dark, except for the two windows in the top floor. The left window glows with a pale blue light, and in the right window you see reflections of orange and red flames.

Encounter 8: Jeeng-dai's Tower

The party approaches the tower without being challenged or detecting any sign of life. The tower is five stories tall, with a large metal-bound door hanging slightly ajar. Inside the door is the dead body of a young soldier:

> When you reach the base of the tower, you find an immense iron-bound door, slightly open. Propped up inside the door is the lifeless body of a young samurai whose armor bears the crest of the Maximoto clan. He holds a spear in his inert fingers. His skin has turned pale gray, and the body has begun to decompose.

This soldier is related to Maximoto Takashi, the daimyo's lieutenant. He was in the group killed during Jeeng-dai's life-draining experiments. His face is sad, but calm. His body could not have been here more than a few days, but it is decayed enough to have been rotting for weeks.

As the PCs climb the steps of the tower, they find dead bodies lying all over the place, both invaders and tower servants. Each body is in the same condition as the dead guard's at the entrance. Maximoto retainers lie where they fell. The wu jen's servants are all positioned as if they had dropped dead in the middle of their household duties. Most of the bodies have a look of fear etched into their features.

1st Floor: Storage/Kitchen

A. Storage Room: This contains enough food and supplies for 50 people for a month. It also is storage for mundane items such as lamps, rope, etc.

B. Kitchen: The bodies of the five servants working here still have utensils clasped in their hands. There are pots on the stoves, but the cooking fires have gone out, leaving half-burned, half-raw food.

2nd Floor: Living Area

Large dining room: This low table has room for at least 12 people. There is no one in the room.

Entertainment room and Library: Books and scrolls line the walls, and comfortable cushions are thrown about. There is no one in the room. The books and scrolls are collections of poetry and stories and have a negligible sale value.

3rd Floor: Bedrooms

Master bedroom: This chamber has a

wooden bed. Elegant tapestries cover the walls and make the chamber look like any other wealthy person's bedroom. The only thing out of place are the dead bodies of six Saito soldiers. All are dead from poison darts; these bodies do not have the gray pallor of the other bodies. All of the traps have been sprung, and the room is safe to enter. The tapestries in this room have a sale value of 800-6,400 tael.

Guest bedroom: This room is nearly a copy of the master bedroom, except there are no dead bodies, and the tapestries are worth 400-1,600 tael.

4th Floor: Servants' Quarters

Five small bedrooms: These rooms have personal knickknacks and small religious statues. There are no dead bodies.

Stairs: The stairway leading to the fifth floor is littered with 15 dead Saito soldiers, all except one died from poisoned darts.

At the top of the stairs is the body of the group's leader; this samurai wears the mon (large flag worn on the back) of the Maximoto clan. He has no poison darts stuck in him and does not have the gray pallor. If a PC wu jen studies the body and makes a successful check vs. one third his Wisdom score, the PC can deduce that the samurai died from *magic missiles.* Any character with the spellcraft nonweapon proficiency also can deduce this with a normal roll.

The stairway has been rigged with a thread tied to a tiny bell placed in Jeeng-dai's lab. The thread is easily detectable.

5th Floor: Laboratory

The lab is filled with arcane equipment and various ongoing experiments. Mysterious tubes and large beakers of glowing chemicals fill one bench. Strange glowing liquids of various colors flow between the beakers and flasks. Pigeon holes, filled with scrolls and research papers, line one of the walls next to the PCs.

If the party found the thread on the stairway and avoided it, they see Jeeng-dai standing in front of the bench facing away from the entrance and the party. He will first cast a *wall of force* using his wu jen ki ability, gaining a +3 initiative bonus. If he successfully casts the *wall,* he uses it to form a protective barrier between himself and the PCs. Once the *wall* is in place, he sits in his "throne," a large chair with a high back, to address the party.

If the party tripped the bell as they climbed the stairs, Jeeng-dai is waiting for them with a *wall of force* already up. The *wall* bisects the lab and prevents anything or anyone from reaching Jeeng-dai. The wu jen sits in his "throne," watching the party as they come through the entrance to his lab.

The "throne" is perched on a low platform that allows a commanding view of the room. Jeeng-dai is taking this opportunity to gloat a little:

> "Ah, greetings. Forgive me, but I can't afford much time to talk. I am in the middle of very important experiments, and I can't spend time with you. So if you will forgive me, I have to get back to my work."

The wu jen walks back to his bench to finish his experiments. As he works, he offhandedly, but smugly, explains what he's been up to:

> "They'll see. They said it couldn't be done. I did it. I found the way to true immortality, and I'll need servants who will stay with me as long as I live.
>
> "True, they won't really be alive, but that doesn't matter, does it?"
>
> While he is speaking, you notice wisps of fog drift in through the window and start to collect on the floor at your feet.

The Spirit of Ravenloft has come to collect Jeeng-dai, and maybe the PCs if they don't flee. The PCs are on the same side of the *wall of force* as most of the wu jen's scrolls and papers. After the wu jen gets back to his bench, he will be too busy concentrating to stop the PCs from grabbing the papers and running for it. If the PCs were able to attack Jeeng-dai before the he could create the *wall,* the wu jen fights to the death, babbling about immortality the whole time. If the PCs slay Jeeng-dai, tendrils of fog rise from the body—the Spirit of Ravenloft isn't about to be denied by something as paltry as Jeeng-dai's death.

Jeeng-dai: Int Genius; AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 9; hp 39; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SZ M; ML 20; XP 2,000.

Jeeng-dai is a 9th level wu jen. Once a day he can use his ki to gain a +3 bonus to initiative. Also once a day he can use ki to cast one spell of 6th level or lower at maximum effect. He has a +1 bonus "to hit" with his dagger.

Magic items: *Necklace of missiles* (five *fireballs:* 1@ 8 dice, 2@6 dice, 2@4 dice), *bracers of defense AC 5, ring of regeneration*

Spells carried: *Hypnotism, magic missile* (x4), *phantasmal force, protection from charm, protection from normal missiles, detect shapechanger, remove curse, improved invisibility, dispel illusion, wall of force* (x2), *speak with dead, reanimation, vanish*

The PCs have 10 rounds to grab all of the papers and flee from the tower or they will be transported to the Demiplane of Ravenloft, along with the tower and its dead inhabitants.

Encounter 9: Next Stop Ravenloft?

As the party leaves the tower, the sky darkens and a thick fog rolls toward the tower. If the party doesn't run, they will be surrounded by the fog. The fog has a movement rate of 13.

The fog is 100 yards away from the party when they first notice it. If the fog surrounds them, they finish the adventure wandering through the ethereal fog until they reach Ravenloft. But, that's another story.

If they escape the fog, everyone in the party looks back up the pass to see the fog and clouds clear away from an empty cavity where the tower used to be. The tower, Jeeng-dai, and everything in the tower is now on its way to the Demiplane of Dread.

When the PCs stop to examine the papers they pulled from the laboratory, they find that most of them are notes for Jeeng-dai's research into immortality.

The papers also include five scrolls, each with a single spell: *Giant size, permanency, teleport without error, gate* (mage/wu jen version), and *true seeing.* The fourth scroll had another *gate* spell on it before Jeeng-dai used it to open the *gateway of symmetry* to the source of the Tolkai river.

In addition, the research papers explain how the *gate* spell works when used with a pair of *gateways of symmetry.* The paper explains that the *gate* spell will last for a few more weeks. ❑

Experience Preferred

Part One

An AD&D® 2nd Edition Game Scenario For Six Veteran Adventurers

Illustration by Scott Rosema

by Tom Prusa

DM Background

The characters provided with this scenario retired from adventuring many years ago. Their ages range from 67 to 151, and they are all residents of the *Nellie Thursday Home for Experienced Adventurers.*

Nellie Thursday is a dwarf who is at least 300 years old. She welcomes adventurers who have lived to a ripe old age. Life has been good at her retirement home—until recently. A former wizard resident has been threatening to destroy the home and everyone in it.

Nellie has called together a group of the most able residents (the PCs) to find the wizard, a former friend of theirs, and bring him back to his senses. Nellie insists they spare his life. However, the task will not be easy, as old age has taken its toll on most of the PCs.

The first part of the adventure takes place on the Plane of Olympus. At the end of this scenario is a list of how each character's equipment, weapons, and spells are effected by Olympus. Familiarize yourself with this before play begins. It also would be helpful to read pages 73-82 and 92-93 of *The Manual of the Planes* for reference. On Olympus, Ada only will be able to recover first and second level spells. Most spells work normally, although conjuration spells generally will be unsuccessful. In addition, alteration spells have a 40% chance of being altered. A table for random rolls is presented at the end of this scenario.

Players' Introduction

The fireplace is crackling nearby, and a young bard shifts on his stool. The old man on the chair opposite him smiles and says, "The impatience of youth. You want to hear my tale, but you don't wish to wait for an old man to tell it. The tale I will tell you is a perfect example of why youth is not always the answer. As has been said before, there is no substitute for experience."

The old man sits back, lights his pipe, and begins his story.

"As everyone knows, adventuring is dangerous business. The rewards are great, but the risks are high. Still, in spite of ferocious monsters,

gruesome undead, and perilous traps, some few adventurers survive. The best adventurers survive.

"But even the best adventurers will someday watch the swing of their sword get a bit slower, the memorizing of spells taking more energy. In short, they grow old.

"And since most adventurers spend their wealth as fast as they get it, they can't retire to rich towers or become barons and dukes. It was for this reason that an old dwarf, Nellie Thursday by name, founded a home for adventurers who had gotten a little long in the tooth.

"All went well at her home for more than a hundred years; the relative wealth of even poor adventurers was enough to provide them with many comforts and luxuries. Nellie also sought to serve as many of the residents' whims as possible. And she became quite rich at it, too. Many of the adventurers lived at her home for years and years, quite content, reliving past glories, and swapping tall tales of derring do.

"But one day Nellie received a very disturbing message. It seemed that Exeter, a former resident, was making threats about the home. No details were given, just the bare fact that the home and all its residents were doomed. Such threats are usually taken lightly, but Exeter was quite a powerful wizard, and in his last years at the home he had shown signs of increasing mental instability. In fact, he was mad as a hatter.

"Nellie called in Exeter's former roommate, an old adventuring companion of his named Wemick the Wise. Wemick had been a resident of the home for a long time. He was a wizard, and a sage besides. And, at 111 years old, he had the distinction of being the oldest human at the home. When consulted about the message, Wemick became very worried. He immediately began a search of his records to find a clue about where Exeter might be. After much research Wemick was sure he knew where Exeter was hiding. There was a small demi-plane which he and Exeter discovered during their adventuring days. They whimsically nicknamed it Kansas. In fact, Wemick had a scroll which would take him there.

"Wemick explained to Nellie that there is a one-way gate from Kansas to the prime material plane, and Wemick expected to go, find Exeter, and be back the next day.

"Nellie, knowing that there might be more to it than that, suggested Wemick take a few of the more active members of the home along—just in case.

"After much arguing and shouting the list was narrowed down to five more adventurers, mostly members of the Company of the Swan, Wemick's old adventuring group. "Matilda, the White Lady, the leader of the Company of the Swan, still trained with sword and armor daily. Although she was 89, she still was a very effective fighter. As always, she was to be accompanied by her devoted husband, Henry.

"Henry, the Shadow Master, was a potent illusionist. He knew his own mind, but Matilda never hesitated to "help" him with any decision.

"Sagrais Bigelow. This halfling thief was Henry's best friend. He had put on a pound or 30 since he retired; probably from the seven meals a day he'd wheedled out of Nellie. At 151, his hearing wasn't what it used to be, either, but no one ever snuck into a kitchen more quietly.

"Ratha Rann, The Eagle-Eyed, of the Company of the Swan, wasn't quite eagle-eyed anymore. In fact, he wore bifocals. He could cut quite a swath with the ladies, and perhaps that was why he was so insistent on going. Although he was 90, he didn't consider himself old—yet.

"Ada, the unbending, Judiciar of Tyr. This young, age 67, priest had recently retired to write her memoirs. She had been a judge, both judicial and clerical, for many years. It was said that in three decades as a judge, she never once reversed a decision.

"This stalwart band had to stop the threat to their home. Old magic items were dragged out, and spells were studied. With rising excitement, the Company of the Swan went into action again!"

The young bard shifted on his seat and eyed the old storyteller. "What happened?" he gushed.

"Just Listen. . . ."

Oops!

With a swirl and a bow, Wemick holds out his scroll and looks around the circle. "Everybody touching? All right, here we go." He begins to intone the words to his *teleport without error* spell. The air fills with magic, and the figure of Nellie, standing in the doorway, grows dim. At the last minute your ears are jarred by a disharmonious sound. Wemick frantically tries to complete the spell, but it is too late. The spell has been botched! With a feeling of nausea and dizziness you disappear and are teleported—somewhere!

You appear on a mountain trail. But what a mountain! It must rise for 20 miles above you. And it must be 10 miles down to flat ground. In the distance you spot a plain of grass. Beyond it is a forest of immense trees, redwoods from the size of them. There is no doubt that you are not on your own plane, but which plane or demi-plane have you come to?

The characters have landed on the Plane of Olympus. Wemick, if he thinks of it, can guess that the party is on an outer plane, and he predicts the party's +1 and +2 magical items no longer will be magical.

The Old Man of the Mountain

After the party has traveled about four miles down the mountainside, they see a cave. If they choose to travel up the mountain, explain that the air seems to be getting thin and cold. The longer they travel, the thinner it gets. Eventually, they will have to go back down.

The cave can be easily seen from about 150 yards away. As soon as the party gets within 120 yards of it, a voice speaks, seeming to erupt from their midst. "Welcome travelers. Come and enjoy the hospitality of my cave. You're just in time for tea." The speaker, still in the cave, is using *ventriloquism*. If the party does not approach, the voice speaks again. "Come, come, I'm just an old man like yourselves. The mountain is steep, and cold. It would be good to rest for a while."

The old man, Jerraman, comes to the cave mouth and waves the party inside.

He appears to be a loner, desperate to talk to someone, and he is garrulous. But despite all the talk, he reveals very

little actual information. If the PCs tell him their plight, he says he is not sure just where he is, either. You see, he was casting a *teleport without error* spell when something went wrong, and well. . . here he is. Jerraman adds he has a scroll that might get him out of here. But he isn't sure it will work, so he has never tried it.

He offers the party the scroll—if they will retrieve an arrow for him. The arrow rests in the quiver of the mistress of the forest. She rules around here, and he would dearly like to study some of her work. It can be any arrow, he says, just so it comes from her quiver.

Unknown to the PCs, the old man is not who he seems. He is actually Hermes, god of discord, *polymorphed*. Hermes is seeking to anger Artemis, the mistress of the forest, and he will try to use the arrow to initiate trouble. Hermes has genius-level Intelligence, so he will carry out his act to the PCs perfectly. The party should be convinced he is an old magic user, too scared to try an unknown magic item.

If the PCs ask to examine the scroll, he complies. It appears to be a good *teleport without error* scroll. He will immediately return it to his robes, and any attempt to steal it will automatically fail (pickpocket the god of thieves?).

If the PCs ask for directions, the old man gives them a *finder stone*, a small pebble which glows when pointed in the direction of the desired object. Jerraman has set it for the arrow. This is a one-use magic item, not rechargeable. Its magic works until the arrow is found.

If the party does not go along with the deal: Jerraman/Hermes points out that the party has very little choice. Casting a *plane shift* spell will not get them home, as they do not have the proper material components.

If the PCs attack Jerraman/Hermes or refuse to help him, he disappears—with the scroll the PCs need. He reappears an hour later offering them another chance. If they refuse, he automatically *quests* one of the characters to retrieve an arrow.

Jerraman (Hermes): Int Genius; AL CN; AC 2; MV 18, Fl 48; hp 340 (680 on Olympus); THAC0 6; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +7; SA Always *hasted*; SD Spells; MR 120%; SZ M; ML 20; XP Nil (1,800 for agreeing to retrieve the arrow).

Magic items: *Winged sandals of flight, helm of invisibility, white caduceus* (which allows him control over non-magical creatures other than man.

Powers useable at will: *Astral travel, command, continual light/darkness, cure light wounds, cure serious wounds, cure critical wounds, heal, detect magic, detect evil, geas, levitate, polymorph self, protection from evil/good, sending, teleport without error, tongues, vocalize, atonement, improved phantasmal force, quest, improved invisibility, mirror image, mislead, regenerate, anti-magic shell, dispel illusion, enthrall, spell immunity, polymorph any object, globe of invulnerability, dispel evil/good, dispel magic, summon, shape change, polymorph others*

In addition, Hermes may use up to six of the following spells a day: *Death spell, restoration, symbol, wish, time stop, heal, gate, resurrection, vision, volley, holy/unholy word*

Flapping Wings

As the party moves down the mountain, they hear the flapping of wings above them. Stirges! Big ones! The stirges dive to the attack.

Stirge, giant (8): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 3, Fl 18 (C); HD 2+2; hp 16 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Blood drain; SZ S; ML 8; XP 270 each.

The Grasslands

At the bottom of the mountain lies a plain that stretches some 30 miles toward the forest. The grass is a variety of wheat, but it grows more than five feet tall. The *finder stone* indicates north.

As the characters start across the plain, they notice several herds of deer, antelope and gazelles. The animals are unusually large and can be seen clearly even over the tall wheat. The herds are several miles away, and the party may move around them easily.

If the PCs want to investigate the herds, they can get to within 50 yards before the animals run away, frightened.

No matter what course the PCs take, they will have to deal with one herd of gazelles.

After traveling about four miles, Ratha notices a rumbling sound. Soon everyone can hear it. Coming into sight is a bucking, jumping mass, a stampede.

If the PCs choose to run, remind them that it has been quite a few years since most of them have done much running. If they insist on running, all the PCs except Ada and Matilda, who can handle a good jog, must make a Constitution check. PCs who fail the check are trampled, taking 2d8 points of damage. A clever use of spells or potions could make the PCs' escape automatic. A particularly flashy or noisy magical effect, for example, could turn the stampeding herd aside.

As the gazelles rush by, the party sees that several of the animals in the back have fallen, pierced by arrows. If the characters investigate, they find the arrows are finely made and tipped with eagle feathers. About this time several elves appear from the surrounding grass. The elves, carrying hunting bows, move quickly to meet the party.

Elves (5): Int Average; AL NG; AC 5; MV 12; HD 1+1; hp 6 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 13; XP Nil.

Elf, Lanarion: Int Average; AL NG; AC 2; MV 12; HD 5 (F5); hp 30; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 15; XP Nil (500 for getting Lanarion's information).

Lanarion is the leader of the hunting party. He apologizes for starting the stampede.

He and his men are amazed at the PCs' appearance. The elves have never seen an old person before.

If the PCs question the hunting party, the elves reveal:

- They do not know the name of this plane. However, they call the land "Home."
- Artemis wisely and justly rules the forest.
- The Mistress of the Forest is rarely seen. Lanarion last saw her more than 50 years ago.
- The monsters to be feared in this area are minotaurs, harpies, stirges, and a very large roc.
- Lanarion's village lies to the north, in the forest about 25 miles away. There is a river running along it, which flows fast and deep.

Maiden In Distress

The party can reach the forest about mid-morning. The gigantic trees are 700 feet tall, and the trunks range from 50 to 100 feet around. Game trails abound, and the party has no trouble finding one which heads toward the north, the direction the *finder stone* indicates.

After traveling five miles into the forest, the party hears faint cries. If

they continue on, the cries grow louder.

> "Help! Leave my tree alone," a feminine voice shrieks.
>
> A scream is punctuated by a chopping sound.

If the party moves to investigate, they emerge from around one giant tree to see that the next tree, a small (for this forest) silver oak, is being chopped down by six minotaurs. Even though the tree is more than 20 feet thick, they already have made a sizable dent in it. There is a dryad in the lowest branch, 60' from the ground, shrieking for help.

If the PCs do not state they are being quiet, the minotaurs notice them.

> "Hey, Chauncey, supper's come to call. Shall we stop and eat?"
>
> Another replies, "Nah, they don't look like they can move very fast. We'll round-em up when we're done here."
>
> The minotaurs take pulls at wine skins, stagger slightly, and resume their work on the tree.

If the party attacks, the PCs have a free attack round. However, if they attempt to negotiate, the minotaurs will be derisive, then hostile, eventually attacking.

Minotaurs (6): Int Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 12+6; hp 66 each; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Grapple, charge; SD +2 bonus on surprise roll; SZ L; ML 13; XP 3,000 each.

Because the minotaurs are drunk, they are −2 on their attack rolls.

Dryad: Int Exceptional; AL N; AC 9; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Charm; SD Nil; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 14; XP Nil (500 for saving her tree).

The minotaurs fight until three or more of them are down, and then the remainder flee into the forest, promising revenge.

When the minotaurs are driven off, the dryad is grateful. She offers a *potion of extra healing* as her thanks. If the PCs question her, she can provide the following information:

- This is the forest of Artemis.
- The forest is huge, and she has not seen Artemis in this part of the forest for decades.
- The elven village to the north is friendly and has several wise elders.
- The Veiled One is a sorceress who lives about five miles to the northeast, along a bend in the river. She collects things, including weapons, and she is supposed to be very beautiful and very powerful. She might be a good source of information.

The Veiled One

The party spies a manor built against the side of a large redwood. As they move closer, they spot several elves on guard. The PCs likewise are spotted, and one of the elves runs into the manor. He emerges a few moments later, motioning to the PCs.

The guards welcome the PCs to the manor and escort them into the sitting room.

> There is a comfortable chair for everyone in the sitting room. The elven servants bring fine wine and sweets. Soon your hostess enters. Her face is veiled, with only her eyes exposed. She looks to be a lovely elven female. She greets you courteously, introduces herself as Gharleee, and asks what such distinguished looking people are doing traveling through the forest.

Gharleee is actually a medusa, who is appearing to the PCs as an elf because of a *polymorph self* spell. Gharleee rules this part of the forest and fears no one but Artemis. Fortunately for Gharleee, the goddess has more important things to do than bother with a medusa.

The only way the PCs could see through Gharleee's ruse is if they cast *dispel magic* or *true seeing* (though *know alignment* could arouse some suspicions). Of course, Gharleee will be very courteous and kind to them, giving them no excuse to doubt her.

If the PCs explain their plight and their need for an arrow of Artemis, Gharleee says she has two such arrows. She is willing to part with one of them—if the PCs run an errand for her.

She wants the PCs to travel to an elf village along the river and pick up a gift they have for her. There is a very large roc preying in the area, and she is afraid to go. When the PCs return with the gift, she will hand over an arrow.

A servant provides directions to the village. It is a 20-mile trek, so the PCs likely will have to spend the night in the village.

Gharleee, Medusa: Int Very; AL LE; AC 0; MV 9; HD 12; hp 60; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Petrification, poison; SZ M; ML 14; XP: 6,000.

She wears a *ring of protection +3, bracers of defense AC 3,* and carries a *wand of magic missiles* (12 charges).

Spells carried: *Charm person, magic missile, burning hands, flaming sphere, web, invisibility, detect invisibility, hold person, lightning bolt, dispel magic, polymorph self* (cast), *fumble, wizard eye, stone to flesh, telekinesis, wall of stone, globe of invulnerability*

The Elf Village

After a hard afternoon's travel, the PCs find the path along the river blocked by a large thicket of trees. As the party begins to move around it, a voice shouts out: "Stand, and be recognized. Who comes to the dwelling of the Leiren elves?" A pair of elven guards appear from out of the underbrush. If the PCs state they are travelers, they will be welcomed with kindness. However, if the characters mention Gharleee, the guards become cold and conduct them to Thanna, mayor of the town.

The mayor's home and office is in a tree. The PCs will have to climb more than 150' to speak with him. A simple, yet lovely treehouse awaits. It has a wooden floor and vines growing on the sides and above for privacy. Thanna is waiting for the party in his meeting room. He invites them to be seated.

Thanna greets the characters soberly. He is a distinguished looking elf, yet a little rough looking. He asks if the characters truly come from the Veiled One. When they admit it, he sighs and says, "What a shame. You look like good folk, for humans. Why would you associate with someone like her?"

The mayor explains that the "gift" for Gharleee is the lifeblood of the village. He refuses to elaborate. He tells the PCs they are welcome to spend the night; the gift will be ready in the morning.

Thanna Silvertree, mayor: Int Average; AL NG; AC 5; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 13, XP Nil.

In the morning the PCs are fed a sparse breakfast and will have to climb down the rope ladder without the assistance of elf guards. At the foot of the tree, a half-dozen young elves await. The mayor joins the group and waves his hand to indicate the youths. This is the gift, he tells the PCs.

Thanna explains that these young

elves are to serve Gharleee for life. It is the tribute the village must pay to remain safe.

If the PCs refuse to deliver the gift, the mayor says it must be done. The village cannot be risked. Further, all six must be taken to the Veiled One, or they will have to increase the gift next time. The mayor tells the PCs they can stop the slavery by killing Gharleee. Thanna has the following information:

- The Veiled One has lived in these parts for the past 30 years. She appeared one day and demanded to be queen. When she was rejected, she slew several of the village elders, including all the spell-casters. The former mayor was found, a broken stone statue. Thanna was named the new mayor.
- The Veiled One has demanded servants regularly, as tribute.
- It is rumored the Veiled One has other forms besides that of an elf. Some say she is an archmage and can change shape at will. Others think that she is some sort of monster, one which can cast spells.

Young elves: Int Average; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 13; XP Nil.

Big Bird Strikes

Three hours after the PCs have started back to Gharleee's, have the lead character make a surprise roll. If the character is not surprised, the party spots a huge roc high above.

The roc obviously has noticed the PCs, as it is dropping toward them. The characters can have two free rounds of attacks on the creature before it is in their midst.

If the PCs were surprised, they see the roc 100 feet above them. This gives them only one free attack round.

The roc's first action is to grab one of the young elves. In the following round, it will attempt to grab another victim, roll randomly.

If it succeeds in picking up two persons, it will fly away to have its lunch.

Roc, giant: Int Animal; AL N; AC 2; MV 3, Fl 30 (C); HD 36; hp 178; THAC0 3; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 3-18+1/3-18+1 or 4-24+1; SA −5 on opponents' surprise rolls; SZ G; ML 11; XP 9,000 (defeat), 18,000 (slay).

DM NOTE: If the roc is damaged for more than half its hit points, it will fly away, taking whatever it has managed to grab. If damaged for 75% or more, it will drop whatever it is holding and attempt to fly away.

Confronting The Veiled One

When the PCs reach Gharleee's home, they face several options:

- Turn the elves over to Gharleee, collect the arrow and leave. Of course, it will not be that simple, but they don't know that.
- Enter the manor house and attempt to attack by surprise. This, too, will not be easy.
- Simply barge in and attack. This is not sensible, but it might work.

No matter what course of action the PCs attempt, Gharleee will be cautious. She meets the party via a *projected image* cast from a scroll. The medusa is actually in another room, watching the characters with a *wizard eye*.

Her faithful followers, Clarig and Zandor, will be the medusa's first line of defense.

Gharleee's image thanks the characters for bringing her gift, and asks if they wish to remain as her servants. She tells Ratha that she could use a consort. If the party attacks, her image will not be dispelled. However, the battle alerts Clarig and Zandor, who quickly rush to join the fight.

Zandor casts *mirror image* on himself, then a blue *chromatic orb* on a PC fighter, followed by *blindness, confusion,* and others as appropriate.

If Zandor is seriously injured, Gharleee will turn to her medusa form and move to the doorway behind him, attempting to petrify the PCs.

While in her medusa form, Gharleee can look at one opponent per round, forcing him or her to save vs. petrification. The gaze is a free attack and can be used in addition to other attacks.

If a character is deliberately avoiding the gaze, the saving throw is at +4, but the PC suffers a −4 penalty to other attacks and defenses (−2 if the character has the blind-fighting proficiency).

If a character physically melees Gharleee, she also attacks with her snake heads; a successful hit does 1-4 points of damage. Characters struck must save vs. poison or die.

Gharleee attempts to immobilize the PCs, as she would like to have them as servants. However, if the PCs are dishing out too much damage, she abandons this strategy and fights to kill them.

If Gharleee is seriously injured, she flees to her room where she has hidden a scroll with a *dimension door* spell. She intends to escape.

Clarig, human fighter: Int Average; AL LE; AC −2; MV 9; HD 9 (F9); hp 77; THAC0 10; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8+4; SZ M; ML 15; XP 2,000.

Clarig wears *plate mail +1*, carries a *long sword +1*, and has an *amulet of protection from petrification.* Before joining the fight, he drinks a *potion of speed.*

Zandor, human illusionist: Int Exceptional; AL LE; AC −2; MV 12; HD 10 (W10); hp 30; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ M; ML 15; XP 4,000.

Zandor has *bracers of defense AC 2*, a *ring of protection +1, wand of paralyzation* (24 charges), and an *amulet of protection from petrification.* He cast *mirror image* prior to joining the fight.

Spells carried: *Chromatic orb,* dancing lights, hypnotism, blindness* (x2), *improved phantasmal force, mirror image, ventriloquism, suggestion, nondetection, fear, confusion, rainbow pattern, maze*

* New spell from the *Complete Wizard's Handbook.* If you don't have this book, replace this spell with *grease.*

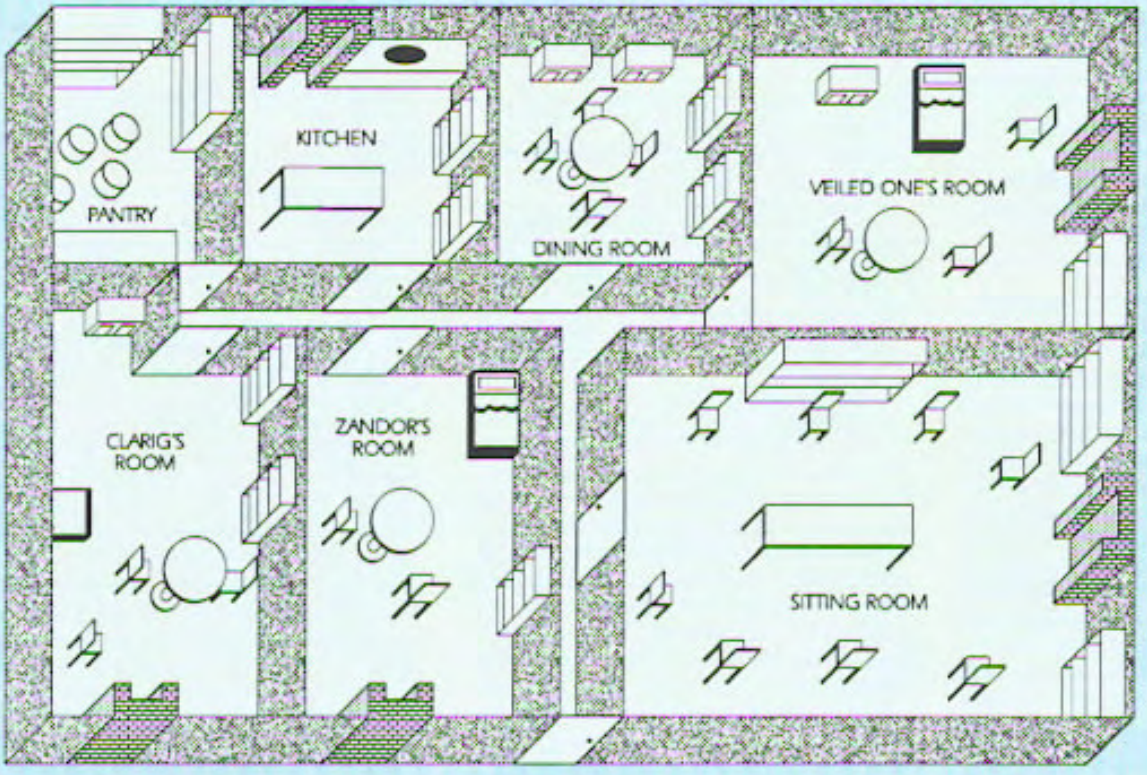
Gharleee, Medusa: Int Very; AL LE; AC 0; MV 9; HD 12; hp 60; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Petrification, poison; SZ M; ML 14; XP 6,000.

She wears a *ring of protection +3, bracers of defense AC 3,* and carries a *wand of magic missiles* (12 charges).

Spells carried: *Charm person, magic missile, burning hands, flaming sphere, web, invisibility, detect invisibility, hold person, lightning bolt, dispel magic, polymorph self, fumble, wizard eye, stone to flesh, telekinesis, wall of stone, globe of invulnerability*

If the party defeats Gharleee, they find a scroll with two *flesh to stone* spells on it, and the arrow they have been seeking.

They can return to Jerraman and get their *teleport* scroll. The grateful elves will happily escort the PCs to Jerraman, providing a safe and uneventful journey.



HOME OF THE VEILED ONE

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Effects Of Olympus

Spells which change the shape or matter of objects, such as *polymorph* spells, have a 40% chance of not functioning correctly. You may use the following table, or decide on the effect yourself.

D100 roll	Effect
1-10	No Change.
11-30	Target changes appearance, retains all original properties.
31-50	Target does not change in appearance, but gains the properties of the new form.
51-70	Target changes to resemble some nearby random object or creature but retains abilities of its original form.
71-90	Target changes to resemble some nearby random object or creature and gains the abilities and powers of that object.
91-00	Target changes in form and function into something not in the nearby area. DM fiendishness is encouraged.

This chart was taken from page 79 of the *Manual of the Planes* tome.

Ada: Hammer is still +3 vs. evil, however, it is non-magical against all others. Splint & shield are non-magical. AC = 3.

Henry: Cloak and sling are non-magical. Shadow magic is only at 1/2 effect, due to the distance from the plane of shadows. AC = 3.

Matilda: Chain and shield are non-magical. Scimitar is +1, but retains its speed property. AC = 4.

Ratha Rann: Ranger abilities unchanged. All items are non-magical except bifocals. AC = 4.

Sagrais Bigelow: Thief abilities are unchanged. Dagger is non-magical, but it will extend to short sword size. Ring is also non-magical. AC = 6.

Wemick: All items work normally except for the cane which is +1 to hit and damage when charges are used. If 2 or 3 charges are used, the damage bonus is +2 or +3, respectively.

Wemick's Actual Spell List

Unfortunately, your recent absent-mindedness seems to show up most when you study spells. It's so hard to concentrate. You must have studied some of the wrong spells by mistake, because these are the ones you actually remember.

Spells Memorized: Level One: *Magic missile* (x2), *audible glamer, Tenser's floating disc, magic mouth* (x2); Level Two: *Continual light, invisibility, levitation, Melf's acid arrow;* Level Three: *haste, hold person, Melf's minute meteors, tongues;* Level Four: *Ice storm, stoneskin, telekinesis, wizard eye;* Level Five: *Cone of cold, fabricate*

And to your horror, you realize that you forgot to pack your spell books! You will be unable to relearn spells until you get home.

❑

Matilda the White Lady

9th Level Female Human Fighter

STR: 14
INT: 13
WIS: 13
DEX: 12
CON: 13
CHR: 15

AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 72
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Orcish
THAC0: 12

Age: 89
Height: 6'
Weight: 130 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Silver/Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Scimitar (specialized), flail, lance, spear, short sword, bastard sword
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Endurance (13), horse riding (16), blind-fighting, swimming (14), artistic ability, needlepoint (13)

Magic Items: *White chain mail +2, shield +1, scimitar of speed +3, 2 potions of extra healing, 2 potions of hill giant strength, potion of speed* (all these potions are at least 40 years old and might not be potent anymore)
Equipment: Spear, backpack, water skin, belt pouch, 6 torches, 3 candles, needle & thread (assorted colors), 4 pairs of support leggings, last month's copy of Good Castlekeeping, current needlework project (a unicorn leaping over a brook), spare set of clothes, 4 bars of chocolate, hairbrush, comb, bar of soap, small mirror, 25 sp, 35 gp, 10 pp, 5 bloodstone trade bars worth 25 gp each

Here at the *Nellie Thursday Home for Experienced Adventurers*, my husband, Henry, and I have a fine life. We share an elegant suite of rooms. There is even a training area where I keep in shape. Nellie is a dear old dwarf, hundreds of years old, and has been my close friend for all the 30 years Henry and I have lived here.

Henry is my husband of 40 years, and he is a dear thing, but he is very indecisive. Fortunately, I can make the decisions for both of us. For instance, Henry didn't know what to do when we heard that Wemick's long lost roommate, Exeter, was threatening the home. I knew immediately that it was our duty to assist Wemick, and I told Henry so. I hate to nag at him all the time, but it is

Ada the Unbending

9th Level Female Human Priestess of Tyr

STR: 16
INT: 12
WIS: 18
DEX: 10
CON: 10
CHR: 15

AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 2
Hit Points: 56
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Centaur
THAC0: 16

Age: 67
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 125 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Hammer, mace, lasso, staff
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Law (18), healing (19), rope use (9), religion (18)

Magic Items: *Splint mail +2, shield +1, ring of regeneration, 3-D mirror*, warhammer +3* (named Gavel; does double damage vs. chaotic evil opponents, can cast *detect lie* once a day when held and commanded), *scroll* (five spells: *Cure disease, resist fire, cure critical wounds, heal,* and *sanctuary*; all scribed at 15th level)

* *3-D Mirror:* Creatures reflected in this mirror are shown in three dimensions. If the *mirror* is turned over, the creature is shown from behind.
Spells/day: 6 6 4 3 1
Equipment: Backpack, 2 bars of soap, 2 sets of fine clothes, silver scales (holy symbol), 4 vials of holy water, hairbrush, comb, perfume, 2quills, 3 bottles of ink, 20 empty sheets of papyrus, notes for book, blue cloak, 5 flasks of oil, bullseye lantern, tinderbox, 2 weeks' rations, water skin, lasso, 45 sp, 33 gp, 16 pp, 2 blue sapphires (1,200 gp each), jewelled hairpin (145 gp)

As a priestess of Tyr, Ada can turn undead. She has major access to the spheres of All, Astral, Charm, Combat, Creation, Divination, Guardian, Healing, Necromantic, Protection, and Sun. Ada has minor access to the Elemental sphere.

I am the newest resident at the *Nellie Thursday home for Experienced Adventurers.* I moved here about a year ago.

Ratha Rann the Eagle-Eyed

9th Level Male Human Ranger

STR: 13
INT: 15
WIS: 16
DEX: 8
CON: 12
CHR: 16

AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 75
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Halfling, Elvish, Hill Giant
THAC0: 12

Age: 92
Height: 6' 1"
Weight: 204 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Black (dyed)/Brown

Weapon Proficiencies: Spear, hand axe, long bow, long sword, knife, javelin
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Blind-fighting, swimming (13) fire-building (15), musical instrument, lyre (15), direction sense (17), tracking (19), read/write Common (15)

Magic Items: *Chain mail +2, shield +1, long sword +1, long bow +2†, 20 arrows +1, bifocals of the eagle**

* *Bifocals of the Eagle:* These eye cusps have split lenses. The top halves serve as *eyes of the eagle,* and the bottom halves allow far-sighted wearers to read.
† Ratha's farsightedness, and *bifocals,* reverse the range modifiers "to hit" for his bow: Short −5, medium −2, long 0.
Spells/day: 2
Equipment: Backpack, belt pouch, water skin, lyre, 2 throwing knives (in boots), 2 sets of fine clothes, 5 day's rations, 3 small mirrors, lizard-skin boots, 3 extra bow strings, 2 bottles of expensive (45 gp each) perfume (for gifts), bottle of cologne, silver shaving kit, comb, hairbrush, 3 bottles of black hair dye, 3 white silk handkerchiefs, bottle of lens cleaner, flask of fine elderberry wine, Silver unicorn brooch (holy symbol), fake ruby ring, 2 bars of scented soap, 25 sp, 12 gp, 3 pp, 2 turquoise earrings (55 gp each)

Ranger Abilities

HS	MS
56	70

Ratha casts priest spells from the spheres of Plant and Animal. If wearing studded leather or lighter armor Ratha can attack with two weapons and use

his stealth abilities at no penalty. He has a +4 "to hit" bonus vs. giants and a −4 reaction penalty when encountering giants. Ratha can influence the reactions of natural animals (save vs. rods at −3 negates)

I have a fine life at the *Nellie Thursday Home for Experienced Adventurers.* I retired here 25 years ago after some financial reverses. I am NOT old. I prove it by chasing all the pretty girls I meet.

My hair seems to be going prematurely gray, so I use dye to keep it the lustrous black it always has been. My eyesight is not what it used to be, so I wear bifocals. They are made of silver, and they look very good on me.

Recently, I caused a scandal when I wanted to have a girl friend, 22 years old, move in with me. The uproar made her reconsider, and I haven't found another girl yet. Ada, the new cleric, is attractive, and I have my sights set on her. Volunteering for this mission was one of the best ideas I've had. Ada is sure to be impressed.

Ada the Unbending: My newest heartthrob. She is older than the girls I normally go after, and a bit straightlaced, but her looks more than make up for it.
Matilda the White Lady: What a nag! She never gives Henry, her husband, any peace. If she and Henry hadn't married I might have courted her. Thank Mielikki I didn't.
Sagrais Bigelow: This fat old halfling thief is a good friend of mine. In his day, he was a very sharp master thief. Though claims he is as fit as ever, his hearing isn't what it used to be. I'll have to watch out for him.
Henry the Shadow Master: This illusionist is very sharp mentally, but I have little respect for him. Imagine being afraid of a woman! He even quit smoking his pipe, his one true pleasure in life, just because his wife told him to. Pitiful.
Wemick the Wise: Now here is someone who is old. He is the oldest human at the home. He is still a very wise old man—he's the fellow who made my bifocals—but he has been getting more and more absent-minded all the time. In our adventuring days he was a powerful wizard, but now I feel that the party should not depend on him too much. He claims he knows exactly where Exeter is. I'll wait and see.
Exeter: Wemick's roommate disappeared 15 years ago. He was always a competent mage, although not as powerful as Wemick. Now he is threatening the home.

Adonyne, my daughter, finally was promoted to High Priestess. I'm not really old enough to retire, but I wished to give Adonyne the opportunity to get out from under my shadow. Besides, this is a good place to write my memoirs (I intend to call them *Justice For All).*

I am a priestess of Tyr, god of Justice, and I have presided over many cases in the past 30 years. I've heard some snide remarks about the amount of time I spend in front of the mirror. I don't care about remarks. Tyr expects his servants to maintain an appearance that befits their stations in life.

I never was one to care about popular opinions. I never once reversed a decision in more than 30 years as a judge. I understand the importance of being right the first time. To my knowledge, I never once made a wrong decision.

I have never heard of Exeter, just that he was Wemick's roommate. Nellie told me he was a mage who disappeared from the home 15 years ago, and now he is threatening the home. If he is sick, he needs my help. If he is evil, he will get another kind of help from me.

Wemick the Wise: This old sage is approaching senility. He has a great reputation as a scholar, and he did a top-notch job in figuring out where this Exeter fellow probably is. However, Wemick seems to be absent-minded. He is a spry old gentleman, and always concerned and courteous, but I am not sure if he should be out adventuring.
Matilda the White Lady: This is a fine woman. She understands my position on justice and the law. She agrees that justice must be both fair and strict. Her mind is sharp. Clearly she and I will share the burden of seeing this mission to a successful conclusion.
Henry the Shadow Master: This man couldn't decide what to eat for breakfast by himself. Fortunately, Matilda seems to have enough backbone for the both of them. As far as adventuring goes, I never thought much of illusionists, and Henry is a good example of why.
Sagrais Bigelow: This fat old halfling doesn't seem to belong with the group. But Wemic says Sagrais and Henry used to work well together. I'll have to see it to believe it.
Ratha Rann the Eagle-Eyed: This old ranger is a pest, but he is also quite charming when he wants to be. His mind is active, and even though he probably dyes his hair, he at least recognizes the importance of a correct appearance.

for his own good. It took 20 years to get him to quit smoking that foul, disgusting pipe, but he is much healthier for it, and now he doesn't miss it at all.

This mission to recover Exeter is my first adventuring experience in more than 30 years, but I am confident that I can still handle myself in any situation. I have kept in shape. This adventure will show I haven't been wasting my time.

Henry the Shadow Master: My dear wishy-washy husband. I look out for him constantly. As long as he listens to me, he will do fine. I always try to watch him and point out any little things he does wrong, for his own good.
Ada the Unbending: The newest resident at the home, Ada claims she only retired to write her memoirs. She is still in fine shape, and will obviously share the practical duties of leadership with me. She spends too much time on her appearance, and she is as stubborn as a mule, but she seems to be a trustworthy person.
Wemick the Wise: Wemick is the oldest human at the home. He is supposed to know exactly where we are going. Fine. But he still is an absent-minded old man. Or maybe senile is a better word for it. Still, he has spent months researching Exeter's location, and once he was a very wise man. I will have to stay on my toes and hope for the best.
Sagrais Bigelow: This halfling is a perfect example of someone really letting himself go. He must be as big around as he is tall. In our old adventuring days he and Henry used to work very well together. But now I have serious doubts about his abilities. Who ever heard of a deaf thief?
Ratha Rann the Eagle-Eyed: This ranger is a dirty old man. He dyes his hair and chases after girls a quarter his age. Why can't he be more like Henry? What he needs is to settle down with a good woman. Ada, the new girl, might be perfect for him. She could settle him down if anyone could.
Exeter: Wemick's roommate used to adventure with me. He was always trying to outdo Wemick, and never succeeded. He always was a little high-strung, and now I think he has cracked completely. He disappeared 15 years ago, without a trace. As crazy as he is, I had better be ready for anything.

Sagrais Bigelow

11th Level Male Halfling Thief

STR: 7
INT: 15
WIS: 16
DEX: 14
CON: 15
CHR: 13

AC Normal: 4
AC Rear: 4
Hit Points: 48
Alignment: Neutral (Good tendencies)
Languages: Common, Thieves' Cant, Dwarven, Orcish, Halfling, Goblin, Elvish, Gnome
THAC0: 15

Age: 150
Height: 3' 3"
Weight: 93 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Gray/Brown

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, sling, knife, dart
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Blind-fighting, pony riding (19), herbalism (16), rope use (16), fire building (15)

Magic Items: *Dagger +2 longtooth, ring of protection +2, bracers of defense AC 6, pouch of accessibility, dinner plate*, scroll* (five wizard spells: *invisibility, hold person, wall of ice, mending,* and *magic missile* all scribed at 11th level)

* *Dinner Plate:* When warmed over an open fire, this thick china plate will produce an average meat-and-potatoes dinner. It can be used four times a day. It has seen a lot of use, but still works fine.

Equipment: Sling, chef's knives, 50' rope, 2 flasks of oil, leather backpack, 5 small sacks, tinderbox, water skin, thieves tools (one pick hidden in hair), 12 pounds of assorted food (snacks, vegetables, and cooking herbs), ivory pipe carved in the shape of a mermaid, 2 pouches of tobacco, hearing trumpet (adds 20% to detect noise chances), assorted pots and pans, 3 dinner settings (plates, silverware, goblets, and napkins), 4 cups, 2 pounds of ground coffee, 12 teabags, *How to Cook the Monster that Just Tried to Eat You When There's Nothing Else to Eat* by Nellie Thursday, 20 silver sling bullets, 20 darts, 2 bottles of sherry, bottle of brandy, 23 sp, opal (480 gp), agate (44 gp), jeweled silver cup (1224 gp)

Henry the Shadow Master

10th Level Male Human Illusionist

STR: 9
INT: 18
WIS: 17
DEX: 15
CON: 11
CHR: 9

AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 41
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Halfling, Elvish, Dwarvish, Gnome, Pixie, Orc
THAC0: 17

Age: 88
Height: 5' 6" (usually stoops to 5' 3")
Weight: 98 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Gray/Black

Weapon Proficiencies: Sling, dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Healing (15), horse riding (20), herbalism (16), tobacco curing (15)

Magic Items: *Cloak of protection +2, bracers of defense AC 5, orthopedic shoes of dexterity*, sling of seeking +2, wand of paralyzation* (5 charges), *carpet-bag of holding* (capacity 1,500 lbs.)

* *Orthopedic Shoes of Dexterity:* These boost the wearer's dexterity by one point (18 maximum) and grant a 33% chance to move silently as the thief ability.

Spells/day: 4 4 3 2 2; plus one additional *illusion/phantasm* spell of each level
Equipment: Spell components, traveling spellbooks, full water skin, 30' rope, dagger, 20 sling bullets, 3 flasks of oil, 5 pouches of tobacco, ivory pipe in the shape of a dolphin, corncob pipe, 2 weeks' iron rations, 3 fresh robes, 5 bottles of pine-scented air freshener, shaving kit, small mirror, 25 gp (hidden in false bottom in shaving kit)

Traveling Spellbooks: Level One: *Read magic, dancing lights, detect magic, gaze reflection, phantasmal force[1], spook[1], burning hands, color spray;* Level Two: *Alter self, blindness, mirror image[1], Henry's hide-a-smell, invisibility[1], ventriloquism[1], whispering wind[1];* Level Three: *Tongues, illusory script[1], hold person, spectral force[1], wraithform[1], item;* Level Four: *Improved invisibility[1], minor creation[1], solid fog, emotion;* Level Five: *Shadow door[1], shadow magic[1], stone shape*

[1] *illusion/phantasm* spell

Wernick the Wise

11th Level Male Human Wizard

STR: 5
INT: 18
WIS: 18
DEX: 14
CON: 12
CHR: 13

AC Normal: 5
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 29
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Silver Dragon, Halfling, Dwarvish, Orcish, Drow, Minotaur
THAC0: 17

Age: 111
Height: 5'10"
Weight: 180 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Gray/Brown

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, cane (staff)
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Glass blowing (13), spellcraft (16), metaphysics of the upper outer planes (sage ability) (14), human genealogy (sage ability) (16), read/write Common (18)

Magic Items: *Cane of striking** (22 charges), *bracers of defense AC 5, wand of lightning* (10 charges), *scroll* (five spells: *polymorph self, jump, Melf's minute meteors, spell turning,* and *phantom steed* all scribed at 15th level), *ring of wizardry* (doubles 2nd level spells)
* Identical to a *staff of striking*

Spells/day: 4 4 4 3 3; eight 2nd level spells with *ring of wizardry*
Equipment: Cloak, belt pouch, wine skin, bar of soap, washcloth, towel, spare robe, dagger, notes on where Kansas is, book on whether the devas of Arcadia have five fingers on the end of each hand or six, 3 flasks of oil, spell components, low-heeled shoes, 12 gp, 2 pearls (100 gp each)

Traveling Spellbooks: Level One: *Magic missile, audible glamer, Tenser's floating disc, magic mouth, read magic, detect magic, feather fall, identify, message, unseen servant, ventriloquism;* Level Two: *Continual light, invisibility, levitation, Melf's acid arrow, detect invisibility, knock, magic mouth;* Level Three: *Haste, hold person, Melf's minute meteors, tongues, clairvoyance, dispel magic, fireball, secret page;* Level Four: *Ice storm, stoneskin, telekinesis, wizard eye, shout, minor globe of invulnerability;* Level Five: *Cone of cold, fabricate, rock to mud, wall of force*

I have been happy at the *Nellie Thursday Home for Experienced Adventureres.*

Now, however, Nellie, the old dwarf who runs the home, has told me about threats she has received from my old roommate and friend, Exeter. He claims he will destroy the home and all within it.

It is my duty to seek Exeter out and bring him back for help. He will have to have a base of operations, and I am sure I know where that is. He is hiding on a small demi-plane the two of us discovered during our adventuring days. We whimsically named it "Kansas." I have a powerful *teleport without error* spell on a scroll which will let me get the party there. Once there, we can fetch Exeter and use a one-way gate to return to the Prime Material plane.

Although I am wiser than ever, I have noticed that in the past 10 years or so, it is harder and harder for me to concentrate. Nevertheless, I have a few spells and magic items that will help me out.

Henry the Shadow Master: A competent illusionist. In the old days, he worked with the party thief, a short fellow named. . . um, now what was I talking about? Oh! Henry used to provide illusory distractions at the opportune moment for the party thief.
Matilda the White Lady: This fighter is loud, shrill, and a bully to Henry. Did I mention that Henry was married to Matilda? She might help the party, but it's going to be tough to put up with all that noise.
Ada the Unbending: This young cleric insisted on coming along. She is pretty, strong, and may just be able to cure Exeter (if he really is sick).
Sagrais Bigelow: This old halfling thief used to work very well with Henry. He has put on a lot of weight in the past 30 years. His hearing is going, too. But he does have an extremely good knowledge of locks, and he can move quietly when he wants to.
Ratha Ran, the Eagle-Eyed: Here is someone who does not know how to act his age. He is at least 90, and he chases after young women. He dyes his hair, and he wears fancy cologne. He used to have incredible eyesight, but recently I had to fashion him a set of bifocals.
Exeter: My roommate always was kind of moody. As he grew older, his temper became hotter, and he became more and more distant from me. Still, he was my friend for more than 70 years.

Henry's Hide-A-Smell (Alteration)

Level: Second/Wizard
Range: 20 yards
Components: V,S
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: 10' radius/level
Saving throw: None

This spell negates any one smell. If the source of the smell still is present when the spell expires, the masked smell is revealed. Note that all smells are subtly different, and if Henry and Sagrais were both smoking tobacco, this spell would have to be cast twice to negate the smell.

The *Nellie Thursday home for Experienced Adventurers* has been a fine place to retire. I settled here 30 years ago with my dear wife Matilda.

I very much enjoy a good pipe. But Matilda will not let me smoke. Since I invented *Henry's hide-a-smell* I have whiled away many days sitting in my study, peacefully smoking pipe after pipe, invisible and unsmellable.

Matilda the White Lady: My wife of 40 years. She tends to nag, a lot. Over the years I have learned that it is easier to go along with her than to argue. When we heard about Wemick's old roommate's threats against the home, Matilda decided we'd join an expedition to find him. As always, I agreed.
Wemick the Wise: A full wizard, and a wise sage. He carries some powerful spells. But in the past 10 years or so he has become very absent minded.
Sagrais Bigelow: In our old adventuring days, this halfling and I worked very well together, combining illusions, invisibility, and stealth. He has put on 30 or 40 pounds since then, and his hearing has faded. I trust him, and he is the only one who knows I still smoke.
Ada the Unbending: This cleric is the home's newest resident. She is a lot like Matilda in her younger days, and I stay away from her.
Ratha Rann the Eagle-Eyed: This ranger used to have very keen eyesight. Now he wears glasses. He thinks he is Leira's gift to women, and dyes his hair. He should act his age, instead of chasing women a quarter his age. Still, I admire his spirit.
Exeter: Wemick's roommate disappeared almost 15 years ago. I always thought I would be a match for him, and if Wemick falters, it may come to that.

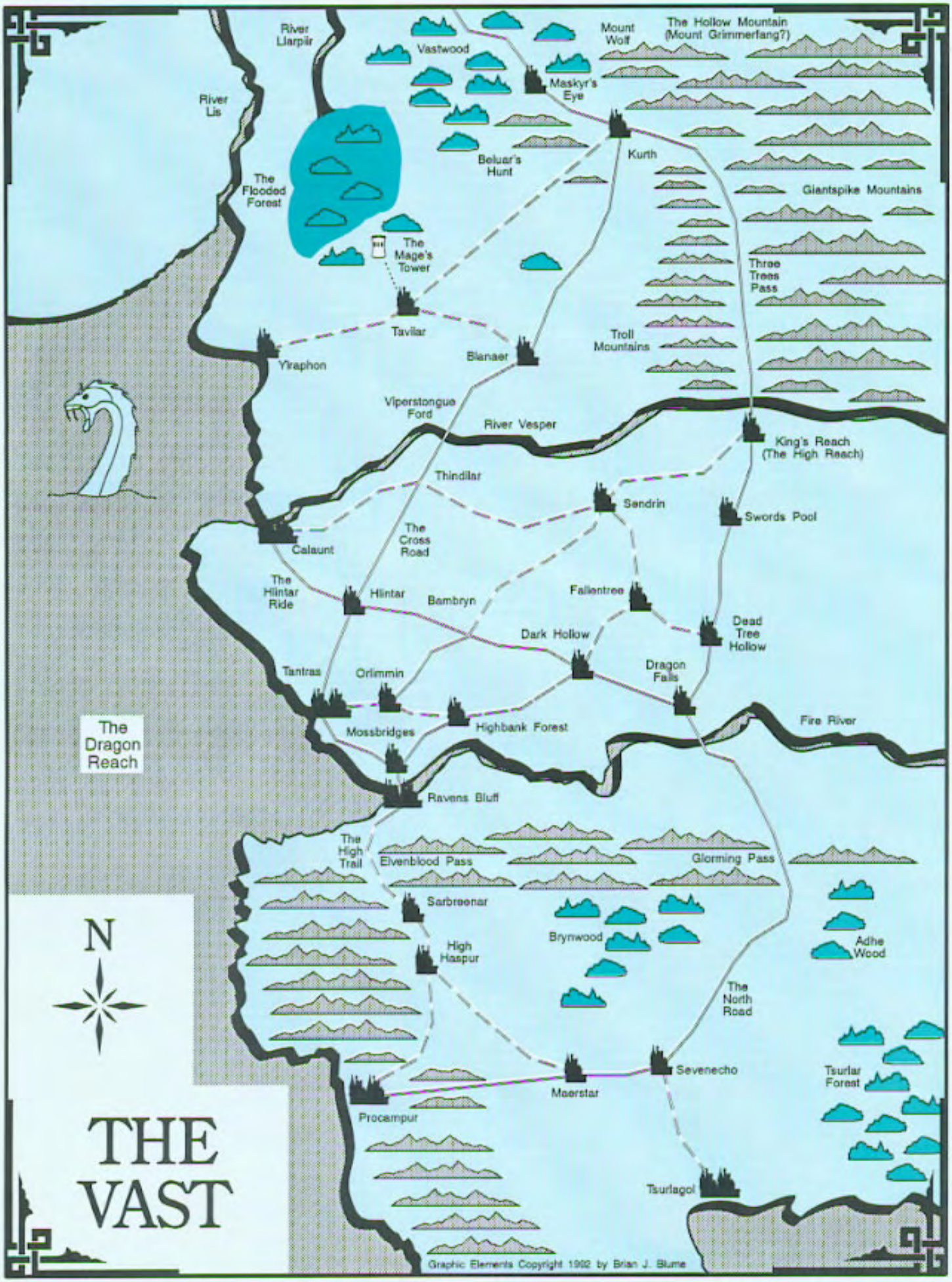
Thief Abilities

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL
95	77	75	96	85	5	81	35

Here at the *Nellie Thursday Home For Experienced Adventurers* I am happy and safe. I have many friends, and none of the pressures of the adventuring life. I retired here 35 years ago. Some old friends from my adventuring days live here, and when they asked me to help find Exeter, Wemick's long lost roommate, I couldn't find a good reason to refuse.

I'm not sure just how well I'll do on this mission. I have put on quite a little weight, and my hearing isn't what it used to be, but I can still pick a lock with the best of them and nobody can beat a halfling when it comes to moving quietly.

Henry the Shadow Master: The illusionist is my best friend. In our old adventuring days the two of us worked well together, combining illusions, invisibility, and stealth. He is a bit of a coward, but only when it comes to facing his wife, Matilda. Because of her, Henry has to smoke his pipe in secret. I think he should stand up to her, but he is my friend, and I would never betray his secret. Besides, I like a good pipe, too.
Matilda the White Lady: Here is the perfect example of why I never married. What a nag! She is a good fighter, but even in the old days she never gave me and Henry the credit we deserved.
Ada the Unbending: This young cleric is very pretty, for a human. She moved to the home last year to work on her memoirs. She was a judge for 30 years, and still hasn't gotten out of the habit of passing judgment. She passed judgment on me the moment we met. This adventure may make her rethink that, when she sees how well me and Henry work together.
Ratha Rann the Eagle-Eyed: This human just does not know when to slow down. He is constantly chasing after women a quarter his age. He was a very good adventuring companion, but the older he got, the more he chased after women.
Wemick the Wise: This old sage makes even me feel young. His mind seems to be going. In the old days, he was the smartest man I ever met, and I hope he will come through one more time.
Exeter: He was a very capable mage, although never as powerful as Wemick or Henry. He always had an inferiority complex. Fifteen years ago, he disappeared from the room he shared with Wemick. He's gone completely crackers, and now he's making threats.


River Llarpir
River Lis
Vastwood
Mount Wolf
The Hollow Mountain (Mount Grimmerfang?)
Maskyr's Eye
Kurth
Beluar's Hunt
The Flooded Forest
Giantspike Mountains
The Mage's Tower
Three Trees Pass
Tavilar
Troll Mountains
Yraphon
Blanaer
Viperstongue Ford
River Vesper
King's Reach (The High Reach)
Thindilar
Sandrin
Swords Pool
Calaunt
The Cross Road
The Hlintar Ride
Hlintar
Bambryn
Fallentree
Dead Tree Hollow
Dark Hollow
Tantras
Orlimmin
Dragon Falls
Highbank Forest
Fire River
Mossbridges
The Dragon Reach
Ravens Bluff
The High Trail
Elvenblood Pass
Glorming Pass
Sarbreenar
Brynwood
Adhe Wood
High Haspur
The North Road
Sevenecho
Tsurlar Forest
Maerstar
Procampur
Tsurlagol
N
THE VAST
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Experience Preferred

Part Two

An AD&D® 2nd Edition Game Scenario
For Six Veteran Adventurers

Illustration by Gary M. Williams

by Tom Prusa

DM Background

In part one, our heroes, detailed in issue #72, accidentally arrived on Olympus. There, they met an old man (actually the deity Hermes) who gave them a *teleport* scroll in exchange for an arrow from the quiver of the deity Artemis. However, the scroll has a very tiny flaw, one that will propell the PCs to an alternate Prime Material plane. This is where our adventure starts.

The PCs arrive in a jungle in Quorsit. Reading pages 117-119 of the *Manual of the Planes* will provide you with helpful specifics, but all the basics are listed below.

The world's *physical factor* is 0, the same as the PCs' home plane.

The world's *magical factor* is 2. Most individuals of sentient races may cast spells, magic users and clerics do not need to study for spells. This does not mean that they can cast unlimited spells, just that they do not need to spend time studying them. Nor may they cast any more spells in a day than they normally could. Of course, this does not apply to Wemick. He left his spell books at home (see Wemick's Actual Spell List).

The world's *temporal factor* is 5. It is an Earth-like planet with an alien atmosphere, and most of the monsters are new.

Players' Background

The old man leaned back in his chair and said, "Yep, that was quite a trip through Olympus. They sure showed that medusa that they weren't too old." The young bard shifted awkwardly in his chair. The chair was decidedly uncomfortable, but the story had been great so far. He could see the makings of an epic ballad in it, if he could just keep the old man to the story.

"What happened next, sir? Did they find Kansas? Was Exeter there?" asked the bard.

"Oh, there's lots more to the story," said the old man, as he settled back in his chair.

"Our party of experienced adventurers had done real well on Olympus. They defeated the medusa, recovered the arrow, and returned to Jerraman's cave. He gladly gave

them his scroll in return. All of the adventurers warned Wemick to be careful this time. Wemick very carefully intoned the words to the *teleport without error* spell. As he read on, the air began to turn misty. Kansas, here we come. But then he stopped! He looked panic-stricken. The scroll was flawed! The adventurers faded out, and they knew that this time, they really could end up anywhere!"

A Strange Land

You appear in the middle of a strange forest. There are tall redwood trees all around you. But there are also bluewoods, yellowwoods, and orangewoods. The grass smells of juniper, and the bushes have strange cuplike flowers on them. Truly this is no world you have ever been to before. You will have to find someone who knows where you are before you can figure out how to get out of here.

Describe the forest in as much detail as you wish, but keep it light-hearted. It is not a place of terrifying strangeness, but it has a things-are-not-quite-right strangeness. Everywhere the PCs look they should see familiar objects, but in unfamiliar colors, shapes and functions. For example, the cuplike flowers on the bushes hold tea. The possible list of plants include trees which bear vegetables, bushes that grow orangeberries and brownberries, vines which grow both peas and acorns.

A Friendly Face

As you stand there looking about at the peculiar forest, a centaur appears from behind the nearest bluewood.

"Hullo. Where did you come from?" he asks. The centaur is carrying a bow, which is unstrung and slung over his shoulder. He has a friendly, if homely face.

Centaur (Nikel): Int Average; AL CG; AC 5 (human frontquarters)/4 (equine hindquarters); MV 18; HD 4; hp 32; THAC0 17; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1-6/1-6 (front hooves) or 1-8 +2 weapon; SZ M; ML 13; XP Nil (250 for getting information about Quorsit).

Nikel carries a knife, club and bow. He is a woodsman centaur who loves to roam the forest. He will want assurance that the party did not get here by magic, for he distrusts magic. He can elaborate on the descriptions of the forest, telling the party that the fat short trees usually contain drinkables; and to watch out, not all the trees are as friendly as they look. He tells the PCs they are in the Forest of Rainbows. "Who on Quorsit wouldn't know that?" If the party expresses ignorance about Quorsit, he becomes very suspicious. Storming off in a huff, he mutters about magic-using types and disappears into the forest. No matter what Nikel's reaction to the PCs, he bursquely tells them to direct their questions about Quorsit to the "Silly Elves" who live to the south.

Wood Giant

The characters probably will move to the south, toward the elves. After traveling for an hour or two in any direction, they come face-to-face with a brown-skinned giant. The giant roars something that sounds suspiciously like "supper," and charges to attack.

Wood Giant: Int Semi; AL CN; AC 2; MV 12; HD 16; hp 100; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 5-30 +5; SZ H (15'); ML 14; XP 9,000.

The giant takes half damage from fire and cold. Rays, lightning bolts and *magic missiles* reflect harmlessly off his skin and have a 1-in-6 chance of hitting the caster. Blows from his massive fists can incapacitate opponents of larger than man-sized or smaller. If a blow inflicts 23 or more points on such an opponent, the target must make a Constitution check or be knocked unconscious for 3d6 rounds.

The wood giant was out looking for supper when he stumbled on the party. To the giant, anything that moves is food. He is the strongest creature on the face of Quorsit, and his stupidity matches his brawn. He does not get a saving throw vs. illusions, provided the illusions resemble something edible (i.e. living). He will fight until he is down to 20 points or less, and then yell "OUCH." It takes a while for pain to penetrate. He continues fighting for 1d6 rounds after he is reduced to zero hit points, but dies immediately if reduced to −20 hit points.

Although this is a strange creature, it is still a giant. Ratha gets his "to hit" bonus and Sagrais gets his AC bonus.

The Critic

This forest of huge trees and strange plants is a confusing place, and even Ratha isn't absolutely sure you are traveling in a straight line.

As you round another massive trunk you spot a fellow traveler: The stranger is a short, pudgy humanoid, a halfling in fact, though not as stout as Sagrais. He is sipping a frothy beverage from a twisted root that is so large he has to hold it in both hands.

"Hullo strangers!" cries the halfling. "Stop, rest a bit and have some root beer—it's a little too sweet and doesn't have any floats, but it's undoubtedly cooler and fresher than whatever you're carrying."

The halfling is K. J. Louder, a drama critic. K. J. has stopped for a root beer break. If the party wishes to partake, they'll have to uproot their own plants. K. J. happily will indicate which plants; he won't allow the PCs to sample the beverage in his root (a very unsanitary practice). Uprooting a plant requires a successful open doors roll. If a PC fails, K. J. points out flaws in the character's technique and suggests the character try again. If anyone grabs a plant K. J. doesn't point out, the halfling screeches in dismay: "Don't try that you bubble head! It's not ripe!"

K. J. will constantly find fault with the party, but will occasionally find reason to dispense minor praise as well. He can tell the PCs the following:

- K. J. is his name. If asked what "K. J." stands for the halfling gets indignant: "It stands for *me* you oaf!"
- K. J. is on his way to visit Hamlet, the elvish king. Hamlet is a thespian of some skill, his actual title is "Director."
- The locals call this place the Rainbow Forest.
- The elf village is as far south as K. J. goes. He knows that uninhabited forest lies to the north, east, and west, with desolate mountains farther to the north. The PCs' most likely source of useful information is Hamlet.

K. J. Louder: Int Average; AL CG; AC 6; MV 6; HD 2 (F2); hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ S; ML 10; XP Nil (100 for getting K. J.'s information).

The Play's The Thing

When the party turns south, they travel through most of the day and do not find the elves. Fortunately, the elves find them. A group of six scouts stumbles on the party just as it is beginning to get dark. The elves greet the party and ask their business in the Rainbow Forest. If the party tells them that they are looking for the elf village, two elves escort them to the village.

The party is guided to a large hill. There is a door in the side of the hill, and the party is led inside to see Hamlet, director of this village of performing elves.

Hamlet (performing elf): Int High; AL CG; AC 6; MV 15; HD 5 (F5); hp 21; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; MR 90% vs. *sleep* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 15; XP Nil (1,000 for getting Hamlet's assistance).

Performing Elves (200): Int High; AL CG; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2 (F2); hp 21; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; MR 90% vs. *sleep* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 15; XP Nil.

The performing elves are an offshoot of a wood elf tribe. Seeking a place to perfect their acting skills, they stumbled on this vast hill, which they have honeycombed with passages, stages, dressing rooms, and living quarters. They gradually grew apart from the other elves, and over thousands of years developed different abilities. Performing elves are able to cast illusion spells. Once per day, each elf can cast *detect illusion, phantasmal force, blur,* and *ventriloquism.* When a performing elf reaches 4th level in any class, he can cast *hypnotism* once per day. Performing elves can be fighters (maximum of 8th), illusionists (maximum of 7th), and thieves (no level limit). All performing elves have at least three proficiency slots in acting, with costume making, singing, dancing, and mime being other popular choices. Performing elves also have all the abilities of wood elves as described in the *Player's Handbook.*

Hamlet graciously invites the PCs to supper, saying that business should be left until morning. If the party tries to press their questions over supper, he becomes irritated and demands that business wait until morning. After the meal is finished, a courtier whispers in Hamlet's ear.

"The performances are about to begin," the director proclaims with obvious joy. "If our distinguished and experienced guests would please join us, we are sure the writers would appreciate an objective viewpoint. After all, one must learn to entertain every kind of audience."

The characters are ushered down a passage to a nearly-filled large theater. The PCs are seated with Hamlet in the front row, center; these are the best seats in the house. As the director motions, the curtain rises.

In the first short play, the theme seems typical. Young elf boy meets young elf girl. They fall in love, only to be separated by a cruel villain (someone is casting an illusion of an ogre). The ogre carries the elf maiden off, and the elf lad must rescue her. Just as the lovers are joined, the ogre appears from off stage, and bashes the young lad on the head, killing him instantly. As the ogre picks up the young lass to carry her away, another young lad, this one in the audience, shouts: "Never, cruel beast, she is too pure." He runs up on stage, draws his sword, runs the ogre through, and carries off the maiden, to live happily ever after.

The party may not know what to make of this ending, but the crowd loves it. Several curtain calls are required.

The next play begins on another familiar note. A young princess, in love with a commoner, goes through much anguish when her father forbids their marriage. Finally, after much suffering and sorrow, she decides to give up her right to the crown and marry her true love. Just before she would renounce her claim to the throne, a birthmark proves that the young commoner is actually a prince from a neighboring land. The two are married, and as they enter their honeymoon manor, the young prince turns into a dragon and says, "I'm sorry, but I'll have to eat you now." The princess looks furious, and screams "I don't believe this. I do not believe it. This is the third time this has happened to me this year!" With that, she turns into a dragon herself, and stomps off stage, very upset.

This time the crowd goes wild. Even Hamlet is up on his feet, yelling and cheering. The actors, including the special effects elf, are brought off stage and given a place of honor near the PCs. At this point Hamlet turns to the nearest PC, and says "And of course, now it is your turn!"

If the characters express shock, Hamlet explains that extemporaneous acting is considered the highest form of art. If the characters are still resistant to the idea, Hamlet remarks darkly that cooperation works both ways; even a bad performance would be better than no performance. If they absolutely refuse to put on a play, Hamlet says, "Fine, and did you know that the giants are much more prevalent in the forest during the night?"

If the characters want the cooperation of the performing elves, they must try and come up with some kind of a play. Hamlet will give them 10 minutes of real time to prepare. They must use everyone. It is permissible to have one or even two special effects people, who may create scenery, costumes, and different bodies by using illusions and spells.

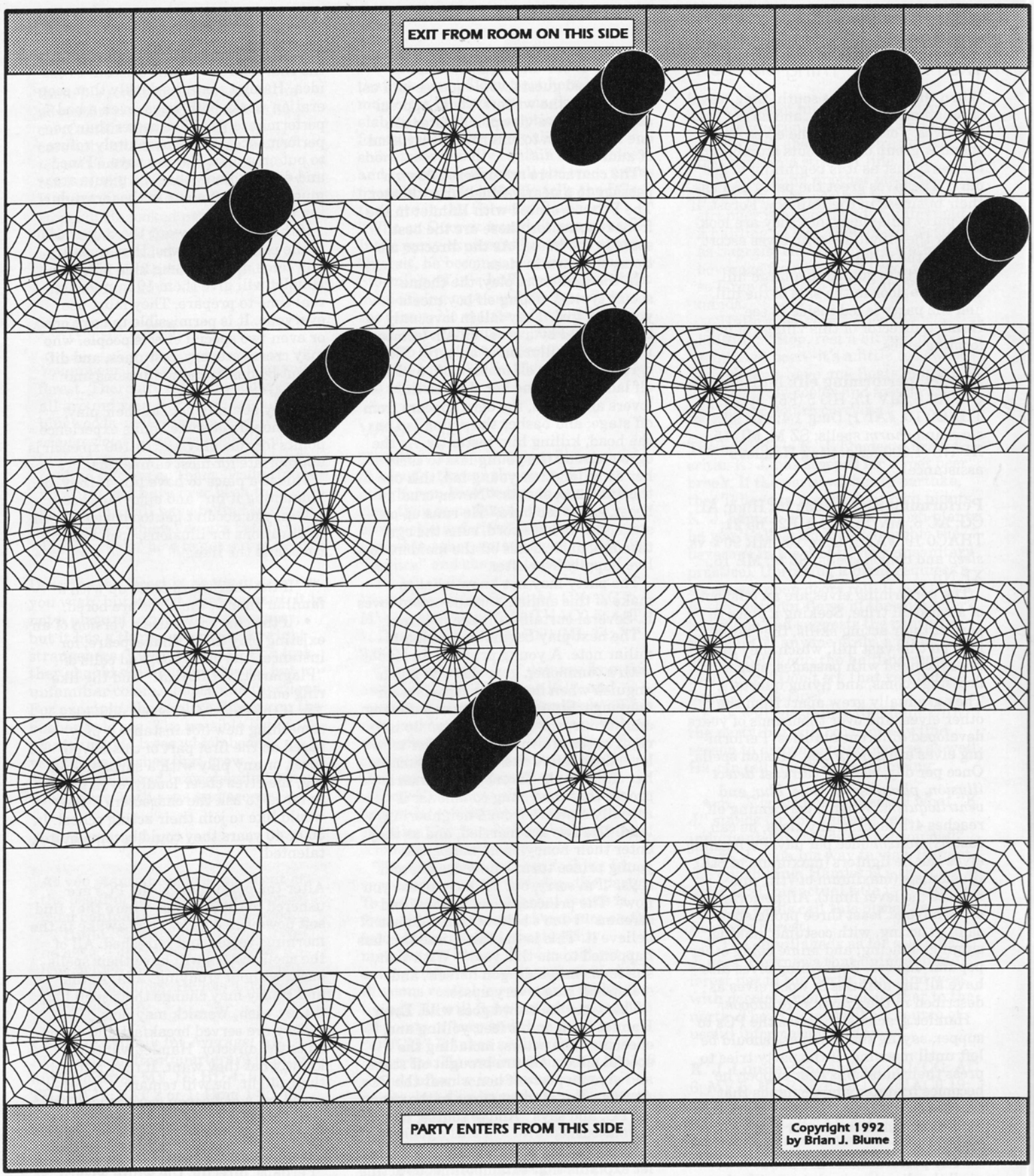
If they actually act out their play, they should get some bonus experience points for role playing; 75-100 xp each is appropriate for most campaigns.

This is a place to have fun. If they are "hamming it up" and enjoying themselves, you needn't get too bogged down in durations for illusions, spell casting time, and the like.

- If the characters come up with a familiar theme, the elves are bored.
- If the characters use a version of an existing play (from Shakespeare, for instance), the elves boo, and calls of "Plagiarist!" "Copycat!" and the like ring out.
- If the characters come up with something new (for instance a play based on the first part of this adventure), or any play with a surprise ending, the elves cheer loudly, even going so far as to ask the characters if they would like to join their acting school. In 30 or 40 years they could become quite talented.

After the performance, the PCs are ushered to their rooms, where they find soft down-filled beds. They awake in the morning, rested and refreshed. All of the spell casters will have their spells back, without studying. Ada, Ratha, and Henry may change their spell lists if they wish, Wemick may not.

They are served breakfast and escorted to the director. Hamlet wants to know what they want. If they tell him their plight, he will remark, "Another world, no wonder you were so bad" (or good, depending on the characters' performance). "Sorry, can't help you." One of the courtiers speaks up and says, "Perhaps, director, the white wizard could help them." The director looks up


EXIT FROM ROOM ON THIS SIDE
PARTY ENTERS FROM THIS SIDE
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by Brian J. Blume

and mutters, "Humph, him. I don't believe for a minute those stories about his world hopping. He is just a senile old human."

Then Hamlet looks at Wemick and says, "But then again, maybe you would get on well together."

The courtier says the party must travel north through the Rainbow Forest. When they emerge on the other side they will see a high mountain to the east. The white wizard's tower is at the base of the north slope. He warns the PCs that the white wizard doesn't usually like company.

Trees?

The PCs make their way back to their starting point and a little way beyond. Soon they notice the trees are getting shorter and the vegetation seems to be changing. Green seems to be more of a predominant color, and the trees are bushier. As they continue, Sagrais picks up the unmistakable odor of lemons. The trees in the area all seem to smell of it. The trees have thick trunks and large knots sticking out, waist high. If anyone touches a tree, he will feel something sticky. It is lemonade! If the PCs pry or pound at a knot, a spray of lemonade hits anyone within a 20-foot half circle. This will make the characters thoroughly sticky from head to toe. This has no effect on game play, but Ada and Ratha will not like the effect on their looks. Careful tapping of the trees will produce a delicious beverage.

The Wizard's Tower

Once the party passes the lemonade trees they can leave the forest without further incident. Ahead is the mountain the courtier described. They can see a tower in the distance. It appears to shimmer in the air, as though it might be an illusion. As they draw closer, the shimmering gets more pronounced, although attempts to disbelieve it do not succeed.

> You are standing in front of a white tower, apparently made of marble. It has only one gate, and the gate is open. As you move through, you enter a deserted passageway. The passageway is 20′ long, and turns right. As you round the turn, you see a strange room. The floor is tiled and resembles nothing so much as a giant chessboard.

The Trial of Wisdom

The party enters this room from the east. The floor tiles are five feet across; the middle third of the room has tiles colored white and black. The rest of the tiles are gray. The colored tiles form a chessboard on the floor. Seven of the white squares are covered with pillars of black metal, three feet tall. Each of the pieces appears to bear a carving or insignia of some sort, although the PCs cannot make it out from the edge of the chessboard.

The only door out of this room is across the chessboard. The secret of the chessboard is that it is a checkerboard. If a character steps on a black square a loud alarm sounds, and the offender is *teleported* back to the starting side. The characters may walk on the white squares without harm. However, if a PC steps on a black square a second time, a sign drops from the ceiling. It reads: "Sorry, one try per customer," and the PC is *teleported* back to the starting side. If any party member passes in front of one of the pillars, the pillar rises into the air, passing over the character, and lands behind him. The character is *teleported* back to his starting position. If a character runs up to a piece and jumps over it, it disappears. (Just as in checkers.) Anyone who jumps or flies over a black square meets a *wall of force* and lands on the black square, where he is *teleported* back to his starting position. PCs can be physically carried over the board, or transported via *levitation* or *telekinesis,* so long as they do not cross a black square. For positions of checkers, consult the map.

The Trial of Intelligence

After the party passes through the door on the far side, they see a stairway leading down into a rough-hewn rocky passage that points to the north. The passage leads to an arching cave that has many stalactites hanging from the ceiling. The cave is 80′ by 45′ and has doors in the middle of the north and south walls. The characters enter by the south door. The floor is *veiled.* It looks normal, but it is actually made of glass. As the party crosses the floor, it begins to vibrate. There is a 15% chance per character (cumulative), that the glass will shatter as a PC walks across it. This releases a *reverse gravity* effect which causes the character to "fall" to the ceiling. The character disappears through the stalagmites (which also are illusory) and is sucked into a funnel, which then deposits him gently at the top of the stairs the PCs just descended.

If one PC breaks through the glass, the hole will be about four feet across, but hidden by the *veil.* If two or more PCs break through, the entire floor will shatter. The glass is not affected by the *reverse gravity* and falls harmlessly to the real floor 10 feet below.

The party can cross fairly easily if they do so one at a time. Another way to cross is to shatter the floor, "lower" a rope to the ceiling, and walk across the ceiling, climbing back down to the door on the other side. If the PCs succeed in disbelieving the stalagmites, they will have no trouble avoiding the funnel. Spells and magic items which bestow flight, *levitation, feather falling,* or similar abilities don't work in this room.

After passing through the north door, the PCs find themselves in a small room with a spiral stairway leading up.

The Trial of Courage

The stairway is about six feet wide, and every 20 stairs there is a landing.

> You come to a landing, and you see a very disturbing sight. A stone statue of a gnome rests on the right side of the landing. Fear is carved on the statue's face, and its hands are in front, as if to ward off a blow. The workmanship is nearly perfect.

The statue is not magical or valuable.

The PCs find another statue on the next landing; this one is of a female elf. The elf statue bears a look of utter despair. Her hands are held in front of her, clutching a piece of a broken bow. Her eyes are downcast, as though she had given up all hope. This statue is also of nearly perfect workmanship, although it is not magical or valuable.

The third landing has a statue of a human wearing armor and carrying a large mace. He is holding a holy symbol in his hand, and his face bears a look of intense concentration.

> As you leave the third statue behind, a shriek of utter terror splits the air, and you hear heavy footfalls rapidly approaching. Despite all the clamor, you are startled when a large troll rounds the corner and charges. The hulking green monster races through your ranks. He is soon lost to sight as he flees.

The troll is real, but it has surprised the party. The PCs cannot launch any attacks or spells against it. If a player objects, explain that even adventurers as experienced as the PCs can be taken aback when they meet frightened trolls on narrow stairways.

After the party climbs through several more landings, they find a troll statue. Its claws are out, and it has a look of ghastly horror on its face.

The next landing has a statue of a female human. She wears full plate armor and carries a piece of a long sword. She bears a look of resignation on her face. There is more light here, reflected down the stairs.

When you reach the top of the stairs you see a statue of a human male carrying a large battle axe, with a look of pure terror on his face. His mouth is frozen in a scream, and his eyes are bulging out. As you take this in, you notice a small bearded man with spindly arms and legs and huge, squinting eyes standing near the statue. He is flaking off bits of stone with his hands. As you watch, the axe becomes thinner and sharper under his hands. The man looks at you, smiles, and says: "Persistent, aren't we? Very well, you may see the wizard now."

Pech (1): Int Exceptional; AL N(G); AC 3; MV 9; HD 4; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ M; ML 14; XP Nil.

The pech are a mysterious race of dwarflike stoneworkers. A pech can cast *stone shape* and *stone tell* four times a day. Pech are immune to petrification. A pech's melee attacks always can affect creatures made from stone.

The pech and the troll are actually very good friends and have been Kimew's most effective guards. They have scared away quite a few visitors, and they enjoy their work. If the PCs question the pech about the bizarre obstacles they've had to overcome, the pech explains that the wizard who lives here doesn't appreciate frivolous visits by strangers. Only visitors who really want to get in, and who are smart as well, can get this far.

The White Wizard

You pass through the door that the sculptor opens and confront a disturbing sight. There, hunched over a desk, poring through a large tome, is Wemick. No, it's not Wemick, but it is someone who looks like him. He has Wemick's gray hair and brown eyes, seems to be about the same age and is about the same height and weight. Someone at the home once brought up the idea of parallel evolution, but this is frightening. His mannerisms, his face, his movements, it's Wemick.

He looks up at you and smiles (Wemick's smile), and says (Wemick's voice), "Hello. I was afraid you looked like the persistent types. What can I do for you?"

This is Kimew, the White Wizard. He is a sage who would much prefer time to study and read. He thinks answering questions is a waste of time. He and Wemick do not recognize any but the most superficial similarities between themselves, although the others may not be able to tell them apart. Still, they think alike, and Kimew will almost invariably speak to Wemick, no matter who asks the questions.

Kimew is a very absent-minded old man. As he talks to the party, he tends to mispronounce names, (you say you are looking for Exile, or was it Exlax?). As he finds out about the party's dilemma, he becomes excited. He was once in the same situation. It took him months to find his way out. He searched until he discovered a gate, he calls it the "Gate of Worlds." If one concentrates on the desired place, eventually the gate will open to that world. Kimew created an amulet that allows him to return to this plane through the gate. He is amiable about giving this information to the party, asking only for some information unknown in Quorsit, books or writings would be best. Matilda's copy of Good Castlekeeping, or Sagrais' cookbook would be acceptable. He is not interested in Ada's biography, saying that biographies tend to be too slanted. The real prize for Kimew would be Wemick's notes on the devas of Arcadia. If the party shows him any of these items, Kimew becomes animated and immediately wants to begin a long discussion with Wemick on the subject. He forgets totally about the rest of the party. Eventually, he looks up from the notes and says:

"Oh, the gate. That's easy. It is only a few miles from here. I moved my tower when I found it. Just go east around the slope of the mountain until you see a crevasse with a bridge over it. Go over the bridge and up the path until you find a large cave. It's in there, you can't miss it. And, oh yeah, I think it's guarded by something. A giant? No. A big tree? No, that's not right. Now what was it? A dragon? No, I know, it was a train. No, that's not right, wrong world. Oh well, it's not guarded."

No matter how hard the PCs press him for information, Kimew sticks to his final assertion that the cave is not guarded.

The room the characters are in reminds them of Wemick's room; it is messy and cluttered. There are objects from many different worlds scattered about, among them a flashlight, a complete set of the works of Zane Grey, and a loaded six shooter. The PCs do not know what these are. If they ask, Kimew will be glad to tell them about each item —in detail.

DM Note: Clever players immediately will think of borrowing Kimew's spell books. If Wemick asks, he may make a new spell list. However, when Wemick begins to cast his first spell after leaving Kimew's tower, hand the player Wemick's Actual Spell List (Wemick is *so* absent minded). No matter how much a character wants it, Kimew will not trade the six shooter.

Kimew: Int Genius; AL ; AC 5; MV 9; HD 11 (W11); hp 29; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 + 1; SZ M; ML 16; XP Nil (2,000 for getting Kimew's information).

Spells carried: *Magic missile* (× 2), *audible glamer, Tenser's floating disc, magic mouth* (× 2); *continual light, invisibility, levitation, Melf's acid arrow; haste, hold person, Melf's minute meteors, tongues; ice storm, stoneskin, telekinesis, wizard eye; cone of cold, fabricate*

One-Way Bridge, The Wrong Way

You leave the tower and find a rough path leading east. Following it for a few miles, you come to the crevasse that Kimew spoke about. He forgot to say that while the supports for the bridge are still there, the bridge itself is not. The crevasse extends on both sides for several miles, it is about 60′ deep and 25′ across, and a mountain river rushes swiftly through the bottom.

The bridge is one-way, from the other side. Its walkway magically appears when a creature steps off the opposite bank. This walkway is solid and safe. If the party can get one person to the other side, that person can simply walk to the center and create a complete bridge. The remaining characters can cross safely so long as at least one character stands on the bridge and faces the right direction. There are a number of ways the party can get across. Henry and Wemick have spells that will allow them to get over, and Ada has a lasso.

The Gate of Worlds

After crossing the river, the PCs can locate the cave.

> You climb for quite a while and see what has to be the cave that Kimew told you about. At last, finally you will be able to get to Kansas and find Exeter, your wayward friend.

The gate has a guardian. A loco-lizard, a huge, dragon-like creature lives in the cave's north chamber (see map).

> You enter the cave and see a passage, 30′ wide. It leads to the north far enough that the daylight does not penetrate. To the south you can see the tunnel runs about 75 yards and opens into a circular cave which is lit by daylight, evidently through a hole in the ceiling. To the north, at the limit of your vision (about a hundred yards), you can just make out another opening, on the east side of the tunnel.
>
> The air in the cave has a sharp, acrid odor. As you peer through the darkness, a noise rolls out of the blackness to the north. It sounds like a snort, or perhaps a huff. After a few heartbeats you hear the noise again.

If the party continues into the cave the loco-lizard charges. If they leave the cave, the loco-lizard follows.

Loco-Lizard: Int Semi; AL N; AC 3; MV 6-24; HD 10; hp 70; THAC0 11; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-4/1-4/3-30; SZ G (30′ long); ML 18; XP 3,000.

The loco-lizard can produce a cloud of steam three times a day; the cloud is 20′ × 20′ × 40′ and inflicts 10d4 + 20 points of damage, save vs. breath weapon for half. It also can build up speed by charging; it moves 6 the first round, 12 on the second round, and 24 on the third. It cannot turn easily while it is charging, and can turn only 90° during any round when it charges. No matter what its speed, it can automatically trample any creature in its path unless the target makes a Dexterity check.

The loco-lizard is a highly specialized monster, created long ago by the wizard who built the gate. The cave was built with the size of the dragon in mind, and as it charges, the characters will have to huddle up against the wall to avoid it, Dexterity checks to avoid being trampled suffer a −3 penalty. Anyone who attempts to dodge cannot attack or cast spells that round. Another unique feature of the cave is the round chambers at both ends. The dragon can build up a full head of steam (making locomotive noises all the while), charge the length of the tunnel, and use the circular wall to turn around without losing speed. Every two rounds the dragon will come charging through the cave, first from the north, and then back again. If the party succeeds in getting to the exit on the east side of the cave, the lizard will be forced to stop and either breath or melee with the party. The tunnel that leads from the east exit is wide enough to allow the lizard to enter, although it cannot use its charging attack in these narrow confines.

It will only use its breath weapon if it suffers 40 points of damage.

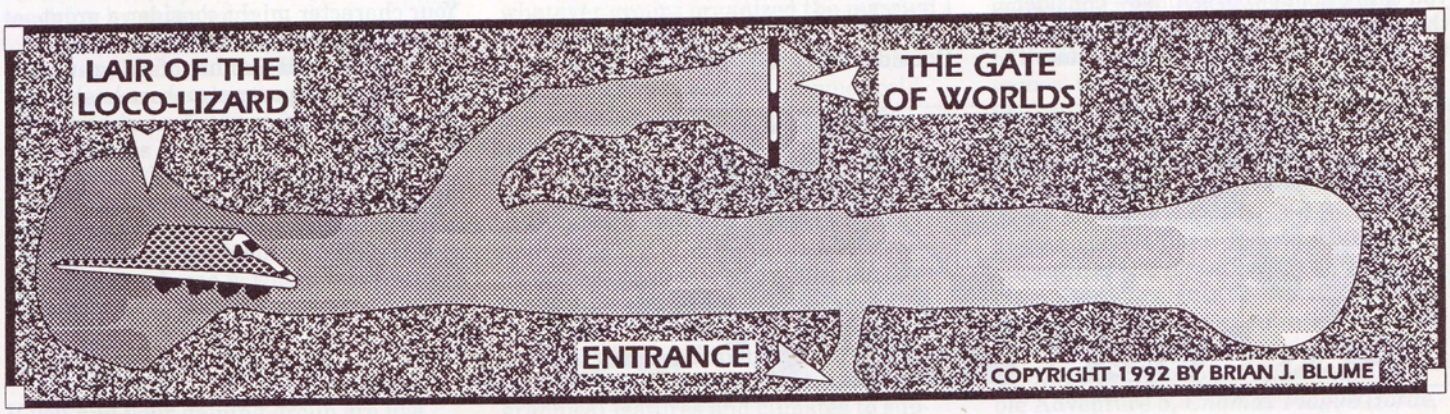
> After you defeat the strange dragon, you reach the end of the tunnel, which opens out into a small room. You see a door with a large window. The scene through the window keeps changing, one minute showing a picture of a sylvan forest, the next a plain full of volcanos, the next a stormy sea. It shows your home for a moment, still standing, and then moves on to other images. Surely this is the gate you seek. Wemick begins to concentrate, and after several hours, an image of a mountain valley appears. "At last," Wemick says "Kansas."

Wemick's Actual Spell List

> Unfortunately, your recent absent-mindedness seems to show up most when you study spells. You must have studied some of the wrong spells by mistake, because these are the ones you actually remember.

Spells Memorized: Level One: *Magic missile* (×2), *audible glamer, Tenser's floating disc, magic mouth* (×2); Level Two: *Continual light, invisibility, levitation, Melf's acid arrow;* Level Three: *haste, hold person, Melf's minute meteors, tongues;* Level Four: *Ice storm, stoneskin, telekinesis, wizard eye;* Level Five: *Cone of cold, fabricate*

Since you forgot to pack your spell books on this trip, you cannot relearn spells until you get home. ❑



by Tom Prusa

Experience Preferred

Part Three
An AD&D® 2nd Edition Game Scenario For Six Veteran Adventurers

Illustration by Gary M. Williams

DM Background

In this, the final chapter of *Experience Preferred,* our heroes must make their way to the demi-plane of Kansas, find Exeter, and bring him back home. Unfortunately, the detours they have been forced to take have given Exeter enough time to organize a party of his own and escape. This adventure works best with the player characters presented in issue #72.

While on the demi-plane of Kansas, there are no modifications to spells or magic items. However, Wemick does not have his spell books and cannot relearn spells. Also note that the potions Matilda carries are old and might not be effective. For purposes of this adventure, assume the *healing* potions always work, the others are still potent on a roll of 51-00.

Players' Background

"Well youngster, you see that youth is no substitute for experience," said the old man, as he leaned back to sip his wine. "Yes, elder," replied the young bard. "But what finally happened? After all, they traveled through Olympus, recovered an arrow for Hermes, fought a medusa, and rescued a dryad. Then they went to some strange alternate plane where they found huge ogres, strange performing elves, and hostile plants. They found Wemick's double and passed his tests. They even fought a dragon. But did they ever find Exeter?"

"Patience young man. I'm just getting to that part. After our heroes' adventures on Quorsit, they stood before the Gate of Worlds, with Wemick doing his best to concentrate on the demi-plane of Kansas, a memory 50 years old. Finally his face brightened, and he shouted "that's it!" The party saw a cold, bleak landscape. The gate entered the plane on a hillside, with a tower at the base of the hill, 300 yards away. Farther down, a gorge cut across the valley, with a wooden bridge crossing it. Upon the opposite hill was a cave with two glowing pillars.

"There was a group of men crossing the bridge, and at least one giant-sized figure. With a look of determination, the experienced adventurers stepped through the gate.

Kansas, At Last

As you enter the demi-plane of Kansas, you see six figures climbing the hill toward two glowing pillars. One is a giant, one a dwarf, and the others are human. The one in the lead is Exeter! After they cross the bridge, Exeter turns. He holds a sheet of parchment in one hand and gestures with the other. The bridge explodes in flames. Exeter and his entourage stride quickly up the hill, stopping before the gate. Exeter whirls, and through some acoustic trick of this plane you can hear him clearly.

"Wemick, you old fool. Don't you know by now that you won't stop me? I'm better than you, I've always been better than you!"

The party cannot get close enough to hit Exeter with spells or missiles before he and his group escape through the gate.

The Burned Bridge

When the party reaches the bottom of the hill, they stand in front of a gorge which cuts across the entire valley. Mountains ring the valley, and the party must cross the gorge to reach the other gate. The gorge descends straight for nearly 1,000 feet. It is 60′ across. The bridge has been reduced to two smoldering bridge supports, one on each side of the gorge.

There are several ways the party can get across—most likely Wemick or Henry will use a spell or two.

The party can use the bridge (the fire and destruction of the bridge are part of a *veil* spell Exeter cast from a scroll). The *veiled* area looks and feels like a destroyed, smoking bridge, but does not smell like one (only PCs who specifically ask about the smell will notice this). The *veil's* duration will expire 12 turns after the party reaches the gorge, revealing an intact bridge.

If someone attempts to lasso the supports on the other side, there is a 50% chance the rope will strike part of the "invisible" bridge. The rope appears to have been knocked aside. (Anyone who makes a disbelieve attempt after seeing this gets a +2 bonus, +4 if the character also noticed the smell.) If the lasso is not deflected, the PCs must hit AC 0 to successfully lasso the beams. Once the lasso is in place, the PCs can cross hand over hand; they'll think they're swinging over the 1,000-foot chasm, but in fact they're only a few feet above the bridge's walkway. A character must make a Strength check at a −2 penalty to cross on the rope. If the check fails, the character falls about two feet to the walkway. This does not dispel the *veil,* but the character automatically is entitled to a disbelieve attempt at +3. If the disbelieve attempt fails, the unfortunate character suffers 20d6 points of damage—all experienced adventurers know about the maximum falling damage rule (see PHB, page 104).

After the PCs cross the bridge, they can use the gate. They are *teleported* to a cave southwest of the home.

On the Road Again

The delay in crossing the bridge was just enough to give Exeter time for a clean getaway. Everybody can see fresh horse tracks and giant footprints leading out of the cave and toward the main road to the northeast. You guess the home must be about two day's travel on foot, maybe half that by horseback. It seems that Exeter and his group have a good lead. The village of Murrows Dell is about five miles down the road. Perhaps you will be able to find mounts there.

Murrow's Dell

This small hamlet is barely a wide spot in the road. There is a tavern and a blacksmith shop with a stable attached. The village is not detailed, since the party will not be spending any great amount of time there. A few of the key NPCs who the party might deal with are listed below:

Harold (tavern keeper): This big burly man is always ready to greet travelers. His ale is drinkable (barely), and the food is good. His prices are extremely high, but he knows he is the only game in town. At this time of the day the tavern is virtually empty; there are only a few old farmers nursing mugs of ale.

Blake (blacksmith): Blake also owns the stable. Blake is a huge man, the typical picture of a smith, but he has a surprisingly high falsetto voice. He offers to sell the party three horses and two mules, and only a clear cut opportunity for a large profit will cause him to part with more animals. His current stock and asking prices include:

Three medium horses. These horses are in good condition and are capable of carrying armored characters. They are not battle trained. Blake's initial asking price is 100 gp each. These are the horses he wishes to sell to the party. He will not sell them for less than 80 gp.

Two light horses. These are horses Blake wants to train for his sons. They are worth 25 gp each, but he will not let them go until the party offers at least 60 gp each.

Two mules. These are only average mules. They cost 20 gp each. If Sagrais is to ride, he must have one of these—he is too short to ride anything else.

Saddles and harness can be had from Blake for 15 gp per set.

Hornick (bully): This small-minded man is the leader of a local gang of young toughs. They are smart enough not to bother any of the residents. In spite of the PCs' armor and weapons, Hornick sees them as old, infirm, and easy pickings. Before the party leaves town, he leads his group of toughs onto the street and demands a "fee" from the PCs for using the streets. He makes rude remarks about the characters' age and acts obnoxious. If the party soundly thrashes the toughs, several local residents (mostly little old ladies) cheer loudly.

Toughs (8): Int Low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 11; XP 15 each.

Hornick: Int Low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 2 (F2); hp 14; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA +1 "to hit and damage for 17 strength; SZ M; ML 11; XP 35.

Big-Mouthed Merchant

As the party rides northeast, remember that they will have to travel at the speed of the mule Sagrais is riding. The PCs continue to lose ground to Exeter's party.

After riding along for about three hours, you spy a wagon approaching. There is an immensely fat man driving the wagon, which is piled high with boxes and barrels. The man waves as you approach, and he pulls his wagon to a stop with every sign that he expects you to stop.

The merchant is Formil, a dealer in spices, foodstuffs, and tobacco. This

fellow never passes up the chance for a sale. If the party asks for information about Exeter, Formil says he saw a group ride past some hours ago. They were riding fast and didn't even stop to say hello, though they did stop a ways down the road to meet with a group of mercenaries.

It is near noon now, and Formil will offer to let the party eat with him. He persistently tries to sell spices (he has a surplus of cinnamon), dried beef, and tobacco. He will offer tobacco to each of the men, being most persistent with Henry, Wemick, and Sagrais.

If the party tries to ride by, remind Sagrais that it is near lunch time.

The Murdered Peasants

Several hours later you see two figures standing on the road. A few more figures lie next to them. As you draw closer you see that the standing figures are two young peasant boys, who begin to cry. Investigation reveals that their parents are lying on the ground, one of them clawed to death, the other with a broken neck.

The boys, Anderus and Philey, are unhurt, but devastated. They are trying to be brave, but the death of their parents has left them in near shock. It is obvious to the PCs that these children will perish if left alone.

If the PCs carry the boys on the two largest horses, they party will not slow down, as the mount Sagrais is riding still is the slowest.

If questioned, the boys say their family was going to town when they were overtaken by a group of men and a giant. The giant killed the father, and one of the men turned into a monster and clawed the mother. The boys are too miserable and frightened to describe the monster (it was Chillclaw, the gelugon), though they do remember that the giant had white skin and that the monster was white, too, and almost as tall as the giant. The boys paid no attention to the men.

Some time after finding the boys, the PCs will have to stop for the night.

Home At Last

The PCs reach the home before noon the next day. If they didn't push themselves into a forced march the previous night, they feel ready for anything.

It has been a long hard ride, but finally you draw near your home. As you crest the last hill, you see that the home still stands. A pale, ivory-haired giant stands on the front steps. He sees you and bellows something to someone inside. Exeter comes outside a moment later. The giant is holding Nellie in his hands, prepared to break her neck if you attack.

Exeter's Plan: Exeter wishes to prove once and for all that he is better at everything than Wemick. He has created a set of 12 gems, and six of them are planted about the home. When their counterparts (held by him and his allies) are brought together, the home will be destroyed by an earthquake. But destroying the home is not enough. Exeter wants to destroy Wemick first, defeating him in view of all the residents. Each member of this group will face one of the player characters in a combat to the death. If four or more player characters can win their duels, they can save the home. If not, everyone will perish.

The situation: In addition to his party from the plane of Kansas, Exeter has picked up a group of mercenaries; these were the men Formil the merchant saw. The mercenaries currently are holding the residents captive. For the duels, the residents will be forced to sit and watch, most with a guard right behind them. Any attempt to free the residents will cause many deaths. The only way to rescue the home is to meet Exeter on his own terms and defeat him. If the party takes a few minutes to look around, they'll see the stands around the practice field packed with nervous residents and grim-faced mercenaries. Attempts to do anything but look will result in Nellie's immediate death, followed by the slaying of all the residents and the destruction of the home.

The Challenge

As you approach the home, Exeter is waiting on the steps. "Well if it isn't the company of the duck. I thought that you'd never get here. We're all ready for you." He holds up an amethyst. "You see this stone? Well, there are five more like it in the hands of my associates. If any three of them touch, there will be an earthquake that will wipe out this place. If you want to save this hovel, you will have to defeat me and my allies. To make it simple, we will fight a series of duels. If you can win more than half of the duels, you can save the home. Well, do you accept the challenge, or will you go blindly to your deaths like the sheep you are?"

If the challenge is accepted (what self-respecting adventurer could refuse?), the PCs are led to the training ground, where most of the other residents are already being held. The giant tosses Nellie into the stands, where a pair of mercenaries watch her closely. There are dozens of mercenaries with swords drawn, all watching the residents.

Mercenaries (50): Int Average; AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1 (F1); hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 10; XP 15 each.

Duel Layout: The training ground is 150 feet by 50 feet wide. There are seats all around. Exeter will place a gem on a pedestal in the middle of the field. The first character to reach it and return to the starting gate will be considered the winner of the duel.

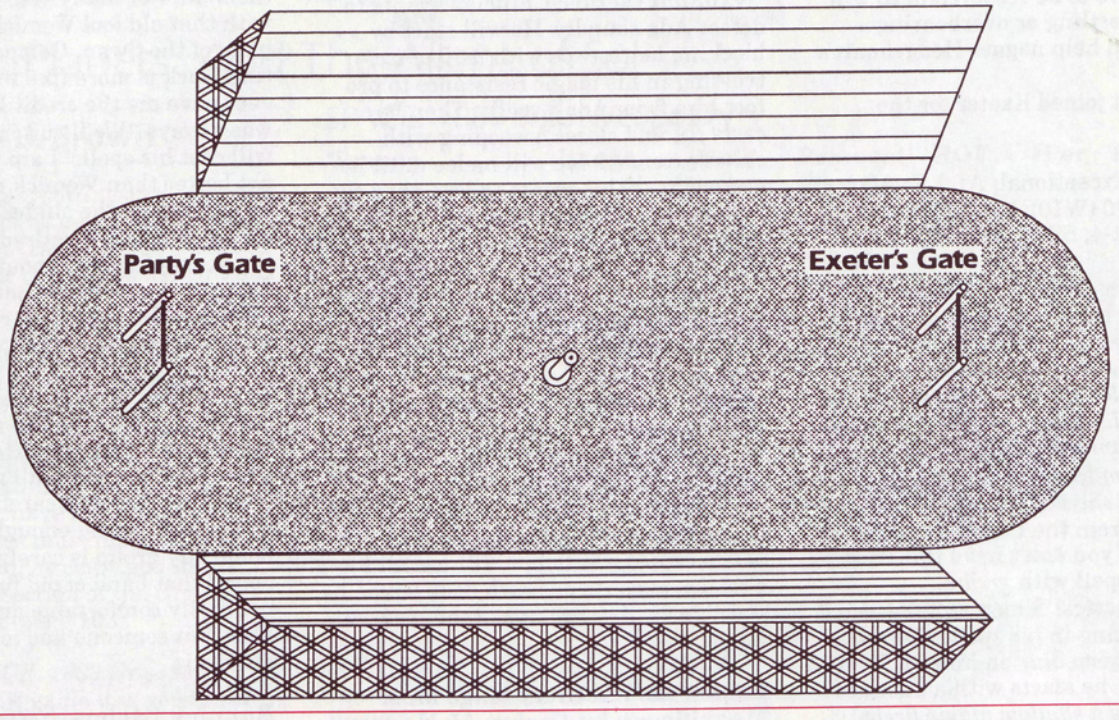
The Gems: The gems are large amethysts. Destroying a gem is just as good as winning the duel. However, the opponent will certainly fight to the death if a PC does this, to avoid Exeter's wrath. The gems can withstand 10 points of damage and are AC 4.

The Duels: The duels will commence at high noon. The PCs are given no time to prepare. When the PCs are ushered to the arena, Exeter announces the duels, which will occur in the following order:

1. Ratha Rann vs. Icehand, the frost giant.
2. Matilda vs. Maralix, an 11th level fighter.
3. Sagrais vs. Hedgeheart, a 10th level dwarven thief.
4. Henry vs. Simon, a 10th level illusionist.
5. Ada vs. Chillclaw, a gelugon.
6. Wemick vs. Exeter.

As the duels start, the first bout will be fought cleanly, Ratha vs. the giant. As this is going on, the party notices that Exeter's group is casting spells, preparing for their duels. The PCs can do the same, although they will have to have

THE CHALLENGE



any spells cast, or potions drunk, before the duel is called.

If the party wins four or more of the duels:

As the last duel is over, and you snatch up the last gem, the crowd roars. Nellie apparently snuck off and recovered her hammer, and is now leading the old residents of the home in their fight against the mercenaries. The crowd makes short work of them. Using chair legs, umbrellas, staves and the like, they chase them out of the home. Nellie slays the mercenary leader, and with that the rest of the mercenaries break and run.

If the party loses the duels:

There is a roar from the crowd as Exeter and his remaining allies draw together. Suddenly Nellie appears and flings her hammer, smashing three of the stones before they can be brought together. She then begins to throw the hammer again at Exeter's party, while the residents turn on the mercenaries in fury. Exeter's party flees for their lives, and the mercenaries are quickly dispatched. In spite of the fact that you fell, and failed, you must still admit that there is no substitute for experience.

Exeter's Group

Exeter has gathered the following allies.

Icehand (Frost Giant): Int Low; AL CE; AC 0; MV 12; HD 14+ 1-4; hp 75; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16+9; SA Hurling rocks for 2d10 points of damage; SD Impervious to cold; SZ H; ML 13; XP 7,000.

Icehand carries a huge battle axe +1 (remember to apply the appropriate bonuses to the unadjusted statistics listed above), and a sack containing three throwing rocks.

Combat tactics: Tactics, what's tactics? I throws me rock, then I takes me axe and cuts him to pieces. Little ones.

Icehand joined Exeter for the money.

Maralix: Int Average; AL CE; AC 3; MV 6; HD 11 (F11); hp 72; THAC0 10; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2-7; SA +4 "to hit," +7 damage and two attacks a round from trident specialization, magical weapon, and 18/23 Strength, one extra attack each round with net; SZ M; ML 14; XP 5,000.

Maralix wears plate mail and carries a net and a *trident +2*.

Combat tactics: Maralix will move quickly to close with Matilda. He uses his net as a secondary weapon, attempting to entangle Matilda. Use the rules for nets in the *Complete Fighter's Handbook*. If you don't have the *Handbook*, Maralix must hit his opponent with a −2 penalty (−6 with the secondary weapon "to hit" penalty). Once entangled, Matilda must make a Dexterity check to get free.

Maralix joined Exeter just to cause trouble for those weaker than himself. If reduced to 10 hit points or less he will surrender, and try to flee the home.

Hedgeheart: Int Average; AL NE; AC 5; MV 6; HD 10 (T10); hp 44; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA +2 "to hit," and damage from magical weapon, poison; SZ S; ML 14; XP 4,000.

Hedgeheart carries a *short sword +2* treated with type E poison (immediate death, save vs. poison for 20 points of damage), which is good for one hit.

Combat tactics: Hedgeheart plays to win. Before the duel, he received a

stoneskin spell from Exeter. This completely negates the first six attacks against Hedgeheart, hit or miss. Sagrais will have to be resourceful to win this duel (wrestling or overbearing attacks would help negate Hedgeheart's advantage).

Hedgeheart joined Exeter for the money.

Simon: Int Exceptional; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 10 (W10); hp 37; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ M; ML 15; XP 4,000.

Simon wears *bracers of defense AC 5,* and carries a *dagger +2* and a *wand of magic missiles* (23 charges).

Spells remaining: *Chromatic orb** (×2), *blur, color spray, detect magic, hypnotism, blindness, mirror image, improved phantasmal force, hold person* (×2), *phantom steed, fire shield, phantasmal killer, shadow magic.*

* New spell from the *Complete Wizard's Handbook.* If you don't have this book, replace this spell with *grease.*

Combat tactics: Simon will not move to close, trusting in his spells. Before the duel, he casts *blur* on himself. When facing Henry, he starts with a distance spell, perhaps a *shadow magic fireball.* He then tries *phantasmal killer,* and *hold person.* He then moves close enough to use his *chromatic orbs.* If both are still standing after all of this, he casts blindness at Henry, grabs the gem, and runs.

Simon is a spell stealer who joined Exeter so he could prey on other illusionists and steal their spell books. Exeter promised him all of Henry's stuff, perhaps exaggerating about some of it.

Chillclaw: Int Genius; AL LE; AC −3; MV 15; HD 11; hp 56; THAC0 9; #AT 4; Dmg 1-4 +4/1-4 +4/2-8 +4/3-12 +4; SZ H (12′ tall); MR 50%; ML 16; XP 39,500.

Chillclaw, a baatezu, is immune to cold and takes half damage from fire. He can be hit only by silver weapons (half damage) or magical weapons of +2 or better enchantment. He regenerates two points of damage each round. He can use the following abilities at will, once a round: *advanced illusion, charm person, suggestion, teleport without error, detect magic, polymorph self, wall of ice, fly,* and generate *fear* in a 10′ radius. He has infravision and continually *detects invisibility* and *knows alignment.* A hit from his tail causes the victim to save vs. paralyzation or be *slowed* from numbing cold for 2d4 rounds. Chillclaw can *gate* other baatezu, but will not do so during this adventure.

Combat tactics: Chillclaw wants to defeat Ada soundly. He will start by blocking her escape with *wall of ice,* trusting in his magic resistance to protect him from Ada's spells. Then he casts *fly,* and closes, swooping with claws extended. He will melee until he is down to 20 hit points or less, then fly into the air, dropping a *wall of ice* on Ada. Note that if Ada is near the gem at this time, the gem may be destroyed.

Exeter summoned Chillclaw with a magical scroll. Exeter really isn't powerful enough to control him. The bait, a high priestess of Tyr, was more than enough motivation for the creature. He doesn't care a whit about Exeter's silly duels, he just wants the cleric. He easily could "win" just by *teleporting,* but can't resist getting his claws into a cleric in an even fight. If a general battle erupts, Chillclaw will use all his abilities to cause as much destruction as possible for three rounds, then *teleport* away.

Exeter, the Excellent Mage Most Magnificent: Int Genius; AL N (insanity causes fluctuations); AC 4; MV 12; HD 12 (W12); hp 27; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 15; XP 6,000.

Exeter wears *bracers of defense AC 4,* a *ring of feather falling,* and a *brooch of shielding* (33 points). He carries a *staff of striking* (9 charges), a *potion of flying,* and a *wand of fire* (13 charges). He receives a +2 bonus on saves vs. mental attacks (Wisdom 16).

Spells remaining: *Burning hands, magic missile* (×2), *unseen servant, continual light, detect invisibility, invisibility, shatter, dispel magic, hold person, Melf's minute meteors, slow, fumble, polymorph other, stoneskin, telekinesis* (×2), *fumble, cone of cold, teleport, globe of invulnerability.*

Combat tactics: Exeter is finally going to show everyone that he is a better wizard than Wemick. He does not want this fight to end quickly. Before the duel starts, he casts a *stoneskin,* and a *globe of invulnerability.* (The *globe* will stop most of Wemick's spells, although it can be brought down with a *dispel magic.*) Exeter begins the duel with his flashiest offensive spell, probably *cone of cold.* If the spell assault fails, Exeter screams in frustration and closes with Wemick. He pounds on Wemick with his *staff of striking,* using three charges every strike, until one of them is dead.

Exeter's Background

I am an incredible wizard. I'll show them all. For many years I traveled with that old fool Wemick and the company of the Swan. Company of the Sitting Duck is more like it. None of them ever gave me the credit I deserved. It was always "We'll run in and Wemick will cast his spell." I am just as good, if not better than Wemick ever was. I could tolerate the slights while adventuring, but once I retired to the home, the years of stories about how "Wemick did this, Wemick did that," finally got to me. I left the home and resumed adventuring. Now, I am a full wizard, plus a little more, and Wemick will have to admit I am the more accomplished spell caster. That is, if he can still talk after I get through with him. He'll pay for all those insults, they'll all pay.

I did my research carefully, I know who is still strong enough to fight at the home. My group is carefully tailored to defeat that band of old fumblers. I am not really comfortable around Chillclaw, but someone has to fight the stupid cleric.

Running Exeter: Exeter suffers from a severe persecution complex, with a bit of an inferiority complex, and some delusions of grandeur thrown in for good measure. He is capable of deciding anything, for any reason. He is a competent wizard, his madness in no way affects his spell casting abilities or intelligence. He has a total fixation on Wemick, and is perfectly willing to see everyone die if he can only defeat Wemick once and for all. Of course he has a *teleport* spell in reserve; he may be crazy, but he's not stupid.

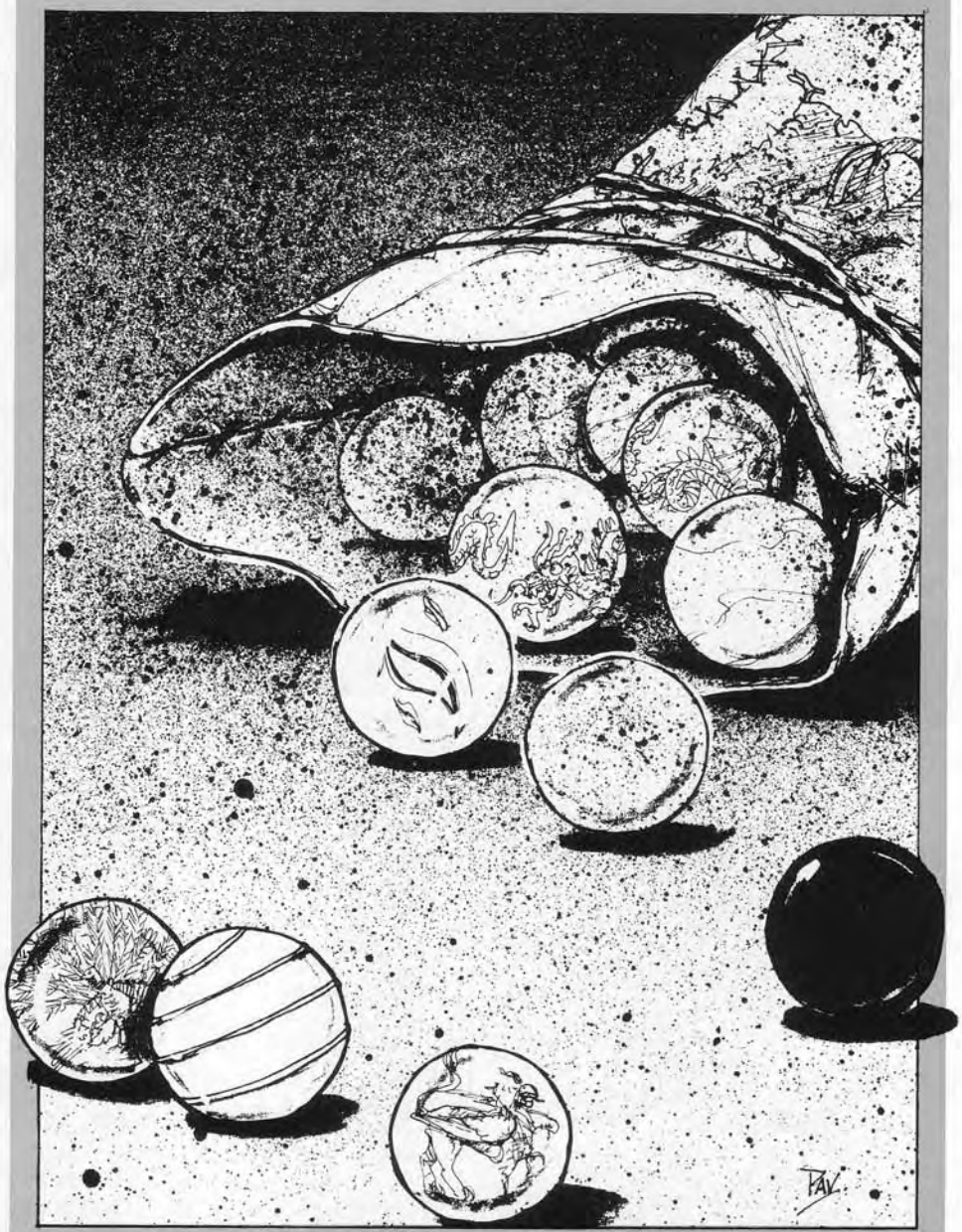
Nellie Thursday

Nellie Thursday: Int High; AL NG; AC 10; MV 6; HD 8 (F8); hp 55; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2-5; SA +6 "to hit" +11 damage from magic weapon and stone giant strength; SZ M; ML 16; XP Nil.

Nellie carries a ring of *stone giant strength* hidden on her person. When she reappears after the duels, she wears the *ring* and wields a *war hammer +3 dwarven thrower.*

Nellie owns and manages the home. She is 331 years old and has been running the home for about 75 years. Her *hammer* hangs over the mantel in the front room. Nellie is a kindly soul and still a very competent fighter.

You've Lost Your Marbles!



An AD&D® 2nd Edition Game Scenario
For 5-7 Characters, Levels 4-6

illustration by Terry Pavlet

by Paula & Steve Greenspan

DM's Overview

The adventuring party is a group of young friends from the city of Fluctawat, though the adventure could be set in any fantasy city. Fluctawat is a large city of about 8,000 and is the capital of the Province of Gronn. It is located on an island on the edge of Lake Oseena and at the mouth of the Henry River which drains into the lake. A suburb called Fluctawat's Landing, often regarded as part of the city, lines the shore nearby. Ferries regularly travel back and forth from the island, used by those who don't wish to take one of the two toll bridges.

Fluctawat is located along a major trade route, and its main commercial business is fishing. Freshwater clams and fish from Lake Oseena are dried and traded to mainland farmers and merchants heading upriver. A large number of artists reside in the city also, as the rulers of Gronn always have had a penchant for art. They have created a public display gallery for paintings, the only one known of in this part of the country. The Gallery Artiste is mainly subsidized by the nobility, although the Gallery charges a small entry fee.

The churches in Fluctawat are primarily of the Finnish mythos, although there are a few small shrines to other gods, primarily for the use of visitors. The residents are a blend of races—humans predominate, but dwarves and gnomes are common. Elves, halflings, half-orcs, and other races are less prevalent, but not unknown.

The party recently has been employed (as a group) by a firm called Odd Jobs. They receive a regular retainer plus a 50% commission upon successfully completing a job. They are not bound to accept any particular job, but if they refuse a job, they receive no retainer until they accept another.

The owner of the business, and the party's employer, is Clarsilla Artthur. She is a shrewd businesswoman who learned from her father, a widowed tailor, that happy customers return and bring their friends. As a youngster, Clarsilla watched babies, walked dogs, delivered packages across town, and did whatever else she could do. As she got older, she organized a group of children to run errands and took over the administrative end of things. She expanded

the scope of Odd Jobs over the years and recently adopted the motto "We'll do anything—for a price." She still employs the kids for small errands, and that part of her business continues to thrive. However, she also employs more capable folks for the tougher jobs. She is a fair boss and attempts to divide the work evenly according to the abilities of her employees. She will not give a job to someone who she doesn't believe can handle it, because she doesn't want to risk not satisfying a customer.

This is the party's first assignment, and Clarsilla is giving them what she believes will be an easy task. If necessary, she will pressure them to accept it because they need to demonstrate their skills to her so she can increase the difficulty of their assignments later. If the PCs refuse the job, she tells them her other employees are busy elsewhere and she needs the PCs for this.

The Mission

Little Richard Walth (Richie) has lost a bag of marbles and wants them retrieved. In reality, his marbles are gemstones carved into spheres for use in an intricate strategy game. Richie thought he could borrow them from his parents and replace them before being found out. Unfortunately, a bully pushed him and he dropped the marble gemstones down a storm drain. His parents own more than a complete set of the gemstone game pieces, and he has offered to give Odd Jobs the extra marbles for returning the rest by sundown. A complete set is 50 pieces. There are 13 extra. Richie does not know the exact count of marbles. The game is called Gomillik, which is something like a cross between Chinese checkers and chess.

The party must enter the storm drains to find the marbles. To complicate matters, there was a heavy rainstorm last night and the torrent washed the marbles further down the sewers. The search for the marbles will lead the group through several obstacles.

Players' Overview

Read this to the players before they pick spells or buy equipment.

> Odd Jobs is the name of the company you and your group of friends have agreed to work for. You wonder just how "odd" the jobs will be—especially since your new boss, Mistress Clarsilla Artthur, says the company's slogan is "We'll do anything—for a price." You will find out soon what "anything" is since you just got a message to come in to the office right away.
>
> The Odd Jobs office is in the business section of town. You're all somewhat familiar with the city of Fluctawat. It is located on an island in Lake Oseena and is the capital of the Province of Gronn. The current ruler is Lady Libbie de Bedloe, who has a small palace at the southern tip of Fluctawat.
>
> As you think about your city's ruler, it occurs to you that Mistress Artthur has the same commanding air as Lady Libbie is said to evidence. She seems to be fair, and she's not quite overbearing, but she certainly expects others to do what she wants. Well, you'd better grab your gear and head over to see her.

She Wants Us to Look for Marbles?

> You file into Odd Jobs, wondering about your first assignment. Mistress Artthur is sitting behind the desk in the entryway.
>
> "Good afternoon. Let's go into my office," she says, as she stands and leads the way. Mistress Artthur's office barely accommodates your group, but you manage to squeeze in. She sits behind the desk and waits until you've all found seats, then begins. "Well, I've got a job for you. A poor little boy has lost his bag of marbles down the storm drain. He knows where he lost it, and it should be a simple task to climb down and retrieve it. Will you do it?"

If the party asks a lot of questions or refuses the job, Clarsilla tries to press them into accepting by pointing out that it should not take long. If necessary, she will remind them that if they refuse an assignment, she is not bound to give them the next good one that comes along. Further, if they refuse, they forfeit their retainer until they accept a job. She tends to be somewhat terse. Clarsilla will NOT mention that she knows Richie's parents are quite rich and the marbles are likely to be valuable. However, if asked, she will tell the group they will receive some of the marbles as their reward. Also, if asked, she will tell the party that anything else they find while retrieving the marbles is theirs to keep—as long as it is obtained legally.

Once the group has accepted this fateful mission, Clarsilla calls Richie in from another room and prompts him to:

> "Tell these nice people all about your marbles, Richie, and how you lost them. They're going to find them for you."
>
> Richie, a seven year old human boy with a rip in his shirt and mud on his pants, is a little vague as he blurts:
>
> "Uh, they're really my papa's and he'll skin me alive if he found out I lost his marbles when I wasn't supposed to play with them. And uh, they belong with a game he has and he's supposed to play it tonight with a bunch of his friends, including Uncle Ed who's really nice, but they won't be able to and it's my fault and he's gonna be really mad. Um, they-'re different colors with pictures on the sides, and they were in a pretty bag—red with a burning dragon on it. And I was gonna win some more marbles for my collection by playing a game with the extra ones with Tommy Bates, but that big bully Alex stopped me in the alley and shoved me. I hate him! And I dropped them down the drain and I couldn't get them back, and now they're lost. Anyway, there's at least a few dozen of 'em in the set, and then there's a couple a extras. Will you get my papa's marbles back so I don't get in trouble? Please?"

If pressed, Richie will list the pictures on the marbles as those of dragons, unicorns and lions. If asked when he lost them, he'll say it was, "Yesterday, before the rain. My mama wouldn't let me come out after it started raining so I couldn't come until today."

Once the party has had a few minutes to question Richie and discovers that he has no more sound information to provide, Clarsilla will break in and say:

> "Now Richie, you told me you need the marbles back before sundown so your father doesn't miss them right? You'd better show these people where you lost them now, so they can start looking."

Entrance To The Sewers

You follow Richie through the business district toward an area which is fairly well-to-do. Before you reach it though, the boy turns down a small alley lined with garbage. He walks up to a 3′ square storm drain in the center of the alley and points to it. "I dropped them down there. I was cuttin through here to go to Tommy's house, but that Alex followed me and picked on me and made me drop them. But I'm gonna fix his wagon. I'm gonna do something to him, too."

Richie has no concrete plans for revenge on Alex, he is just voicing his anger. If the party discusses it with him, he will be easily swayed to a specific plan, or to forgetting it as long as he gets the marbles back.

There are no people in the alley at the moment, and the group won't be noticed loitering around or entering the grate. The grate is made of iron bars spaced about six inches apart. It is stuck down with dirt and rust so it takes two characters who both make successful open doors rolls to lift it. Under the grate is a 10′ drop: a 6′ long hole which is 3′ square opens into the round sewer tunnel which is 5′ in diameter.

The tunnel is damp and the stones lining it are stained with refuse. The whole tunnel smells of garbage and mold. A small stream of dirty water flows slowly along the rounded bottom, leaving small puddles amongst the pebbles and garbage.

To travel along these tunnels, anyone taller than 5′ will have to stoop and anyone taller than 5′6″ will have to crawl. Stooping gives −1 on all "to hit" rolls, and crawling gives −2. The group will have to travel single file. The water on the bottom varies from two to four inches deep. This is not enough to cause a problem for anyone crawling.

If the party travels upstream, they will discover the tunnel slopes up slightly and narrows to 3′ diameter. Eventually, it splits up and all paths come to dead ends with grates above.

On the Right Track

If the party travels downstream, the first character in the marching order almost immediately notices a very round white stone lying in a pile of leaves by the side of the water. It is actually made of white marble with an intricately carved lion inlaid in adamantite. It is about 1″ around. Upon examination, any PC can tell it is clearly quite valuable, possibly worth a few hundred gp.

As the party proceeds downstream, they find two more white marble stones—one lion and one unicorn.

Just Another Grate

As you travel through the sewers, you notice a patch of color up ahead. A profusion of red and orange mushrooms is growing on the wall here amid a large patch of greenish-purple moss. A dead giant rat lies just beyond this area; the water tugs gently at its body. Light filters down from a sewer grate above.

There is nothing dangerous here. The moss is growing in the light, the mushrooms happen to like the same environment, and the rat was washed up here by chance.

The Monster That Ate Fluctawat

As the party approaches a side passageway, two crocodiles that were lying in wait for some convenient prey (−2 to the party's surprise rolls), attack. These crocodiles were dumped here when they got too large and dangerous to keep in the washtub as pets.

Crocodiles (2): Int Animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 6, Sw 12; HD 2; hp 10, 12; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/1-12; SD Surprise; SZ M; ML 10; XP 65 each.

The crocodiles attack first with their bites. They cannot attack with their tails unless someone gets behind them. The tunnel is too narrow and the water is too shallow for a normal thrashing tail attack.

One crocodile's stomach contains a silver spoon worth 5 gp, a child's yo-yo, and a fishing lure; the other crocodile has swallowed a gold and sapphire ring worth 1,200 gp, an onyx marble, and a studded leather dog collar.

The side passageway which exits here has a small amount of water standing in the bottom. It is not flowing. If the party follows the side passageway, they find that it ends shortly, with a storm grate in the top above the dead end.

Sewage From Heaven

As you pass under yet another sewer grate, a shower of smelly water and rotting vegetables falls on (character 1 in the marching order) and (character 2).

Have each victim make a Dexterity check or fall splashing into a puddle of sludge in surprise. (This has no game effects, just play the incident for laughs.)

Which Way To Go?

The passageway opens up into an intersection. Two other tunnels split off here. The stream of water you've been walking or crawling in widens, and it is hard to tell which way the current flows. The water in both larger tunnels is deeper and slower, and there are some eddies and whorls around the intersection. However, as you watch, a leaf brushes past you from behind and bobs erratically down the right-hand passageway.

Although the current actually flows to the left, an object on the top of the water will float to the right, borne by a draft in the air, then be marooned on the side or pulled underwater and back toward the intersection after the characters lose sight of it. If the PCs float a lot of objects down the stream, they will go in each direction somewhat randomly, but biased toward the right. Whichever direction the party actually decides to try will, in fact, be the wrong direction—the direction leading to the encounter with the giant toads.

Fire Hazard

The water deepens to about a foot as you travel, and the odors intensify. It smells like a mixture of rancid oil and spoiled milk down here, and you hope you find the silly marbles soon! The water is coated with a large amount of oil.

Each character must make a Dexterity roll or slip and fall. Any falling character holding a lamp or torch will set the oily surface of the water on fire. Flames will sweep across the surface, inflicting 1d3 points of damage to each character. Any character falling or ducking under

the water that round will escape the damage as the fire passes over him.

Survey Says—Wrong Direction

Ahead, you see the tunnel open up into a larger area, and there even appears to be some dry floor and a few reddish brown rocks scattered about.

The rocks are four reddish brown giant toads who reside in an open area at the dead end of this passageway. This area has a higher ceiling than the sewer tunnels, so all characters can stand upright. The toads will not be apparent to the party until they have gotten up to the entrance—unless the PCs do something like throw objects at the reddish brown rocks.

Three of the toads will attack the party on sight. The fourth is actually a human who was *polymorphed* into a giant toad. He will yell "Beware" to the party as soon as he sees them. He will not aid them in their combat with the other toads, but will beg for mercy if the PCs try to attack him.

Fire Toads (3): Int Low; AL CN; AC 10; MV 6, hop 6; HD 2+4; hp 12 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg Variable; SA Fireball; SZ S; ML 9; XP 210 each.

A fire toad's fireball has a range of 30′ and a radius of 5′. The damage generated by the fireball is equal to the toad's present hit points. Victims can save for half damage.

Marvin the Toad: Int Low; AL CN; AC 6; MV 6, hop 6; HD 4+1; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 10; XP nil (slay), 135 (converse), 270 (accompanies party).

Marvin is a human merchant who was *polymorphed* into a giant toad by a wizard. He was wearing a magic ring of telepathic communication when this happened, which allows him to communicate with the party. The wizard who *polymorphed* Marvin was hired by some of Marvin's business rivals. Marvin escaped into the sewers and has been unable to get back out since he could not climb back up to a sewer grate. He has been here for a long time, learning the business of survival by watching the other toads. Marvin now accepts being a toad. His thought processes are slowing down to the level of a toad, so he has difficulty with complicated reasoning and is concerned mostly with his immediate comfort. Marvin communicates slowly and croaks verbally while he is communicating. Every once in a while, a large fly goes by and Marvin snatches it out of the air with his tongue. It will not be easy for the PCs to carry on a conversation with him. The PCs could convince Marvin to come with them and attempt to be made human again.

Marvin will not even think about his former life unless the PCs talk about some of the better aspects of being human—good food, friends, the beauty of the outside world, etc. If the PCs get Marvin thinking about being human again, he will agree to help them find marbles only if the PCs agree to help Marvin find a means for becoming human again. Marvin was not married, but did have a girlfriend, Amelia. On the other hand, he remembers that as a merchant, he was always busy working and never had time for doing what he wanted to do. He does not believe that there will be anything left of his business or home to go back to, and he would be penniless if he returned (an offer to share the PCs' reward would erase this attitude). If Marvin goes with the PCs, he will not participate in any combat. He will flee if his life seems to be in any danger.

The Left Way Is The Right Way

This tunnel is 5′ diameter and has about 6-8 inches of water in the bottom.

Stick To It

You are approaching another intersection. The ceiling is 6′ high here, and a pool of thick, dark water lies at the junction. The current clearly flows out of the pool into another passageway straight across from you, and out of the other two passages into the pool. The bottom of the scummy pool is not visible.

The pool is 18″ deep. Searching the pool yields leeches; a rotted wagon wheel; a small sack containing 6 gp, 2 sp and 8 cp; a battered tin cup; several broken sections of pottery of various faded colors and patterns; and four round ivory stones (some of the marbles) with beautiful mithril inlay patterns of two lions, one unicorn, and one griffin.

Any bare skin inserted into the pool attracts 1d4 leeches each round (it takes five rounds to completely search the pool). The leeches can be avoided by searching the pool with gloves or scooping with a tool. Leeches can be removed from the skin by simply grasping them and pulling hard, or by pouring salt on them. Marvin, if he is with the party, would have no difficulty retrieving the marbles in a round or two, but will attract leeches, much to his chagrin. Once the party discovers the leeches, Marvin won't go near the pool at all.

Leeches: Int Non; AL N; AC 9; MV Sw 1; HD ¼; hp 2; THAC0 Special; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Drain blood; SZ T; ML 5; XP nil (slay) 100 (avoided by PCs).

The tunnel which continues is again 5′ in diameter, but has about 8 inches of water on the bottom. The other two tunnels lead to a maze of sewer tunnels which slope upwards slightly and eventually narrow and come to dead ends, just as the one the characters come from.

Two, Two, Two Mimics In One

Four small, round green stones lie near a large broken rock at the side of the sewer tunnel.

This rock is actually a mimic which is in the middle of fission to produce an offspring. The mimic has been eating very well in the sewers of late, and in fact just finished off an osquip which was carrying four marbles this morning. It spit out the marbles as being undigestible. The mimic speaks Common. The process of fission is far enough along that each side of the mimic operates independently. However, having the same makeup and memory, they respond virtually identically to all situations. Therefore, the mimic's speech gives the odd impression of being echoed as each side speaks the same words with a very slight delay between. The mimic's name is Tom (Tom). It has recently begun to wonder whether there is anything more to life than eating rats, fish, and the occasional larger monster or humanoid—this seems so pointless. In short, it is bored. Perhaps these humanoids can show it something that will cheer it up for a while.

If a character attempts to pick up the marbles, the rock (mimic) will reach out an arm and grab the marbles just before the character does—automatic success. It will also protrude two pseudopods and attempt to grab the character (for no damage) and glue him up against itself.

Once that is accomplished, the mimic will inquire sweetly: "Did (did) you (you) want (want) those (those) stones (stones)?"

It will attempt to get the party to bargain for the release of the stuck character (if it captured anybody), accepting food or entertainment in exchange. It will also bargain for the "round stones." But since it has seen they can be used as bait, it will not trade the stones for food. It will trade them for entertainment. If you are amused, the mimic is amused. Such entertainment could include storytelling, singing, dancing, a demonstration of a skill or craft, etc. One amusing act (i.e. one PC performing) will get the return of the captured PC or a stone. In other words, the PCs will have to amuse the mimic five times to get four stones and the caught PC (though the mimic will accept food in return for releasing the PC). If the PCs are stuck and Marvin is with them, the toad recounts the PCs' battle with the toads, complete with sound effects—this amuses the mimic.

The stones are made of green jade with a lovely unicorn pattern inlaid in copper, and are part of Richie's game set.

Mimic (2, sort of): Int Average; AL N; AC 7; MV 3; HD 8; hp 61; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12 (smash); SA Glue; SD Camouflage; SZ L; ML 15; XP 975 (slay), 1,400 (amuse).

Kachoo!

The air here has a stale smell mixed in with the normal offensive odors you've been smelling.

Each party member must save vs. breath weapon or have a sneezing attack caused by the concentration of mold spores in the air. Each affected character will sneeze intermittently for 2d8 rounds. During this period, the PC is −1 on all attacks. As long as any character is sneezing, the party will be unable to move quietly or sneak up on anything unless magic is used to silence the affected character(s).

Great, A Grate

A large metal gate blocks the entire passageway in front of you, attached right into the green slimy walls of the sewer. The gate ends just above the water line, so the water flows underneath it, but there are dead leaves, sticks, and many other bits of junk piled along the edges of the tunnel here and caught in the lower section of the gate.

There are no marbles caught in the debris here. They were carried underneath the gate. Among the dead leaves, torn papers, sticks and other such garbage, however, is a carved stick with metal-tipped ends. It is a *wand of flame extinguishing* with 27 charges and a command phrase of "Put It Out" etched on the side in Elvish. The PCs must state they are searching the floating debris to find the wand. Uttering "Put It Out" will extinguish the PCs' torch or lantern and knocks off one of the remaining charges on the wand. Not surprisingly, the metal of the gate is heavily rusted. The gate has a latch with a built-in lock, but that has also rusted shut. A thief must pick locks with a −30 penalty to open it. Although it has rusted, the metal of the gate is still strong enough that it cannot be broken through easily. Only an open doors roll at a −4 penalty will open it, and the party gets only one attempt. However, there is enough clearance under the gate so that Marvin and any slender PC can just squeeze under, equipment and all. A slender PC weighs less than 70% of his racial maximum, but no heavier than 180 pounds in any case. The limits for common races are: dwarf 119 pounds, elf 84 pounds, gnome 65 pounds, half elf 102 pounds, halfling 50 pounds, and human 140 pounds. A character who is less than 10 pounds over the limit can remove all armor and most clothing, cover himself with oil (lamp oil is fine), and squeeze underneath. Crawling under the gate requires entering the water. Each character who attempts this becomes wet, cold, and covered with leaves and other gunk.

If all else fails, the characters can attempt to break through by just bashing down the gate, they must dish out 200 points of damage to the gate, which is AC 4.

Oh, Look!

A four-foot diameter tunnel joins the tunnel where you are traveling. There are puddles on its floor, but there are enough dry spots to walk on.

If one or more party members state they are looking at the tunnel floor, they notice a small, carved sphere against the side. If no one looks, this marble is passed over. The sphere is carved in a rich black stone (onyx). It is one inch in diameter and has a tiny, intricately carved dragon inlaid in silver on it. It belongs to Richie's marble set.

Marbles, Marbles, Who's Got The Marbles

The passageway ends up ahead. Just before the end is a grate in the top of the tunnel similar to the one through which you entered the sewers. There is a small, damp pile of fallen leaves and other debris past the grate.

Through The Secret Door

Characters have double their normal chance of finding the crudely-made secret door at the end of the sewer. In addition, after four rounds of searching, they automatically find it. If the PCs do not search for the secret door or give up before finding it, proceed to "Waiter, There's A Man In My Soup."

Beyond the secret door is a small alcove which contains the possessions of a mongrelman who is currently concealed in the shadows at the rear of the alcove. The party will not spot the mongrelman until after they have been in the alcove for a couple of rounds, as she has done a good job of camouflaging herself. A large canvas sack in the alcove contains: an empty, heavily mended waterskin; a rag wrapped around a smelly piece of sausage; three torch stubs; a dull knife with a broken tip; a small sack containing a tarnished silver brooch with a small pearl in the center (15 gp if cleaned up), a jagged piece of rose quartz (3 gp), a lovely blue ceramic vase with the top broken off (worthless), and a heavy red cloth bag of marbles.

The female mongrelman, Riilip, is the most repulsive thing any of the characters have seen. Her mottled green, warty hide is covered with patches of

yellow-green fur. She has hairy feet with long sharp nails, and a general lopsided look with one large muscular arm and hand, and one small vestigial arm ending in a furry paw. She is wearing tattered, gray rags and is cowering in the shadows in a back corner of the alcove. When discovered, Riilip will plead in her broken Common, interspersed with grunts and whimpers, for her life. She also begs that her possessions be left alone. She knows others consider her disgusting in appearance and has only unpleasant memories of her occasional encounters with people. She is young (about 8 years old), but has no concept of her age other than that she has lived in the sewers for as long as she can remember. If the party treats her well, she will retain a frightened, cowering manner but will attempt to get a trade of one item for each possession (including each marble) that the party wishes to take from her. For example, Riilip would be willing to trade one gold coin for one marble, or one weapon for one marble, or food (one day's rations) for one marble, etc. No Exceptions—one item for one marble. Further, she will not accept in coins anything less than one gold coin for one marble (she knows copper and silver aren't worth as much). Riilip has 50 marbles in her bag. Therefore, the PCs will have to give up 50 items to get all the marbles. To help you determine what is an acceptable one-on-one trade, consult the list at the end of this encounter. The PCs can use force to get the marbles, as she is too frightened to put up a fight; However, they're not being very nice if they do this (they also get less experience for fighting here; no xp for killing Riilip, 5 xp for each marble Riilip trades to the PCs).

Riilip loves to look at pretty things and will happily accept anything shiny or brightly colored as part of the trade: coins, weapons, jewelry. She is enchanted by any cute pet or familiar, and will be bold enough to request such an animal as part of the trade. She is perpetually hungry, and any sort of food will be greedily accepted. She does not want anything that is not edible, attractive, or useful to her, and she definitely does not want a mirror. She is ashamed of her looks. If the party is especially nice to Riilip, or one character treats her particularly well, she may ask if they will come visit her again. However, she will strongly resist any suggestion that she leave the sewers.

Riilip's Bag of Marbles

The marbles are contained in a heavy, red cloth bag, embroidered with a flaming griffin in gold and silver threads. The bag, which is filthy and reeks of the sewer, has split partially open along a seam. Each 1-inch diameter marble inside has an intricate design inlaid into it with a contrasting metal. There is one complete set of 50 marbles, 10 each of 5 different colored stones: red striped agate with platinum inlay, black onyx with silver inlay, green jade with copper inlay, pink jade with gold inlay, and white marble with adamantite inlay. For each color, there is 1 marble decorated with a dragon, 2 with griffins, 3 with unicorns, and 4 with lions.

Items Accepted for Trade

Size "S" or "M" weapons (bows of any kind also are acceptable), brightly colored clothing (even if it won't fit right), jewelry (paired items such as bracelets or earrings count as one item), gold coins, pouches, belts, pouches, sacks, candles, tools, armor (even if it doesn't fit), rope (one trade per length of 15′ or longer, and Riillip is smart enough to notice if the PCs try to cut a rope into multiple pieces), and food (one day's worth equals one trade). Riillip will not accept foot gear (shoes that don't fit *hurt*). Multi-part items such as tinderboxes count as one item; so would a needle and thread.

Waiter, There's A Man In My Soup

Just before the dead end, a grate opens up into the street. If the characters choose to take this path, they emerge into the dining area of an outdoor cafe. By this time, the group is covered in mud, slime, and sewage. They look disgusting and smell worse. Choose one character to accidentally knock a patron's soup into her lap. The patron, a fat, middle-aged woman wearing bright clothes and a hat with fruit on it, stands up and screams. A waiter comes running over, waving a pot of hot coffee in one hand and a dishtowel in the other, and goes into a tirade about hooligans, riffraff, and gutter slime. He finishes by ordering them away. Depending on how the characters react, this encounter can be extended by having the waiter insist on payment for the intrusion and lost business, or attempt to detain the party and call the town guard. If the party becomes violent, he will desist until they are on their way and then shout after them, "I'm putting in a complaint about this. You'll be hearing from the guards."

Gone To The Dogs

No matter where the PCs emerge from the sewer, the group is trailed by an ever increasing number of dogs. First, a little brown and white beagle begins trotting after them. It comes up and sniffs their legs, automatically tripping someone in the process. It follows the group and is joined by dog after dog of all sorts. A small girl walking a shepherd on a leash gets dragged along behind the pack, sobbing and yelling, "Stop, Bruno. Please stop!" The dogs are fascinated by some smell that the party picked up in the sewers and all follow closely. The party is forced to travel slowly, as otherwise dogs would be tripping them at every step. Use these statistics for the dogs if the PCs decide to attack them:

Stray Dogs (40): Int Semi, AL N, AC 7, MV 15, HD 1+1, hp varies, THAC0 19, #AT 1, Dmg 1-4, SZ S, ML 7, XP 35 each.

Any attempt the PCs make to lose the dogs is doomed to failure. If they succeed in ridding themselves of the current pack, more dogs quickly replace them. Assuming the PCs did not kill any dogs, when they reach their headquarters, they can barely squeeze in without letting in any dogs. After the party has been inside for a few minutes, the dogs slowly disperse.

The Triumphant Return

Back at the office, little Richie is waiting anxiously. When he sees the bag of marbles, his face lights up. He can hardly wait for the marbles to be sorted, and runs off with the set of 50 as soon as possible. Odd Jobs receives all of the extra marbles (9 ivory and 3 green jade marbles if all marbles were retrieved). The party receives half of those (6 if they found all the marbles), and Clarsilla allows them to take their pick. Although the marbles would be worth much more in a complete set, they are still made of valuable gems and metals and the designs are of impeccable, detailed workmanship. They will sell for approximately 400 gp each. Further, each PC in the group earns an extra 10 xp for every marble found.

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The Valley of Death

by William Tracy with Erlene Mooney

A harrowing AD&D® game adventure for six characters, levels 8-10

Illustration by Gary M. Williams

Players' Introduction

For many years the small, peaceful kingdom of Beleus has prospered. But recently a dark cloud of fear has settled heavily over the land.

Rumors have spread throughout the kingdom that a Master of the Undead has descended into the Valley of Death, an ancient place steeped in history.

Many centuries ago, before the birth of the kingdom of Beleus, the area was the center of the mighty Empire of Thanus. A graveyard was set up for royalty and other important personages of the empire, and this graveyard was placed in the Valley of Death, a dismal cleft surrounded by the Duskus Mountains. The valley could be reached only by a pass that wound through the mountains. The dead taken there were placed in ornate marble crypts.

The Empire of Thanus was a warlike country, ever in conflict with its neighbors and ever victorious—until they encountered a well-trained army from the nearby city of Beleus. Through careful military maneuvers, the Beleus people moved their forces through the Valley of Death, surprising and defeating the Empire of Thanus, and claiming the land as their own.

After the empire crumbled the valley was shunned, more because it was a place of Thanus than because it was a place of the dead. Beleus expanded over the former Thanus land, and Beleus officials occupied the Thanus manor houses.

The Beleus Empire prospered and was at peace with neighboring cities and countries. The decades passed quietly. The stories of the Thanus Empire and the strategic maneuver through the Valley of Death became dim memories—until recently when a merchant caravan moving through the mountains near the valley was raided and had its goods destroyed by a band of undead. Rumors sprang up of a Death Master who now controls the Valley of Death.

King Andros of Beleus has offered a reward of 50,000 gold pieces to those who can determine if someone is controlling the undead, and to put a stop to the threat in any case. Many have tried for the reward; none have succeeded.

Now it is your turn. If you end the threat, whatever the threat is, your group will be 50,000 gold pieces richer.

Notes for the Dungeon Master

There is indeed a "Death Master" in the Valley of Death. He is a drow lich who used to be the court mage in the Thanus Empire. When the Thanus Empire was flourishing, the drow, called L'rac Darkray, enjoyed unmatched wealth and power. However, the drow was forced to flee the empire when the Beleus army started to overrun the Thanus forces.

Centuries passed, and as the drow neared death he undertook the arcane process to become a lich, vowing to mastermind the destruction of Beleus.

In life, he was the real power behind the Thanus throne. He wants that power again. His plan is to frighten away as many Beleus citizens as possible with the rumors of walking dead. Then, L'rac believes he will have a lesser force of citizens to contend with, one that his undead minions can trample. L'rac has been gathering the undead and other "supporters" and is making plans to move on the outlying Beleus villages. L'rac has been taking his time with his plans, confident that nothing stands in his way and enjoying the battle calculations too much to make them go quickly.

Among his supporters are two duergar vampires, who L'rac encountered in his journeys as a lich. He "persuaded" them to join him in the Valley of Death. The lich also has a handful of drow to aid him in his plans.

The vampires recognize a chance for increased power and wealth if Beleus falls, but they do not like the company of the drow lich. As the lich plots to take over Beleus, the vampires plot to defeat L'rac and place minions of their own under their domination.

Encounter A: Drow in Orc Clothing

The party has no difficulty locating the ancient road to the graveyard. The road snakes through craggy terrain in a series of hairpin turns, rising and falling to take the path of least resistance. Thickly forested slopes rise above one side of the road and fall away on the other; the road's up slope and down slope sides constantly change as the road twists and turns.

This encounter occurs on the party's second night out, toward the end of the PCs' last watch, just an hour or so before the sun will come up. The drow prefer to move around at night.

A six-member drow force has been told to patrol the mountains to make sure no more adventurers from Beleus wander by. The duergar vampires interrogated a few low-level adventurers caught by an orc company and learned about the 50,000 gold piece reward being offered for stopping the undead menace. So as an extra precaution, L'rac assigned these six drow to be on the lookout for armed adventurers, to infiltrate any adventuring groups they came across, and to defeat them from within.

The drow are posing as a band of adventurers whose illusionist has made them all look like orcs. The "adventurers" claim they saw a large force of orcs walking through the mountains and figured they would be safer if they made themselves up to look like orcs.

Actually, the drow used the *polymorph self* effect from a *wand of polymorphing* to assume orc form.

"Pssst! Hey, you guys! Don't hit us. We're not going to fight." The voice comes from behind a large clump of dried brush. Peering over the brush is a dirty orc who tosses a weapon on the ground in front of you. "Are you guys from Beleus? Hope so. It would be nice to see some friendlies for a change."

Five more orc heads peak out from the brush. "We're not what we seem. Can we enter your camp peacefully? Don't hurt us or nothing, okay? We're from Beleus, too."

The "orcs" attempt to enter the PCs' camp. One at a time they approach the PCs, each laying down a weapon in an attempt to look sincere. Of course, that's not the only weapon each "orc" has. They will explain to the PCs that they aren't really orcs, and they seem very honest and frightened.

If the PCs do not attack the "orc/adventurers," and seem somewhat friendly, the drow magic-user will pretend to cast a spell (let the PCs think this is the illusionist). On this cue, all the drow change themselves into humans; sparkling motes of green light surround each "orc" as he turns into a human.

If the PCs do not immediately uncover the drow's facade, the drow will attempt to join forces with them, acting very much like inept adventurers in need of help. They talk about the 50,000 gold piece reward. When the drow have gained the PCs' confidence and have gotten a little information out of them, the drow attack. They automatically gain surprise unless any of the PCs state they are carefully watching the group. The drow's first tactic will be a spell assault directed against the heroes' spell casters.

Ruhlun: S 10; I 18; W 17; D 17; Co 9; Ch 17; AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD W5; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 +1 (dagger +1); SA spells and; MR 60%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400.

Ruhlun receives a +3 saving throw bonus vs. mental attacks for his Wisdom score and an additional +1 from his *ring of protection.* As a drow, he gets another additional +2 saving throw bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius, detect magic, know alignment, levitate.*

Magic Items: *Dagger +1, dust of disappearance* (one use), *potion of extra healing, ring of protection +1.*

Spells carried: *magic missile, color spray* (x2), *hypnotism, deafness, mirror image, hold person.*

Giesed: S 8; I 18; W 14; D 18; Co 11; Ch 14; AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD W5; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 +2 (dagger +2); SA spells and drow abilities; MR 60%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400.

As a drow, Giesed gets a +2 saving throw bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius, detect magic, know alignment, levitate.*

Magic Items: *Dagger +2, potion of healing, ring of water walking*

Spells carried: *Charm person, magic missile* (x2), *ventriloquism, mirror image, web, haste.*

Sibb: S 9; I 15; W 12; D 16; Co 18; Ch 14; AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD W4; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (staff); SA spells and drow abilities; MR 58%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 975.

As a drow, Sibb gets a +2 saving bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius.*

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 8, wand of polymorphing* (10 charges remaining).

Spells carried: *magic missile, protection from good, taunt, invisibility, web.*

Spiroei: STR 18/40; I 10; W 18; D 16; Co 17; Ch 18; AC 3; MV 12; HD F/C 6/6; hp 48; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6+5/1-4 (short sword +2 and Strength bonus/dagger); SA spells and drow abilities; MR 62%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 2,000.

Spiroei receives a +3 saving throw bonus vs. mental attacks for her Wisdom score. As a drow, she gets an additional +2 saving throw bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius, detect magic, know alignment, levitate, clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, dispel magic.*

Magic Items: *Drow chain mail +1, short sword +2, boots of elvenkind.*
Spells carried: *Command* (x2), cause fear (x3), *hold person* (x2), *silence 15' radius* (x2), *resist fire/cold, prayer*, speak with dead, remove paralysis.*
*Cast and running at the beginning of the encounter.

Beadal: S 14; I 10; W 10; D 18; Co 17; Ch 16; AC 1; MV 12; HD F3; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10+1 (two-handed sword +1); SA drow abilities; MR 56%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 420.

As a drow, Beadal gets a +2 saving bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius.*

Magic Items: *Drow chain mail +1, two-handed sword +1.*

Orencaca: S 18/20; I 17; W 16; D 11; Co 12; Ch 18; AC 0; MV 12; HD F7; hp 42; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2+1; Dmg 1-8+5/1-4 (long sword +2 and Strength bonus/dagger); SA drow abilities; MR 64%, SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400.

Orencaca receives a +2 saving throw bonus vs. mental attacks for her Wisdom score. As a drow, she gets an additional +2 saving throw bonus vs. all magical attacks and can use these abilities each once a day: *dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius, detect magic, know alignment, levitate.*

Magic Items: *Drow chain mail +3, shield +1, long sword +2, potion of extra healing.*

Encounter B: The Valley of Death Graveyard

Once they have dealt with the drow, the PCs travel toward the graveyard for another day and reach it as the sun begins to set. It is up to the party whether to camp outside the graveyard and wait until morning or go in now to face whatever lurks inside.

> Before you stretches a small valley, roughly rectangular in shape, about a half mile wide and one mile long. The sun dips into the horizon, casting its last rays over the valley below and the marble crypts that fill the ancient graveyard within. In the center of the graveyard is a small lake with an island in it.

If the PCs camp outside the graveyard, three waves of undead attack the camp. The first attack comes at about 10 pm, the second, 1d4 hours later, and the third, just before dawn.

Zombies (24): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65 each.

Zombies are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death,* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. They are utterly fearless. Their slowness causes them to always lose initiative vs. the PCs. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes a zombie.

Wights (7): Int Average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 21 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Energy drain; SD Hit only by silver or +1 or better magical weapon; MR; SZ M; ML 14; XP 975 each.

Wights are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death,* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A melee hit from a wight drains one level or hit die from the victim. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes a wight. Wights are not harmed by bright light, but shun it when possible.

Mummies (5): Int Low; AL LE; AC 3; MV 6; HD 6+3; hp 30 each; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; SA Fear, disease; SD Special; SZ M; ML 15; XP 3,000 each.

Mummies are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death,* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. The mere sight of a mummy inspires fear; if a save vs. paralysis fails, the victim is paralyzed with fright for 1d4 rounds. Humans receive a +2 bonus to the save, and large groups of any sort of creatures get a +1 for every six creatures in the group. Mummies burn easily; a blow from a torch inflicts 1d3 points of damage, a flask of oil inflicts 1d8 points of damage on the first round, and 2d8 points on the second round. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes a mummy. A melee hit from a mummy inflicts a rotting disease which is fatal in 1d6 months and can be cured only with a *cure disease* spell; the victim gets no benefit from *cure wounds* spells until the mummy rot is cured.

The PCs actually will be safer if they camp in the graveyard. When nightfall comes the undead leave the valley to roam and get rid of any trespassing adventurers or soldiers from Beleus. PCs in the graveyard will encounter one group of undead; two if they are making a considerable amount of noise. Roll randomly to determine which group from the preceding list attacks.

Read the following when the PCs finally explore the graveyard in daylight:

> The graveyard is old. The tombstones and crypts are weathered and cracked, the writing on the stones long since worn away. Weeds and vines grow up many of the stones. It has been many, many years since anyone tended this site.
>
> Still, the place has an air of quiet dignity. Despite the problem of undead, the graveyard seems serene. You can tell that the people buried here must have been important, as the carved tombstones and crypts would have been costly even hundreds of years ago. Those who rest here could have been royalty, generals, and wealthy noblemen. Unfortunately, some of them have had their rest interrupted. You can see where several graves have been opened, and the occupants removed. This, obviously, is the source of the undead.

Any character with a tracking proficiency can find the tracks of assorted undead—it is difficult to tell the difference between types of undead based solely on their tracks. In addition, they can find orc tracks. Persistent tracking also will reveal the tracks of drow and two sets of small, wide footprints.

There are basically two areas of interest in this graveyard: The lake with the island and the small crypt which leads to the villains. Searching through the graveyard will reveal the small crypt. The island is pretty obvious, but it is not necessary for the PCs to go there in their search for the Death Master.

Encounter C: The Island of the Dead

Lake of Death: read the following when the PCs approach the lake:

> The lake is more than 300 feet across and is filled with brackish water that shows no signs of life. Indeed, even the grass and weeds stop about a foot away from the water's edge. A rickety wooden bridge leads from the shore to a small island in the center of the lake. The island has one large, blackened tree on it. A large pile of bones lays under the twisted branches.

The bridge is strong enough to support the weight of up to two PCs at a time. If more than two cross at once, the bridge collapses. The lake ranges from two to 20 feet in depth and is the home of 10 lacedon ghouls. When two characters reach the middle of the bridge, or when the PCs fall in the water because too many tried to cross, the lacedons rise up from the water to attack, attempting to pull the PCs under the water to drown them.

The lacedons' lair is in the south end of the lake, in water about 12 feet deep. Their treasure, which is scattered on the lake bottom, consists of 2,000 cp, 8,000 sp, 1,600 ep, 300 gp, one gem (worth 1,000 gp.), and three pieces of jewelry (worth 8,500 gp). The treasure was taken from some of the opened graves. In addition, there are 14 scrolls, all of which have been ruined by the water.

Lacedons (10): Int Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV Sw 9; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA Paralyzation; SD Special; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175 each. Lacedons are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. A melee hit from a lacedon causes the victim to save vs. paralysis or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 rounds, elves are immune to this effect.

Island of Death: Read the following when the PCs finish with the lacedons:

> The island seems dead, no grass or weeds grow on it, and the large blackened tree seems petrified. Beneath its macabre, twisted branches lays a large pile of bones, and about 20 feet from the bones is an iron-bound wooden trap door.

The door is not locked or trapped. The pile of bones is an animated skeleton of a huge red dragon that has been directed to attack any live being who attempts to lift the trap door. It can neither fly nor breathe fire, nor does it have any treasure. L'rac is very proud of the beast, which he animated himself. He plans to animate several more skeletal monsters and use them in his assault on Beleus. He believes the monsters will frighten away the Beleus commoners and crush the morale of the troops.

If any PC attempts to open the door, the skeletal head of the dragon rises on a long, bony neck, and the great bony beast moves to attack.

Dragon skeleton: Int Non; AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 6; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-10; SD Special; SZ H; ML —; XP 650.

Skeletons are immune to *fear, sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. Skeletons take only half damage from type P or S weapons and never check morale.

The trap door leads to a 40-foot-square room, which originally was planned to be the resting site for the last Thanus king. L'rac had no respect for the king, and has placed the bones of several monsters inside this vault. He plans to animate them soon.

The PCs must lower themselves into the chamber, as there is no ladder or stairs. There are seven piles of bones inside: baluchitherium, brass dragon, hill giant (which is missing a foot), giraffe, hippopotamus, mastodon, and umber hulk. L'rac has labeled them to make sorting easier, but the ancient script can be deciphered only by a thief's read languages skill or by magical means. Messing up the bones will mess up L'rac's plans to animate them, as he will have to painstakingly separate them.

Encounter D: The Crypt

Most of the crypts in the graveyard are *wizard locked* and overgrown with turf. One door, however, shows signs of recent use and is easily opened (L'rac believes his undead will keep interlopers out of the graveyard and didn't bother to conceal it.)

D1. The Crypt's The Thing

It doesn't make much difference what time of day the PCs elect to go down into the crypt. If the PCs enter during daylight, all the creatures will be in their designated locations. However, if they wait until the evening, the skeletons and shadows in area D2a will come out of the crypt on patrol and will attack the party. Read the following when the PCs enter the crypt:

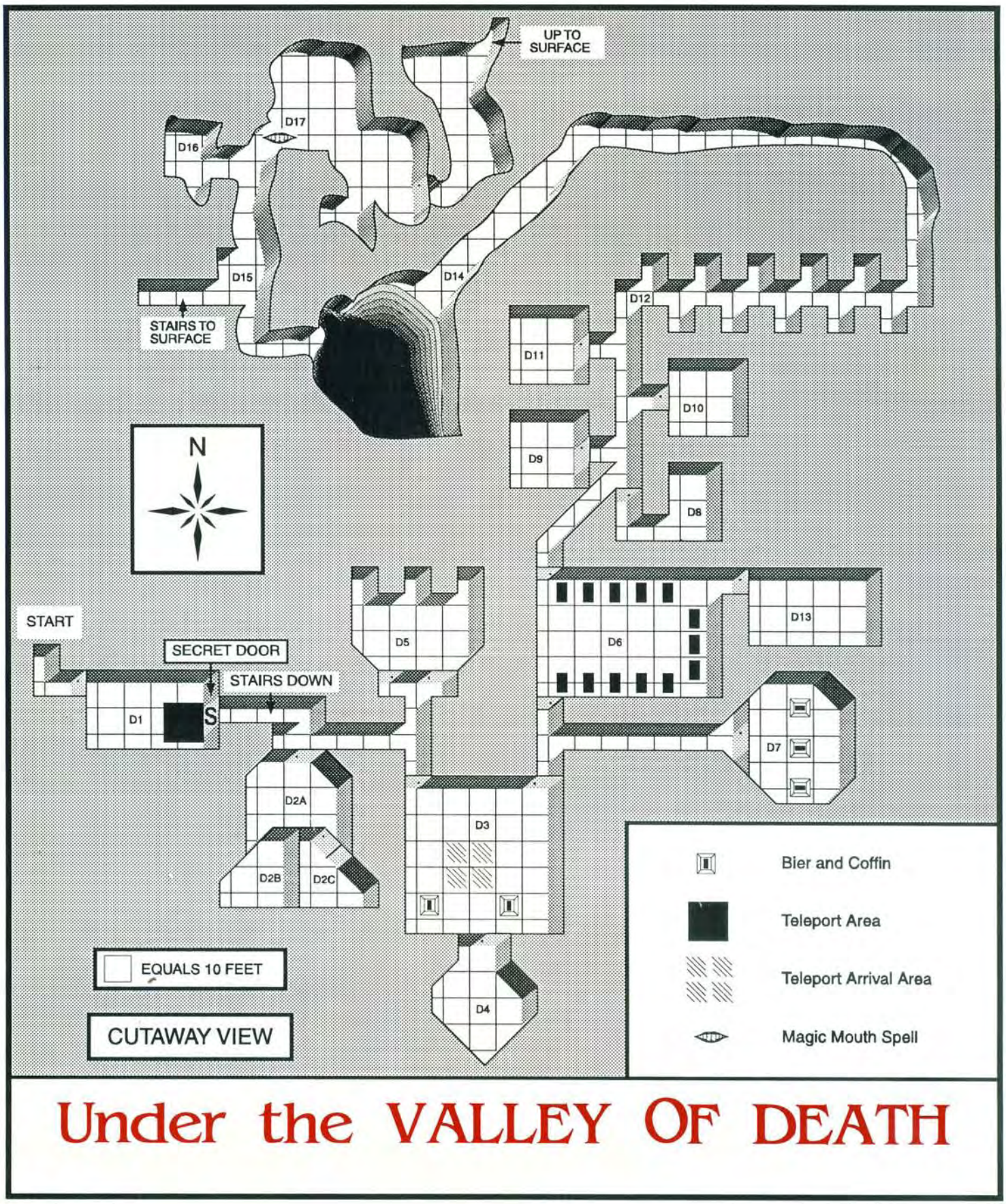
> The interior of this crypt is clean; the black marble walls glisten in the light of the torches, which line the walls. A thin slab of shiny black onyx, 15 feet square, lies at the back of the room. A lone, skeletal figure in brown robes lounges on an elaborate chair atop the slab.

This is one of L'rac Darkray's servants; it is a crypt thing. This creature is a particularly intelligent and powerful specimen. It cannot be turned and it can speak Common. Furthermore, it is an aberrant specimen that paralyzes its victims and simultaneously turns them invisible.

The onyx slab where the crypt thing sits is enchanted and can teleport any living creature that steps on it, or touches it, to the vampire lair in area D3, no save. When the crypt thing paralyzes a group of victims, it picks up the unfortunate creatures and places them on the slab, where they are immediately whisked off to visit the vampires.

The crypt thing will not initiate an attack against the PCs, but will respond in kind if attacked. It will not speak unless spoken to, but if the PCs talk to it they will learn that the crypt thing has been here for nearly 400 years. Others have entered the crypt, and the crypt thing "dealt" with them. The others included young humans and demi-humans in robes and armor (adventurers), foolish orcs, and a floating fog (the gaseous forms of the vampires). The crypt thing guards the entrance to the burial crypts of the early Thanus kings—and will tell the party that. If the party questions it further, the crypt thing will relate how wealthy the kings were and that most of the wealth was buried with them.

Any PC who tries to melee the crypt thing will step on the slab and be teleported (unless he or she is flying). PCs who attack from a distance will be subjected to the crypt thing's paralyzation



Under the VALLEY OF DEATH

attack once per round until all the remaining PCs have been paralyzed or until the crypt thing is destroyed. If the PCs can defeat the crypt thing before they all are teleported or paralyzed, they can find the secret door behind the crypt thing's chair. However, they might inadvertently teleport themselves while looking for it. Stairs behind the secret door lead to Area D2a.

Crypt Thing: Int Genius; AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 9; hp 46; THAC0 13; #AT; Dmg 1-8; SA melee hit causes save vs. spells or be come paralyzed and invisible for 3d8 +2 rounds; SZ M; ML 17; XP 2,000.

The crypt thing is immune to *fear, sleep, charm, hold, death,* and cold-based spells. Poison, paralysis, and illusions don't affect it.

D2. Crypt Troops

D2a. Bony Barracks

The corridor (or stairway) leads you to this large wooden and brass door. In the center of the door, about four feet off the ground, is a brass knocker in the shape of a horse's head, the ring extending from the horse's mouth.

There is a unit of skeletons and shadows in the room. If the PCs did not take any precautions to be quiet, the undead hear them come down the stairs (from the crypt thing's chamber above) or will hear them in the hall outside this room. The PCs will not be able to hear the undead in any case.

If the PCs use the knocker three times, the undead troops inside will believe L'rac or the dwarves have come to release them for their nightly patrol and will hesitate a round before attacking the PCs. However, if the PCs start a fight, the undead will comply. If the PCs do not correctly use the knocker (which will likely be the case), the undead will attack as detailed below.

The shadows place themselves along the wall the PCs enter, the skeletons line up on the other side of the room. Their tactic is to sandwich the intruders between them. The shadows are 90% undetectable because they appear as actual shadows. However, they can be clearly seen in the presence of bright light.

Skeletons (36): Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (weapon); SZ M; ML —; XP 65 each.

Skeletons are immune to *fear, sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. Skeletons take only half damage from type P or S weapons and never check morale.

Shadows (18): Int Low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3 +3; hp 16 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5 + Strength drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML —; XP 650 each.

Shadows are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A melee hit from a shadow drains one point of Strength from the victim; the loss persists for 2d4 turns. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. Shadows are 90% undetectable in anything but the brightest light (sun light or *continual light*).

D2b. Bone Yard

This is another holding area for undead. However, there is no knocker on this door. Inside are 50 skeletons. They will move to attack when the PCs open the door.

Skeletons (50): Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (weapon); SZ M; ML —; XP 65 each.

Skeletons are immune to *fear, sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. Skeletons take only half damage from type P or S weapons and never check morale.

D2c. Come Up to the Lab

An iron door closed with a heavy padlock bars the entrance to this area. The door is newer than the rest of the crypt rooms you have been through. It shows no sign of age, and looking at the wall around the door, you can determine that the door frame has been shaved down to accommodate the larger iron door.

A thief must successfully pick locks to open this door. It is not trapped. A *knock* spell also will work. When the PCs open the door, the guards attack. The guards include a drelb, which can make itself appear to be turned, and a necrophidius, which probably will surprise the party.

Drelb: Int Average; AL NE; AC 2; MV 6; HD 5 +3; hp 29; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SA Chill touch; SD Immune normal weapons, reflect psionic attacks; SZ L; ML 20; XP 650.

At first glance, a drelb is indistinguishable from a wraith. It is not undead and cannot be turned, but it can (90%) make itself look like it is retreating when it actually is attacking. A melee hit from a drelb causes the victim to fall shivering to the ground for one round. There is no save, and the victim drops whatever he is holding. Psionic attacks used against or within 30 feet of a drelb are reflected or imitated and used against the attacker.

Necrophidius: Int Average; AL N; AC 2; MV 9; HD 2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Paralyzation; SD Immune to poison and attacks that affect the mind; SZ L; ML 20; XP 270.

A necrophidius cannot be surprised and imposes a −2 on opponent's surprise rolls. In combat, the serpentine creature sways hypnotically, and all viewers must save vs. spell or be *hypnotized* for three rounds. A necrophidius's bite magically paralyzes victims for 1d4 turns, a save vs. spells negates.

The interior of this room is spotless. Gleaming glassware sits upon tables and shelves. Many of the bottles have colored liquid in them. Alchemical equipment lies on some of the tables. A bookshelf on one wall holds a few large books. One of the books is open on a stand in front of the shelf. There also is a large, bubbling vat.

If the PCs look inside the vat, a shadowy, man-like form can be seen at the bottom. This is a man-sized iron golem that L'rac attempted to make. He is attempting to soften the metal so it can be recast into something else. The failed experiment is detailed in the open book on the pedestal by the bookcase.

If the PCs cast *detect magic,* they discover that eight small vials filled with a pink liquid, a jar of lime green cream, a broom and a bottle filled with purple smoke radiate magic.

The vials contain *potions of healing* for the drow force the PCs met in encounter A.

The jar is filled with a lime green cream. This is a faulty batch of *Nolzur's marvelous pigments.* The pigment works in all respects like the item detailed in the DMG except that items created only will last 1d6 turns.

The broom is a *broom of animated*

attack. L'rac originally thought this was a *broom of flying.* He soon found out otherwise, but he hasn't decided what to do with it. The command word "up" is etched on the broom. Any PC trying the broom is dumped off after a gut-wrenching loop. Then the *broom* begins beating the character with the handle. The broom attacks twice a round with THAC0 17. The handle end inflicts 1d3 points of damage, and the straw end causes blindness for one round. The *broom* is AC 7 and has 18 hit points.

The bottle contains Nez al Pahr, L'rac's enslaved djinni.

Pahr: Int Average; AL CG; AC 4; MV 9, Fl 24; HD 7+3; hp 38; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SZ L; ML 14; XP 2,000.

Pahr can perform the following actions once a day: create nutritious food for 2-12 persons, create water or wine for 2-12 persons, create soft wooden items, create an illusion with both visual and auditory components, become invisible, assume *gaseous form, wind walk,* or form a whirlwind. The whirlwind is cone-shaped, 10 feet across at the base, 30 feet across the top and up to 70 feet high. The whirlwind lasts one melee round and causes 2-12 points of damage to any non-aerial creature it encounters. Pahr can carry up to 600 pounds without tiring—twice that amount for a short time.

If the PCs open the bottle to let Pahr out, he will agree to help them one time. (Therefore, the PCs better use him carefully.) Pahr will create food and water or wine for the rescuing party with little provocation, as he is very grateful for his release. Pahr is feeling generous and intends to help the PCs with a problem or assist in a battle; he won't try to evade his promise by obeying requests to the letter or twisting the PCs' meaning. However, Pahr is concerned about his own welfare and will not assist in a battle unless asked. He will float back and watch the PCs fight something. Because of this, it is possible that Pahr could stay with the PCs for most of the adventure, giving the DM something to role-play. Pahr is very friendly, very grateful (as the idea of being a slave to L'rac was very distasteful), and is very, very inquisitive. He asks the party lots of questions about everything. Pahr has not seen anything in this complex other than the inside of the lab. He is not sure how L'rac enslaved him; something to do with powders and reading a scroll. He can describe L'rac as a "black, evil elf." Pahr does not realize L'rac is a lich. He assumes L'rac is a vampire—just like the two little dwarves who have visited the lab before.

The only other items of value in the lab are the books on the shelf, which are not magical. The books discuss the creation of magical protection devices, recommend when certain protection devices be used and detail the spell components needed. A scroll hidden behind the books contains L'rac's notes on various experiments, notes on how to summon a drelb and how to create a necrophidius. The books could be sold for 15,000 gp. The scroll is worth 5,000 gp.

D3. Vampire Twins

This crypt is old and smells of death. Spiderwebs drape the walls like curtains. Dozens of bats cling to the ceiling. In the center of the room, on carved stone biers, rest twin coffins. The coffins are small, made of a rich, dark wood, and are trimmed in silver and gold. The coffins do not have lids.

If the PCs were teleported here by the crypt thing, they appear in the center of the room, near the coffins. As soon as the PCs enter this room, the vampires (floating about in mist form in the spiderwebs) are aware of their presence. Hyden appears before the party and tries to talk with them. If he is successfully turned, he becomes gaseous and Lizzst appears before the party, attempting to communicate with them. They can use the bats for cover, if necessary. If the PCs physically attack either vampire, the vampire initially does not attack back, trying to negotiate.

If the PCs refuse to talk with either vampire, the vampires will turn gaseous and retreat to the spiderwebs. The vampires do not want to attack the PCs because they are hopeful the PCs can take on the lich. They also are hopeful the PCs can release their coffins. However, if the PCs attempt to harm the vampires' coffins, the vampires will pull out the stops and attack, hoping another adventuring group eventually will come along to help them. If the PCs are willing to listen to the vampires, run the dialogue something like this:

A mist floats to the floor and congeals into the form of a dark, dwarven vampire. He raises an arm as if to stop your actions, bares his fangs, and speaks.

"You know, we could fight. You might kill me. Maybe. But not before I have drained much of your life energy. I know you adventuring types. It takes a lot of monster killing and treasure finding to regain that lost energy. Or, we negotiate. And you can walk away rich and unscathed. You see, the problem I face is the problem you face—L'rac Darkray, the man gathering forces of undead to march on the pitiful, peaceful town of Beleus."

Another voice speaks from behind you (the other vampire, Lizzst. Hyden, who spoke first will turn gaseous as soon as the PCs' attentions are on Lizzst. The vampires prefer to appear individually.)

"L'rac Darkray," continues the dark, dwarven vampire, who looks only slightly different than the other you addressed, "Is a cunning lich who wants power at all costs, caring nothing for the people and monsters who aid him. His evil is darker and deeper than the evil which fills my brother and I. And without our help, his evil could overcome you. We have a proposition for you."

The duergars' proposition is for the PCs to get their coffins out of this area and defeat L'rac. The duergars would prefer the PCs remove the coffins first (just in case the PCs die in a fight with L'rac), but they will not push the point if the PCs want to fight L'rac and then remove the coffins. If L'rac is defeated, and the PCs then decide to harm the coffins or turn on the vampires, the vampires still win because they are free of the lich. They will be very upset about losing their ornate burial coffins, but they will get over it, as they are free and they have a few other coffins elsewhere. If L'rac is defeated the vampires will have only the PCs to fight.

If the PCs attack now, the vampires will not fight to the death, turning gaseous and escaping when they have taken more than half of their hit points in damage.

When paralyzed and invisible PCs have been teleported into the crypt the vampires know when they arrive—the arrival is accompanied by a subsonic "pop" that the vampires recognize instantly. They also have become adept at locating paralyzed victims. The vampires have no qualms about using these victims as bargaining chips. Depending on the situation they will be helpful:

"Just to show we mean well, we'll return your missing comrades to you—at no small risk to ourselves." Of course there is no difficulty or risk, but don't tell the PCs that. If the PCs want to know where the missing characters are, the vampires make up a quick but convincing lie: The lich's crypt, the Astral Plane, Hades, etc. In other situations they will be threatening: "Want to know where your friends are? They were really quite delicious!"

If the PCs ask the duergar about the lich, they tell the PCs that they know he is very, very old. He was around at the time of the first few Thanus kings. They will say the lich bragged about "doing in" one of the kings and putting another king into power who was sympathetic to L'rac. The vampires do not care about the Thanus kings and don't understand L'rac's behavior. Despite the lich's apparent disregard for royalty when they were living, he seems to respect them in death, leaving their remains alone. In addition, the vampires believe L'rac had plans of eventually setting himself up as a Thanus king, as the lich seems to want power above all else. The vampires do not fault the lich for his motivations, as they also think power is important.

The vampires have been in nearly every room in this complex, and depending on the way the PCs treat them, they might be willing to impart some of their knowledge. They tell the PCs the lich lives in a cavern complex, which was not a part of the original crypt, but was discovered by accident. The vampires will show the PCs the way there. However, they will be adamant the PCs recover an *arrow of lich slaying* first (explained below). This is a vehicle for the PCs to explore the crypt. Besides their duergar abilities, the vampires can call upon the bats in this room and the wolves in Area D4.

The Coffins: L'rac has set up an elaborate trap on the twins' coffins. First, the lich removed the coffin lids to expose the dirt in them. Next, he trapped them so that if they are moved more than one foot, a spray of holy water will drench both coffins, the exposed dirt in the coffins, and anyone standing within five feet of the coffins. If the PCs agree to attempt to free the coffins, the duergar will insist that the dirt in them be protected. Removing the dirt before moving the coffins will work. Other methods also will work, depending on clever the PCs are. The duergar insist that a PC not try to disarm the trap (which the duergar/thief/vampire could have attempted), because a failed attempt definitely would set off the trap off. If, however, the PC thief attempts to do this, make the remove traps roll at −20 because of the complexity. If the PC thief sets off the trap and causes the holy water to spray over the dirt in the coffins, the vampires will be furious, but at least they will have their coffins free. Remember, they have more coffins elsewhere. The vampires have been able to charm common people to move the coffins, but every common person they have brought into the complex, L'rac has killed and turned into an undead.

The Vampires' Treasure: The vampires' treasure is in the dirt in the coffins. All together, there are 900 pp, 200 gp, and 20 gems each worth 400 gp. In addition, the ornate burial coffins are very valuable. The gems and gold designs on the coffins can be picked off. The removed items are worth 9,000 gp. The vampires also carry magic items with them (see the NPC section for details).

The Vampires and L'rac: The vampires tell the PCs there is an item which they are certain can harm the lich hidden within the crypt. It is an arrow that L'rac stole from the body of an adventurer. L'rac killed the adventurer before he could fire the arrow. The vampires know the lich has hidden the arrow somewhere within this crypt complex (apparently, L'rac couldn't destroy the arrow). The vampires have not bothered to seek it out because they don't use bows. However, they encourage the PCs to find the arrow and use it to slay the lich.

The Truth About the Arrow: The arrow will do nothing special against the lich; it is an *arrow of vampire slaying*. L'rac knows this, and therefore has kept it hidden, planning to use it (via one of his servants) against Hyden or Lizzst if one of them becomes too difficult to manage. The vampires believe it is an *arrow of lich slaying*.

The Vampires and The PCs: One or both of the vampires will agree to accompany the PCs throughout the crypt—if the PCs really want them to. However, one of the vampires will prefer to remain in the area with the coffins to maintain a lookout for L'rac. If one or both vampires accompany the PCs, they will be suspicious and will constantly watch the PCs. The vampires can tell the PCs a little bit about what is behind each door. For example (area D1): Some of L'rac's skeletons are kept here. Because the vampires have never been attacked by L'rac's troops, they do not mention knocking on the door to prevent an attack. The vampires also will not mention any precautions about the laboratory, as the "bony snake" and the "wraith-thing" have never attacked them. Further, the vampires will not join the PCs in fighting anything down here—until the final battle with L'rac—unless it appears there will be a few PC casualties. The vampires would like to gain control of L'rac's forces when the lich is eliminated, so they don't want to help the PCs destroy anything except L'rac. Further, when and if the PCs confront the lich, the vampires will help as little as they can and still keep the PCs' confidence. If possible, they will be unobtrusive; in case the PCs lose, they don't want L'rac to know they were involved in the attack. In fact, if the PCs begin to lose the fight, the vampires will turn on them so as to appear loyal to L'rac.

Ideally, the vampires want the PCs and L'rac to destroy each other or hurt each other so much that the vampires easily can defeat the winner. To this end, they will try to keep the PCs in the fight as long as possible. They will, reluctantly, use their abilities to help the PCs, and, even more reluctantly, attack the lich if necessary. If the PCs try to flee, they will use their charm abilities to keep them in the fight. Remember, the vampires are chaotic evil creatures with no scruples whatsoever. Their only goal is to get the maximum gain for the least risk and cost to themselves.

The Vampires and Pahr: If the PCs pick up one or both vampires and Pahr, the djinni, there will be numerous and uncomfortable personality clashes. Pahr wants nothing to do with vampires, and the vampires aren't especially fond of the now-freed djinni. Pahr will ask that the vampire(s) be left someplace for a while. If the PCs refuse, allow the vampire(s) to argue with Pahr on and off throughout the adventure. This will provide further role playing for the DM and should serve to frustrate the PCs.

D4. Wolves

A harsh odor pours out of this room. Inside are about two dozen wolves. The wolves appear a little undernourished, and their hair is matted and tangled.

These wolves are under the vampires' control. They do not like being underground, and are only allowed to go outside occasionally at night. The wolves will not attack the PCs if the vampires are in their company—unless the vampires instruct them to do so. Their condition is a result of their treatment. They are fed—but not enough, and their "den" is not ideal.

Wolves (20): Int Semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SZ S; ML 10; XP 65 each.

D5. More Undead Troops

If the vampires are with the PCs, they will explain that some of L'rac's forces are kept behind these doors. The vampires will try to dissuade the PCs from attacking these undead, coming up with all manner of excuses: there are too many of them, they are too powerful, the PCs should concentrate on L'rac instead of his followers. This, of course, is because the vampires want to command the undead forces when L'rac is out of the picture. If, however, the PCs pay no attention to the vampires and go in, they should be able to deal with the zombies and ghouls inside with little problem. There is nothing of value in this room.

Zombies (18): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65 each.

Zombies are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. They are utterly fearless. Their slowness causes them to always lose initiative vs. the PCs. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes.

Ghouls (12): Int Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA Paralyzation; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175 each.

Ghouls are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes. A melee hit from a ghoul causes the victim to save vs. paralysis or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 rounds, elves are immune to this effect.

D6. Real Crypt

Coffins are spaced evenly throughout this room. Many of the coffins are ornate, and all of them are very, very old.

This is the resting chamber for the relatives of the early Thanus kings. Because the relatives were not considered as important as the kings, their names were not inscribed on the coffins or anywhere in this room. There are a total of 36 coffins. The vampires have not disturbed these coffins, despite the wealth inside, because of L'rac's orders. In spite of L'rac's evilness, he holds some reverence for Thanus' past, and has decided to leave the remains of these people alone. The people who were buried in the cemetery above, however, he considered fair game as they must not have been as important as those people buried in the crypt.

If the PCs want to play the part of grave robbers, they can search the coffins and find a total of 9,000 gold pieces worth of gems and jewelry. The vampires will not assist the PCs in any looting here.

This room is a time waster. If the PCs want to spend time here describe the coffins, commenting on age and ornateness. The oldest coffins will be the farthest from the door. A *speak with dead* spell will not work on any of the people buried here, as they have been dead too long.

D7. A Place For Kings

A pair of large, bronze doors etched with scenes of battle are before you.

These doors are not locked or trapped, and the guards were long ago eliminated. This is the resting place for the first three Thanus kings. L'rac has left this room undisturbed because of his odd sense of honor. It is specially enchanted so that the moment someone steps into the room scenes from Thanus' history will be shown on the walls. The enchantment is a specially-researched *programmed illusion* that is triggered by the presence of life. This effect does not go off when the vampires, the lich, or other undead are in this room. The scenes show a once-mighty Thanus empire, where the rulers and wealthy are dressed in fine, elaborate costumes. The buildings are in good repair, and everything appears clean. The scenes focus on three individuals, all who wear the same crown. The three people are not shown at the same time. The PCs will have to state they are watching the scenes to notice the shift between rulers. There also is a shift in style of clothes, and there will be different statues outside the buildings. Also, during the showing of the third king's reign, a drow can be noticed in the background. This is L'rac Darkray, who was beginning to rise to a position of importance. If the vampires or the djinni are with the PCs, they will point out L'rac. (However, give the PCs a chance to notice the drow.) The scenes will not portray Thanus' defeat at the hands of the Beleus army, as that happened after these kings' reigns. However, the scenes will show other battles.

The remains of the kings have been perfectly preserved. Each king: Thanus The First, Thanus The Second, and Thanus The Third, has jewelry worth 10,000 gp in his coffin. The names of the kings are written in an obscure form of Common, which the PCs can decipher. Again, speak with dead will not work on the kings because they have been dead for so long. Player characters who come within 10' of the middle coffin, the one belonging to the second Thanus king, will catch the attention of the phantom left from that king. The second Thanus king was murdered with a poison (put in his wine by a very young, very greedy L'rac Darkray. The public thought the king died of natural causes. The king was buried here, but because of the trauma of his death, a phantom was created and haunts this place. It cannot be harmed, nor can it harm the PCs. But PCs who gaze on the translucent form of the phantom must save vs. spells at −2 or panic and run away as if they were under the effects of a *fear* spell. The phantom recorded the death of the king, and PCs watching it will "witness" the king's death via the phantom, from the poisoning to the burial. The phantom cannot be turned. L'rac poisoned the second king because he was in league with the king's oldest son (the third Thanus king), and believed getting the second king out of the way would improve his own position.

D8. L'rac's Treasure Chamber

As you approach this door a strong odor wafts across your path. There is no mistaking the scent of garlic. Buds of garlic are smeared over the door and are hung all the way around the door frame. The smell is overpowering.

L'rac doesn't fully trust his vampire associates, and so took the precaution of putting garlic all around the entrance to his treasure chamber. Neither vampire will come near this door. The door is locked, but not trapped. L'rac figured the garlic, the lock, and his "friend" inside would be enough to keep away the vampires and anyone else. If the PCs open the door, they see a mound of silver pieces, glistening in the beams of a *continual light* rock which hangs from the ceiling. There is a large chest in the center of the silver pieces. Milling about across the silver pieces are 36 rats. The vampires can control 30 of these rats. One of the rats is a guardian familiar (the same thing as a cat guardian familiar). The PCs will have to deal with the rat if they want to get the treasure. The lids to the vampire's coffins also are in this room. The lids and silver pieces can be taken without a fight. The rat guardian familiar will only attack if the chest is disturbed. Although the vampires (if they are with the PCs) will not want to come into this room, they will be transfixed by the possible wealth inside. The vampires will charm a few of the rats and tell them to bring out the wealth—a silver piece at a time if necessary. And they very much want the coffin lids. The chest is locked, but not trapped. The treasure inside is 20,000 gp worth of gems and 10 +1 arrows. If the PCs bring out the arrows, and the vampires are with them, they will be elated, as they are certain one of the arrows must be the magical arrow that will "slay" the lich.

Rats (36): Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1/4; hp 1 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA Disease; SZ T; ML 4; XP 7 each.

A bite from one of these rats has a 20% chance to infect the victim with a disease that causes incapacitation in 1d4 days and death in 1d3 weeks unless cured.

Guardian Familiar: Int Animal; AL CE; AC 8-0; MV 12-28; HD 1-9; hp 6-54; THAC0 20-11; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6 (+0-8 per attack); SA see below; MR 80%; SZ S; ML —; XP 3,000.

A guardian familiar literally has nine lives. Each time it is brought to zero it points it immediately is "reborn" with an extra hit die (with the appropriate improvement in saving throws and THAC0 and, in this case, six extra hit points), a +1 bonus to armor class and damage rolls, and a +2 bonus to movement. The creature is not reborn if it is "killed" nine times. Several spells also can stop the rebirth, provided they overcome the creature's magic resistance and the creature fails its save: *disintegrate, flesh to stone, temporal stasis, wish,* and *limited wish.* A *holy word* banishes the creature back to its home plane.

D9. Abandoned Living Quarters

This room contains a crudely made bed and chair, which were apparently made out of the remains of coffins. The remains of a dwarf lie in a corner. This unfortunate soul was exploring the Valley of Death, came upon the crypt, and was teleported by the crypt thing. The dwarf luckily evaded the vampires and stumbled upon a store of food and wine (which L'rac was saving for some orcish troops he was planning to recruit). A diary in the bed details his experience with the crypt thing and his finding of the food and wine. He also relates that he couldn't find a way out without running into the crypt thing again. He talks about the undead wandering around and a pair of dwarves that he constantly had to avoid. PCs searching the remains will find claw marks. Some of L'rac's undead finally killed the dwarf, and L'rac never bothered to do anything with the body.

D10. Food Storage

An old iron padlock hangs from this wooden and iron door. The construction here doesn't match the rest of this crypt.

This is a food storage area for L'rac's living troops. The vampire brothers pick the lock and take food from it occasionally, but not often enough, to feed the wolves. There are shelves of dried fruits, meats and vegetables. There are several bags of flour, a few casks of wine, and a few jugs of spoiled beer.

D11 Just Another Laboratory

The door to this room is not locked or trapped.

Three small tables are spaced evenly apart in the center of this room. They are covered with a few vials, bowls, and sacks.

There is a shelf against the far wall. It contains a few books and a few scrolls.

There is nothing magical in this room. The sacks contain bits of bone, hair, and powders. The vials are empty. The books detail the methods for summoning and binding guardian familiars and other creatures at the DM's option. The books are written in an obscure Elvish language, but with careful study the PCs can translate them if they can read Elvish. The books are worth at least 3,000 gp.

D12 Hallway of Fear

L'rac enjoys his privacy, and therefore took special effort to keep the living creatures he employs from visiting him in his chambers. L'rac charmed eight Beleus soldiers who were patrolling the Valley of Death, brought them to this crypt, and killed them in this corridor. They have become poltergeists, and they attack all creatures coming into the corridor. The vampires, which are immune to the poltergeists' fear effect, go down this corridor in mist form so they will not be pelted by rocks. If the vampires are with the PCs, they will caution them to put their shields over their heads, as rocks frequently fall from the ceiling in this area. The poltergeists are invisible and non-corporeal, so it is very possible the PCs will not know they are facing undead.

This long corridor extends into darkness. The walls are rough, indicating it is not a part of the actual crypt complex.

There are eight alcoves off this corridor. Each alcove is the resting place for a poltergeist. The poltergeists throw rocks at the PCs when they enter the corridor. Creatures struck by a poltergeist's missiles must save vs. fear or flee for 2-24 rounds.

Poltergeists (8): Int Low; AL LE; AC 10; MV 6; HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg Fear; SD Invisible, hit only by silver or magic weapons; SZ M; ML —; XP 35 each.

Poltergeists are immune to *fear, sleep, charm, hold, death* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. Holy water does not harm poltergeists, and they are treated as ghouls when turning attempts are made against them. A poltergeist attacks by mentally hurling fairly lightweight objects. Creatures struck by a poltergeist's missiles must save vs. fear or flee for 2-24 rounds. When

hurling objects, a poltergeist has the THAC0 of a five-die creature.

D13 The Kings' Wives

A large bronze door covered with etchings of beautiful, dancing women prevents you from going further. The scent of wildflowers floats in the air here, and from somewhere beyond the door you hear faint music.

This is the burial chamber for the wives of the three kings buried in this complex. This is also a time-waster for the PCs. However, if they want to waste time and explore it, let them. Inside are 12 coffins. The room is divided into thirds. In the first third there are seven coffins (the first king had seven wives); in the second section is one coffin; and in the last section are four coffins. A *programmed illusion,* which operates like the one in the king's room, will go into effect when someone living walks into this room. The illusions show the marriage ceremonies between each king and his wives. The music and the scent of wildflowers are also permanent special effects. *Speak with dead* spells do not work, as the remains are too old. There is nothing of value in the coffins—not even jewelry. The wives, who are perfectly preserved, were buried without any wealth. However, they are dressed in exquisite garments.

D14 The Perilous Chasm

The end of the tunnel opens into a great chasm, which obviously wasn't a part of the crypt complex. However, most of the rocks are smooth, showing the age of this place. The cavern is lit by luminous moss, bathing the place in eerie shadows.

The chasm must be at least 120 feet across. (This is distorted and compressed on the map to make everything fit.) There are no walkways around it, and it must be more than 100 feet deep, as you cannot see the bottom, which is shrouded in total darkness.

Across the chasm you see a tunnel that apparently continues farther.

The PCs will have to get across the chasm to get to the lich. There are several avenues available. *Spider climbing* or flying across will work. Two vampires can carry one unencumbered PC across (if the PCs are willing to trust the vampires). The vampires *can* carry PCs without draining them. Ropes can be secured to rocky outcroppings on either side of the chasm, so PCs could climb across if one can first fly over to secure a rope to a rock on the other side. If the PCs take precautions, none of them will fall in, and all can get across. Feel free to make the PCs nervous about the entire procedure (a Dexterity check or two would be appropriate here). The chasm is 350 feet deep. There are a only few old bones at the bottom. Across from where the PCs entered the cavern is another tunnel that continues on toward the lich's den. If a character with tracking proficiency checks here, he can tell that someone has been through the tunnel, as the moss is smashed down in places.

The tunnel continues farther away from the crypt. The walls are partially illuminated by glowing moss.

D15. The Way To The Surface

A narrow, worn staircase ascends into darkness. PCs following this stairway will find a way into a looted crypt and then out onto the surface.

D16. The Lich's Study

The glowing moss also illuminates this room, which is filled with books. A desk in the center of the room is cluttered with papers. A large, wooden and partially rotted chair sits near the bookcase.

The books detail the history of Thanus, from the first king to the planned war on Beleus. The papers on the desk describe L'rac's plans to fight Beleus with his army of undead. Inside the desk drawer are quills, vials of ink, and an arrow. This is the *arrow of vampire slaying.*

D17. The Lich's Den

If the PCs proceed down the tunnel toward the lich's chamber they trigger a *magic mouth* set five feet off the ground about 30 feet from where the tunnel opens into the lich's chambers. A second *magic mouth* is located at the end of the tunnel. Both *magic mouths* say, "Who goes there?" This is a warning to the lich. The *magic mouths* are triggered whenever a creature at least five feet tall approaches them, or when the other *magic mouth* goes off. The vampires are both under five feet tall, and it would be virtually impossible for any of the undead in the crypt complex to trigger it since they can't get across the chasm. Therefore, when the *mouths* are triggered, there are intruders. Note that the second *magic mouth* will go off when the first one does even if the party is using a *silence, 15' radius* (the *magic mouth* detects the first mouth being triggered, it does not need to "hear" anything).

Once alerted, L'rac turns invisible, flies to the top of his chamber, and casts *hallucinatory terrain* on the chamber to make it appear as a chasm with a natural stone bridge going across it. If the PCs try to "cross" this bridge, they will be nicely grouped together for a *fireball, cone of cold,* or *chain lightning* spell from L'rac. Casting any of these spells will make the lich visible (casting *hallucinatory terrain* does not), but L'rac is not worried. If the vampires are with the PCs, they will not want to enter this area. They do not want the lich to know they are revolting against him. If the PCs are not able to handle the lich, they want to still be in good graces with him. They will come up with all manner of excuses for not entering the chamber, such as: we can't go in there—too many holy symbols and too much garlic; if we go in there, your plan to destroy the lich will be revealed too soon. However, if the PCs use convincing tactics, the vampires will join them in a fight. If the PCs do not try to enlist the vampires' aid, the vampires will turn to mist to watch the fight. If the PCs weren't fooled by the *hallucinatory* bridge, the lich will take time to cast a *globe of invulnerability* on himself (against *fireballs*), and then casts *reverse gravity* on an area where he can get the most PCs. Again, this will cause him to be visible, but he is confident in his abilities to defeat the PCs. Other tactics he might use include casting *transmute rock to mud,* and then *dispel magic,* to trap the PCs in the cavern floor. Afterward, he'll try casting *darkness 15' radius* on spell casters, *ice storm* on the fighters, and any other spells in his memory which seem appropriate. If the lich loses more than half of his hit points, he attempts to escape, fleeing into the last chamber. If he is able to do this, he will cast a *wraithform* spell on himself and slip into a crack in the ceiling. The PCs will have to scrutinize the room to find him. The lich will only attack further if he believes he has the upper hand. If very hard pressed, he uses *dimension door.*

The lich's room is very opulent and plush, furnished with a large canopy

bed. The floor has many pillows scattered on it. All of the furnishings are old, but of fine quality. The walls are covered with mirrors of all sizes and shapes, as the lich is very vain. There is nothing of value here other than the furniture.

Ending the Adventure: If the PCs have not already dealt with the vampires, they probably will have to fight them. The vampires want to maintain their freedom and establish control over the lich's troops. They don't want any humans to know what they have here. If they are badly damaged they will be inclined to let the PCs go, or they will flee if the PCs attack.

If the PCs defeat both L'rac and the vampires, they can return victoriously to Beleus; however, it is up to the DM to decide if the PCs actually collect the full 50,000 gp reward (the gratitude of kings is notoriously short-lived). If any PCs were killed, the Beleus king will agree to raise them instead of paying the PCs the 50,000 gp reward. Likewise, *restoration* spells might be available in lieu of a reward at the DM's option.

Villains

Hyden and Lizzst, duergar vampires: Int Exceptional; AL CE; AC 1; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 8+3; hp 45 (Hyden), 51 (Lizzst); THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 5-10; SA Energy drain; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit; SZ S; ML 16; XP 4,000 each.

Magic Items (Hyden): *Ring of feather falling, boots of striding and springing.*

Magic Items (Lizzst): *Dust of appearance* (2 uses), *boots of levitation, brooch of shielding* (21 charges).

Creatures struck by a vampire are drained two life energy levels, complete with corresponding losses in hit dice, ability level and attack level. Vampires regenerate three hit points per melee round. If taken to 0 hit points, a vampire is not killed, but is forced into gaseous form. It must return to its coffin within 12 turns, rest eight hours, and then reform a corporeal body. *Sleep, charm* and *hold* spells do not affect vampires. They take one-half damage from cold-based spells or electricity. They can assume gaseous form at will, change into a large bat when desired, and can summon rats, bats, and wolves. They can be slain by: exposure to bright sunlight, being immersed in running water for three melee rounds or driving a stake through the its heart. These vampires also retain the following duergar abilities: Immunity to paralysis and poison, the psionic powers *mind thrust, ego whip, id insinuation, mind blank, thought shield, mental barrier, poison sense, expansion, invisibility, molecular agitation,* and *reduction.* Each psionic ability has a power score of 12 and each vampire has 72 PSPs.

Background: Hyden and Lizzst are brothers who were both killed several hundred years ago by a vampire. When that vampire was killed, they became free agents and terrorized the countryside together until they met L'rac. Through deception and base trickery, the lich captured the pair's coffins. The lich keeps their main two coffins in his complex, trapped and guarded so the duergar cannot move them. In addition, L'rac knows the locations of the brothers' secondary coffins. L'rac uses this to keep the duergar under his control, sweetening the uneasy partnership with promises of wealth when Beleus falls. Because of the promised treasure, L'rac believes the vampires are on his side. However, the two vampires have been plotting to defeat the lich and release their coffins. While the vampires realize they could leave the lich by each taking a secondary coffin and heading to another land, they are concerned the lich would follow them to exact a terrible vengeance. And they are adamant about keeping their main, ornate coffins in which they were buried.

Hyden, a thief when he was alive, has average abilities at 6th level (see DMG, page 23). He is as greedy as he is evil and believes wealth is far more important than power. Until meeting L'rac, he was far happier as a vampire than as a duergar thief. When free of L'rac's clutches, he plans to go off on his own, so he will not have to share his wealth with his brother.

Lizzst, a duergar fighter in life, hates this "arrangement" with L'rac nearly as much as he detests his own undead state. Lizzst has grown to hate all life, but he realizes living creatures might be able to aid in the vampires' escape from the lich. Lizzst cares little for material wealth, except for magic items which he believes will make him more powerful. Lizzst desires power above all else.

L'rac Darkray, drow lich: Int Supragenius; AL CE; AC 0; MV 6; HD W16; hp 62; THAC0 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Paralysis; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 17; XP 7,000.

Spells Remaining: *Spook, burning hands, detect magic, magic missile* (x2), *stinking cloud, darkness 15' radius, detect invisibility, ESP, invisibility, clairaudience, clairvoyance, dispel magic, fireball, hold person, wraithform, dimension door, fumble, hallucinatory terrain, ice storm, fire shield, animate dead, transmute rock to mud, cone of cold, globe of invulnerability, project image, chain lightning, delayed blast fireball, reverse gravity.*

Magic items: *Ring of flying, dust of appearance (1 use), figurine of wondrous power* (Asian elephant).

The mere sight of a lich causes creatures with less than five hit dice to save vs. spells or flee in terror for 5d4 rounds. Liches are immune to *charm, sleep, enfeeblement, polymorph, cold, electricity, insanity,* or *death* spells. L'rac has not retained the drow abilities he had during life.

Background: L'rac Darkray began to come to power during the reign of the second Thanus king. However, that king saw L'rac as a threat and prevented him from being appointed court mage. L'rac poisoned the king—a fact no one learned—and gained more power under the third king. Because of a drow's long life span, coupled with magic items to lengthen his life, L'rac lived through the reigns of several kings. When the last Thanus king waged war on the Beleus empire, and his army was defeated, L'rac's plans for ultimate power were dashed. He fled the area, became a lich through arcane, dark forces and planned to eventually come back and take Beleus. He is gathering an army of undead, orcs and a few drow, and is formulating battle strategies to crush the Beleus kingdom. L'rac is greedy, values power above all else and does not trust anyone. He spends nearly all of his time in his chambers formulating battle plans. Because his chambers are so far from the rest of the crypt complex, he cannot hear any battles that would go on there. However, if the PCs spend more than 18 hours within the crypt, or leave and then come back again, L'rac notices their presence and will consider confronting them directly. L'rac hates life and living creatures, and he will be happy to attack the PCs if they approach his chambers. However, he will be angry at himself and the vampires for allowing the PCs to get that far. L'rac will not fight to the death, as he prefers to run away if severely damaged, heal his wounds, and come back to plot again. He knows that time is on his side. ❑

Downunder The Living City

An AD&D 2nd Edition game scenario for 4-6 characters, levels 2-5

Illustration by Gary M. Williams

by Wayne Straiton

This adventure is set in Ravens Bluff, The Living City. With a few adjustments it can be used in a variety of AD&D® game fantasy worlds.

The player characters have been hired to discover why the water level of the Dragon Reach and the Sea of Fallen Stars has been dropping an inch a day. It is up to the DM to decide how the PCs learn about the adventure; they might answer an advertisement, receive a private message from an official they know, meet a merman or sea elf who is concerned about the problem, or get involved in some other plausible way.

Unknown to anyone in The Living City, the water is receding because a *well of many worlds* leading to the Elemental Plane of Fire has opened on a sunken ship about 50 miles out to sea. Water is pouring through the *well,* and the heroes must close it to save Faerun's oceans.

The action in this scenario takes place underwater, so the PCs will not be able to wield any slashing or bludgeoning weapons. Weapons which can be effectively used underwater include: crossbows, daggers, picks, knives, military forks, spears, short swords, and tridents.

Keep track of the armor each PC wears, as this affects the character's armor class and ability to swim.

Players' Introduction

The beach seems quiet and still this morning, as it usually does shortly after dawn. The cool fall breeze and the constant din of small waves washing over the sand is pleasant and relaxing.

The serenity of the moment is broken by the pounding of advancing hoofbeats. As the lone rider approaches his cloak flutters about him, revealing the Ravens Bluff insignia embroidered on his shirt. The man is Lord Calvin Longbottle, Regent of the Harbor.

It seems he is alone—no guards, no harbor masters. As he slows his horse to a trot you notice his stern expression. The wind rises to a howl, and the ocean seems to attack the beach, as if assuming the mood of the moment. Lord Calvin talks loudly to be heard above it.

"You were selected for this mission because of your great accomplishments—handpicked by Sunny Sunriver and approved by Lord Mayor Charles Oliver O'Kane." Lord Longbottle pauses and turns his face into the wind so it can whip the hair away from his eyes.

"The Dragon Reach, and therefore the Sea Of Fallen Stars beyond, has been dropping one inch a day for the past three days. We fear that it will drop further still, maybe until the whole sea dries up. City wizards have learned that the source of this calamity lies within an area of one hundred square miles, beginning 50 miles out from the city.

"I commend you for agreeing to seek out what is causing this disaster and to stop it. We don't know if the water drain is a natural phenomenon that will suddenly cease on its own or if it is the result of an act of evil magic. No matter what the cause, it must stop or be reversed soon or the city will be ruined.

"So far, we have kept this terrible news from the general population of Ravens Bluff, although we know a few experienced ship captains have spotted the receding water level.

"Enough chatter on my part. If you succeed, you can each keep as your reward a magic item, which we will discuss in a moment, and 300 pieces of gold, which will be given to you upon your return." Lord Calvin raises his hand, and you hear the pounding of horses' hooves. Three more riders approach. They are city guardsmen; their horses laden with large sacks.

"One sack contains dried food in water-proof containers. This is enough to last you five days. The other two contain magic items that will help you breathe underwater. It is up to you how the magic is divided. The items are: a *ring of water breathing, necklace of adaptation, pearl of the sirines, cloak of the manta ray, helm of underwater action*, and an *iridescent ioun stone* that can be used in water.

"Call for me at the harbor master's office when you return. May the gods be with you."

If the PCs want to purchase a few things before setting off, let them. Smart warriors will purchase weapons that will have more effect underwater. Hopefully, the PCs also will think to take fresh water with them for drinking.

Lord Calvin will provide the PCs with a boat if they need one.

Adrift

You venture away from Ravens Bluff on your mysterious mission to save the sea. You are several miles from shore when you spot something floating on the waves. Initially you believed it a hunk of driftwood. Closer inspection, however, reveals it is a young boy clinging to a battered piece of wood.

The unconscious 8-year-old is laying across a shattered section of ship's hull. He has no shirt or shoes, only tattered canvas shorts, and he is badly burned from the sun. One side of his face is so blistered that he can only squint out of that eye. It is obvious he has been adrift for days and won't live much longer. A little fresh water will revive him, but it will require a *cure light wounds* to heal his blisters.

Boy: Int Ave; AL NG; AC 10; MV 0 (normally 12); HD 1; hp 1 (normally 4); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg By weapon; SZ M; XP 200 for healing him.

The Boy's name is "Bach," but he started calling himself "Double" after the shipmates dubbed him "Double Bach." He has grown up not trusting anyone and assumes that everyone has a what's-in-it-for-me attitude. He'll be grateful for any cure spell, though he will pretend to be mute until the party hesitates to take him to shore. He definitely has had enough of the open sea. Bach also has no great desire to part with any information—unless the PCs transport him to shore.

He knows that his ship, the *Moonwind* out of Mulmaster, was carrying a wizard when it went down in a storm three days ago. The ship, bound for Ravens Bluff, sank off the coast when it was tossed into a reef. Bach knows the wizard was powerful and had wonderful magic. The wizard could take a piece of cloth from his robe and place it on the floor causing a pit to appear (this is the *well of many worlds*). Bach has no other useful information, but he can regale the PCs with tales of sailors climbing in the rigging and singing bawdy songs.

Weird, Man!

Eventually, the PCs will have to take to the water and search for the wreck of the *Moonwind.* When they do, the PCs soon encounter Chuck, an unusual water weird. Chuck is drunk and slurs his telepathic words. Do not tell the PCs Chuck is a water weird. Let them figure it out, or let them assume he is just an unusual creature.

The wizard aboard the *Moonwind* summoned Chuck from the Elemental Plane of Water and into a cask of ale. When the ship sank, Chuck was released from servitude, but has no way to get home. He doesn't find this to be a problem, as nagging relatives had just arrived for a lengthy stay, and he welcomes any excuse to avoid them.

However, he is not without problems at the moment—the major one being his current condition. Being summoned into a cask of ale rendered him intoxicated on this plane.

The drunken Chuck likes people, although he only has seen a few in his lifetime. Chuck vaguely remembers that every person he met died when he pulled them under the water to "visit." He has a hard time understanding the concept of drowning, but he wants to learn all about it.

If the PCs are swimming underwater, Chuck assumes they are holding their breath. He will keep them under to see how long it takes them to "drown." If they are on the surface, he tries to pull them under. When he realizes they cannot drown, he telepathically questions them about this. He will not provide any information in return unless they first satisfy him about this "drowning" matter.

If they do so, Chuck gives the PCs general directions to where a "big wooden thing with walls" sank; he will not act as a guide. All he remembers about the wizard who summoned him is that the man called him during a storm, the walls rocked, and the wizard bumped his head against something hard. A black object fell out of the wizard's robe and onto the floor, unfolding. When the walls started to fill with water Chuck decided to swim outside and watch all the people float to the bottom.

When the "big wooden thing with walls" hit the bottom of the ocean, Chuck felt released from the wizard's service. He also felt a great current moving toward the "big dead wooden thing with walls," but he was able to swim away.

Water Weird: Int Very; AL CN; AC 4; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 18; THAC0 15; #AT 0; Dmg Nil; SA Drowning; SD Special; MR None; SZ L; ML 13; XP 420 for getting information.

A Morkoth Menace

> You continue on your watery journey, mystified about the condition of the water creature you encountered. Ahead and below you spot a glint of silver.

The glint is a morkoth who has spied the PCs. He swims along just out of sight, but close enough so that the party will eventually notice his luminescent silver patches. He intends to trick the group into following him back to his lair. The PCs are better off passing over this encounter or fighting the morkoth before he reaches his cave.

If the PCs follow the morkoth, he leads them to his cave. The morkoth's lair is deadly; it is a cavern consisting of six spiraling tunnels, each is 120' long and leads to a central chamber. The tunnels are narrow, forcing the PCs to go single file. As a PC passes over a tunnel, he must make a saving throw vs. spell with a −4 penalty. Failure means he is *charmed* and will be devoured at the morkoth's leisure.

However, if the morkoth is not able to *charm* the PC before that PC comes within 60 feet of the center of the lair, the tunnels' hypnotic effect is broken and no *charm* is possible.

Morkoth: Int Exceptional; AL CE; AC 3; MV sw 18; HD 7; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Hypnosis; SD Spell reflection; SZ M; ML 13; XP 450.

The morkoth carries three *javelins of piercing*, a full jar of *Keoghtom's ointment* and a scroll with two *cure disease* spells. All of these items are kept in a large *bag of holding* (150 cubic foot capacity). He will use the *javelins* only as a last resort, as he knows they are valuable. He fights to the death.

In addition, in his cave is a small, rotting wooden chest. It contains a *potion of rainbow hues* (the vial is marked with a rainbow), 240 gp, 10 pp, a *trident +2*, and a tiny, exquisite ruby worth 5,700 gp.

Giant In A Half Shell

> Many yards below you, a light moves about on the sea floor. It doesn't seem to follow to any pattern.
>
> As you approach, you see what appears to be a giant lobster with extremely bright eyes. It is the leader of a pack of giant lobsters.

If the PCs make noise or do something to make their presence known, the lead lobster turns to menace the PCs. This lobster actually is an *apparatus of Kwalish* operated by Alexandra, a juvenile storm giantess who is roughly as mature as an eight-year-old human.

Alexandra is out playing with her new giant lobster friends in her *apparatus of Kwalish,* which was a gift from her father. She has named her *apparatus* Zachary. This name is painted in Common on the *apparatus's* side. However, because the water is murky, the PCs would have to be within 20 feet to read the writing.

The lobsters are not smart enough to realize that the *apparatus* isn't another giant lobster.

When Alexandra spies the party, she turns the *apparatus* to face them in a mock attack, claws-a-snapping, and will persist until she realizes that the party is causing structural damage to Zachary. If the group continues to attack the *apparatus,* Alexandra will fight for real. The other giant lobsters fight only if they are attacked.

If it appears the PCs are going to destroy Zachary, Alexandra will throw open the hatch in an attempt to communicate with them.

Alexandra is a likeable youngster and looks forward to growing up. She is sly enough to try to pass for a human adult; she enjoys playing make-believe. She is quite able to pass herself off as a woman, as she stands only six feet tall and the party will not be able to discern the true coloration of her skin while under water.

She wants to know all about the PCs—where they are from, what they are doing here, do they have any presents for her, etc. She knows nothing about the sunken ship, drunken water creature, or any other recent happenings.

After talking with the party awhile, Alexandra realizes it is getting a little late in the day. Although she knows she should go home, she is lost. She won't mind admitting this and asking for directions. She frequently has to ask sea creatures for directions. She only wants to be pointed west.

Storm Giant: Int Very; AL CG; AC 0; MV Sw 15; HD 9; hp 45; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SD Immune to electricity; SZ M; ML 12; XP 300 for giving her directions.

Apparatus of Kwalish: pincers do 2d6 points of damage per successful attack (25% of success regardless of the target's armor class, but Dexterity adjustments apply); body AC 0; structure can take 100 points of damage before springing a leak; 200 points to bash in a side.

Giant Lobsters (5): Int Animal; AL N; AC 0; MV Sw 3; HD 4+4; hp 24 each; THAC0 12; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SZ L; ML 13; XP Nil for killing them, 200 for leaving them alone.

Intelligence Test

To find the wreck, the PCs eventually must venture well below the surface. Read the following once the PCs begin searching the depths in earnest.

> You continue on your mission, in awe of all the wonders beneath the waves. It truly is a beautiful place. Just ahead, a school of strikingly colorful angel fish, each about the size of a man's hand, playfully chase each other through an a equally beautiful patch of seaweed. One particularly beautiful fish, purple with bright yellow spots, swims toward your group. It seems to be curious about you. If you were not on such a crucial errand for Lord Calvin Longbottle, you could really enjoy yourselves.

Allow the PCs to react to the fish in any way they see fit. No matter what they do, however, they eventually attract the entire school's attention. The sprightly fish surround the PCs and automatically swallow the *ioun stone.* The affected character inadvertently takes a big gulp of seawater and begins to choke. The character will drown in four rounds if something is not done to save him.

There are a variety of ways to handle this situation. The choking character cannot reach the surface by himself in less than four rounds, but other PCs, particularly the character wearing the *cloak of the manta ray,* could sprint him to the surface. The PCs can find the fish that swallowed the stone by casting

detect magic. PCs with animal-related spells could use *speak with animals* to persuade the offending fish to spit out the *ioun stone.* Of course, they could simply find a way to kill the fish (there are 78 in the school), cut them open and retrieve the *stone.* This will take more than four rounds.

The PCs can buy time for their helpless comrade by sharing some of their water-breathing items, particularly the *ring of water breathing* or *necklace of adaptation,* like skin divers sharing an air tank.

Use your judgment—if the PCs come up with a viable way for getting the *stone* back, let them.

Angel Fish (78): Int Non; AL N; AC 10; MV Sw 9; HD 1-1; hp 1; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg Nil; SZ T; ML 8; XP Nil.

A Sinking Feeling

Some time after their brush with the angel fish, the PCs encounter a strong current. They cannot avoid it, nor can they successfully fight it. After a time, tell them they have been dragged to the ocean floor where a veritable forest of tall seaweed grows. The current still is powerful, but not overwhelmingly so, and the PCs easily can grab onto pieces of seaweed to keep from being swept away.

The PCs have encountered some turbulence caused by the seawater rushing through the *well of many worlds.* If the PCs attempt to investigate the cause of the current, they find a large crevice in the sea floor. The freshly wrecked bow of the *Moonwind* rests on the PCs' side of the crevice, right at the edge. When the PCs approach the wreckage or the crevice, a pair of giant lampreys ambush the PCs. They get one free attack, *then* have the PCs roll for surprise.

Giant Lampreys (2): Int Non; AL Nil; AC 6; MV Sw 9; HD 5; hp 25, 26; THAC0 15; #AT 1; D 1-6; SA Drain blood; SZ H; ML 8; XP 175 each.

Once a lamprey successfully strikes a victim, it holds on, draining 10 hp a round until the victim reaches 0 hit points. The only way to remove a lamprey is by killing it.

Ahoy, The Ship!

The *Moonwind's* stern and midships rests on a ledge 300 feet down into the crevice. The wreck is perpendicular to the crevice and the stern sticks up at a 30 degree angle. The crevice is 500 feet deep, and runs for miles in either direction. It is 100 feet wide at the top and even wider at the bottom. The crevice walls are rough and slope inward; it is very dark inside. The wreck lies about 100 feet from the crevice wall. See the map on page 13 for details.

A powerful vortex has formed over the ship. A few fish are being sucked into it, along with shells, bits of plants and even grains of sand. Have any character who gets within 150 feet of the crevice make a Strength check. Failure means the PC is pulled toward the ship. He will be sucked through a hole in the stern deck and into the *well of many worlds.*

There are several ways the party can use to approach the ship and avoid the vortex. Anchoring ropes to the sea floor will work. If the PCs do this, do not ask for any Strength checks. Climbing down the crevice walls to get to the ship could work, but only if the character is light enough to float (otherwise the character cannot cling to the overhanging wall). The character must make a successful climb walls roll because the walls are slippery and turbulence from the vortex buffets the character.

Probably the best method to get to the ship is to swim outside the 150-foot current radius to directly beneath the ship and approach the ledge from there. This should be safe for everyone.

The ship has been weakened considerably from the current and is in very bad shape. Any PC who dangles over the jagged breach in the stern deck (with a light) sees that the water is being sucked into a 6-foot diameter black hole (the *well of many worlds*) in the floor.

Any PC who can reach the hull without being sucked into the vortex can easily hack through the battered hull and gain access to the interior.

The Ship

The door to the stern cabin is accessible from the main deck. However, the body of the ship's captain, which is infested with aquatic rot grubs, has been partially sucked trough a hole in the bulkhead near the door. His legs and left arm are on the PCs' side of the door. His head and right arm are inside the cabin, blocking the door. To open the door, the PCs will have to hack through it. If they are not careful, the captain's body will be freed and sucked through the *well.* There are two rings on the captain's right hand. One is a non-magical gold band set with three sapphires (value 3,790 gp). The other is a silver band, which is a *ring of protection +2.* If the PCs search the captain's body, they find a magnifying glass worth 50 gp, a cloth map that claims to lead to a valuable treasure (and might in a future adventure), and a silver neckchain with a carved ivory parrot hanging from it (worth 900 gp). The PCs also discover the aquatic rot grubs, which promptly attack. As with normal rot grubs, infestation only can be healed by fire or a *cure disease* spell.

All documents on the ship have been ruined by the sea water. The mage and all his possessions have been sucked into the *well.* The PCs can clearly see the *well,* but it looks like a simple hole to them.

Aquatic Rot Grubs (10): Int Non; AL N; AC 9; MV 1; HD 1 hp; hp 1 each; THAC0 Nil; #AT 0; Dmg Nil; SZ T; ML 5; XP 15 each.

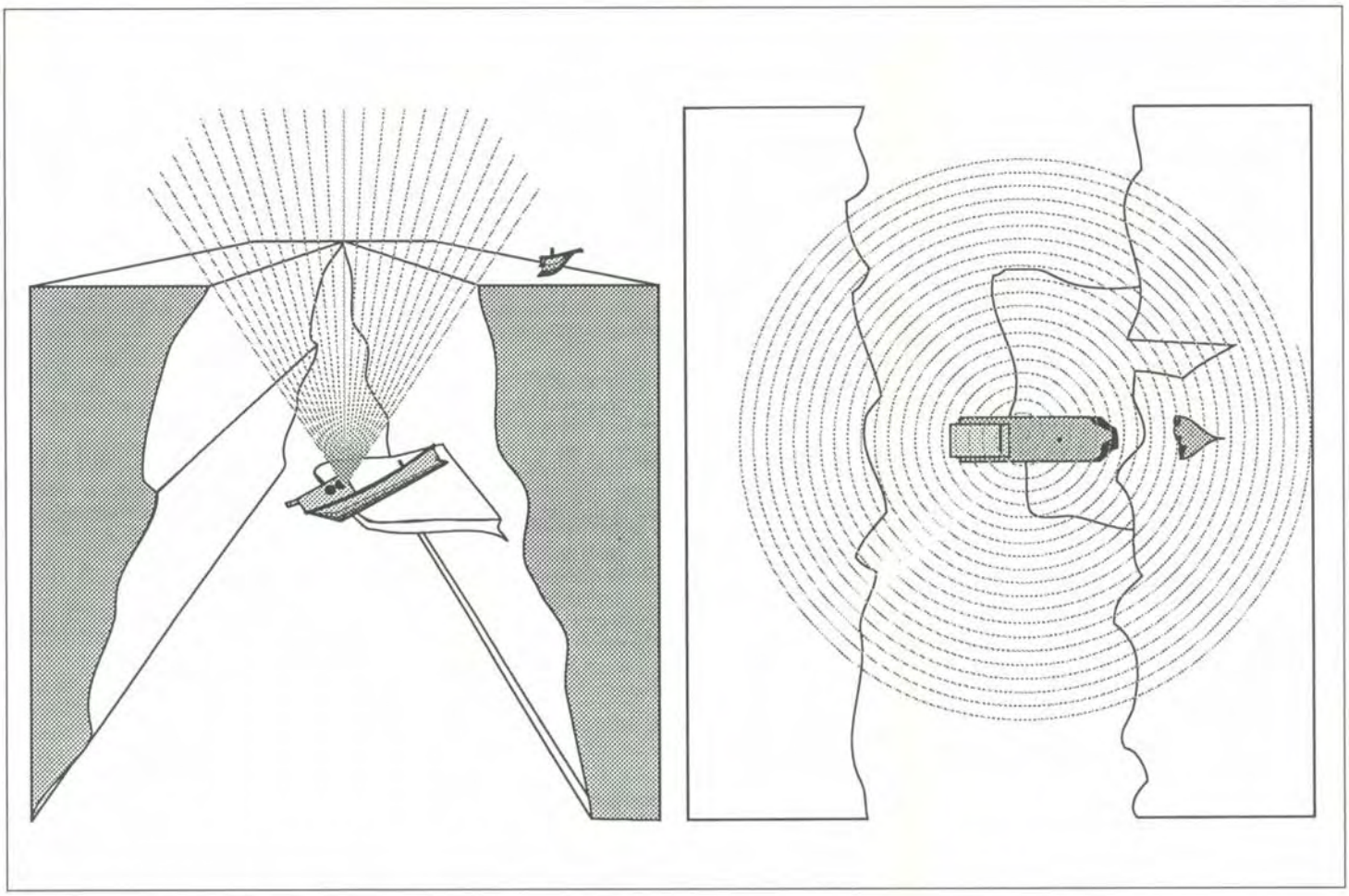
These creatures viciously burrow into any living flesh that touches them. No attack roll is necessary. If there is question of whether bare skin has been exposed, multiply the victim's AC by 10. This is the chance, rolled on percentile dice, that the rot grubs are touching bare skin. Flame, which gives the victim 1d6 hit points of damage, automatically kills the rot grubs, as does a *cure disease* spell. It takes three turns for the aquatic rot grubs to burrow into their host's heart, killing him.

The Well

The PCs have two options: deal with the *well,* or return to Ravens Bluff and tell Lord Calvin about it, letting him find someone who can deal with it.

If the PCs choose to deal with the *well,* all they have to do is pick it up and fold it. Of course, they better be anchored quite firmly to get close enough to touch it. PCs not anchored automatically get sucked inside.

Any character who gets drawn into the *well of many worlds* falls 20 feet and lands in the Elemental Plane of Fire. Besides taking 2d6 points falling damage, each character also takes 2d6 points of steam damage per round until he runs 25 feet in any direction to get away from the steam. Visibility is zero in the steam. Characters who emerge from the steam are temporarily protected from the great heat on the Elemental Plane of Fire because of the dampness in their hair and clothing. However,



they find themselves in the City of Brass and surrounded by hostile efreet.

The efreet are upset that an ocean is pouring into their streets and will take great delight from watching the characters' dry out and expire in the heat. Of course, it is possible that the PCs may be able to quickly plead their case and offer to get rid of the water in exchange for their lives. Use your judgment if they plead well enough to get out of their predicament and back into the ocean.

If the PCs fold up the *well* and return to Lord Calvin Longbottle, the regent praises them and gives them 300 gp each. There is no way Longbottle is going to let them keep the *well of many worlds*. It is too dangerous an item to be in the hands of characters wandering around the city. If the PCs won't willingly hand it over, Longbottle will assemble enough guards to take it from them. Clear-thinking PCs should understand Longbottle's concern over the item.

Optional Encounters

The currents swirl about irregularly. Looking around, you see three gargoyle-like creatures several feet away. They swim forward to attack.

Kapoacinth (3): Int Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV Sw 15; HD 4 +4; hp 24 each; THAC0 17; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 11; XP 650 each.

Horrors from the depths! Undead swim in these seas. From below you approach six watery ghouls.

Lacedons (6): Int Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV Sw 9; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA Paralyzation; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175 each.

A pack of seals swims playfully in your direction. As the creatures near, you can tell they have the faces of wolves and are apparently hostile.

Lesser Seawolves (7): Int Average; AL NE; AC 6 (7); MV 30, Sw 12; HD 2 +2; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1 (3); Dmg 2d4 (1-2/1-2/1-4); SZ M; ML 11; XP 175 each.

A humanoid form springs from the sandy bottom and paddles toward you. The closer it gets, the clearer its features come into view. It looks like a troll. But are there trolls underwater?

Scrag: Int Low; AL CE; AC 2; MV 3, Sw 12; HD 6 +12; hp 62; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/9-16; SA Special; SD Regeneration; SZ L; ML 16; XP 1,400.

❑

A Fluffy Wonderland

by Rick Reid

An AD&D 2nd Edition Game Adventure
for 4-6 Characters, Levels 4-6

Illustration by Terry Pavlet

The Night Before Wondertime

The tree is up, the wreaths are hung, the apple cider is bubbling in the pot, and colorful paper chains are strung across the doorways. As you sit back to observe your handiwork, contented grins spread over your faces. Everything looks perfect.

However, a loud rapping at the door interrupts your holiday thoughts. There in the doorway stands Penny, the mayor of Ealow, looking radiant in her fox-fur coat lightly dusted with a powdering of new fallen snow. Next to her is a sack bulging with odd-shaped objects.

Penny addresses everyone with a tentative "Season's Greetings," then her lower lip begins to tremble and her eyes fill with tears. Burying her face in her hands, she begins to sob, "What will I do? What will I do?" She quickly apologizes for her display of emotions and begs you to hear her story.

"It started out on such a happy note," Penny whimpers. Two days ago, we received a message that Fluffy's canine relatives, who she has not seen in years, would be joining us this Wondertime. They were to arrive today by carriage from Dogtown, with sacks of presents for the local orphans. Fluffy was so excited that she wouldn't even sample my plum pudding—and that's her favorite.

"A few hours ago, we departed to the station to await the carriage. When some time had past I began to think that perhaps I made some mistake on the arrival time. Just as I was ready to leave, the carriage flew into the station. The driver, looking as if all the demons of Heck were pursing him, was wild-eyed. His hair had turned white and his lips were pale blue.

"The poor man said the carriage had been waylaid in Snow Valley by a group of odd-looking, but dangerous blue creatures wearing fringed leather jerkins, pointed-toed shoes, and tasseled hats. The driver had great difficulty telling me all of this, as his tongue had been frostbitten. The creatures emptied the carriage of its cargo. Then, noticing the passengers, the blue creatures became agitated and demanded that they disembark. When the last dog had exited the carriage, one of the

creatures slapped the lead horse on the rump. The frightened horses took off with the driver hanging on for dear life.

"Although in obvious pain, the driver was able to fashion a crude map for me, showing where the attack took place. (Show the players the map.)

"I know it's Wondertime eve, and I know you are in the midst of your festivities, but I don't know who else to turn to for help. When Fluffy realized that her relatives had been dognapped, she went into catatonic shock. She's at home right now, staring glassy-eyed at the tree, an untouched cup of eggnog at her feet.

"What I ask of you is that you return to the scene of the crime and try to recover the abducted dogs and the orphans' gifts."

If the PCs accept the job, Penny explains that three one-horse open sleighs have been provided for their transportation. Each sleigh can carry two passengers. The horses know the way back home, so the PCs don't need to worry about becoming lost. If the PCs bring up the matter of payment, Penny agrees to any fee they propose—within reason. After thanking the characters and wishing them the best of luck, Penny opens the sack and pulls gaily wrapped packages from its depths. She hands the gifts to the characters, while explaining: "I almost forgot. Here are your Wondertime presents. Perhaps you should open them now, as you may find them useful in your journey." With that, she departs.

Read each player the "Wondertime Gift" list for his particular character detailed on pages 14, 15 and 16.

A Warm Send Off

As the PCs exit the building after completing their preparations for the journey, they see the three sleighs waiting at the roadside. The sleighs are surrounded by six angelic faced youngsters who break into song, which sounds something like this (feel free to substitute the PCs' names for a better effect):

Jingle Bells, Sassy smells,
Spittle laid an egg,
Sizzle and Soapy act real dopey,
And Sputrock ran away.

After completing their song, the children bow and hold out their hands to the party for a gratuity.

Whether the PCs reward the singers, they find themselves pelted with a barrage of snowballs as they make their way out of town.

Angelic-faced youngsters (6): Int Average; AL Obstreperous; AC 8; MV 12 (15 if being chased); HD 1-1; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 2/1 (snowballs); Dmg 0-1 subdual damage; SA satirical carols, +3 "to hit" with snowballs; SZ M; ML 8; XP nil.

Over The River And Through The Woods

Temperature: 15 above zero
Wind: 30 MPH
Time: 4:00 PM
Snowfall: 6"

Although there are several inches of snow on the ground and the wind is brisk, the road out of Ealow is still visible and passable. The horses do indeed seem to know the way, and you are able to snuggle back into the heavy blankets to enjoy the scenery as you enter the beautiful Woody Forest west of town. The bare branches of the trees glisten with a glaze of ice, and the only sound you hear is the wind blowing through the ice-covered branches. There is a lone squirrel shivering on one of the frozen branches. He holds out his paw as you pass, as if begging for a spare nut to feed his family.

Shivering Squirrel: Int Animal; AL Hungry; AC 9; MV 18; HD 1 hp; hp 1; THAC0 20; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SZ T; ML 2; XP see below.

If the PCs feed the squirrel, praise them for spreading Wondertime cheer to our small, furry friends (600 XP).

The Old Man Who Walks Backwards

You are approximately a half hour out of town when the horses suddenly snort and rear. A bobbing, yellow light is visible on the road. As the light gets closer, you distinguish the figure of an old man with long stringy hair and a beard. The light is a lantern he is carrying. He is walking backwards.

As the man comes up alongside the sleighs, he holds his lantern up to examine the PCs' faces. With a satisfied nod he speaks:

"I am the Old Man Who Walks Backwards. I see where I've been, but not where I'm going. On your journey this eve you will be visited by three ghosts. Heed their words of wisdom."

After speaking, the old man continues his backward walk. If the party attempts to question the old man, he answers all inquiries with, "Seek and ye shall find."

The Old Man Who Walks Backwards: Int Average; AL N; AC 10; MV 8; HD F0; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 (with lantern); SZ M; ML 9; XP nil.

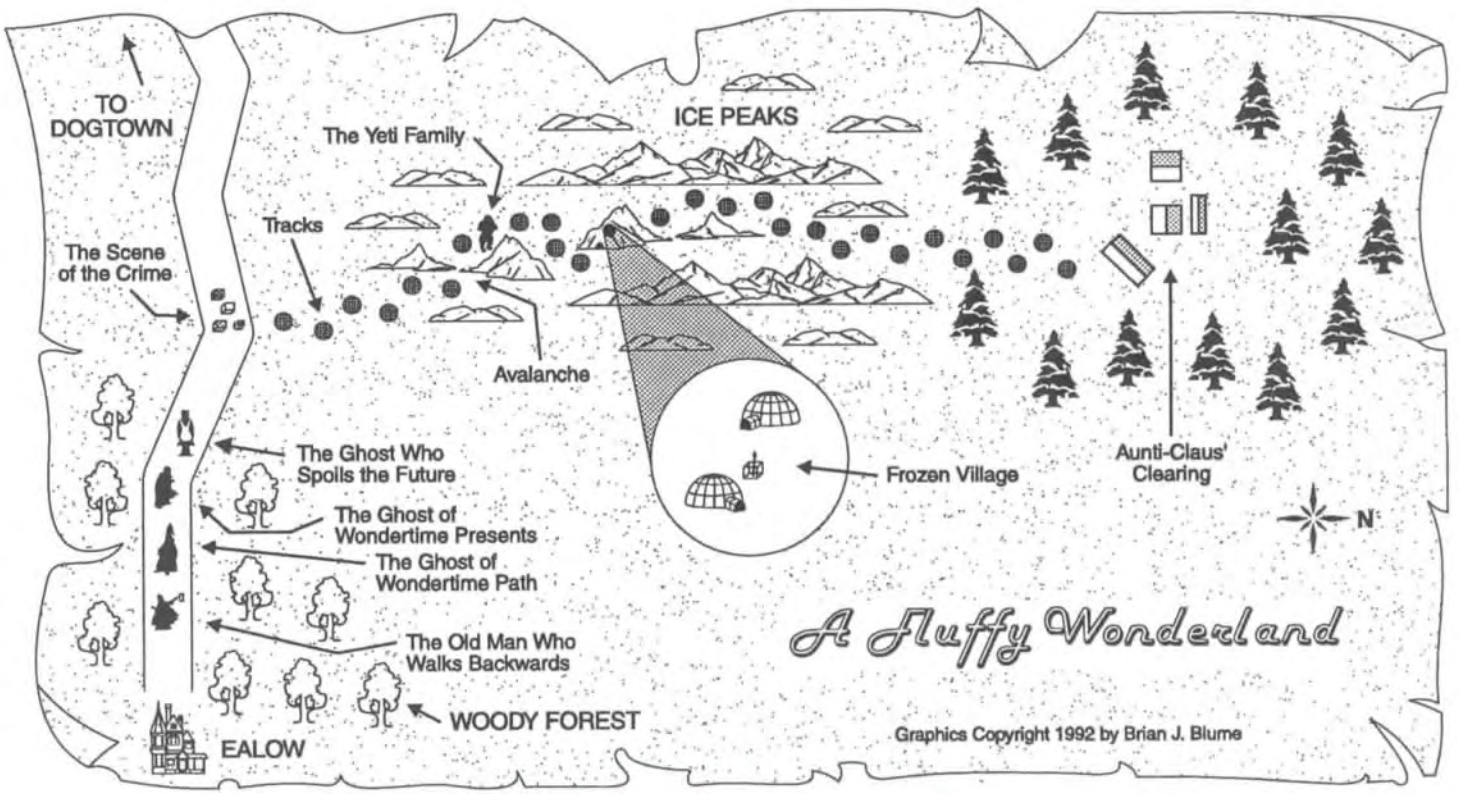
The First Ghost

You have traveled approximately 100 yards when you notice a swirling of snowflakes directly ahead. A ghostly form slowly materializes in the road. The spectre resembles a middle-aged, pot-bellied man with a large bulbous nose. The spook is dressed in tattered clothes and is carrying a wide-bladed shovel. In a chilling voice, the ghost speaks:

"Oooo! Oooooo! I am the Ghost of Wondertime Path. In life it was my duty to keep the road clear and shoveled. One Wondertime Eve I partook too heavily of the rum cake and fell asleep, neglecting my duty. When I awoke, I found that my carelessness had caused a wagon with a cargo of partridges, calling birds and turtle doves to become mired in a snow drift. It had overturned, releasing the fowl to the four winds. Needless to say, Wondertime was ruined. Now in death I must atone for my sins. Every Wondertime Eve I must appear in this spot to right my wrong. My spirit will find no rest until the path is clear. Ooooo! Ooooo! Woe is me!"

After his speech, the ghost attempts to clear the path with his insubstantial shovel. Naturally, he has no luck, as the shovel just passes through the snow. The ghost will not allow the party to pass until his work is done (an impossible feat), and he will attack if they attempt to get by him.

Thus, the group has two options. They can fight and defeat the ghost, or they



can disembark and clear the path for him, using whatever means are at their disposal. If they choose to do the latter, the ghost will step back to survey their work, pointing out spots that they missed, until the path is cleared to his satisfaction. When the path is clear, the ghost fades away, leaving them with a final warning to "Beware the rum cake!"

The Ghost of Wondertime Path: Int High; AL LE; AC 0; MV 9; HD 10; hp 61; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg Age 10-40 years; SD hit only by silver (1/2 dmg) or magic (full dmg); SZ M; ML 20; XP 7,000 (slay)/9,000 (clearing the path).

The Second Ghost

Another hundred yards brings more swirling snow and the ghostly figure of a bent, sour-faced old man. In his hand is a large, ghostly gift-wrapped box tied with a spectral ribbon. The spook cocks his head, fixes the group with a beady stare and chuckles:

"Heeenh! Heeenh! I am the Ghost of Wondertime Presents. Throughout my miserly life, I never gave anyone a Wondertime present. I kept them all to myself! Now, in the afterlife, it is my punishment to appear once every Wondertime eve and give someone a gift. If my gift is not accepted, my soul will find no rest. Heeenh! Heeenh!"

The ghost holds out the box to the party and says, "Here, take it. I made it myself." If someone accepts the present, the ghost rubs his hands together gleefully and cackles, "Open it! Open it!"

If the present is not accepted, the ghost rants at the party, "What do I have to do, shove it down your throats? Take the blasted thing!" If the present is still not accepted, the ghost drops the gift and attacks. Anyone who accepts the gift finds that it appears very light and insubstantial. Undoing the ribbon causes the box lid to fly open, and a ghostly, but very solid, mail-gloved hand springs out, striking anyone holding the box for 1d12 points of damage. If this happens, the ghost doubles over with laughter, joyfully shouting, "Ha! Ha! Sucker! That gets 'em every year!"

Before the party can retaliate, the ghost fades away leaving his parting words echoing through the night, "Beware of ghosts bearing gifts!"

The Ghost of Wondertime Presents: Int High; AL LE; AC 0; MV 9; HD 10; hp 61; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg Age 10-40 years; SD hit only by silver (1/2 dmg) or magic (full dmg); SZ M; ML Special; XP 7,000.

The Third Ghost

One hundred more yards, a swirling of snow, and the semi-material figure of a fat crone, head swathed in a turban, appears in the road. In one hand she holds a large, red Wondertime ball on a string. While swinging the ball slowly back and forth, she relates her story:

"Cackle! Cackle! I am the Ghost Who Spoils the Future. In life I snooped in all my presents and always knew what I was going to get. Now, in death, my mission is to spoil Wondertime for everyone else. Step closer while I gaze into my crystal ornament and tell you what you will receive on Wondertime morn. Cackle! Cackle!"

Whether the group wants to hear it, the ghost gazes into her ball and begins relating the following "futures" to each of them (in no particular order):

"You will receive a frilly dress from your great, great grandmother, who still thinks you're six years old. And you will be forced to wear it to keep peace in the family.

"Your sister puts salt instead of sugar in the Wondertime cookies. You will spend the day in bed with a stomach ache.

"Your stocking will have a large hole in it, and the dog will eat all your candy.

"Your brother will get up early and open all your presents, keeping the best ones for himself.

"The tags on your presents and your spinster aunt's were accidentally switched. She will receive your presents, and you will receive toilet water and a girdle.

"None of your gifts will fit, and you can't exchange them."

The only way to stop the ghost is to attack her. Otherwise, the party will be forced to listen to all her predictions, each punctuated with cackling laughter. When she has finished, the ghost fades away, her parting words being, "You will never get what you ask for."

The Ghost Who Spoils The Future: Int High; AL LE; AC 0; MV 9; HD 10; hp 61; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg Age 10-40 years; SD hit only by silver (1/2 dmg) or magic (full dmg); SZ M; ML Special; XP 7,000.

When this last ghost disappears, phantom letters spontaneously appear in the snow reading "See you next year!"

The Scene of the Crime

You travel for approximately another hour when you see what appears to be the setting of the abduction. Ripped packages are scattered about an area churned up by carriage tracks, hoof prints and odd, circular foot prints.

There are about a dozen wolves milling about. They have long, silky black coats and white faces. The wolves are rooting through the packages, eating candy canes and jelly rolls.

The largest wolf, the apparent leader, lifts its head at the party's approach and howls through jelly-smeared jaws. Immediately, the other wolves set up a howl in three-part harmony.

The 12 choir wolves snarl at the party, still in three-part harmony, and leap to attack if the PCs move any closer. Naturally, the horses will become very agitated and try to run away (45% chance per round of bolting and running). The wolves continue their attack until at least half their number have been killed. The remainder run for the hills, grabbing a stray pastry and howling in three-part harmony all the while.

Choir Wolves (12): Int Semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 4+4; hp 32, 32, 30, 28, 27, 27, 25, 23, 23, 23, 20, 18; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ S; ML 10; XP 175 each.

There is not much left at the site except bits of colored paper and packaging, pieces of food and a few abandoned toys. The circular tracks contain a cross-hatch pattern and seem to run in pairs. They lead to the north in the direction of the Ice Peaks. There are approximately eight pairs of tracks.

Avalanche

Once off the road, the going becomes slower. The horses must plod through the knee-high snow drifts. Following the tracks, which seem to run on top of the snow, the party eventually comes to the base of the tall peaks. A narrow passage running through the peaks becomes visible as the PCs approach the base. The tracks lead into and through the pass. The snow here is piled high, making it almost impossible to continue with the horses. In fact, the horses will stop. If the horses are sent back, they will easily find their way home.

The passage, though 15 feet wide, is filled with snowdrifts ranging from about knee high to almost waist high. After the PCs have traveled a short way trough the passage, they hear a loud rumbling. Looking up, the characters see a large mass of snow and ice sliding down from the peak on the left. There is no way the PCs can avoid the avalanche in the narrow passage. The avalanche will do 1d10 damage to whoever it hits. However, if the characters manage to curl up into a ball, or get under the sleighs (if the sleighs are still with them) they will avoid the full brunt of the avalanche and suffer half damage instead.

When the avalanche has subsided, the PCs find themselves buried in snow up to their necks.

The Yeti Family

Overhead, the PCs see four white, hairy, ape-like faces peering down from the peak 20 feet above. The largest creature wags his finger at the PCs and says, "There! That fix you bad mans! You no more cause trouble for yeti!" This said, all four creatures shake their heads in agreement.

There are four yeti in the family; mother, father, sister and brother. The yeti are convinced that the PCs are part of the group that has been hijacking the wagons and stirring up trouble in the area. When the yeti saw the PCs coming, they loosened a hugh pile of snow on the top of the hill, causing the avalanche.

If the PCs talk to the yeti, they will be told, "You bad mans. You steal from wagons, yeti get blame. We see you while ago. We fix trap for you. Now you no more cause trouble."

The PCs must try to convince the yeti that they are not the ones robbing the wagons, and in fact are on their trail. If they are successful, the father yeti replies, "Huumm! All mans look same to yeti. We sorry. We dig you out now."

The yeti scramble down the slope, and with the frenzied digging of their long powerful arms, they have the party free in no time.

The father introduces his family. "Me Freddi Yeti, wife is Betti Yeti, son is Eddi Yeti and daughter is Hetti Yeti."

If asked about the direction the robbers had gone, one of the young yeti replies, "Me see bad mans take shortcut cave to village of icy mens. Me show you."

The yeti will lead the party about 50 yards down the passage to a barely visible 6' wide by 8' high natural cavern on the right hand side of the passage. The horses and sleighs definitely cannot fit. Before the yeti take leave of the party, they give the PCs goodbye hugs, squeezing the air from the PCs' lungs and bruising a few ribs in the process.

Yeti (4): Int Average; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 4+4; hp 32, 30, 15, 15; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SA Squeeze; SD Immune to normal cold, invisible in snow and ice; SZ L; ML 14; XP 420 each.

The Frozen Village

The tunnel is a natural shortcut through the hills and leads north. After walking several yards through the

twisting and turning passage, the group enters a cavern that is approximately 100 yards in diameter. It is open to the sky above. Tall snow-covered peaks tower above the 30′ high opening, and the tunnel continues on the other side of the cavern.

Inside the cavern is a small village of igloos. On the outskirts of the village is a 12′ tall totem pole composed of crude figures hugging themselves and making lewd faces. Long-frozen wolf skins are stretched across racks, and the remains of cooking fires can be seen outside the igloos.

In the center of the village is a 6′ by 6′ block of ice with a finely crafted long sword firmly embedded in the center. Everything in the village seems coated in a layer of frost. There is no sign of life.

Inside the igloos are human families frozen in a tableaux of everyday life. Some have spoons in frozen soup, are getting dressed in frozen clothing, or are bathing in a tub of frozen water. If all the igloos are searched, approximately two dozen frozen villagers will be discovered. There is nothing of real value inside the igloos except for a few primitive wall hangings.

One of the largest igloos contains a man hunched over a writing desk, frozen in the act of penning an ice-covered diary. Through the glaze of frost, the PCs can discern the following:

I fear that Mt. Frostbite is due to erupt sooner than I anticipated. I try my best to warn the others, but my words are not heeded. If the unthinkable does take place, and we are caught in its spume of icy death, I pray someone will come along and free us from the fingers of... Uh oh!! What's that noise? Oooops! Too late!

The villagers were indeed caught in the eruption of Mt. Frostbite, which occurred several decades ago. When the snow volcano erupted, it covered the entire village in a layer of icy frost, freezing everyone immediately.

If the PCs attempt to pull the sword from the block of ice, they will discover it a difficult task. It takes a combined Strength of 30 to pull the sword from the block of ice. Once this is done, the ice cube melts and the sword begins pulsing with a red glow, radiating waves of heat. The sword continues glowing until the wielder drops or sheathes it. However, in order to drop or sheathe the sword, the user must successfully save vs. spells or find the sword has frozen to his hands (yep, it can be hot AND cold at the same time—it's magic).

The sword will stay frozen to the hands of the user for 1d4+1 turns, at which time the glow disappears, the heat fades, and the blade becomes a normal long sword. When energized, the sword is +2 to hit and does 1d12 damage to creatures of any size. It is also considered a fire-based weapon, but will only work in this capacity for the person who originally freed it from the cube of ice. The heat doesn't harm the wielder—but the DM™ should feel free to describe the searing heat coming from the sword.

A few minutes after the sword has been freed, the PCs hear a crackling noise coming from the igloos. Emerging from the igloos, dripping water and shedding layers of ice, are the 24 villagers, now animated frosty zombies.

The blue-skinned zombies shuffle toward the sword, grunting "ah," rubbing their hands, and attacking anyone who gets in their way. They converge around the sword and follow it everywhere, unless they are turned or destroyed.

Frosty zombies (24): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 plus creepy cold shivers; SD Immune to cold, double damage from fire; SZ M; ML Special; XP 65 each.

On the opposite side of the village, the PCs can again pick up the trail of the odd tracks. The tracks lead through another 200 yards of twisting cavern and emerge on the other side of the range of hills into a grove of tall pine trees.

The Creature That Hated Wondertime

Picking up the trail of the strange tracks, you eventually come upon a clearing set into a low depression. You notice several of the trees circling the clearing have been cut down. Four buildings stand in the clearing. The two largest are rectangular and appear to be barns or barracks. The tracks lead directly to the closest large building.

The Barn

This building is approximately 100′ long and 50′ wide. The front wall has a set of huge 20′ by 20′ double doors secured with a large lock. Near the doors are three snow drow building a decidedly untraditional snow figure of a voluptuous elf woman.

The snow drow resemble regular drow except that their skin is a very pale blue and their hair and eyes are snow white. All the drow are dressed in red and green leather pants and jerkins. Atop their heads are tasseled red caps, and on their feet are tasseled green shoes. They carry scimitars tucked into their shiny black belts. If the PCs defeat and search the snow drow, they find six pieces of sticky candy gold pieces, a sprig of mistletoe, and a key to the lock on the barn.

Snow Drow (3): Int High; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD F3; hp 21 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA +1 "to hit" with bow or sword; SD 90% resistance to *sleep, charm,* or cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML 13; XP 175 each.

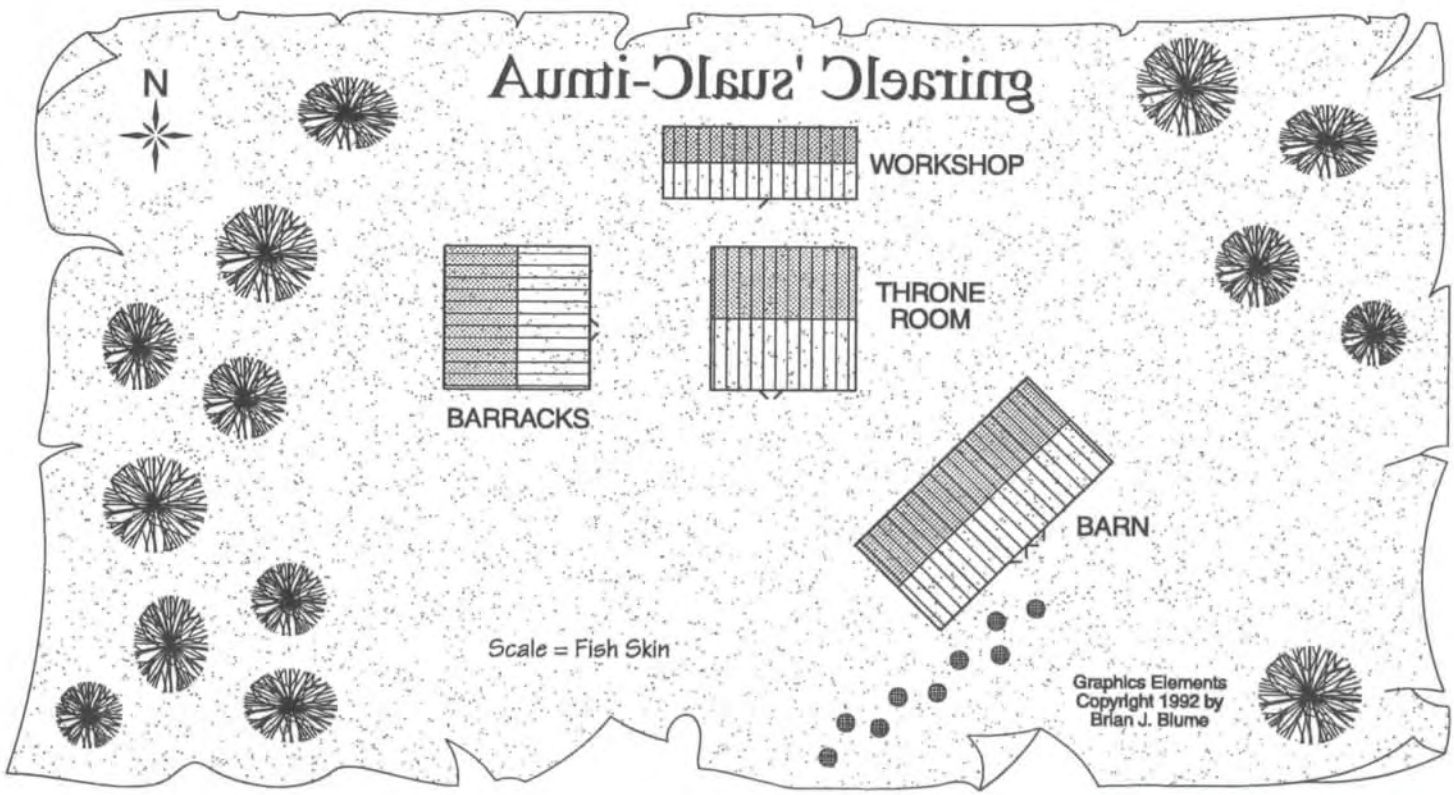
Inside the barn is a huge sleigh laden with two large sacks. Hitched to the front of the sleigh, looking thoroughly miserable, are 10 fluffy white dogs. Each dog has a pair of tree branch antlers attached to its head and a gold medallion around its neck. The lead dog is also outfitted with a red rubber ball on its nose. These dogs are Fluffy's missing relatives, dognapped by the snow drow to pull Auntie Claus's evil sleigh. The medallions read "Puffy," "Huffy," "Cousin Tuffy," "Buffy," "Muffy," "Duffy," "Scuffy," "Ruffy," "Great Aunt Stuffy," and on the lead dog "Grandpa Gruffy."

The sacks are filled with willow switches, lumps of coal, broken toys with sharp protrusions, books with missing pages, small objects that might be swallowed, hard candy covered with lint and dead bugs, and ugly dolls that say "nooo" when held.

Leaning against the walls of the barn, still dripping wet, are a dozen pair of crude snowshoes. The snowshoes are made of thick willow branches bent in a circle and laced with thinner bark and branches. The remainder of the barn is stacked with bales of hay.

As soon as the dogs become aware of the party's intent to rescue them, they set up a joyous yipping, yapping and howling. This chorus of joy will bring the remaining snow drow rushing from the barracks and the workshop to investigate.

When the PCs exit the barn, they find



themselves surrounded by two dozen snow drow. Each is brandishing a wicked-looking scimitar. They demand that the PCs drop their weapons and follow them to meet the "Boss."

Snow Drow (24): Int High; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD F3; hp 21 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA +1 "to hit" with bow or sword; SD 90% resistance to *sleep, charm,* or cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML 13; XP 175 each.

The Throne Room

Unless the party tries to resist, the snow drow escort them to a square building behind the barn. The wooden building is 60′ long on each side and 25′ tall. When the PCs reach the 20′ tall door, the lead drow knocks the refrain of "Jingle Bells" and pushes the PCs inside.

Seated on a throne of dirty ice and snow is a 21′ tall humanoid with snow white skin and light blue hair and eyes. The creature is wearing a tattered red robe with dingy white fur trim. Her long scraggly hair and beard are intertwined with tinsel. Perched on top of her dirty blue hair is a moth-eaten red stocking cap complete with a dingy white tassel. She is wearing scuffed-up black boots and a wide black belt that has been let out several times. Tucked on the side of her belt is a yellow leather pouch. The stem of a giant briar pipe is clutched firmly between her yellowed teeth. The foul blue smoke from the pipe encircles her head like a wreath.

A Wondertime tree, decorated with broken ornaments, is set up behind the throne. On the walls are several reindeer heads and wreaths constructed of dead plants and birds. Beside the throne is a large, dirty sack and what looks like a willow switch at least three inches thick.

A huge wooden cot is set in the far corner of the room and hung upside-down above the bed is a giant striped stocking. Upon seeing the party, the creature lets forth with a loud "Raaar! Raaaar! Raaaar!" while holding her ample belly. This action causes the room to shake like jelly.

Eyeing the PCs with a wicked gleam in her eyes, the giant creature speaks:

"Come in, Come in my little friends! Sit down on the floor and make yourselves comfortable. Before I introduce myself, let me tell you a little Wondertime story.

"When I was a child, all I got for Wondertime was coal and switches, switches and coal. You don't know what it's like growing up in a chaotic evil family. No matter how good or bad you were, you always got crummy presents. I vowed then that when I grew up, I'd make sure that everyone else had as rotten a Wondertime as I did. That's why tonight, when all the little children are asleep, my dogs and I will fly through the sky visiting every one of their homes. I'll steal their presents and leave them dangerous toys, boring books, stale candy and COAL AND SWITCHES!!!!! Raaar! Raaar!

"And now, please allow me to introduce myself, I call myself: AUNTIE CLAUS! I see you've met my helpers, the snow drow. Boys tell them about yourselves."

At the cue from Auntie Claus, the elves sing:

"We are naughty elves
We never clean our plate
We like to tease our sisters
And stay up real late
We never comb our hair

Our clothes are never neat
We don't wash our ears
And you should smell our feet!!"

After thanking the drow for the entertainment, Auntie Claus continues:

"To carry out my plan, I needed some creatures to pull my sleigh. Horses were out, they'd be too noisy landing on the roofs. Wolves are too hard to control, and using reindeer is just plain ridiculous. Then I hit upon the perfect animal—dogs. I sent a party of elves to Dogtown with orders to steal a team of the dogs and to stop anyone they met on the way and steal their gifts. But as luck would have it, the first carriage they came across not only was full of presents, but loaded with dogs, too. I suppose you're here to try to get the presents back. I figured they belonged to someone. I really hate to do this on Wondertime eve, but now that you know my plans, I guess I'm going to have to kill you."

With glazed eyes and a malicious smile, she invites the PCs to step up and get their "presents." She picks up the long willow switch with one hand and reaches into the sack with the other to extract a huge lump of coal. The giant attacks by either hurling lumps of coal or swatting PCs with the willow switch—whichever attack mode is appropriate at the time.

If by chance the PCs offer Auntie Claus a present, tears form in her eyes, and sniffling and snuffling, she sobs, "Gee, no one's ever given me a real present. Now I really feel bad about having to kill you."

Of course, if the giant is given the *Do Not Open 'Till Wondertime Box* (see the gift list) she will really become enraged when it explodes in her face. In this event, she directs her attacks on the giver. Note that the *Snowball From Hades* (see the gift list) will affect the Auntie Claus, as it is actually a fire-based attack.

If the PCs are able to injure the giant to within 10 hp of her death, or if they can do anything to disrupt her obviously unsteady mental state, she suddenly ceases her attacks and curls up into a ball. She cries, "I'm sorry, Mommy! Don't hit me!! Don't hit me!!" Then, with tears streaming down her face and a thumb firmly planted in her mouth she begins humming "Jingle Bells" over and over again. With Auntie Claus reverted back to her childhood and lost in her own madness, the PCs are free to rescue the dogs or search the rest of the buildings. What they do with the giant is up to them, as her mind is now that of a four-year-old's, and she is helpless to resist their attacks.

The pouch attached to the giant's belt is labeled *Whoofle Dust* and is filled with a glistening gold powder. Sprinkling the powder on any animal or object gives it the power of flight for 12 hours. If the dust is sprinkled on the dogs and the sleigh, the PCs will be able to fly back to Ealow in time for the Wondertime eve festivities. The sleigh will easily hold the PCs and the sack of toys for the orphans.

Auntie Claus (Frost Giant): Int Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 15; HD 14+1-4 hit; hp 65; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Hurling coal lumps for 2-20 points of damage, switching for 1-10 points of damage and save vs. paralysis or be stunned (−2 on attack and defense due to pain) for 1d4 rounds; SD Impervious to cold; SZ G; ML 11; XP 7,000.

Workshop

This 30′ by 80′ wooden building is the elves' workshop. Two long wooden tables have been set up for the purpose of dismantling and disfiguring toys. The tables are littered with pieces of toys, broken dolls, ripped stuffed animals, sharp pieces of metal, and wooden mallets. Shelves along the wall contain jars of paint in hideous colors, prybars, hammers, skinning knives, chisels, saws, axes, and sacks of toys in various states of disrepair. Most of the toys intended for the orphans can be recovered, as the elves did not have time to do too much dirty work to them before the PCs arrived.

Barracks

This 60′ by 60′ wooden building contains 15 crude cots (the elves sleep in shifts) and a huge moth-eaten bearskin rug. Under the rug is a tunnel leading to the underground ice caves where the snow drow make their home. If the PCs have won the fight against Auntie Claus, the elves try to escape down this hole to their subterranean village. The PCs should be discouraged from following the elves, unless they want to take on hundreds of snow drow in their natural environment.

Epilogue

Thanks to you, the orphans have their toys and Fluffy and her family are reunited for a happy Wondertime celebration. After much licking of noses, the contented canines settle down with their bowls of eggnog to enjoy the festivities.

At a sharp bark from Fluffy, the dogs turn in your direction, salute you with their paws, then slowly push gaily wrapped bones in your direction.

As Penny starts to pound out the notes of a well-known Wondertime tune on the piano, the dogs start to howl along to the melody. You contentedly settle back and think to yourself, "This has been the Fluffiest Wondertime ever."

A DM's Guide To Gift Giving

Although Mayor Penny gave the PCs Wondertime presents at the beginning of the adventure, the PCs do not know what the presents do. The following provides that information—which is for the DM only. The PCs can discover the magical properties of the gifts as they go along.

Wondertime Gifts For PC #1:

1. A small, heavy package containing a ¼ slice of fruit cake. The label reads *fruit cake of the gods.* Eating the entire piece of *fruit cake* causes a dead or near dead creature to be restored to full life and hit points. The cake can be stuffed in a dead creature's mouth with the same effect as eating it.

2. A scroll with the following spell: *Gift of warding* (Abjuration, Evocation) Sphere: Guardian; Components: V, S, M; Range: Touch; Casting Time: Special; Duration: Permanent until discharged; Area of Effect: Special; Saving Throw: Special.

To use this spell, an object of any size must be chosen and wrapped in colorful paper. A small paper tag stating the name of the intended recipient of the gift must be affixed to it. Once the spell is cast, anyone attempting to open the gift (other than the named individual) must save vs. spells or receive 3d4 points of electrical shock damage. A successful save vs. spells reduces damage by half. In addition, a *magic mouth* appears on the gift, informing the violator that he's being "naughty, not nice."

3. A scroll with the following spell: *Holly word* (Enchantment/Charm) Sphere: Animal; Components: V, S; Range: 60-yards; Casting Time: Special; Duration: 24 hours; Saving Throw: Special; Area of Effect: One intelligent creature.

The recipient of a *holly word* spell must save vs. spells or find himself overwhelmed with holiday spirit. The effects include singing carols, bestowing glad tidings, and stopping any current activity to rush out and shop for presents. The recipient is overcome by an urgent desire to spend the holidays with the family. If a save vs. spells succeeds, the recipient instead experiences a strong craving for eggnog and plum pudding. This spell only effects an intelligent creature whose hit dice are equal to or less than the level of the caster.

4. A scroll with the following spell: *Silent night 15′ radius* (Alteration) Sphere: Guardian; Components: V, S; Range: 100 yards; Casting Time: Special; Duration: 1 round/level; Saving Throw: None; Area of Effect: 15′ radius sphere.

When this spell is cast, complete silence and darkness prevail within the affected area. While the spell is in effect, no noise or light can enter or exit. The spell is stationary, unless cast upon a moving creature or object. In this case, the effect moves with the target.

Wondertime Gifts For PC #2

1. A small glass bottle of very strong-smelling cologne labeled *cheap cologne of protection.* Anyone splashing himself with a dose of the cologne lowers his Armor Class by 1 for a period of 24 hours. If the entire bottle is used, the Armor Class is reduced by 2 for the same period. There are two doses in the bottle.

2. A scroll with the following spell: *Magic mistletoe* (Enchantment/Charm) Range: 0; Components: V, S; Duration: 1 round/level; Casting Time: Special; Area of Effect: Intelligent creatures; Saving Throw: Special.

Casting this spell causes a small sprig of mistletoe to appear, suspended in air, above the caster's head. Any intelligent creature viewing the effect of this spell must immediately save vs. spell or be overcome with a desire to plant a big, sloppy kiss on the caster's mouth. If a save vs. spell succeeds, the creature will only deliver a small peck on the cheek.

3. A wide tie with a purple, pink and lime-green swirling pattern. Label inside reads *loud tie of chameleon power.* Wearing the *tie* allows the user to blend in with his surroundings, if he so chooses, with a 90% chance of success. If the attempt is successful, the wearer will not be noticed unless he moves, in which case he will be detected as a blur of colors.

4. A white leather sling engraved with words *sling of super snowballs.* The *sling* acts as a normal sling for stones and bullets. However, any snowballs shot from the *sling* turn super cold, doing 1d6 points of damage to any creature struck.

Wondertime Gifts For PC #3

1.A pair of knee-length white boxer shorts decorated with images of evergreen trees and snowmen. The label inside the shorts reads "*underwear of giant strength*—must be worn on the outside of clothing—hand wash on smooth rocks only." This *underwear,* if used as per the directions, increases the wearer's Strength to 19, giving him bonuses of +3 to hit and +7 to damage.

2. Stuffed rag doll with blond hair. Doll says "Mama" when picked up. This item is not magical. It was accidentally mixed in with the other presents.

3. A glass bottle filled with creamy eggnog. The label on bottle reads *eggnog of extra healing.* When drunk, the eggnog will restore 2d8+1 hit points of damage. If half the bottle is drunk, 1d4+1 hit points will be restored.

4. A small glass globe filled with water and containing a small figurine of a snowman. There is a layer of artificial snow on the bottom of the globe. Inscribed on the base are the words "shake me to wake me." The globe can be used up to three times within a 24-hour period. Shaking the globe causes the snow to swirl around the figurine and a 6′ tall snowman to appear in front of the user. As long as the user remains within 6′ of the snowman, all physical and magical attacks directed at him will be absorbed by the snowman. The user can still attack normally. The snowman is AC 4, has 24 hit points and saves as a 4th level wizard. Once the snowman has taken damage equal to or greater than its hit points, it melts and reappears in the globe. In all other respects the snowman is treated as a normal man of snow with a weight of approximately 180 lbs. It is not capable of movement.

Wondertime Gifts PC #4

1. Set of 12 white-metal throwing stars shaped like snowflakes. When thrown, these razor-sharp snowflakes do 1d6+1 points of damage to anything they hit.

2. A large empty velvet sack decorated with green holly designs. Printed on the sack in bright green letters is "Toys For Good Girls And Boys." Any object placed within the sack will seem to disappear, as the sack will gain neither weight nor bulkiness. Items placed within the sack may be removed at any time. This special *bag of holding* will carry up to 1,000 lbs. of items.

3. A red woolen cap with earflaps. The label inside the cap reads *cap of cold protection.* When this *cap* is worn with the ear flaps down, the wearer can withstand extremely cold temperatures, whether natural or magical, without suffering any ill effects. The wearer takes half damage from magical cold attacks, or none if his save succeeds.

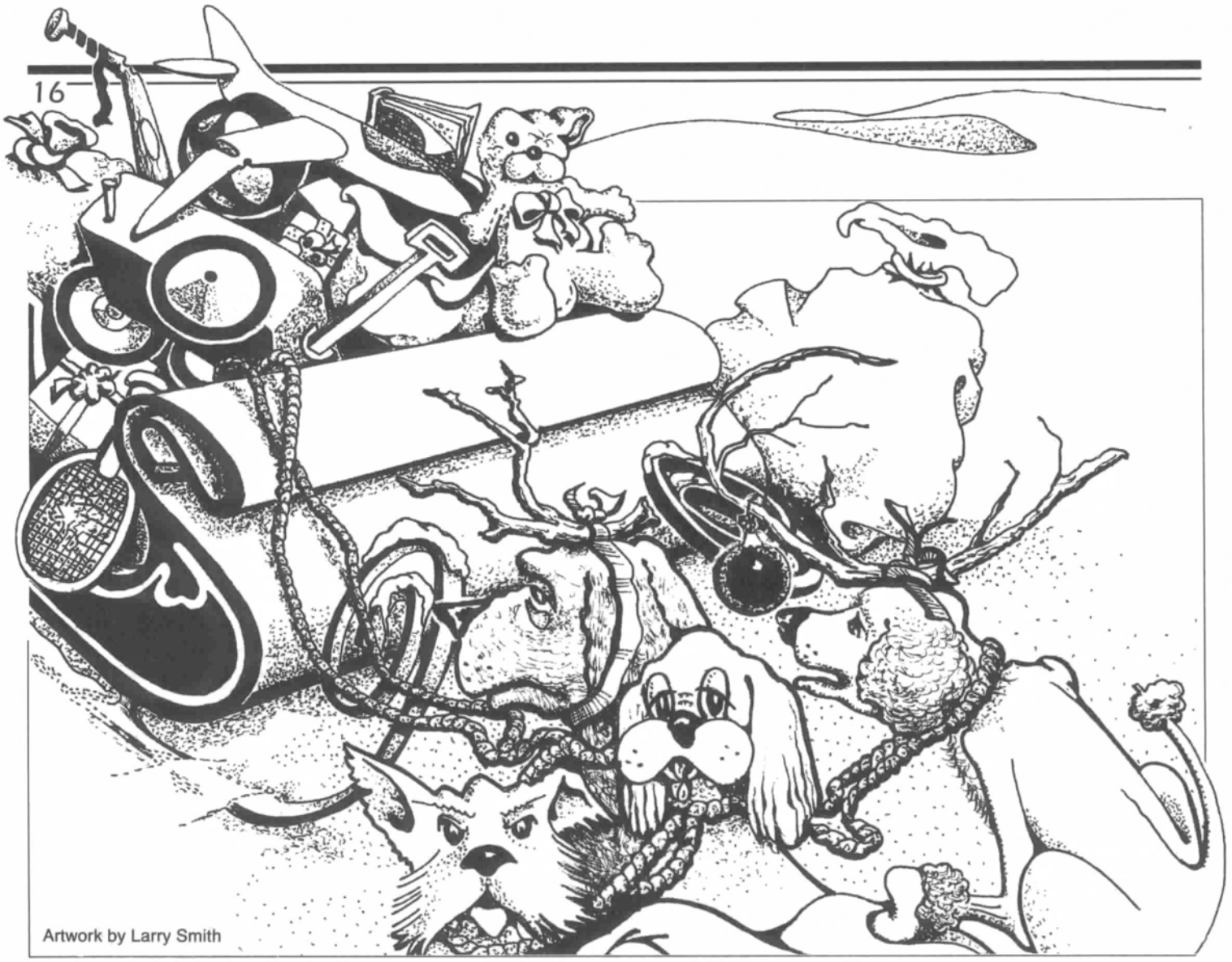
4. A pair of black rubber boots with thick metal buckles. Inside the boots is a label reading *boots of snow striding.* Engraved on the soles of the boots are candy canes and gumdrops. The wearer of these *boots* is able to walk on top of any depth of snow or thickness of ice without slipping or falling through. Movement rate is normal in other respects, although running is hindered because of the bulkiness of the *boots.*

Wondertime Gifts For PC #5

1. The label on this long red and green plaid scarf with tassels on the ends reads *scarf of protection.* Anyone wearing this scarf lowers his or her Armor Class by 1 and can keep his or her neck warm.

2. A long, translucent icicle-shaped wand. The runes inscribed on the wand read *wand of frosty*—command word is "chillout." Pointing this *wand* at a target up to 60′ away and speaking the command word causes a blast of snow to erupt from the end of the *wand* burying the target creature in a pile of snow (1d4 rounds to dig out) and doing 2d6 cold damage. There are six charges.

3. Covered ceramic pot filled with warm figgy pudding. The label reads *pudding of scrying.* This pudding may be used once per day as a scrying device. The user must gaze into the pudding and form a mental image of the subject to be located. The user must have some personal knowledge of the



Artwork by Larry Smith

subject to be located, with the chance of locating the same as that of a *crystal ball* (DMG pg. 164). If the scrying is successful, a hazy image of the subject will form on the surface of the pudding for a period of 30 seconds. Note that the pudding will not reveal the whereabouts or any other information on the subject, but will only reveal the condition and immediate surroundings of the subject at that point in time.

4. A sack of assorted hard candies. Label on sack reads "*Candi of the Magi*—Eat Me." Once a single piece of candy is eaten, the consumer will be seized with an overwhelming desire to devour the entire sack (save vs. spells to resist—if the individual is trying to resist). The eater then experiences a strong sugar rush, a feeling of power and gains a permanent level (DM should then secretly roll for additional hit points and add them to the character statistics). If a save is desired and is successful, the magic is nullified and the candy is then treated as a normal sack of sugary treats.

Wondertime Gifts For PC #6

1. A glass case containing a single snowball. The snowball seems to glow with a red light from within. The label on the case reads "Caution—*The Snowball in Hades.* This item can only be used once. After the glass case is broken, the snowball can be thrown up to 10 yards, with a normal "to hit" roll needed for success. Upon hitting the target, the snowball erupts in a ball of fire doing 6d6 points of damage to any creatures within 10′ of the point of impact. If a successful saving throw is made, the damage is halved.

2. A long red and white striped stocking with a lump in the toe. Stitched on the stocking are the words *everfull stocking.* The *stocking* always contains one random item which is determined by rolling 1d6 and consulting the chart below.

1—Orange	4—Lump of Coal
2—Bag of Gumdrops	5—Apple
3—Sack of Chestnuts	6—Rock

Once an item is removed, another immediately appears in the toe. The stocking continues generating gifts for the entire holiday season.

3. A small, square box wrapped in festive paper and tied with a bright red ribbon. A large tag on the box reads "Do NOT Open 'Til Wondertime." If opened early, the contents of the box explodes, doing 2d6 points of damage and charring the upper body of the impatient opener. If the box is opened Wondertime day, it reveals a beautiful diamond nose ring valued at 400 gp.

4. A pair of red mittens tied together with a three-foot-long string. A tag on the string reads *mittens of ogre power.* When worn, these mittens add bonuses of +3 to hit and +6 to damage to any attacks with the hands or with a hurled or held weapon. The mittens must remain attached to be effective. Because of the string, the use of two hands while wearing the mittens is severely limited. ❑

Guarded Wagon

by Tom Prusa

This adventure is designed for the six pregenerated characters included in this issue. However, PCs from your own campaign also can be used; simply have them hired as guards by a caravan.

Players' Introduction

You are among the highest paid caravan guards in the world. Your business, the Company of the Guarded Wagon, has made quite a name for itself. You have yet to lose a caravan, which is a record very few can match.

Your current employer, Sadaloc Leatherkin, is a big burly merchant who tends to order you around. This doesn't sit well with you, but he pays your fees without a complaint. He wants to meet you outside of town tonight. His caravan is forming there for its journey from Balic to Gulg. The trip will be a long one, and through very nasty country. In other words, it will be just like all of your other jobs.

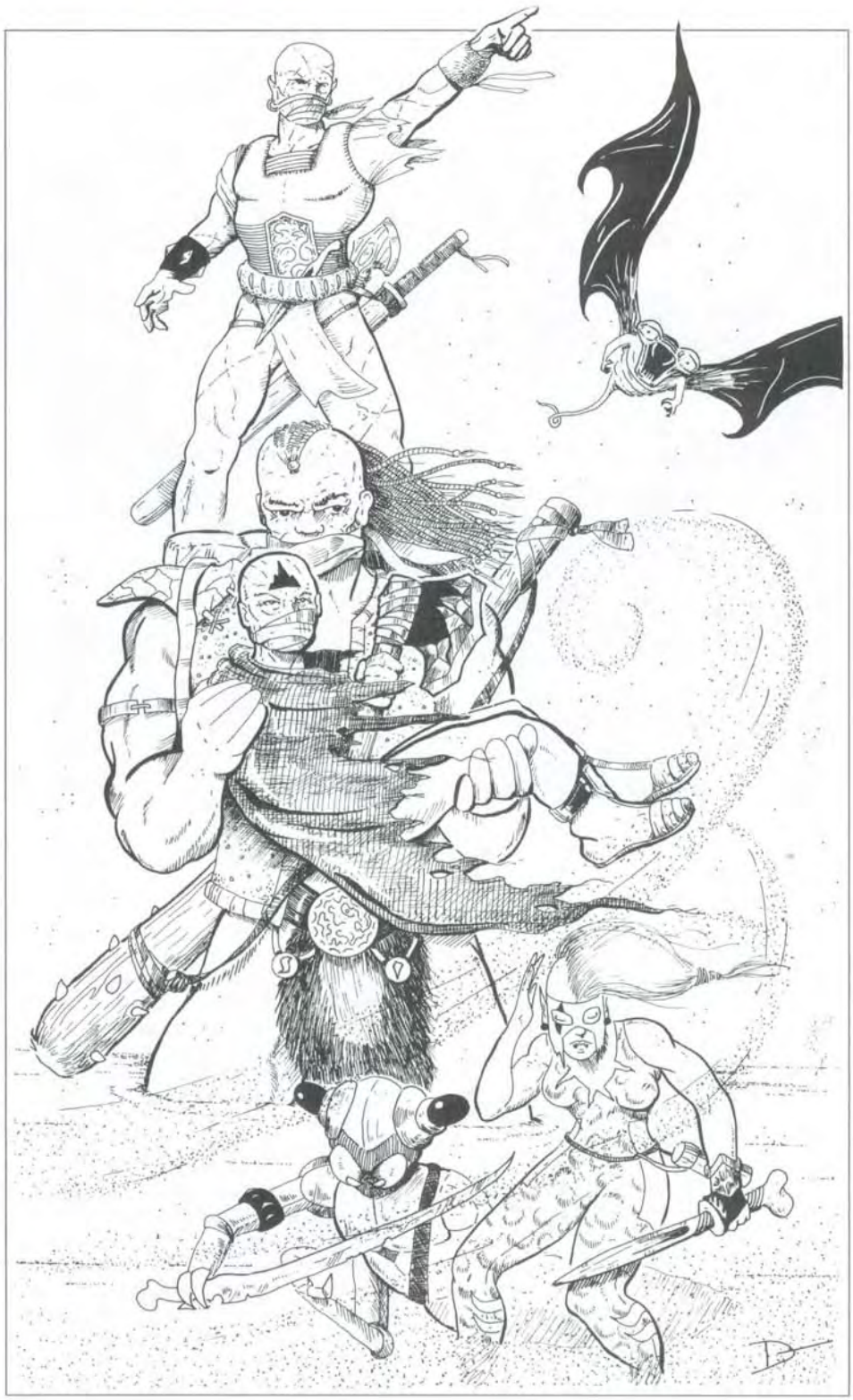
You are currently sitting in the Black Dog Bar, waiting for the sun to move from straight overhead. The temperature is around 105, but it's worse outside. The afternoon drags on, and finally the sun begins to set. As the temperature drops, activity returns to the streets. Knowing that it is near the appointed time, you set out for the gates of Balic.

Gate Guards

As you approach the gate, you see guards milling about and a man in fine silk robes giving orders to a group of crossbowmen. The archers run up the stairs and take positions on the ramparts while a pair of half-giants drag away two humans and a dwarf. The captive trio appears badly beaten and is likely headed to the slave pens.

The excitement dies down a bit, and the templars and guards resume watchful positions.

The PCs start about 100 feet from the gates. There is quite a bit of traffic in



this area, and there are a number of stables for kanks (large riding insects), imix (larger riding lizards), and mekillots (really large lizards that pull the caravan wagons).

There are 20 crossbowmen on the walls, and the gates are manned by three half-giants and five templars. The templars are not going to let the PCs out of town without a good reason and a substantial bribe. The chief templar is named Lactar Smid.

Lactar Smid: Int High; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 10 (Templar 10); hp 60; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (bone short sword +2); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M; ML 18; XP 2,000 (500 for bribing)

Spells remaining: *Cure light wounds* x2, *cause light wounds, command, sanctuary, hold person* x2, *silence 15' radius, spiritual hammer, dispel magic, cause paralysis, speak with dead, cure serious wounds, cause serious wounds, poison, flame strike, true seeing*

Lesser templars (4): Int High; AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 4 (Templar 4); hp 22 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6-1 (obsidian short swords); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M, ML 14; XP 420 each

Spells remaining: *Cure light wounds, cause light wounds, command* x2, *detect magic, aid, silence 15' radius, barkskin*

Half-giants (2): Int Average; AL LE (today); AC 4; MV 24; HD 5 (Fighter 5); hp 66, 98; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+6 (obsidian two-handed swords); SZ M; ML 12; XP 420 each

Crossbowmen (20): Int Average; AL LE; AC 8; MV 24; HD 3 (Fighter 3); hp 20 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4-1 (light crossbow bolts); SZ M; ML 10; XP 175 each

Lactar wants a bribe. He is willing to settle for 1 silver piece, but if the PCs ask him how much he wants, he demands a gold piece. If they fail to offer a bribe, he threatens them with prison or slavery, mentioning how the king needs new contestants for the arena. He is not really interested in arresting the PCs, just in getting a profit.

If the PCs make threats, Lactar waves his templars and half-giants into position. At this point, it will require at least a gold piece bribe to get the PCs out of this predicament.

If the PCs refuse to pay anything, Lactar orders the guards on the wall to aim their crossbows at the PCs, who he places under arrest. At this point, a bribe of more than a gold piece is necessary, or the PCs will be led off to the arena. If the PCs try to fight their way out of the gate, they must face the two half-giants, templars, and crossbowmen. Lactar retreats if there is combat, climbing up on the wall. From there he can cast *flame strike*, following it up with a *hold person* or two. The crossbowmen also fire at the PCs, but only for two rounds.

Terrible Tembo

Yesterday you made your way out of Balic and joined the caravan. It is a small caravan, with only one mekillot-drawn wagon that is 20 feet high, 45 feet long, and covered with bone spurs and heavy wooden slabs. The caravan master and the three drivers ride inside while you walk.

The first day's travel was uneventful, and now you are resting during the worst heat of the day. Those of you on watch are sitting in the shade of the wagon, listening to the snores of the drivers and your other companions. The wind is blowing briskly, and small bits of sand sting your faces. This will be another long, hot day.

The PCs are about to be attacked by a trio of tembo. Tembo are nasty creatures which attempt to sneak in close enough to leap on their unsuspecting victims. Since all of the drivers and the owner are sleeping under the wagon, only the PCs are obvious targets.

Unless a character specifies where he or she is sleeping, the resting PCs are presumed to be under the wagon. It is the only place for shade.

Tembo (3): Int High; AL CE; AC 4; MV 15; HD 4; hp 19, 20, 21; THAC0 15; #AT 5; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6/1-6/2-8; SA psionics, bite causes energy drain; SD psionics, 40% chance to dodge missiles; SZ M; ML 20; XP 975 each

Tembo have the psionic powers of *life drain, shadow form, displacement,* and *death field generation. They have power scores of 10 and 80 PSPs each.*

The tembo fight to the death and attempt to carry away any PCs or NPCs who are killed.

Dangerous Oasis

After two more days of traveling, you have finally reached the first oasis on the trek. It is little more than a waterhole. The caravan master tells you he expects to be here for a full day; it will take that long to get enough water to fill all of the barrels.

You have a day of rest, although you must continue to be watchful. The chance of an encounter at an oasis is much higher than anywhere else. After about four hours, just after dawn, a group of figures appears on the horizon. There are a little more than a dozen of them. Those on watch rouse the rest of the company, and you all watch them move closer to the oasis. As they get nearer you see that they are scrabs, lizard-like little men with pincers surrounding their mouths. You know scrabs have a real fondness for elf flesh.

As they approach the oasis they politely ask if they can have some water.

Sadaloc, the caravan master, has no objection; he has traded with scrabs before. However, he had more guards with him then, so he warns the PCs to be on watch every second. Sadaloc is glad there are no elves among the drivers. The scrabs are cordial (for scrabs), taking turns at the waterhole, asking the PCs about their weapons and armor, and getting into and under everything. The leader of the scrabs engages in an animated discussion with Sadaloc, who shakes his head. Then the leader of the scrabs approaches Jearalith and asks if the elf (he means Josie), is for sale. If the players are not using the pregenerated characters, the scrabs will select a PC at random.

The scrab leader offers to pay two metal weapons and a pretty rock he found for the character, who will be used for food. If he is turned down, he raises his offer to two metal weapons and four pretty rocks. He shows Jearalith the rocks (diamonds worth 100 gp each). If the scrab is turned down again, he makes veiled threats about uncooperative humans and what can happen to them.

Eventually the leader gives up and motions the rest of the scrabs to follow him away from the oasis.

After another three hours, during the hottest part of the day, the scrabs appear again. They have used their *chameleon power* to blend in with the sand and have approached to within 30 yards of the caravan. They attack, and the PCs suffer a −4 penalty to their surprise roll.

Scrabs (12): Int Average; AL CE; AC 4; MV 18; HD 5; hp 18 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4 + grip; SA psionics; SD psionics; SZ M; ML 13; XP 650 each

Scrabs have the psionic powers of *animal affinity* (lizards), *biofeedback, chameleon power, enhanced strength, mind over body, contact, mindlink, conceal thoughts, inflict pain, thought shield, mind blank, psychic crush* and *mind thrust.* They have power scores of 13 and 61 PSPs each. In melee, the scrabs have a chance of gripping a limb with their pincers. On an unmodified roll of 18 or better, the scrab has grasped a limb. This means that it does damage automatically with the grasping claw, and has a +4 chance to hit with the other pincer. An open doors roll is required to break free, and that is the only action allowed for the round.

Scrab leaders (3): Int High; AL CE; AC 4; MV 18, Br 6; HD 7; hp 33, 28, 24; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4 + grip; SA psionics; SD psionics, spells; SZ M; ML 13; XP 1,400 each

Scrabs have the psionic powers of *animal affinity* (lizards), *biofeedback, chameleon power, enhanced strength, mind over body, contact, mindlink, conceal thoughts, inflict pain, thought shield, mind blank, psychic crush* and *mind thrust.* They have power scores of 13 and 61 PSPs each.

The leaders are defilers of 7th level. This means that when they cast spells, up to a seven-yard ring around them turns gray and lifeless.

Spells memorized: *Burning pincers, chill touch, magic missile, protection from good, invisibility, scare, detect psionics, hold person, non-detection,* and *psionic dampener.*

The scrabs have a devious battle plan. All of the scrabs have used *enhanced strength,* and now have an effective Strength of 18. (+1 to hit, +2 to damage).

In the first round, eight scrabs close, one on each PC except Josie, who gets three attackers. The other four normal scrabs attempt to establish psionic contact with four of the PCs. These can be chosen at random. The three leaders begin their spell assault: one casts *detect psionics,* and the other two cast *magic missiles* at Sud and Maradoc.

In round two, The scrabs continue to melee. If any of the remaining four successfully made contact last round, they close and attempt to touch the affected PC and *inflict pain.* This requires a successful power check and a melee hit. The victim must make a saving throw vs. spells, or pass out from the pain. Such pain lasts 1-6 rounds. If the saving throw is successful, the PC is still −2 to hit and damage and suffers a −2 armor class penalty. Any scrabs that failed to make contact last round will try again. If a leader successfully detected psionics, he casts *psionic dampener.* If the targeted PC fails the saving throw, he or she cannot use psionic abilities. The remaining two scrab leaders cast *hold person* spells at Josie if she is still fighting, otherwise their spells will go wherever they will be most effective.

The attack continues in round three. If Josie is unconscious or held, three scrabs pick her up and head for the desert. Otherwise, they continue to concentrate on her. If Sud or Maradoc have finished off their opponents by now, the leaders begin to concentrate on them. The leader who still has his *magic missile* uses that on Sud, and the other two move to close with Maradoc.

In round four and beyond, the scrabs continue to try to get Josie as a prisoner. If they are successful, the scrabs attempt to break off melee and escape into the desert. If Josie is still fighting, the scrabs continue to try to make contact and use *inflict pain.* The leader that still has his *hold person* spell uses it on Josie, and the other two begin trying to make contact with anyone who is hurting them (probably Sud or Maradoc).

If the scrabs get away with Josie, the PCs are probably going to pursue. This will not be difficult, as most of the PCs are faster than the scrabs.

During their flight, the scrabs will cure Josie with crude *healing ointment.* This will keep her at 1 hit point and will permanently lower her Charisma by one. The ordeal has left Josie with no spells in memory.

If the PCs catch up to the scrabs, the creatures fight to the death for their food. However, the leader scrabs will flee to find prey another day. If it took the PCs more than four rounds to catch up with the scrabs, one of the leader scrabs was able to steal Josie's magic sword before escaping.

Metal Merchant

Sadaloc is very impressed by your resistance to the scrab attack. He orders his drivers to collect the shells from the dead scrabs, as they make good armor. You end up with half of the shells, which are worth one silver piece each.

As you finish cleaning up after the battle, another figure materializes on the horizon. This one is riding a kank, which leads another kank. The second kank is loaded down with bundles and bags.

Behind them rides a half-giant mounted on an imix. As the figures get closer you see that the lead rider is a half-elf. He waves at you as he approaches the oasis.

When the half-elf nears, the PCs can see he is richly dressed. His half-giant bodyguard is obviously wary and alert. The half-elf is Chlopeck Divot, a merchant, and his bodyguard is Fuddle. They are on their way to Balic from Gulg. The merchant is a dealer in metal, and as such is carrying very valuable cargo. No metal can be seen on the spare kank, although the half-giant is carrying two metal long swords, and the merchant has two metal daggers on him. There are several water barrels strapped to the imix and Fuddle's saddle.

"Well, well. A guarded wagon, it seems. And it looks as though you've had some trouble recently. Something fatal to a Templar, I hope?

Sadaloc lets the PCs deal with the half-elf; he doesn't want anyone too near his wagon.

The half-elf merchant is eager for news, wanting to know what kind of bribes he'll have to pay to get into Balic, can he share the water at the oasis, have the PCs seen any elves around, etc. He knows there have been reports of elven raiders near Gulg, but he and Fuddle didn't have any trouble. Of course, with Fuddle along, trouble doesn't usually come looking for him. The next oasis, three days ahead on the trail, was dry when he and Fuddle passed it. They are nearing the end of their water supply and were very glad to see this oasis. If they have to, they'll wait until tomorrow to fill up their barrels, they have enough water to last that long.

After chatting with the PCs for a while, Chlopeck gets down to business. He is a trader, and he smells an opportunity for a hefty profit. He has metal weapons for sale, and all he wants is a fair price. His prices are listed below.

- 10 metal-tipped arrows: 2 silver each
- Two short swords: 5 gold each
- One long sword: 10 gold
- Two daggers: 2 gold each
- One knife: 1 gold
- Two battle axes: 7 gold
- One two-handed sword: 12 gold
- One short sword: 10 gp

Chlopeck is not aware that one of the battle axes is magical—*+2*, and the single short sword is *+1, +2 vs. magic using creatures.*

Obviously, the PCs are not going to walk away loaded down with metal weapons, as they do not have enough money to purchase them all.

Chlopeck will not haggle. However, he will consider trading for permanent magic. For example, Greckle's only possessions that would get him a battle axe are his *ring of regeneration* or magical dagger. Take note if Greckle spends his caravan funds. Acquiring metal weapons is not part of his focus.

If the PCs decide to fight to get the weapons, Fuddle defends the goods, while Chlopeck disappears. Chlopeck will reappear, just after he drives both his daggers into a character's back. He will also try and soften any weapon doing serious damage to Fuddle. The PCs may be able to get all of the metal weapons this way, but they likely will have a few fatalities to show for it.

Chlopeck: Int High; AL N; AC 4; MV 24; HD 7 (Thief 7); hp 34; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4 +2/1d4 +2 (steel daggers); SA backstab for 3× damage; SD *ring of invisibility*; SZ M; ML 12; XP 1,400 (250 for getting news of Gulg, and 250 for buying a weapon instead of fighting)

Chlopeck has the wild psionic talent of *soften.* His power score is 18, and he has 40 PSPs. On a successful power check, non-magical weapons lose one from their chance to hit and damage. When minuses reach 5, the affected weapon is rubbery and useless. Magic weapons get their owner's save vs. magic to avoid the effect.

Fuddle: Int Average; AL CN (today); AC 4; MV 18; HD 10 (Fighter 10); hp 228; THAC0 6; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8 +11/1-8 +11/1-8; SZ L; ML 12; XP 2,000

Fuddle is a long sword specialist. He uses a long sword in each hand, and has almost maximum hit points for his level, race, and Constitution. He is fiercely loyal to Chlopeck and is trying to become a merchant. Wild psionic talent: *mind bar.* His power score is 10, and he has 58 PSPs. A successful power check makes him 75% magic resistant to enchantment/charm magics, and immune to domination/possession.

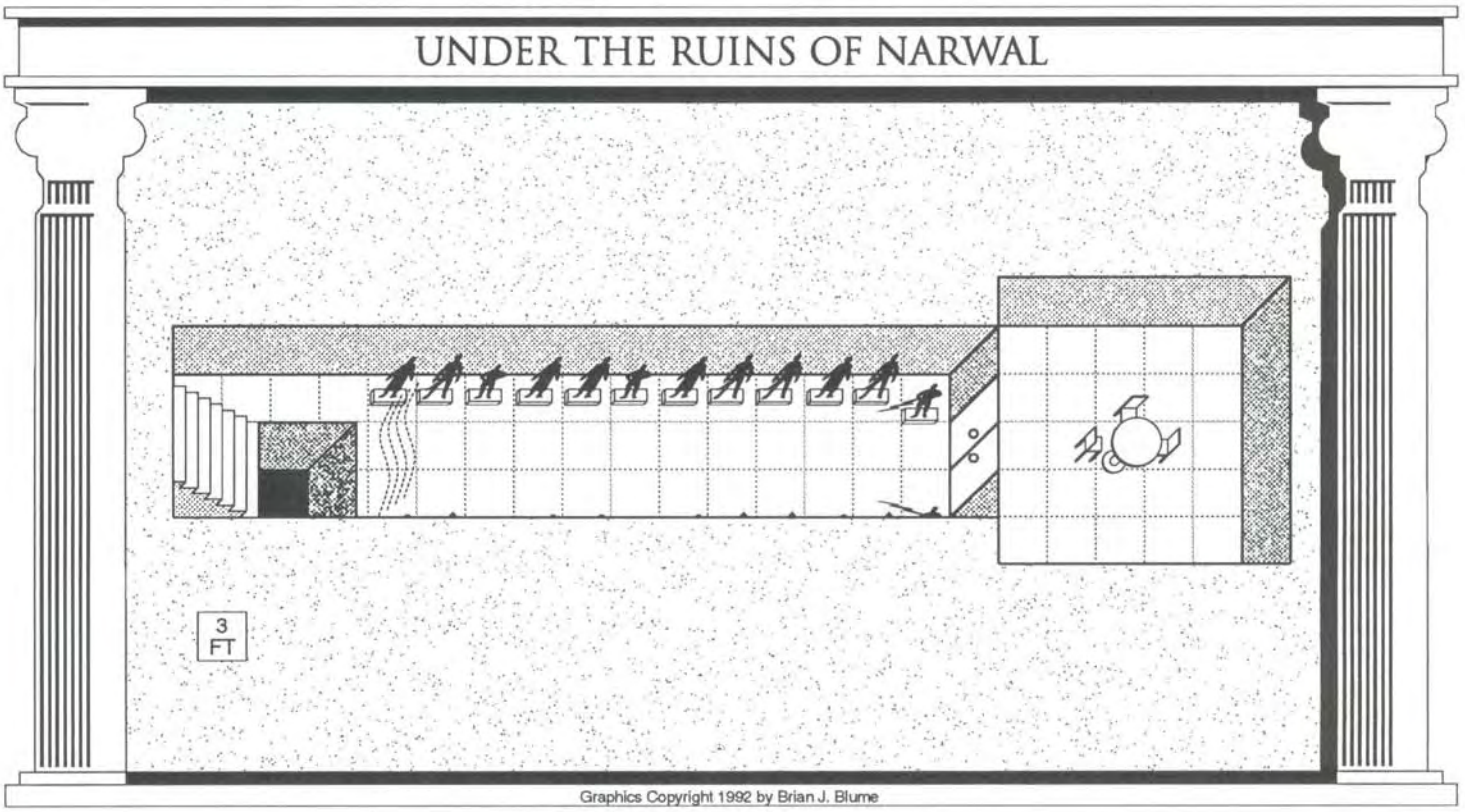
Wanting A Wheel

Yesterday you left the oasis, looking forward to making up some time. Now you are delayed again. An axle and wheel on the wagon broke this morning. Greckle and Sadaloc have been looking it over. Greckle is sure he can fashion another wheel, but you need some wood. There are dead trees near some ruins about half a mile away, but the ruins are across an estuary of the Sea of Silt. This could be a problem.

Sadaloc is not going to risk himself or his drivers trying to cross the silt. It is up to the PCs to get the wood. If they want to leave someone behind to watch the wagon, that is up to them.

The PCs have a challenge in front of them. They must cross 200 yards of silt. Silt is extremely grainy, and someone who goes under lasts no more than four rounds before suffocating. The PCs have a magic item that allows them to walk on the silt, (L'arin'ti's *ring of silt walking*), and Josie has a psionic talent that lets her walk on most surfaces, including silt. Sud can wade through the silt; it is only about 10 feet deep. Of course, if he loses his footing, he's in big trouble.

If Josie uses *body equilibrium,* she must make a power check and three Dexterity checks. The power check is to get her power going, the Dexterity checks are to keep her on course. If she fails her power check she knows she can't go, if she fails a Dexterity check a slight wind has blown her off course. Each failed Dexterity check means she must make another power check or lose her concentration, and sink into the silt. Sud and L'arin'ti can carry people across. Other options can work, based on the players' ingenuity.



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The Ruins of Narwal

Having negotiated the silt, you stand before a ruined building. There are several small dead trees in the area, but none big enough to provide the kind of wood you need for a wheel. One of them might make a decent axle, if it is cut and shaved smooth. The building's walls are still standing, but the doors and windows are all gone. It looks like the roof has caved in as well. From your position, you can see three window frames and a door frame. The door is blocked with rubble and broken stone. The windows are small, too small for Sud to enter. In fact, Maradoc and L'arin'ti would have quite a time squeezing through them.

Greckle must at least give directions on making the axle, and help measure it out. Anyone else who attempts it must make an ability check vs. one-half Wisdom. Failure means the axle is either too thick or too thin. If it is too thick, Greckle can save it. If it is too thin, the party must start over. There is only one more tree that could serve as an axle.

Nothing in sight looks like it would make a good wagon wheel. The PCs must enter the ruins and try to find wood or something that can serve as a wagon wheel. The PCs can climb in through the window frame or attempt to clear the rubble away from the doorway. The window frame does not pose any dangers, however Sud cannot make it through, and Maradoc and L'arin'ti must make successful Dexterity checks to enter.

It will take two rounds to clear the doorway. While they are clearing it, the door frame collapses, causing 2d6 points of damage to whoever is doing the work. Checking the structure or strength of the doorway allows a Wisdom check to see where it needs to be braced. A slab of stone lying nearby will make an adequate brace.

Inside the building, the PCs can poke around for a while. It takes four turns of searching before they find a set of stairs leading down.

The stairway is trapped and activates when the first PC sets foot on the steps. The stairs go flat like a sliding board, propelling that PC down into a pit. At the same time, all of the doors and windows in the building above are supposed to slam shut. Since there are no doors or windows, the walls collapse.

The PC who slides downstairs suffers 3d6 points of damage (Dexterity check for half damage), and lands in a small pile of dried out crystals which are the remnants of an acid pit. Everyone upstairs and inside the walls suffers 5d6 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage).

A *find traps* spell or Josie's find traps skill could locate the trap on the stairs. *Detect magic* reveals nothing, since the trap is mechanical. Greckle can also detect unsafe walls with a successful roll, and sliding/shifting walls (the stairs) with another successful roll.

Ancient Statues

Having reached the lower level of the ruins, you look around. You are in a long hallway lined with statues. The statues are dust covered, and it's hard to make out what they are supposed to look like in this dismal light. You can only see the first half dozen or so. The hallway stretches on, with more shadowy figures lining the walls. There is nothing in the immediate area that can be used for a wagon wheel.

Pause to let the PCs come up with a light source and make up a marching order. When they move on, the trap begins to take effect. There are 24 statues, all of ancient fighters, heroes, and sailors. The first pair of statues radiates faint magic. The third pair,

sixth pair, and 12th pair (final pair) also radiate magic. If the PCs *detect magic,* they learn that the first pair and sixth pair radiate alteration magic. The third pair and the 12th pair radiate enchantment/charm and evocation magic respectively.

At the end of the hallway is a door which hangs on one hinge. The last pair of statues stands on either side.

As the first person passes the sixth pair of statues, a magical trap is set off:

- The first pair of statues begins to glow, and a *wall of force* springs up between them.
- The third pair of statues begins to move. One arm of each statue reaches out and tries to grab any nearby PCs, holding them up in the path of the oncoming magical assault. The statues grab with a THAC0 of 16, and once they grasp a PC, a successful bend bars/lift gates roll is required to break free.
- The sixth pair of statues speak, via a *magic mouth.*

> "You must discover the key or lie here forever. The key is only a short. . . ." (Leave off speaking as though the message was interrupted.)

- The 12th pair of statues emit *lightning bolts,* which travel three feet above the ground for the length of the passage. The *lightning bolts* cause 8d6 points of damage. Anyone in the hallway must make a surprise roll and a saving throw vs. magic. Characters who are not surprised can save vs. spells for no damage (they jump out of the way) and do not take damage from the bolts. A failed saving throw means they suffer one-half damage. Surprised PCs take full damage, save vs. spell at −2 for half. PCs in a statue's grasp are considered surprised and cannot apply dexterity bonuses to the save.

After the first round, any PCs who state they are lying on the floor need not make saving throws. The *lightning bolts* are emitted each round, until the key is found. The key to the trap is the *magic mouth* message. The key is a short. The 12th pair of statues are covered by a thin sheet of copper, which is currently covered with dust. If someone brushes away the dust, and grounds the statues (using a metal item), the *lightning bolts* are harmlessly grounded, and the *wall of force* comes down. If only one of the statues is grounded, it stops one set of *lightning bolts* and half of the wall of force. If the PCs cannot figure out the key, they might opt for violence. If either of the 12th pair of statues is hit (AC 4) for 23 points of damage, it will be destroyed and the *lightning bolts* will stop. PCs cannot attack the statues while lying on the ground; there isn't enough leverage.

The doorway at the end of the hall is three feet wide and six feet tall. Inside is a square room, with an old wooden table and three ramshackle chairs. The table is not perfect for a wagon wheel, but with a little effort, it can be made to work. Of course, the PCs must figure out how to get the table top through the hallway, and across the silt.

Elves On The Warpath

> Having fixed the wagon wheel, you have been on the road again for three uneventful days. You have seen almost no signs of life, except for an occasional flying creature, far off in the distance. Yesterday Sadaloc claimed he saw an elf running parallel to the trail, but you haven't seen any sign of elves today. In only two days you will be in Gulg, collecting for another successful mission.
>
> Your thoughts wander until you spot the drivers pulling the wagon to a stop. They begin fastening all of the openings on the wagon. "Elves, ho!" they shout. In the distance you see a line of dust. Elven raiders!

Elves (40): Int High; AL N; AC 4; MV 36+; HD 3 (Fighter 3); hp 15 each; THAC0 16 or 17; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d6-2/1d6-2 (obsidian tipped arrows) or 1d6 (bone short swords); SD psionic *levitation* (power score 10, PSPs 20 each); SZ M; ML 13; XP 420 each.

Elf subchiefs (3): Int High; AL N; AC 2; MV 36+; HD 5 (Fighter 5); hp 28 each; THAC0 11 or 14; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (metal tipped arrows) or 1d6+1 (bone short swords); SA psionic *life-draining* (power score 13, PSPs 41 each; transfers 1d6 hit points from victim to elf on a successful power score and hit); SD psionic *levitation* (power score 10); SZ M; ML 13; XP 975 each

Elf chieftain (1): Int Exceptional; AL N; AC 0; MV 36+; HD 7 (Fighter 7/Wizard 5); hp 34; THAC0 10 or 11; #AT 2 or 3/2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (metal tipped arrows) or 1d8+3 (wood long sword +3); SA psionic *life detection* (power score 13, PSPs 63), spells; SD spells; SZ M; ML 13; XP 3,000

The chieftain is a preserver mage who has these spells in memory: *Chill touch, magic missile, charm person, detect magic, detect invisibility, detect psionics, Melf's acid arrow, spook, lightning bolt, Melf's minute meteors,* and *minor globe of invulnerability.*

The elves have a simple plan. They are going to kill everyone on the caravan and take all of the goods and water for themselves. They are not evil, this is just how they survive. If the PCs are willing to give up everything they own, and the wagon, too, the elves will let them go.

During the first two combat rounds the elves close, moving from about half a mile away to about 70 yards away. The PCs have this much time to prepare. The elves surround the wagon, at a distance of 70 yards, and begin to shower arrows on the wagon, and on the PCs and NPCs. Any PCs on top of the wagon can take partial cover (+4 bonus to AC), since the wooden slabs of the wagon extend up above the top of the wagon for about three feet.

Each elf can shoot two arrows a round. The elves keep moving and do not bunch together. The elves want to locate any spellcasters and concentrate the arrow fire on them.

The subchiefs aim at anyone on top of the wagon, while the chieftain casts *detect psionics* and *detect invisibility.* As soon as he can identify a spellcaster, the chieftain casts *magic missile* and *Melf's acid arrow* at that target. If the chieftain comes under fire, he casts his *minor globe of invulnerability* on the following round.

When the PC mages are down, the elves will rush the wagon. The subchiefs melee the most dangerous PCs, using their *life-draining* abilities as often as possible. The chieftain casts a *charm person* on one of the humans, or the half-elf. If the charm is successful, he tells the affected PC to drop everything and flee for his life. Next, the chieftain closes with his magical wooden sword, probably on the gladiator. He saves his *spook* spell for an emergency, and his *Melf's minute meteors* will be used to smoke out those inside of the wagon.

If more than 20 fighter elves are killed, or more than 15 and the subchiefs are killed, the remainder attempt to escape.

After dealing with the Elves, the PCs can finish their trip to Gulg and collect their payment. ❑

Maradoc Wilmot

8th Level Male Mul Gladiator

STR: 20
INT: 12
WIS: 11
DEX: 16
CON: 21
CHR: 10

AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 104
Alignment: Neutral
Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Elvish
THAC0: 13
Move: 24

Age: 30
Height: 6′ 4″
Weight: 245 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: None/Green

Weapon Proficiencies: All, specialized in: short sword, hand axe, bastard sword, short bow, flail
Nonweapon proficiencies: Blind-fighting, mining (11), healing (12)
Water Requirement: 1 gallon a day (½ gallon if in the shade)
Rest Requirement: Must sleep after every 46 hours of hard exertion, normal activities (including marching) require sleep every week or so
Magic Items: *Wooden bastard sword +2, leather bracers of fire resistance, potion of healing* (apple)
Equipment: Leather armor, two wooden hand axes, two bone daggers, belt pouch, One-gallon water bottle (full), 17 cp
Special Gladiator Abilities: Maximize armor (+1 bonus to AC), proficient in all weapons, multiple weapon specializations
Psionics (wild talent): *Flesh armor* (18)
Psionic Strength Points: 56

My face is a map of my past. Scars adorn almost every part of my body. The scars and the fact that I never did worry about washing helped to give me a fearsome look in the arena.

I was the best that there ever was, undefeated in the arena. Then again, most gladiators who aren't undefeated aren't still alive. Even in the fiercely competitive world of the arena, I stood out. I was ruthless, fierce, and fair. Fair in that anyone who ever raised a blade against me is now dead. I don't believe in mercy, someone who wants mercy had better show me mercy first. I have what some call a cynical view of the world, but I think it's practical. Anyone who doesn't

Sud

8th Level Male Half-giant Fighter

STR: 22
INT: 10
WIS: 10
DEX: 12
CON: 19
CHR: 10

AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 6
Hit Points: 132
Alignment: Good (other half can change every morning)
Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Halfling
THAC0: 13
Move: 30

Age: 25
Height: 10′ 5″
Weight: 1,544 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Two-handed club (specialized) (dmg 3d6), trident, two-handed mace (dmg 2d6)
Nonweapon proficiencies: Blind-fighting, water find (8)
Water Requirement: 4 gallons a day (2 gallons if in the shade)
Rest Requirement: Normal
Magic Items: *Wooden two-handed club +3, leather vest of protection +1*
Equipment: Hide armor, two-handed wooden mace, obsidian long sword, belt pouch, 8-gallon waterskin (full), large leather shield, 5 cp, 3 bits
Special Abilities: 60′ infravision, flexible alignment
Psionics (wild talent): *Complete healing* (19)
Psionic Strength Points: 58

I am a big person with a friendly smile. I have vivid red scar on the left side of my face—that gaj had sharp claws.

Some people call me wishy-washy, but I just like to try new things. One day I'll feel like being a cleric, then I might try my hand at magic. Most of the time I imitate Maradoc, because he's the best fighter I ever saw. But if I get bored I'll try to be sneaky like Josie, or a be hunter like Larry. I get bored easily.

I once worked in Tyr. It was easy work: bashing heads, keeping the gladiators in line, and scaring the peasants. But I found I didn't like scaring peasants, and the gladiators didn't look like they were having a good time. Besides, I was getting really bored. I eventually decided to take off on my own. Some templars tried to stop me, so I bashed their heads in—that

Jearalith Rednap

9th Level Male Human Preserver Enchanter

STR: 10
INT: 19
WIS: 12
DEX: 17
CON: 16
CHR: 16

AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 41
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Halfling, Thri-kreen
THAC0: 18
Move: 24

Age: 43
Height: 6′ 2″
Weight: 171 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Black/Green

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, sling
Nonweapon proficiencies: Somatic concealment (19), heat protection (19), read/write Common (20), water find (19)
Water Requirement: 1 gallon a day (½ gallon if in the shade)
Rest Requirement: Normal
Magic Items: *Cloak of Protection +2, bone dagger +1, belt pouch of holding* (1,500 lbs., 250 cu. ft. capacity; this item and anything carried in it is invisible), *wand of magic missiles* (10 charges), *scroll* (*hold person, feeblemind, sleep,* and *knock* scribed at 10th level)
Spells/day: 4 3 3 2 1 plus one extra enchantment/charm per spell level
Equipment: Spell scrolls, 2-gallon waterskin (full), pint flask of strong brandy, 3 torches, fire building kit, 2 weeks' iron rations, pen and ink, 2 sheets of blank parchment, erdlu egg, 5 gp, 7 sp, 3 cp, 5 bits
Spell scrolls: Level One: *Charm person*, comprehend languages, detect magic, read magic, shocking grasp, sleep*, Tenser's floating disc, ventriloquism*; Level Two: *Blindness, detect evil, detect psionics†, Melf's acid arrow, ray of enfeeblement*, strength*; Level Three: *Dispel magic, flame arrow, haste, hold person*, suggestion**; Level Four: *Charm monster*, enchanted weapon*, psionic dampener†, polymorph other;* Level Five: *Cone of cold, feeblemind*, hold monster**

* enchantment/charm spell
† new spell from the *DARK SUN™ Rules Book*

Psionics (wild talent): *Biofeedback* (14)
Psionic Strength Points: 71

I am a dignified, suave man of the world. I try to look like someone who is used to being in charge. My carefully cultivated air of command really helps me deal with people.

My old master, Arsineus, taught me that there is only one path to the true Art. Anyone who does not practice magic in this way is a defiler, and an enemy. This view made Arsineus very unpopular with the local templars, and he spent most of his life in hiding. He was a father to me. I grew up in the streets of Tyr as a beggar, but Arsineus gave me pride and knowledge.

Because good wizards are persecuted, We have formed alliances to share safety and knowledge. Each alliance is a strict one, and anyone who betrays it will be hunted down and killed. I am very careful not to reveal my alliance connections in the different cities I visit. I generally go to the elven market, and look for elves selling herbs. I merely ask them if they have some mandrake root. If they do, I buy the root. Most of the time they laugh, but if they ask if a pinch of sand mother ichor would do, it means that they are my contacts to the Veiled Alliance in the city.

I can pass messages to many cities along the caravan routes. This is the chief reason I helped start this company. We call it the Company of the Guarded Wagon. The group includes:

Sud: This half-giant has a good heart. His head is a bit empty, and he frequently tries to imitate my spellcasting motions. I caution him not to do it when others can see.

Greckle of the Mountain: A dwarven priest of the earth. He can summon a wall of stone in almost no time at all. Pretty impressive.

Josie Mendicant: This half-elf is also a servant of the alliance. Being a half-elf, she has an inferiority complex as big as Sud. I have to watch her, especially around elves. Other than that, she's someone I could get interested in.

Maradoc Wilmot: A gladiator, and the backbone of our company. When I first met him, I charmed him. This might have had bad consequences, but I really like the guy and he seems to like me, too. The charm should have worn off years ago, so it must be true friendship.

L'arin'ti: This mantis warrior is a wilderness expert. She rounds out the company. Her hunting and survival skills have helped out many a time. She's also no slouch in combat.

was something different.

I traveled a bit and met Greckle. He didn't like me at first, and doesn't like me much now. But I helped him out in a battle with a few dozen templars and guards, and now he lets me follow him around. He joined some mages and a gladiator, and we have formed our own company to guard caravans.

Caravans are neat, they carry lots of stuff, travel to new places, and always have enough water. Well, almost always. Maradoc, the gladiator, says my size makes an imposing threat to scare away any bad guys who might want to hurt the caravan. That sounds good, but we still seem to fight every trip. Maybe I need to practice being imposing.

The others in the Company of the Guarded Wagon include:

Jearalith Rednap: The smartest man in the world. I know that because he told me so. He can do magic, but he doesn't like me to talk about it. He says that it would get him in trouble. I try to do magic, and it never gets me in trouble. Of course, it never works, either. I like Jearalith a whole lot. I don't talk about his magic in front of anyone who's not in the company. It's fun to imitate him, because he's likable and a good talker.

Josie Mendicant: A real pretty elf, or human, or something. Like me, she can't seem to decide what she wants to be. One minute she's imitating a human, and the next minute she's running like an elf. She sometimes casts nasty magic spells, and then turns around and hides in the shadows. I wish I could imitate people as well as she can.

Greckle of the Mountain: This straight-laced dwarf is a perfect person to imitate. He never changes, so once I get it down I can always be like him. He can make a wall of stone appear from nowhere. I'm going to learn to do that.

L'arin'ti: Larry is a nifty golden bug. She knows a lot about the wilderness. I've tried to get her to teach me everything she knows about the wilderness, but she doesn't have the patience for it. She never seems to sleep. I have tried to imitate that part of her. The trouble is, after two or three nights of watching her, I drift off to sleep.

Maradoc Wilmot: This mul is such a good fighter it almost scares me. He's my favorite person to imitate. I can drive him crazy by echoing everything he says. I don't do it to bother him, just to learn how to be like him. Once I've learned all he knows, I might just go be king of the gladiators myself.

like it can meet me on the field of battle, or preferably, in the arena.

Only one person ever helped me. Arsineus, a powerful white mage, once bet a whole bunch of magic items on me. He claimed I could beat three nasty monsters at the same time. He was right, although I came away from that fight with a few more scars for my collection. After I won, Arsineus bought me (he had to pay ***ten*** gold pieces), and gave me my freedom. He died shortly afterward, but I have continued to travel with his apprentices. I have formed my own caravan guarding team. It's hot, dusty, thirsty work, fraught with death and mayhem every step of the way. Ah! Even more than the arena, I love this life.

The others in the Company of the Guarded Wagon are:

Sud: A half-giant, few can beat him for sheer strength or stamina. He can take blows that would fell anyone other than me. But he is not very smart, and he tends to imitate those around him. No matter who it is. He even spent a week trying to be a dwarf.

Josie Mendicant: A preserver mage. I didn't always trust magic, but that was before Arsineus. Now I know some mages can use magic without hurting the land as the sorcerer-kings do. Josie is a half-elf, which means she's sneaky. But she does her work, and she never risks using her magic when it might cause trouble. A fine friend.

Jearalith Rednap: Another preserver. I have always liked Jearalith. He just has a way about him. He was Arsineus' chief apprentice, and when Arsineus died Jearalith took over for him. He has said that he has other missions besides guarding caravans, but he's never said just what. It's amazing, we can meet a hostile enemy force, and all of a sudden the leader is laughing it up with Jearalith like they were long-lost brothers. What a charisma.

Greckle of the Mountain: Greckle is a dwarven priest of earth and a real strait-laced type. He is extremely conscientious about the caravans we guard. He has sat up many a night, keeping watch with me. It's okay for me, I only need to sleep every few days. But he's only a dwarf. I have to admire his steadfastness.

L'arin'ti: A thri-kreen ranger. L'ari, as I call her, is a very knowledgeable bug. She knows so much about the wilderness. She is always hunting, and frequently shares her bounty with the rest of us. She never sleeps, so on the rare occasions when I do, there still is someone trustworthy on watch.

Greckle of the Mountain

8th Level Male Dwarven Priest of Earth

STR: 13
INT: 12
WIS: 19
DEX: 14
CON: 16
CHR: 10

AC Normal: 7
AC Rear: 7
Hit Points: 47
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Languages: Common, Dwarvish
THAC0: 16
Move: 12

Age: 94
Height: 5′ 3″
Weight: 207 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Black

Weapon Proficiencies: Lasso, dagger, battle axe, mace
Nonweapon proficiencies: Wagon driving (12), rope use (14), appraisal (19), survival-mountains (12)
Water Requirement: 1 gallon a day (½ gallon if in the shade)
Rest Requirement: Normal
Magic Items: *Steel dagger +2, two potions of healing* (mangoes), *wooden ring of regeneration, scroll (raise dead, cure light wounds, hold person, and barkskin* scribed at 12th level), scroll (*flame strike, create water, cause serious wounds, and light* scribed at 12th level)
Spells/day: 6 5 4 4
Equipment: Mekillot hide armor, obsidian battle axe, brown cloak, set of dirt-stained clothes, belt pouch, half-gallon water bottle (full), 25-foot silk lasso, wooden dagger, four bits, savings for focus (12 gp, 5 sp, 10 cp)
Special Dwarf Abilities: 60-foot infravision, +4 to saves against magic or poison, +1 bonus to saving throws and +2 bonus to proficiency checks related to focus (personally owning a caravan company)
Psionics (wild talent): *Catfall* (12)
Psionic Strength Points: 28

As a priest of the earth, Greckle can use any weapon made of metal, stone, or wood; can ignore the presence of earth for up to eight rounds a day, can gate in two cubic feet of earth (range 50 feet, dirt or stone only) once a day, and can turn undead. Greckle has major access to the sphere of Earth and minor access to the sphere of Cosmos.

I decided years ago that I wanted to run

L'arin'ti

7th Level Female Thri-kreen Ranger

STR: 16
INT: 10
WIS: 15
DEX: 21
CON: 14
CHR: 10

AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 53
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Thri-kreen
THAC0: 14
Move: 36

Age: 12
Height: 6′ 4″ (9′ 1″ long)
Weight: 452 lbs.
Exoskeleton/Eyes: Sandy Yellow/Jet Black

Weapon Proficiencies: Chatkcha, scimitar, short sword, long bow, dagger, club
Nonweapon proficiencies: Water find (14), survival-stony barrens (9), hunting (17), chatkcha making (14), tracking (17), heat protection (7)
Water Requirement: 1 gallon a week (½ gallon if in the shade)
Rest Requirement: None
Magic Items: *Obsidian ring of silt walking* (similar to a *ring of water walking* except it only works on silt), two *potions of invisibility* (grapes), *bone dagger +1, bone scimitar +2*
Equipment: Leather harness, two bone skinning knives, wooden club, long bow, quiver with 20 bone-tipped sheaf arrows, 10 chatkchas, belt pouch, one-quart water bottle (full), two leather wristbands each studded with a 2 gp gem, 2 cp
Special Abilities: Ranger: Fight with two weapons at no penalty, influence animals (save vs. rods at −2 negates, HS 43%, MS 55%, +4 "to hit" vs. elves; Thri-kreen: Bite once a round for 1d4 points of damage and paralyzation (save vs. poison negates, onset time varies with size of victim), leap 20′ straight up or 50′ horizontally, chatkcha returns it if misses the target, dodge missiles (9)
Psionics (wild talent): *Mind bar* (8)
Psionic Strength Points: 41

I was a little different from the rest of my pack; I was a bit of a loner who sometimes liked the company of humans. I liked to hunt and enjoy the stark beauty of the wilderness. I set out to prove I could exist on my own. Prove it I did, by

Josie Mendicant

7th/8th Level Female Half-elf Preserver/Thief

STR: 13
INT: 16
WIS: 10
DEX: 20
CON: 12
CHR: 15

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 25
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Thri-kreen
THAC0: 17
Move: 24

Age: 37
Height: 6′ 2″
Weight: 170 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, short sword, knife, short bow, sling
Nonweapon proficiencies: Somatic concealment (16), heat protection (12), read/write Common (17), blind-fighting, armor optimization (19), appraisal (×2) (13), survival-sandy wastes (14), water find (14)
Water Requirement: 1 gallon a day (½ gallon if in the shade)
Rest Requirement: Normal
Magic Items: *Bone short sword +1, +2 vs. magic using or enchanted creatures, bone dagger +1, three potions of rainbow hues* (cherries), *potion of feather falling* (apricot), *electrum ring of protection +1, scroll* (*magic missile, web, detect invisibility,* and *improved invisibility* scribed at 9th level)
Spells/day: 4 3 2 1
Equipment: Spell scrolls, one-gallon waterskin (full), three wooden throwing knives, bone lock picks, sling with 20 stones, leather boots with hollow heels, mekillot hide armor, two 1 gp gems (in right boot heel), spare bone lock picks (in left boot heel), 13 cp, 5 bits
Special Half-elf Abilities: 60-foot infravision. 30% resistance to sleep and charm spells, 1-in-6 chance to spot secret or concealed doors within 10′, if actively searching spot secret doors 2-in-6 and concealed door 3-in-6

Thief Abilities

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL	BS
48	77	76	84	94	41	67	30	×3

Spell scrolls: Level One: *Burning hands, comprehend languages, detect magic, read magic, spider climb, taunt, ventriloquism*; Level Two: *Blur, detect evil, detect*

psionics†, Melf's acid arrow, invisibility; Level Three: *Dispel magic, lightning bolt, slow, tongues, vampiric touch;* Level Four: *Fire charm, psionic dampener†, polymorph other*
† spell from the *DARK SUN™ Rules Book*
Psionics (wild talent): *Body equilibrium* (9)
Psionic Strength Points: 38

I am a half-elf. I had a hard upbringing; shunned by elves and distrusted by humans, thieving was the only way to survive. My life changed when I met a human called Arsineus, a wise and powerful man. He taught me the ways of the Veiled Alliance, and how to use magic without hurting the land.

For several years, I felt accepted. Then Arsineus was killed by templars, and his other apprentice and I escaped. We traveled around for a while, and eventually formed our own caravan-guarding company. We have a very well balanced company and have fought off numerous monsters and bandits.

The group includes:

Sud: A friendly half-giant who tries to imitate everyone. It's fine for him to try to be more like the gladiator, Maradoc, he's suited to that. But when he tried to follow me as I was moving silently, it was a disaster.

Maradoc Wilmot: This mul is the best fighter in the company. He fought in the arena for years and never lost. He is an incredible fighter, and very touchy.

Jearalith Rednap: The leader of the company, and my fellow apprentice under Arsineus. He knows a bit more about magic than I do, but I'll catch up to him before long, and he can't match my stealth skills. He is very likable, but I know that most of that comes from his specializing in enchantment/charm magics.

Greckle of the Mountain: A dwarven priest of earth. The company would have rather had a priest of water, but so would everybody. Since he has taken guarding caravans as his focus, a more dependable guard will never be found.

L'arin'ti: A thri-kreen ranger. L'ari is a bit touchy about elves. She is even touchier about thieves. She is always watching me. She never sleeps, and when I wake up and see those eyes staring at me, it definitely makes me nervous.

living alone for three years. When I returned home I discovered my pack had been wiped out by elven raiders.

I am currently allied with a mixed group of races, and find that the variety gives me an interesting feeling. It's almost like they're my nestmates. I would die to defend these people.

Our group is called the Company of the Guarded Wagon. When I met them, the leader had a very persuasive way about him. He convinced me that joining would allow me to have company, yet roam the wilderness. It has.

We have traveled a lot, going from city to city. I'm happiest when we're on the trail, but the cities are full of interesting things. I enjoy the elven markets, where questions are seldom asked. I have a hard time liking elves, and elves don't particularly like thri-kreen. I walk around, waiting to be challenged. Sure enough, some young elven fighter will try and make a name for himself by taking down a thri-kreen. I don't ever start fights, that would be wrong. But nobody says I can't defend myself. The strangest thing is that doing this has actually gotten me a few elven friends. When I am approached as a friend, I respond like one. It makes me wonder if it's right to go looking for fights with elves. But then I meet a gang of elven cutthroats on the trail, and my doubts are stilled.

The rest of the company includes:

Josie Mendicant: A half-elf, a mage, and a thief. Talk about having three marks against you! She seems friendly and eager to prove herself. I have decided to give her a chance. She's had plenty of opportunities, and never touched one thing of mine. Maybe she is okay.

Greckle of the Mountain: A dwarf and something of a bore. He's interested in my stories about the wilderness, and is always asking how to survive in the wilds. But when I tell him about hunting, he falls asleep. What a thickhead!

Maradoc Wilmot: A mul gladiator with a reputation and a chip on his shoulder. He's a tremendous fighter, and he has a tremendous temper.

Sud: A half-giant who often tries to imitate Maradoc. That's better than when he tries to imitate Josie, or me, or Greckle. He's friendly and likable, but he just can't make up his mind what to do.

Jearalith Rednap: The leader of the Company of the Guarded Wagon, and a mage. He's a preserver, not a defiler, but mages have always made me nervous. However, Jearalith only makes me nervous when he's actually casting spells. Otherwise, he's a great friend.

my own caravan company. This is my focus, and I'm going to make it happen. It's taken 25 years, but I have almost half the money I need saved up. I am currently with a company that guards caravans. It makes sense, I'll need to know how to protect my own company. I make safely delivering each caravan to its destination a minor focus.

Dwarves must have a focus to exist. Dwarves who break their focus are doomed to spending eternity as banshees, wailing over the sands. That'll never happen to me.

I am interested in anything that can help me make a successful caravan company. I need to know about the animals, the terrain, the trade routes, the monsters, everything. I'm getting a good look at the monsters, most of them face to face. The worst are those elven bandits, they're so fast. But none has ever taken a caravan from us, and none ever will. I still need to learn how to make and mend harnesses, how to survive in the desert, and how to deal with the merchant houses. I already know how to drive wagons, how to make wagons, how to appraise goods, and how to defend the caravan. It's all coming into focus, to use a dwarven expression.

The rest of the company includes:

Sud: My big, dumb half-giant buddy. Every time I create a wall of stone, he tries to. He can never understand why he can't do it. I've tried to tell him, but he just doesn't understand. If I made educating him my focus, I'd end up a banshee for sure.

Maradoc Wilmot: A mul gladiator. He is half dwarven, that's in his favor. Of course he's also half human, but nobody's perfect. He is an incredible fighter and has single-handedly slain some terrible monsters. He's a trusted friend, although he's entirely too quick to draw a weapon.

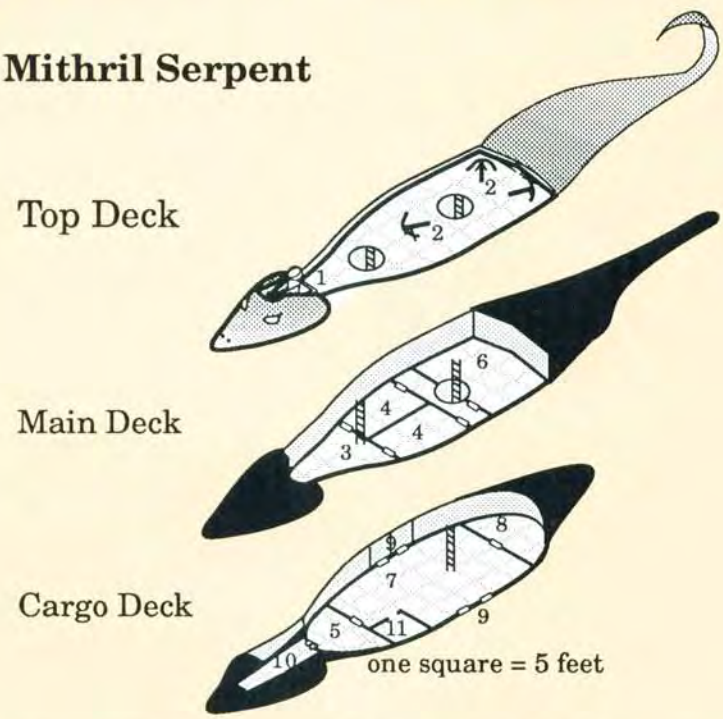
Jearalith Rednap: A preserver mage who can use magic without ripping the life from the land. He's very likable. The way he convinced me that magic could help me reach my focus was amazing.

L'arin'ti: A thri-kreen ranger. I listen when she talks about how to survive in the wilderness, but I get bored real fast when she talks about past hunts. Unfortunately, past hunts are her favorite subject.

Josie Mendicant: A preserver mage and a thief. I know I have to watch this one, she might steal from a caravan. I haven't caught her doing it yet, but if I do she's history.

In His Majesty's Spacial Service

The Mithril Serpent



Mithril Serpent Vital Stats:

Tonnage: 29
Hull points: 29
Crew: 1/32
MC: A
Landing: land (yes)
water (yes)
AR: 4
Saves as: metal
Power type: major helm
SR: as per helmsman
Cargo: 18 tons
Kl: 125 feet
Bl: 15 feet

Mithril Serpent Map Key

1. Light catapult crew: 1
2. Light ballista crew: 1
3. Major helm
4. Cabins
5. Captain's cabin
6. Pantry/galley
7. Cargo hold
8. Brig/cargo
9. Cargo doors
10. secret cargo room 1/2 ton
11. Meditation chamber

An AD&D® game SPELLJAMMER® Adventure for six characters

by Tom Prusa and Sam Adams

Background for the DM™

In His Majesty's Spacial Service takes place in the sphere of Korvspace. A predominately elven civilization has controlled the inner sphere for the past two hundred years. The home planet of this empire is Korvada. A second planet, Teirze, has been thoroughly colonized, and a third, Sidar, is being actively explored and colonized. Sidar, along with the asteroid belt known as Kleggra's Bones, is considered the frontier of the Korvadan empire. The Imperial Navy maintains ports in the belt, which also act as ports of entry for traders and havens for the free traders who prospect the belt. The navy's main task is to defend the sphere from the ever-present threat of the Illithids. Trade and regular patrols by the Imperial Navy make Korvspace a busy place. Of course, with successful trade comes piracy. To deal with this menace, the empire has employed adventuring mercenary companies as pirate-hunters.

The PCs have become mercenaries for whatever reason happens to fit the campaign. The PCs might be seeking a reward or the emperor's favor. They might have lost their ship, or their ship might have become damaged and require extensive repairs. In any event, the PCs should receive a monthly stipend for their work, plus bonuses for extraordinary accomplishments. The DM should set the amounts to fit the campaign.

The PCs are free to use their own ship. However, the empire offers the PCs *The Mithril Serpent,* a modified viper class ship. The ship also comes with a helmsman, Noda, a human specialty priestess of Ptah.

The PCs' duties have taken them to the planet Sidar, where they quickly are drawn into a most enigmatic situation. The Imperial Governor asks them to check on a remote mining settlement, where the PCs find the entire population has disappeared. In the course of their investigation, they find evidence that the townspeople have been kidnapped by the infamous Mindflayer pirate, Willbender. Unbeknownst to the PCs, Willbender plans to sell the townsfolk to the Neogi for a fat profit. Willy decided this is much easier than attacking heavily guarded merchant ships.

By the time the PCs confront Willy, the neogi have already picked up their slave cargo.

Players' Background

You and your stalwart companions have accepted an imperial commission and are now members of the empire's Spacial Service. Your first assignment was simple, even a bit dull. You delivered a batch of communiques to Duke Martisan, Governor of Sidar.

However, you have learned that a shipment of valuable mithril ore from the newly opened mines of Fort Hope (a small village in a remote part of Sidar) is almost a week overdue. The Duke has asked you to check in on the miners before returning to Korvada, since your ship can get to Fort hope in hours instead of the week it would take the planetary garrison to get a detachment there.

You decided perhaps that would be a good idea—a band of troublesome orcs or giants or whatever is delaying the shipments might provide some excitement.

Fort Hope

After three hours of flight, you can see the vast Barrier Mountains looming on the horizon. Minutes later, you are flying over the farms of Fort Hope. It is early afternoon, but you see no people. There are cattle grazing aimlessly in the freshly harvested fields. The town comes into view moments later. There are perhaps a score of buildings lining the road through town. The road leads east past the farms back toward Tarselan (the capital) and west to the mines located in the foothills outside of town. The fort itself, though small, dominates the town. There are no people in the streets or visible at the fort. Though the air is brisk, you see no tell-tale smoke of hearth fires.

The PCs easily can land their ship on the road or in the fields next to the fort. Allow the PCs time to search as much of the town as they wish.

Only locations with relevant clues are listed below. All of the structures have several things in common. All fires, such as hearths, the forges in the smithy, the baker's oven, etc., have burned out. On a successful Intelligence check PCs can deduce the fires burned out four days ago.

Items are laying out in the homes and shops as if they had been hastily forgotten.

All of the town's livestock is grazing on the chaff and grasses outside of town, having obviously broken out of the stables and barns.

Any building not described below contains only the normal tools of the trade and furnishings common to a small frontier town.

If the PCs examine the road itself, they find great indentations in the dirt at each end of town, as if some large heavy object had settled there. This is where the pirates dropped the anchors of their hammerships.

There are more clues in the following locations:

1. The Fort: Four elven bodies in imperial uniforms lie just inside the gate. One corpse bears the insignia of a garrison commander. The three common soldiers appear to have been slain while trying to close the gate. The commander's body reveals a more ghastly clue. There is an expression of complete horror frozen on the corpse's face, his long sword is still in his hand in a death grip. But the most terrible sight is the hole punched in his forehead right above the eyes. A successful Intelligence check by any PC reveals that the commander's brain was removed.

A search of the fort reveals two wagons loaded with ore. Nothing has been looted from inside the fort.

If a *speak with dead* spell is used on any of the bodies they reveal the following:

- Just after nightfall, four days ago, the pirates landed. They took the town by surprise and were in the streets before the garrison could respond.
- The pirates rounded up the citizens and herded them aboard their two ships.
- A handful of the miners fled to the fort. As the soldiers attempted to secure the gate, a band of pirates attacked. The pirates killed the soldiers, and the pirate leader, a mindflayer, killed the commander.

2. The Grain Warehouse: This building is only three-fourths full, even though the harvest was just completed a few weeks ago. The pirates took enough grain to feed their slave cargo.

3. The Smithy: This contains the usual assortment of tools and weapons that are here for repair. A successful Wisdom check reveals that there isn't a single length of chain left in stock.

When the PCs tire of the investigation or think they have arrived at the truth of what happened, they have several options. They can speed into wildspace hoping to pick up the trail, go back to Tarselan and report to the governor, or head for the nearest royal navy base, Port Kazdeyn.

If the PCs report to the governor, Martisan carefully questions the PCs about what they found at Fort Hope. He is relieved to learn that the ore is intact, but concerned about his missing subjects. He directs the PCs to go to Port Kazdeyn and report to Commodore Ricard. Martisan is confident that the Commodore will help the PCs locate the raiders. If the PCs mention bonus payments, the governor offers them between 100 and 500 gp (DM picks the amount) for their work at Fort Hope and assures them that the empire will compensate even more generously for tracking down the pirates.

Flow Barnacles

Run this encounter after the PCs return to wildspace. A school of flow barnacles lies in the ship's path. If the PCs have posted no watch or no one is on deck, their first indication of trouble will be a series of loud thumps against the hull. The helmsman knows only that several big objects have struck the hull and are clinging to it. If there are one or more PCs on deck, have them make a surprise roll at −3. Four flow barnacles attack each PC who is on deck. Surprised PCs are attacked at +4 with no defensive Dexterity modifiers. All barnacles that miss characters strike the ship and do six points of damage each round; remember that every 10 points of damage equals one hull point of damage to the ship, so the PCs should remove the barnacles quickly. The helmsman can "feel" this damage to the ship. At least half of the barnacles adhering to the ship are on the hull below the gravity plane. This should provide the PCs with some additional challenge to the task of removing the creatures.

About three hours after leaving Sidar, you see a score or more objects the size of a human head jetting toward you over the ship's bow. They have rounded, spiny shells and masses of writhing tentacles.

Flow Barnacles (30): Int Non; AL N; AC 4; MV 3; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 6 or 7; SZ T (9″); ML 20;

XP 35 each.

A flow barnacle's three beaks inflict six points of damage each round if the creature attaches itself to a ship's hull. A barnacle attached to a character drains nutrients for seven points of damage each round. It takes at least 33 points of strength to tear a living barnacle away from a host, and this inflicts 2-5 points of damage.

The Survivor

Suddenly, you feel a change in the ship's speed. The reason is soon apparent; there is a wrecked damselfly scout ship drifting off the port bow. Its brightly enameled wings are shattered, and there are large holes in the hull. You can barely make out the Imperial Navy emblem on the bridge.

The PCs can maneuver alongside and grapple the wreck. If they board, they find the ship nearly destroyed. The afterdeck apparently was hit with fire. There are two bodies on the aft deck beside the burnt framework of a ballista. There is debris blocking the hatch to the bridge. It can be removed in one round by two or more characters. On the bridge is another body collapsed in the helm. This is Marin, the elven helmsman—he is alive, but badly injured. If rescued, Marin is grateful, very respectful to the PCs, and eager to avenge his dead captain. He can tell the PCs the following:

- The scout ship, *Paxel,* was attacked by pirates three days ago and the officers were killed. Marin was knocked unconscious by spelljammer shock.
- The pirates were headed for Kleggra's Bones and were in a hurry as they did not stop to make sure there were no survivors or to take the ship.
- He needs to get to Port Kazdeyn as soon as possible to report the loss to the Navy.
- Commodore Ricard has access to the most recent charts of the asteroid belt and scout reports of pirate activity. The Commodore is known to be a staunch supporter of the empire.
- The pirates had a hammership and were heavily armed.

Marin: S 10, I 16, W 14, D 14, C 15, Ch 14; AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 6 (wizard 6); hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA None (no spells currently in memory; SZ M; ML 20; XP 500 (for rescuing)

Port Kazdeyn

As you approach Port Kazdeyn, an elven flitter hails you. After a few words with the guardboat, you are directed to a berth and word of your arrival is on its way to Commodore Ricard. An adjutant and two elven clerics await you as you dock. The two elven clerics take Marin away to be treated and make his report. The adjutant takes you to see Commodore Ricard.

The commodore expects the PCs to recount their experiences up to this point. The commodore agrees to gather the latest maps of the constantly shifting rocks that comprise Kleggra's Bones, and he tells the PCs that more scouts are due in over the next few hours.

If the PCs have role played the audience with the commodore well, the commodore invites them to be his guests at the Spacefarer's Inn. After the meal, they can rest in the officers' quarters, where suitable rooms have been provided. If the PCs fail to impress the commodore, they still are directed to await the scouting reports at the inn, but they have to pay their own bill.

The Spacefarer's Inn

The ever-hovering adjutant is instantly there to see you to the inn and inform Nelson, the owner, to serve you anything you want and bill it to the commodore.

You are alone in the Inn's common room, except for a giff officer and his odd crew drinking at the bar. From the look of them, they are obviously one of the mercenary crews hired by the Navy as pirate hunters. As you start to enjoy your meal, one of them loudly says to the other, "Look! It's some messenger boys."

There are six mercenaries. They are the crew of the *Iron Fist:* Captain Maximillian, a giff in a gray military uniform with small medals adorning the chest; Rat and Long Tom, two skinny humans dressed like normal sailors; Scalehead, a lizardman with elaborate tattoos covering large portions of his body; Rodac, a balding man wearing the garb of a cleric of Ares; and Korel, a half-elven mage. If the PCs ignore the first exchange, the mercenaries continue to loudly insult the party's manners and clothing. At the point where the PCs are ready to take physical action against their detractors, Maximillian steps forward and suggests a competition to see which are the real sailors in the room. Max suggests a test of skill and a test of strength. Two of the PCs will compete at knife throwing against a target on the far wall of the room with Rat and Long Tom, and two will compete against Scalehead and Rodac in arm wrestling. He and one of the PCs will serve as judges, and Korel and the remaining PC will hold the bets.

No matter what the PCs do, a group of elven sailors enters the bar and starts egging on the PCs to "show the bounty hunters who their betters are." The party is free to choose who will compete in each test. If the PCs accept the challenge, the sailors cheer and start laying side bets on the PCs. If the PCs insist on fighting the crew of the *Iron Fist,* Maximillian and his crew beat a hasty retreat, as they don't wish to be arrested. The NPCs' flight is assured when a large contingent of elven guards appears on the scene to restore order.

Knife throwing: Each contestant throws three knives at a target 30 feet away. They receive points for each throw. The team with the highest total wins.

The target is similar to an archery target. There is a red circle in the center and yellow, blue, green, and white circles around the center. The center is AC −1, the yellow is AC 1, the blue is AC 3, the green is AC 5, and the white is AC 7. Any throw that does not hit at least AC 7 misses the target.

Points: bullseye (red) 10, yellow 4, blue 3, green 2, white 1, miss 0.

Korel attempts to cheat for his side by using his *ring of telekinesis* to aid Rat and Long Tom. If the PC with Korel makes a successful Intelligence check, he or she sees Korel's ring glow each time his crewmates throw. If the throwing PC makes a successful Intelligence check, he notices the knives veering a bit right at the end of their flight. If the PCs notice and deduce what is happening, the giff concedes the knife throw. Because of the speed of the thrown daggers, Korel can affect the throws only enough to make each man's throw one result better (i.e. a yellow hit becomes a bullseye).

Long Tom and Rat: Int Average; AL

CN; AC 8; MV 12; HD 8 (fighter 8); hp 71, 59; THAC0 11 (bonuses for dexterity and knife specialization included); #AT 2; Dmg 1-4+2; SZ M; ML 11; XP 200 each (for defeating in throwing contest)/ 50 each (for being defeated in knife throwing contest)

The two fighters have pulled this scam before with Korel and are very confident of its success.

Arm wrestling: If Maximillian's crew lost or were discovered cheating in the knife throwing competition, they try to crush the PCs in this event. Of course, they also attempt to cheat again. Rodac is wearing a *girdle of hill giant strength.* It is very elaborate and easy to notice, but its magic is not readily apparent. If the PCs tell Maximillian the *girdle* is magical, Rodac grudgingly removes it before the match.

Both pairs of contestants start at the same signal. They begin with elbows together and hands locked in the vertical position. Each round, the contestants roll normal Strength checks. If both contestants make the check, the one who had the *highest* successful roll advances his or her opponent's arm one-fourth of the way to the tabletop. If both fail the check, or if both checks succeed with the same dice number, there is no change in position and the match goes on. If one contestant succeeds and one loses, the successful character pins the opponent's arm.

Rodac: Int Average; AL NE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 9 (priest 9); hp 60; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+7; SA Strength 19 with *girdle,* 16 without; SZ M; ML 11; XP 200 (for defeating at arm wrestling)/ 50 (for being defeated at arm wrestling)

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 4, girdle of hill giant strength*

Rodac is very hot-tempered and violent. If he loses he will kick the table over and storm out.

Scalehead: Int Average; AL LN; AC 5; MV 12; HD 9 (fighter 9); hp 68; THAC0 12; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8+1/1-8+1/1-4; SA Strength 16; SZ M; ML 11; XP 200 (for defeating at arm wrestling)/50 (for being defeated at arm wrestling)

Scalehead speaks pidgin Common, and taunts his opponent continuously during the match.

Max the giff will be honest in the judging and concedes any contest between individuals where the PCs have caught someone cheating. To Max it is all right to cheat, but not to get caught. Korel surrenders any bets lost by the crew, or if his people won, loudly and gleefully counts their winnings.

Win or lose, the crew of the *Iron Fist* departs after the contests. The PCs have time to finish their meal, then a messenger comes rushing into the inn to tell them that Commodore Ricard has summoned them.

A Briefing from the Commodore

The commodore and Marin await you when you arrive at the commodore's office. Apparently, the base clerics have ministered to Marin well.

You are just getting settled into the commodore's comfortable chairs when a clerk with an armload of maps enters the office.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the commodore begins, "I believe we have located the area from which your pirates—Willy the Squid and his crew—are operating. According to our scouts, we have had several distant sightings of unknown ships in a remote area that is lightly patrolled. Since your group has been on their trail most recently. I offer you first crack at them. Marin has volunteered to accompany you as a helmsman since he knows that part of the Bones as well as anyone. And, as he has pointed out to me, you may well need all your spellcasters available against vicious scum like Willy and his jetsam of a crew.

"From our most recent scouting reports, we can assume Willy has at least two spellcasters with him, and we suspect this illithid pirate has a base within Kleggra's Bones about here."

The commodore indicates a section of asteroids at least 200 miles across.

"I leave it up to you as to whether to take Marin along, but I know he would serve well. Your ship has been restocked and some minor barnacle damage repaired. You may depart when you will. Good luck! I shall send word to His Imperial Majesty of your pursuit."

The commodore has no additional information about Willy the Squid for the PCs. It is up to the PCs to locate Willy and bring back the details to the commodore.

The PCs are free to decline Marin's help, they can even leave Noda behind if they are using their own ship instead of *The Mithril Serpent.* If Marin does accompany them, he helps Noda man the spelljammer helm so that any PC spellcasters can renew their spells.

The commodore is quite willing to authorize whatever bonus the DM thinks is reasonable for the campaign. He offers the PCs a small bonus (25-100 gp) for each Fort Hope villager returned alive, and additional rewards for slaying or capturing Willy the Squid.

The Scavvers

On the second night out from Port Kazdeyn, three night scavvers attack the PCs' ship. If no watch has been posted, the scavvers take up residence near a heavy weapon mount (the bow catapult if the PCs are using *The Mithril Serpent*). If there is a watch, roll for surprise. If the watch is surprised, the scavvers attack immediately. Otherwise, they attack warily, concentrating on a smaller or weaker opponent.

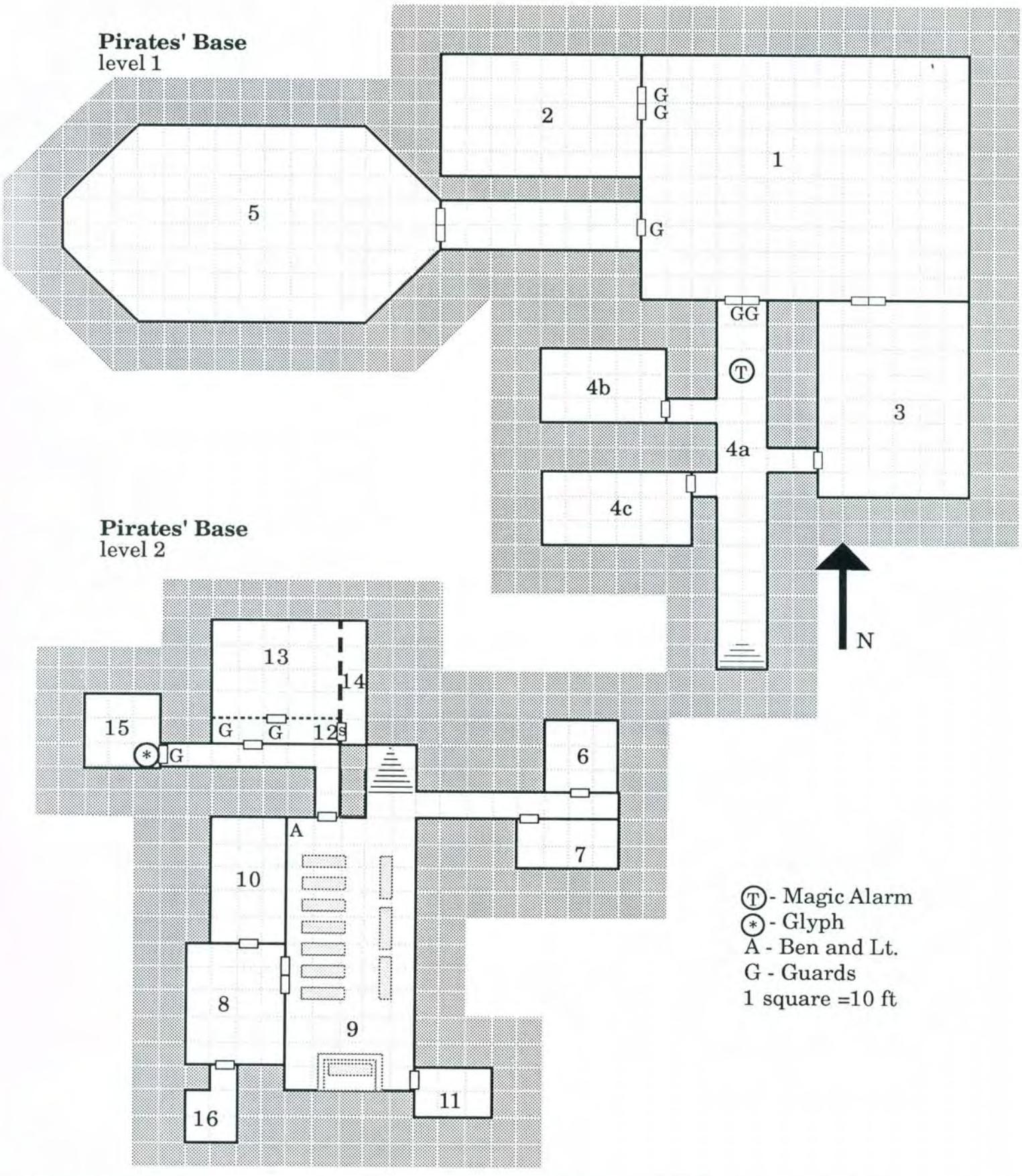
Night Scavvers (3): Int Animal; AL N; AC 3; MV 18; HD 6; hp 45, 41, 40; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SZ H (15'); ML 9; XP 975 each.

A night scavver can swallow man-sized or smaller opponents on a "to hit" roll of 19 or 20. Swallowed victims can cut their way out only if they have a type S weapon shorter than 3' long in hand when swallowed. The scavver has an internal armor class of 7, and if it suffers any internal damage at all it brings the swallowed victim back to its mouth, where it delivers a bite attack at +4 "to hit." Then it automatically swallows the victim again. A scavver must be killed for the victim to escape. A swallowed victim dies after six rounds inside the scavver and is utterly digested after 12 turns.

Oyutu the Watcher

You are close enough to Kleggra's Bones to drop out of spelljamming speed. Now all you have to do is carefully enter the asteroid field, avoid being dashed to bits in the jumble of rocks, and find the notorious Willy the Squid and his band of cutthroats.

Have the players indicate on the ship's deck plan where they are standing and what they are doing. This area of space is chocked with jagged chunks of rocks


Pirates' Base
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Pirates' Base
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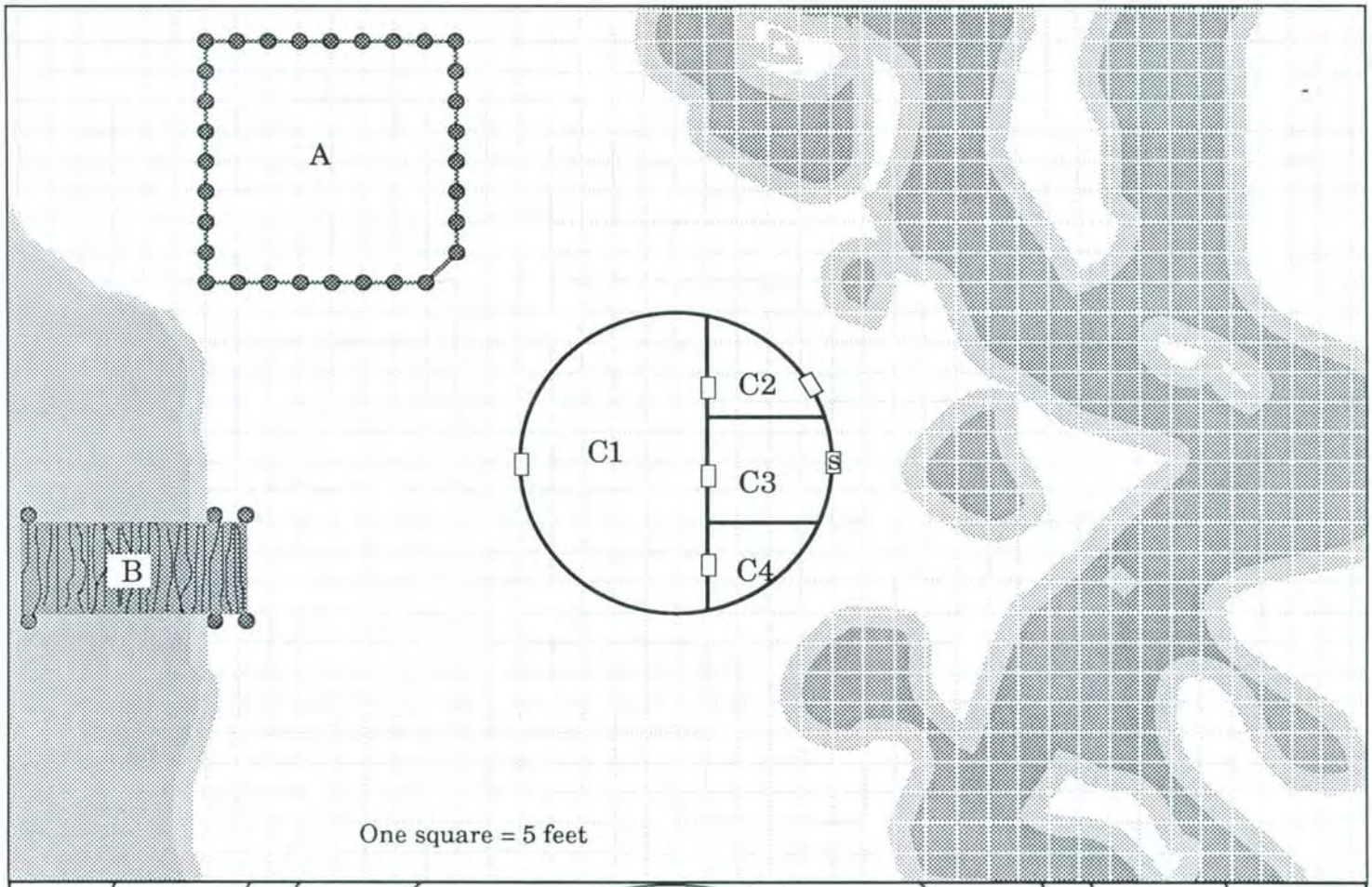
T - Magic Alarm
* - Glyph
A - Ben and Lt.
G - Guards
1 square =10 ft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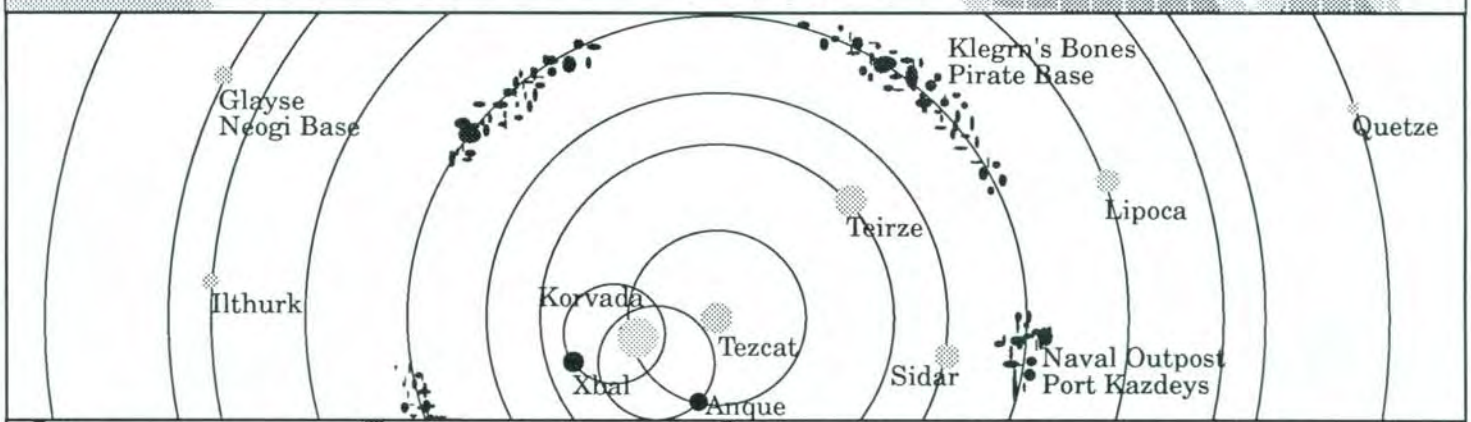
Klegrin's Bones
Pirate Base
Glayse
Neogi Base
Quetze
Lipoca
Teirze
Ilthurk
Korvada
Tezcat
Xbal
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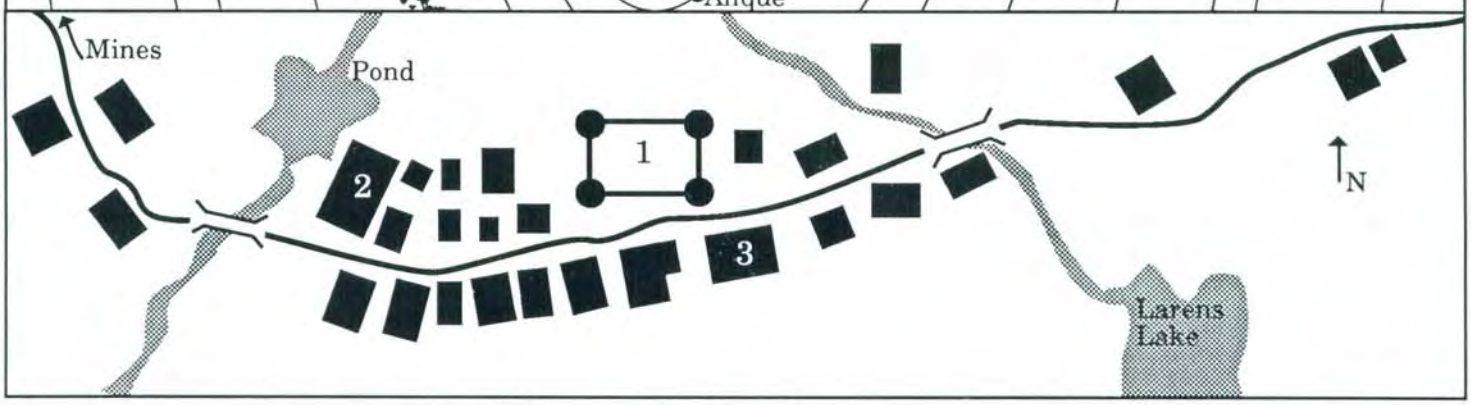
Naval Outpost
Port Kazdeys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in many different sizes. Willy the Squid and his pirates know several safe passages through the debris, but the PCs' ship is in some danger as they blunder along, looking for the pirate base.

If the PCs aren't wary, their ship will take damage. The helmsman must make an Intelligence check at a −2 penalty each hour or the ship suffers 1-4 points of hull damage from a collision. If the check roll is a "20" the ship suffers a critical hit. The helmsman gains a +1 bonus to the check for every two characters assigned to lookout duty, but a roll of 19 or 20 still fails.

Read the following when the PCs have been dodging rocks for an hour:

> This is nerve wracking! You are surrounded by literally tons of rocks, all tumbling through wildspace. Suddenly, one of your lookouts lets out a whoop. There's something alive out there, just beyond your air envelope. You can make out the body of a large reptile approximately 20 feet long. It is carrying something entwined in its tail.
>
> The creature, which resembles a huge snake with a very draconian head, seems to be frolicking among the asteroids, agilely evading several potential collisions in the short time you watch it. It seems to have taken an interest in you, and is looping its way toward you with an expression that seems to be a silly grin.

The being is Oyutu, a sarphardin. Oyutu has been watching this area and is curious about the new arrivals in the neighborhood. If the PCs attack, Oyutu gains a +7 bonus to armor class and saving throws due to cover. If the attack misses, Oyutu sticks his head into the PCs' air envelope and yells "Now cut THAT out!" If the attack hits, or the PCs persist in attacking, Oyutu launches a spell assault. Read the following if the PCs remain friendly:

> The serpentine creature comes alongside your ship. It pokes its head over the rail and stares at you. Then it mutters a loud "mmmm-hummm" and proceeds to peer at you more closely. You're not sure, but it certainly seems to be smiling.

Oyutu is glad to converse with the PCs if they don't attack. Oyutu has been watching the pirates because he finds them very amusing. Oyutu considers himself a superior being, but is actually somewhat naive. He doesn't realize that other beings might not find the pirates amusing. Oyutu is very curious about the PCs, their ship, and the sphere in general. Work the following information into Oyutu's gossip if the PCs don't think to ask the right questions.

- Oyutu has been watching a very strange collection of beings living in one of the big rocks.
- A very big, odd-looking ship visited the rock several days ago, and then left heading out toward the crystal shell. Oyutu had never seen such strange beings as the ones on the big ship. This was a neogi spider ship. If the PCs press Oyutu for details he can describe the ship (a hull like a big, black, shiny coconut with long fingers coming out the front) and the crew (people with rather attractive, snake-like heads and lots of legs that looked something like the "fingers" on their ship).
- The "rock-people" land their ship in a large pit on the rock and they grow plants in another large hole with glass over it. They actually live in the rock.
- A small number of the "rock-people" left with their ship about two days ago. The rest are still in the rock.

If the PCs explain to Oyutu why the pirates are bad, he will gladly lead the party to the base. He will then pick a large, comfortable rock nearby and watch what follows.

If the PCs don't get Oyutu to lead them, they must search the asteroids for 3d6 hours before locating the pirate base.

Oyutu: Int Supra-Genius; AL CG; AC 5; MV 6, Fl 20 (A), Sw 18; HD 8+8; hp 66; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12/1-2; MR 36; SZ H (20'); ML 15; XP 3,000 (for being lead to pirates).

Oyutu can entangle opponents with a successful melee hit. Entangled opponents take two points of constriction damage and can be bitten automatically. Entangled characters may make a Strength check once per round to break free; if successful they suffer only one point of constriction damage. Oyutu regenerates one hit point every four rounds and is immune to 1st-3rd level illusions and to *cause fear, command, forget, friends, hypnotism, ray of enfeeblement* and *scare.*

Magical Items: *Staff of power* (11 charges) held in the tail.

Spells remaining: *Charm person, read magic, hold portal, wall of fog, ESP, invisibility, improved phantasmal force, haste, dispel magic, wall of ice*

Willy the Squid

As the ship approaches the asteroid, the PCs see a large excavation on the surface where the pirates land their ship. The ship is not here now. There are three guards in the landing pit. They are lazy and overconfident. If the PCs land immediately, the guards will not notice. If the PCs spend more than one round observing the pit, the guards will sound an alarm. A large glass dome is visible just beyond the pit. This covers a greenhouse which the pirates use to refresh their air envelope. The only obvious means of entry to the base are the pit and the greenhouse dome. The dome is ordinary glass and can be broken easily, but a break has a 2 in 6 chance of alerting the guard at the door to the corridor. If the PCs enter through the pit, make normal surprise checks for the guards. If the guards are surprised and overpowered in two rounds or less, they cannot sound an alarm. If the guards are not surprised they call out and six more pirates come rushing out from area 3.

Area 1: This large open pit contains a cradle-like structure that allows the pirates to land their modified hammership here. Three guards are stationed here at the west doors. Each has a horn, which he can sound as an alarm.

Area 2: This is a large storeroom filled with common ship's supplies (rope, tar, spars, ammo for weapons, etc.)

Area 3: This is the repair shop. The room is full of lumber, rope, and tools. There also is a small forge. Six pirates are at work here repairing various pieces of equipment.

Area 4: This is a barracks with two guards posted at 4a. They are armed with light crossbows and sabres. Ten feet beyond the guards a magical alarm has been placed in the hall. Anyone passing the spot without uttering the password "Willbender," activates a *magic mouth* which yells "Fire in the Hole!" until deactivated by the password. This alerts the pirates in area 4b and 4c.

If an alarm horn or the *magic mouth* sounds, 10 pirates rush out of 4b to the hall to deal with the intruders. If the PCs manage to avoid the alarms, these

pirates remain in 4b playing cards and drinking. There are nine pirates in area 4c sleeping and awaiting their turn at watch. If an alarm sounds, they go to the top of the stairs at the end of the corridor and attempt to hold the intruders back until the officers and spell-casters arrive.

Pirates (28): Int Average; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3 (fighter 3); hp 25 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7; SZ M; ML 10; XP 65 each.

Area 5: The greenhouse dome is two stories tall. It contains trees and miscellaneous greenery for air and a small garden plot for food. There is no one in the greenhouse when the PCs arrive.

Area 6: Two clerics and a mage share this room. It contains only personal effects and their spell and prayer books.

Area 7: The officers bunk here. Willy's four lieutenants and the first mate share this room.

Area 8: This is the kitchen. Five slaves work here. When the fighting starts, they hide in area 10.

Area 9: The pirates dine, celebrate, etc. in this common room. The room is full of long wood tables and benches. There is a raised platform at one end with three large chairs and a table. This is where Willy and the ranking pirates sit during meals and celebrations. At present only Willy, the wizard Darkstar, the clerics One-eye and Aryx, the first mate Ben Blade and Willy's four lieutenants are here. They are planning their next raid.

Even if the PCs managed to get to the lower level without triggering an alarm, the NPCs are expecting them. Undoubtedly the PCs made some noise upstairs. Ben and the four lieutenants hide in the northwest corner, ready to leap out behind the party. Willy and Darkstar are on the platform. The clerics stand in front of the platform with four objects laying at their feet. They are just finishing spell-casting as the party enters the room. The three pirates posted as guards in areas 13 and 15 enter the room on the second round of combat. As the PCs enter the room, Willy stands and, the PCs hear a voice in their minds.

"So you are the ones who have dared to invade my domain. That was a very foolish action on the part of such supposedly elite agents of the empire. However, never let it be said that Willbender was not a good host. I have prepared a very special surprise for you. I imagine you came here seeking your missing villagers. Unfortunately, my men have delivered most of them to my new allies already. But just so you won't be totally disappointed, One-eye has brought four of your soldier elves from the fort to greet you. It seems they just didn't appreciate our hospitality."

Four bodies arise from the floor. They are barely recognizable as garrison soldiers from Fort Hope. They draw their long swords and look to One-eye. One-eye points to you and commands, "KILL THEM!"

One-eye has used an *animate dead* scroll on the corpses, while Aryx cast *revenance* from a scroll to keep the zombies from being turned. The zombies form a line in front of the clerics and advance on the party. Meanwhile, Ben and the lieutenants close from the rear. Willy and Darkstar watch until the PCs seem to be gaining the advantage before joining in the attack. At the end of the second round of combat, the additional guards arrive.

Zombie elves (4): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 20 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65 each.

Zombies are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death,* and cold-based spells. Poison and paralysis don't affect them. They are utterly fearless. Their slowness causes them to always lose initiative vs. the PCs. A vial of holy water does 2d4 points of damage if it strikes a zombie.

One-eye: Int High; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 7 (priest 7); hp 34; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 +3; SA spells; SZ M; ML 14; XP 2,000.

One-eye is an elven priest of Hades, as such he can see in all forms of darkness and can create darkness in a 10-foot radius once a day. He is tall for an elf (5′ 10″) and has a pale, gaunt complexion. One-eye wears no patch over the empty left eye socket, as he likes the effect it has on people. One-eye has a Wisdom of 17 (+3 magical attack adjustment).

Magical Items: Staff of striking (9 charges) bracers of defense AC 4

Spells remaining: *Curse, command, cause light wounds, create air, protection from good, silence, aid, hold person, heat metal, resist fire, dispel magic, cause blindness, cause serious wounds*

Aryx: Int Average; AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 4 (priest 4); hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 +1; SA spells; SZ M; ML 8; XP 270.

Aryx is an elf and One-eye's acolyte. He can see in darkness, but has not gained the ability to create darkness. Aryx is an abject coward. However, he fears One-eye and Willy much more than any PC. He is armed with a flail. Aryx has a Wisdom of 16 (+2 magical adjustment).

Magical Items: *Ring mail +1*

Spells remaining: *Endure cold, command, cause light wounds* (×2), *warp wood, hold person*

Lieutenants (4): Int Average; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 5 (fighter 5); hp 42, 40, 39, 37; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7; SZ M; ML 19; XP 270 each.

The lieutenants are fearless on their turf and will attack until killed or ordered otherwise by Ben or Willy. They are armed with sabres and daggers.

Ben Blade: Int Average; AL NE; AC 2; MV 12; HD 8 (fighter 8); hp 74; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2-7 +4; SZ M; ML 19; XP 1,400.

Blade has been with Willy for many years and is fiercely loyal. He is a large, wiry man, who obviously knows how to handle a sabre very well. He is specialized with the sabre giving him two attacks per round at +1 to hit and +2 to damage. He has a Strength of 17 and Dexterity of 16 (his statistics reflect these adjustments).

Guards (3): Int Average; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3 (fighter 3); hp 25 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7; SZ M; ML 10; XP 65 each.

Darkstar: Int Genius; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 8 (wizard 8); hp 23; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA spells; SZ M; ML 12; XP 3,000.

Darkstar is a renegade elven wizard who was cast out of the regular navy. He joined Willy for revenge. He is cunning and devious. Darkstar will not waste his spells if he thinks the fighter-types are handling things. When he does join in, he casts *darkness 15′ radius* centered on enemy spell casters.

Next, he uses *hold person* on enemy fighters. If this doesn't work, he casts *slow* at the combatants, even though his own men will be in the area of effect. From then on he concentrates on individual targets, saving *invisibility* for an escape attempt. He will not cast his *lightning bolt* unless it is absolutely necessary.

Magical Items: *Cloak of protection +2, ring of protection +3*

Spells remaining: *Magic missile* (×2), *shield, color spray, invisibility, darkness 15' radius, blindness, hold person, slow, lightning bolt, polymorph other, fumble*

Willbender (Willy the Squid): Int Genius; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 8+4; hp 59; THAC0 11; #AT 4; Dmg Special; MR 90%; SZ M; ML 15; XP 8,000.

Willy can generate a *mental blast* once a round. This is a cone 60 feet long, five feet wide at the base, and 20 wide at the far end. Creatures within the area must save vs. wands at −4 or be stunned for 1d10+2 rounds. Willy also can use the following powers, once a round, as a 7th level caster: *suggestion, charm person/monster, ESP, levitation, astral projection,* and *plane shift.* All saving throws against these powers are at −4.

Willy is as arrogant and egotistical as all mindflayers. He is positive that he has the upper hand over the "inferior" PCs. If his men start to lose he begins to use his powers, but tries to avoid melee at all costs. As mentioned above, if the situation looks hopeless for Willy, or if he takes 30 or more points of damage, he uses his *plane shift* ability to escape.

Area 10: This is the food storeroom. The five kitchen slaves are hiding here. So is Sally of the Way, a 5th level priest of Ptah. Sally served as a backup spelljammer on an elven scout ship that fell prey to Willy. When the pirates crippled the ship and boarded it, Sally played dead, then she snuck aboard Willy's ship while the pirates looted the scout. She's been hiding out on the base for weeks.

Most of the slaves are terrified of the PCs. The slaves know nothing about the pirates' operations and are convinced that the PCs are going to kill or hurt them. Sally distrusts the slaves, and she believes they would have turned her in to gain favor with the pirates if they had discovered her hiding place before the PCs arrived. Sally has additional information for the PCs:

- The pirates had no prisoners in their brig when Sally arrived here. This made it very difficult to steal food from the pirates. Several days ago, the pirates' hammership returned with about 70 captives taken in a midnight raid on a village on one of the inner planets (these were the Fort Hope captives).
- The pirates made no secret of the fact the villagers were to be sold to the neogi. The neogi came for them yesterday.
- The neogi came for the slaves in a mindspider. It looked like there was a full complement of neogi and umber hulks aboard.
- When the mindspider took off, it headed toward the outer planets, probably toward Glayse. Sally overheard several pirates talking about a neogi base on one of the moons of Glayse.
- If Willbender, the mindflayer, escaped from the PCs, it's a good bet that the crew of the hammership soon will be warned about the attack on the pirate base.
- The neogi treat their slaves badly, and when a slave's usefulness ends, he becomes food.

Sally eagerly offers to subject herself to a *detect lie, know alignment,* or other divinations to prove herself. Noda does not know Sally, but can question Sally and confirm that she seems to be a genuine priest of Ptah.

Sally of the Way: S 13, I 15, W 17, D 14, C 13, Ch 15; AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 5 (priest 5); hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA None (no holy symbol and no spells currently in memory; SZ M; ML 20; XP 1,000 (for rescuing and getting information).

Area 11: This is Willy's room. It is spartan, containing only a bed, a desk and a chair. A piece of parchment covered with strange, ugly-looking script lies on the desk. This a record of Willy's most recent sale to the neogi. It is written in a form of the mind flayer language interspersed with words from Neogi and Common. If the PCs decipher it magically or via the rogue read languages ability, they find a clear reference to the captives from Fort Hope. It also mentions a payment of 300 platinum pieces received from the neogi.

Area 12: This corridor slants slightly downward and leads to the brig and the treasure room.

Area 13: This large room serves as the brig. Iron bars separate the back 40×40 space from the rest of the room. From the look of it, it was recently occupied by a large number of people.

Area 14: This secret passage allowed the pirates to spy on the prisoners unobserved. Disguised slots in the wall allowed for missile fire into the brig in case of a disturbance. It is only accessible from the secret door in area 12.

Area 15: The thick, iron door to this room is locked (Willy had the key). There is a *glyph of warding* scribed inside the door, which does 10 points of fire damage to anyone not uttering the disarming phrase ("fame and plunder") before entering. The pirates have stored the following treasure here: 15 assorted gems worth 4,100 gp, 450 pp, 727 gp, 1,563 sp, 5,678 cp, a bale of rare silks and furs worth 2,000 gp, and 11 art objects worth 8,000 gp.

Sally is right about Willy. He fled to a secret bolt hole and warns the hammership's crew to stay away from the base. If the PCs decide to lie in wait for Willy or the hammership they will wait in vain. Also, if the PCs wish to collect their full bonus from Commodore Ricard, they should depart for Glayse without delay.

Purple Dragon

You have left the asteroid belt, and your ship is handling beautifully You are making good time toward the outer planets—you might just save all the villagers and get your full bonus yet.

There is an abrupt lurch as your ship drops out of spelljamming speed. Something big must be in the vicinity. There it is! A large ship is coming in from below. No, it is a creature, and it's moving fast. Your hearts race as huge purple coils wrap around the ship. The creature is a radiant dragon, and a big one, too! The dragon lifts a head the size of your cargo hold and looks you in the eyes. "Well little ones, what brings you to my part of space?"

This is Vundernomicas, a venerable radiant dragon who wants to give the

PCs a chance to admire a "superior" creature for awhile. If the party is properly respectful, the dragon could be quite helpful. Vundernomicas likes wine, and asks if the ship has any to spare. He drinks as much of wine as the PCs care to give (a whole wineskin is only one sip for Vundernomicas). If the party offers jewels or gems, Vundernomicas will cast clerical spells to help the party. The real help available from the dragon is information:

- The dragon did indeed see a mindspider fly by about two days ago, headed for Glayse. The dragon also saw another mindspider fly by one day ago. Now the PCs are passing through, and it's high time these visitors stopped to pay their respects.
- The closest portal out of Korvspace also lies near Glayse, which is a water world. There is really nothing else out there except a few asteroids.
- It is much better here. If the party would like to keep Vundernomicas company, the dragon would be glad to spend a week or 10 talking about how great dragons are.

The PCs can to talk to Vundernomicas as long as they wish, but the dragon has no other useful information. Vundernomicas inevitably turns the conversation back to the glories of dragons in general, and in Vundernomicas in particular. When the PCs are ready to leave, or if the players are starting to get bored with the dragon, the dragon unwraps himself.

If the party attacks, Vundernomicas uses *holy word* to stun the PCs. He then gives them a chance to apologize for their foolish actions. If they persist in attacking, he casts *flame strike,* which sets the rigging ablaze, then gives the ship a wing buffet and leaves.

Vundernomicas (venerable radiant dragon): Int Exceptional; AL CG; AC −5; MV 12, Fl 48 (B); HD 21; hp 161; THAC0 −1; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 2-20+10/2-20+10/4-40+10; MR 60%; SZ G (375' body); ML 18; XP 2,000 (for getting information).

Vundernomicas's breath weapon is an energy pulse that inflicts up to 20d12+10 points of damage; it has a range of 60 yards and can be broken into smaller pulses as Vundernomicas wishes (minimum size, 2d12+1), a save vs. breath weapons negates all damage from a pulse. Like all dragons, Vundernomicas can make kick, tail slap, wing buffet, and plummet attacks. A wing buffet attack made against a ship can knock all the ship's occupants off of their feet—just like a ship shaken critical hit. Vundernomicas can squeeze the PCs' ship, inflicting 1-6 hull points each round in addition to any other actions. Once a day Vundernomicas can use *corrupt* or *restore air, Bigby's interposing hand, Bigby's grasping hand,* and *wall of force* as an 18th level caster. Vundernomicas also can *shape change* three times a day.

Spells: *Cure light wounds* (×2) *command, bless, create water, detect magic, faerie fire, enthrall, heat metal, silence 15' radius, slow poison, warp wood, obscurement, locate object, stone shape, cure disease, remove curse, remove paralysis, dispel magic, free action, detect lie* (×2), *cure serious wounds* (×2), *neutralize poison, quest, flame strike, true seeing, raise dead, blade barrier, animate object, heal, transmute water to dust, holy word, fire storm, symbol, regenerate*

Sargasso

The party continues to fly toward the Neogi base. Unknown to them, there is a small uncharted sargasso (dead area) in space. Their path takes them directly toward it. There are two player descriptions provided. The first is to be read if an NPC is spelljamming, the second if a PC is spelljamming.

It has been two weeks since your encounter with Vundernomicas. Marin, Noda, and Sally have proven to be capable helmsmen, giving you plenty of time to relax. All of you are refreshed and rested, and your spellcasters have their full complement of spells. Suddenly, the ship lurches and begins to drift. You grab onto things, and manage to maintain your balance. The ship regains power a moment later. You can hear (the current helmsman) shouting, "Help me turn around—now!" What do you do?

It has been more than three weeks since you met Vundernomicas. All your spellcasters—except your current helmsman—have their full complement of spells memorized, and you should be getting close to the neogi base. Suddenly there is a lurch, your helmsman feels a sickening thump, and the ship begins to drift in space.

Just as suddenly, the ship regains power. What will you do?

No magic works here. This includes items, spells, and the spelljamming helm. The flow of this encounter must be adjusted to reflect who was spelljamming at the time, and what the reaction was. When a ship hits a sargasso its helm fails for one round, restarts for 1-3 rounds, and then dies completely. The only way out of a sargasso is to drift through, or to react quickly enough to change direction and get out before the spelljamming helm dies completely.

Noda, Marin, and Sally are experienced spelljammers and immediately try and reverse course if they are at the helm. This requires the rest of the crew to man the rigging. If the party dithers or even stops to ask questions, it will be too late. Any off-duty NPCs rush to the deck and start grabbing the rigging. If the PCs immediately jump into action and help to turn the ship, the ship drifts only an only an hour. Otherwise, the ship drifts for more than a day.

If a PC is at the helm, the NPC spellcasters rush onto the deck, grabbing the rigging and shouting at the helmsman to turn around. Unless the helmsman reacts immediately, the ship will be stuck in the sargasso for a week.

In either case, the players have exactly one minute of real time to react.

If the ship gets stuck in the sargasso, the NPCs become morose and despondent, particularly Sally. She is sure that they will drift here for the rest of their lives. She tells them what she knows about the sargassos. They are magic dead areas that occasionally occur in space. She hopes this is a small one, since it is not on any charts. But then, maybe everyone who found it has died here. She tells tales of ships found coming out of sargassos, all of the air fouled, and everyone dead. She has even heard of creatures turning to cannibalism, both for food, and to save dwindling air. She is very depressed. Marin and Noda confirm that the ship is helpless, but try very hard not to succumb to Sally's depression.

Try to give the impression that the PCs are in a lot of trouble, even if they are stuck for only an hour. If the PCs experiment, no spells or magical items work. An attempted spell fades from the caster's memory with no effect. Trying to use a charged item drains a charge, but also produces no effect.

Moon Over Glayse

At last, the neogi base. There is a small moon orbiting Glayse, a water world. The moon's atmosphere seems foul and murky, at least from up here. As you study the base, you spot two spider ships, and it occurs to you that it would be best to circle around to keep out of sight. If your ship has to tangle with a couple of mindspiders, you'll probably lose. Soon you are well out of sight of the base.

If the PCs are inclined to take on the neogi ships with *The Mithril Serpent*, they have a mutiny on their hands. The NPCs assume—correctly—that the vessel is no match for even one mindspider.

More than likely, the party will try to sneak into the neogi base. They can find a good landing place about five miles away. Once on the ground, the party can locate the base again with little difficulty. However, travel on the surface is unpleasant and dangerous. The ground is dotted with boiling sulfur pits that spew noxious fumes into the air. The five-mile walk to the base takes two hours. The NPCs stay to guard the ship unless the PCs order them to go along to the base.

Unless they are making a lot of noise, the PCs can remain unobserved as they approach. The base consists of a loading dock, a slave pen, and a large dome that houses the neogi and their slaves.

If the party checks out the base from the surface, they can get close enough to see that one spider ship is gone (it headed back into the system to go raiding). The prisoners are still in the pen, however. There is a pair of umber hulks with a neogi on guard. There also appear to be five human guards. The prisoners are still alive, although some of them are unconscious, and all of them look pretty dejected.

After entering the camp, the party has several options. They can attempt a lightning raid, killing the guards and getting the prisoners out fast. They can try to silently kill the guards and sneak the prisoners out. Or they can hit the dome and try to kill all the neogi and umber hulks. Let the party take as long as they want to decide their course of action.

The base is described below. The PCs' actions will determine how this encounter is played out. Remember that the Neogi are intelligent and will send reinforcements anywhere the PCs attack. If the party is overwhelming the guards, the neogi leaders will order the lesser neogi and their umber hulks to hold off the party while they attempt to escape.

The moon: The sulfur pits make the air foul. The neogi are accustomed to this foul air, and can fight normally. The umber hulks don't even notice it. The human guards and the PCs all fight at −2 to hit and +2 to initiative. Should someone actually end up in a sulfur pit, the character suffers 1-6 points of damage a round, and must make a Constitution check each round or pass out from the fumes.

A. The prisoners: The prison enclosure has a single gate, six feet wide and 10 feet high. The fence is 12 feet high all around and made of heavy wire mesh. The fence is AC 4. Each five-foot square section can withstand 20 points of damage; the fence is immune to fire, cold, and type B weapons. There are 63 prisoners still alive, although 12 of them are unconscious and quite a number are having trouble breathing.

Human Guards (5): Int Average; AL N; AC 2; MV 9; HD 7 (fighter 7); hp 60, 55, 45, 40, 38; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8+2; SZ M; ML 10; XP 975 each.

These guards have a +2 to initiative due to the fouled air, and their THAC0s have been adjusted for the air, magic and strength. Sssissila, the neogi leader, has charmed them, and they fight to the death.

Umber Hulks (2): Int Average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 6, Br 1-6; HD 8+8; hp 70, 75; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 3-12/3-12/1-10; SA gaze causes *confusion;* SZ L (8′ tall, 5′ wide); ML 13; XP 4,000 each.

These are neogi guard's slaves, and fight to the death unless the neogi is slain.

Neogi (1): Int Average; AL LE; AC 2; MV 6; HD 5; hp 21; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA bite causes *slow* effect for 1-8 rounds, save vs. poison negates; SZ S (3′ tall); ML 12; XP 270.

This neogi keeps the umber hulks between himself and the PCs. He directs the guards, and fights only if he has no choice or if he can get an attack at an unsuspecting PC's back.

B. Loading Dock: The dock has space for two ships. Currently there is one ship docked. It is unoccupied, and the party may easily sneak aboard. The ship has a lifejammer. Unless someone wants to power up the ship by climbing inside the lifejammer, the PCs cannot fly it.

C. Barracks: This large dome has four rooms. There is a large central area where the lesser neogi sleep and eat; two small rooms, one for the leader, and one for the other spellcaster; and a food preparation area. There is a large entrance to the central area, and a smaller one to the kitchen. The areas are detailed below.

C1: There are currently four neogi and four umber hulks here. Unless alerted, the neogi are busy eating, and the umber hulks are waiting on them. There are several round tables and charts of Korvspace. The charts are very well marked, with the location of most of the settlements in the system clearly indicated. If the party breaks in here, the umber hulks attack immediately, and the neogi stay back where it is safe. Within two rounds, the two leaders and their umber hulks join the fray.

To the leaders, their own personal umber hulks are more important than the lesser neogi, and the lesser neogi are ordered into the fight.

Umber Hulks (4): Int Average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 6, Br 1-6; HD 8+8; hp 64, 60, 70, 71; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 3-12/3-12/1-10; SA gaze causes *confusion;* SZ L (8′ tall, 5′ wide); ML 13; XP 4,000 each.

Neogi (4): Int Average; AL LE; AC 2; MV 6; HD 5; hp 21; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA bite causes *slow* effect for 1-8 rounds, save vs. poison negates; SZ S (3′ tall); ML 12; XP 270 each.

C2: This is the kitchen. There is one thoroughly subdued troll cook and one prisoner, an unconscious elf lad. The troll will not fight, except in self defense. He is a fair cook, according to neogi standards, and an abject coward. If the party gets the drop on him, he drops to his knees and begs for his life. He is loyal to the neogi (charmed), and his begging is loud enough to be heard in the adjacent areas (C1 and C3). If the party wastes too much time here, any neogi in the dome order two of their surviving umber hulks to dig into the floor near the door, where they can come up and attack the party by surprise. When the PCs turn to face the umber

hulks, the troll attacks the PCs.

Troll: Int Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 25; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/5-12; SD Regeneration; SZ L; ML 14; XP 1,400.

C3: This small room houses a pair of umber hulks and a neogi. If the neogi hears fighting or the troll begging, he casts *stoneskin* on himself and prepares to rush out and join the fray.

Umber Hulks (2): Int Average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 6, Br 1-6; HD 8+8; hp 74, 73; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 3-12/3-12/1-10; SA gaze causes *confusion;* SZ L (8′ tall, 5′ wide); ML 13; XP 4,000 each.

Neogi lieutenant: Int Average; AL LE; AC 2; MV 6; HD 5; hp 21; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA bite causes *slow* effect for 1-8 rounds, save vs. poison negates, spells as 7th level wizard; SZ S (3′ tall); ML 12; XP 650.

Spells remaining: *Stoneskin, lightning bolt, slow, web, detect invisible, knock, magic missile* (×2), *shocking grasp, message*

The lieutenant will first cast *stoneskin,* if he hasn't already, followed by *slow,* and then *magic missile.* If the opportunity presents itself, he'll use *web* or *lightning bolt.*

C4: This is Sssissila's room. It has a secret exit, not visible from the outside. If alerted, the captain casts *protection from normal missiles* and *haste* on himself and his two umber hulks. Otherwise, he casts *haste* first and orders his umber hulks to attack. He casts his other spells until he is out of magic, then orders the healthiest of the two umber hulks to come with him. While the remaining umber hulk blocks the exit, he opens the secret door and flees to the spider ship.

Umber Hulks (2): Int Average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 6, Br 1-6; HD 8+8; hp 74, 73; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 3-12/3-12/1-10; SA gaze causes *confusion;* SZ L (8′ tall, 5′ wide); ML 13; XP 4,000 each.

Sssissila: Int Average; AL LE; AC 2; MV 6; HD 5; hp 21; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA bite causes *slow* effect for 1-8 rounds, save vs. poison negates, spells as 8th level wizard; SZ S (3′ tall); ML 12; XP 650.

Spells remaining: *Polymorph other, charm monster, protection from normal missiles, haste, invisibility, flaming sphere, magic mouth, magic missile, shocking grasp, color spray*

When the battle begins to go badly for the neogi, Sssissila or his lieutenant orders one of the surviving umber hulks to kill as many prisoners as possible. This order is given in Neogi, a hissing sibilant language that the PCs probably don't understand. The disappearance of an umber hulk should be a clue, as well as the tone of the neogi's command, a "get even" kind of tone. Anyone not in melee can make a Wisdom roll to hear the command and notice at least the tone of voice. The umber hulk burrows through the rock, taking five rounds to reach the prisoners.

If the PCs rescue the prisoners, most of them are healthy enough to survive the trip back to Sidar without any special attention. The 13 unconscious prisoners, however, will die unless they receive treatment for poisoning. This can include *neutralize* or *slow poison* spells, or attention from a character with the healing or herbalism nonweapon proficiency.

Noda

10th Level Female Specialty Priestess of Ptah

STR: 15
INT: 17
WIS: 18
DEX: 10
CON: 15
CHA: 13

AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 2
Hit Points: 57
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish
THAC0: 14
Age: 56
Height: 5′7″
Weight: 105 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Gray/Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Mace, flail, staff, lasso
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Healing (18), tracking (12), heraldry (Korvadan) (18), neogi lore (18), rope use (+2 "to hit" with lasso) (10), read/write Dwarvish (18), read/write Elvish (18), space-fighting, spelljamming (15)
Normal Items: Two weeks' rations, leather backpack, silver holy symbol, spell components, 50′ lasso, five sketches of neogi (for study), copy of the book entitled *Mind Spiders: Mistake or Abomination?* by Noda of Ptah, two changes of clothes, 123 silver pieces, waterskin, 55 platinum pieces, five vials of holy water, three flasks of oil, bullseye lantern
Magic Items: *Chain mail +3, shield +1, footman's mace +2, periapt of immunity to neogi poison, staff of curing* (16 charges), *potion of extra healing, Keoghtom's ointment* (two doses)
Spells/day: 6 6 4 3 2

As a priestess of Ptah, Noda has major access to the spheres of All, Astral, Charm, Creation, Divination, Healing, Necromancy, and Sun. She has minor access to the spheres of Elemental (air only) and Animal. She can turn undead as an 8th level cleric, use *crystal balls* (but not additional powers such as *clairaudience*, and usually cannot get lost. In any situation where she does not know exactly where she is, Noda can make a Wisdom check to determine how to get home. This does not reveal exactly where she is, just the direction where home lies. If she is in a place where directions are unreliable or on another plane, only those facts are revealed.

Noda has been a priestess of Ptah for many years and has spent most of her life exploring wildspace. She was once a prisoner on a neogi ship and escaped only because the neogi lost a battle with an imperial ship. Noda hates neogi, but has made an extensive study of them so she can slaughter them more efficiently.

Noda is accustomed to brisk military discipline, but realizes that the PCs are in charge on this mission. However, she is always on the lookout for evil and injustice, and will ceaselessly harangue the PCs if they pass up a chance to do a good deed.

Silverwood

An ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Scenario for 6-8 Characters, Level 6 and up

by Mark Liberman

A glen east of Elvenblood Pass is home to Silverwood, a unique and enigmatic being. Silverwood looks like a large willow tree, but he can *veil* himself and change his appearance as he wills. Silverwood's influence extends over the hilly forest around him for at least 30 miles. A large settlement of elves, possibly survivors from city of Ylraphon, has made this section of the enchanted forest its home. Treaties with the local humans guarantee the borders.

Except for a few squabbles over hunting rights, all has been well with Silverwood, the elves, and their neighbors for many decades. Now, however, Jalena Lavender, a local human sorceress with a passion for exotic scents, wishes to harvest a few of Silverwood's branches.

Jalena's henchmen have been violating the treaty line in their efforts to locate Silverwood, and the elves have become increasingly hostile to the local humans. The PCs, who might be in the area for any number of reasons, represent the best hope for a solution. Silverwood does not know who is trying to harm him, but he does know that the elves never will be able to make friendly inquires among the humans. Accordingly, he sends the PCs a telepathic message, asking for help.

Players' Introduction

At first, the young had strange dreams. Then the dreams came to the eldest. Finally, everyone in the village shared a dream—even outsiders like you. Your shared vision showed you Silverwood, a beautiful one-of-a-kind tree of knowledge. Silverwood is a willow tree that was thought to have died long ago. In the dream, destruction threatens Silverwood. The tree needs your help.

The village elders summoned you, begging you to aid this tree. They said a messenger stationed with a wood elf patrol at a guard post in the forest will be able to direct you to Silverwood.

"We don't know what is jeopardizing the tree," the chief elder said.

"But we know it must be something serious. You must leave quickly to reach the messenger and find the tree."

Still haunted by the vision, you accepted the charge and left on your mission a week ago. The trip has been uneventful so far, passing elven villages and guard posts—none with a sign of this Silverwood messenger. It is getting late now, and you hope to stop for the night. Ahead on the trail you see another elven guard post. Perhaps the messenger is here. The post consists of a small hut on the left side of the trail and a row of five two-man tents on the right. Several elves are about. All of them look tired and a few are injured.

Elves (6): Int Average; AL NG; AC 5; MV 12; HD 2 (F2); hp 15 each (currently 2 each); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Special; SZ M; ML 13; XP 35 each.

Captain Greenbow: Int High; AL NG; AC 2; MV 12; HD 5 (F5); hp 35 (currently 12); THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Special; SZ M; ML 13; XP 175.

Half-elf, Tal-Ric: Int Average; AL NG; AC 9; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Special; SZ M; ML 13; XP 15.

Tal-Ric is an agent of the elvish king who is investigating the rising tensions along the borders. Today, he is posing as a dealer in rare incense and herbs. He pretends to be just passing through, looking for exotic plants. His features are only slightly elvish, and he pretends to be only mildly interested in the PCs.

The guards have been warned to expect the party. The elves were injured early this morning. Greenbow took the patrol into the woods when they heard loud noises and eerie growls. As the searched the undergrowth, a force of ogres attacked. Half the patrol was captured—including the messenger who was waiting to talk to the PCs.

Greenbow and his patrol will not leave their post again. However, they strongly urge the PCs to save the messenger and their captured comrades. If the PCs ask for information about the ogres, an elf says he noticed one of them carried a two-handed sword, while the rest had clubs. One of the troopers thinks he saw another ogre lurking in the background. The ogre was continually mumbling to himself. He had a staff topped by what looked like a large wolf's skull.

Captain Greenbow tells the PCs if they want to save Silverwood, they will have to rescue the messenger.

"Head toward the rising sun and to the high peak that appears barren. It was in that direction we encountered the ogres. We call the place the Barren Crown. No one remembers ever seeing anything living up there. But as we fled we saw the ogres were heading in that direction."

On The Trail

The ogres' trail is barely discernable. In places, the tracks have been covered or obliterated—a sure sign that the ogres went out of their way to hide their trail. If they follow captain Greenbow's directions, the PCs quickly come upon the remnants of a battle. A thorough search of the area reveals a large shield with ripped arm straps, a crushed helmet, and elf footprints. This is where the elves fought the ogres. Characters with the tracking proficiency can find marks that indicate bodies were dragged away. Farther along, the tracker can find other signs of hurried passage, including drops of blood.

Even if they can't track the ogres, the PCs can find the ogres by moving toward the bald crown:

Continuing your pursuit of the ogres, you come upon two wooden stakes that straddle a dirt trail. Each stake is roughly seven feet high and is topped with a polished humanoid skull. In the distance you see a village.

Ogre Village

If the PCs take special precautions to approach the ogre village, they can gain surprise. However, if the PCs talk amongst themselves, argue, or make noise, the ogres know someone is coming and will be prepared.

A battle standard adorned with skulls, feathers, and animal horns stands in the center of the village. All ogres within 30′ of the standard gain the benefits of a *prayer* spell. The effect is dispelled if the standard is destroyed or moved.

Whether the PCs stroll casually into the village or attack, Grazno, the ogre chief, leads his warriors against them. The children do not join in the fight. If the PCs kill Grazno and Mazk, the remainder of the tribe tries to escape.

Ogres, young (4): Int Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 1; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT Nil; Dmg Nil; SA Nil; SZ M; ML 11; XP 35.

Ogre, females (6): Int Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (spear); SA +2 to damage; SZ L; ML 12; XP 175.

Ogre, warriors (6): Int Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hp 25 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 + 4 (long swords); SA +2 to damage; SZ L; ML 12; XP 175.

These ogres are using captured long swords and have not yet mastered them. Therefore, they suffer a +2 penalty on their initiative rolls.

Ogre, Draal: Int Average; AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 7; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 + 3; SA +2 w/weapon; SZ L; ML 12; XP 420.

Draal used to be the leader, and he is the largest ogre in the village. However, he was injured and still has a sore head. He gave up his chieftain title when he had trouble remembering things—including who were the enemy. He wields a massive club.

Ogre Chieftain, Grazno: Int Average; AL CE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 7; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 + 6; SA +2 w/weapon; SZ L; ML 12; XP 650.

Grazno, the newly-appointed chieftain, is a vicious fighter who always believed he should lead the tribe. He relishes battle.

Ogre Shaman, Mazk: Int Average; AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 7; hp 29; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SA +2 "to hit" with weapon, spells; SZ L; ML 12; XP 650.

Spells remaining: *Cause fear, chant, spiritual hammer, continual light, hold person.*

Mazk likes to stay out of the battle until his spells are exhausted. Even then, he is hesitant about entering the fray. He prefers to keep his dirty skin intact. He carries all of his wealth on him—2 sp, a necklace of teeth and finger bones, an agate (worth 60 gp), a large black pearl (worth 900 gp), and a silver earring (worth 20 gp).

If the PCs defeat the ogres and search the village, they find little of value in the

majority of the huts. However, in the leader's hut, which is larger and better constructed than the rest, are four suits of chain mail, a suit of *elven chain mail +1,* a small silver box with a sliver of wood in it, two giant otter pelts (each worth 250 gp), a blue crystal (worth 75 gp), an amethyst (worth 143 gp), and a jade stick pin (worth 1,805 gp).

The elf prisoners are being held in the shaman's hut.

Elves (6): Int Average; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 2 (F2); hp 15 each (currently 1 each); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Special; SZ M; ML 13; XP 35 each.

Fleetwood: Int High; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1 (F1); hp 5 each (currently 1); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Special; SZ M; ML 13; XP 35 each.

If the PCs rescue the captives, the elves say they need to return home. The messenger explains that the sliver inside the silver box is all they need to find Silverwood.

> "When floating in holy water, the sliver from the great tree of knowledge will point its way home," the messenger says. He wishes you luck and warns you that if the tree is not saved, all of the forest could fall with it.

If the PCs chat with the elves, they learn the elves were unaware an ogre village was so close to their guardposts. The elves are certain the ogres discovered the guardpost and lured the elves into the woods for an ambush.

Misdirections

> Pressing onward, you travel a few more miles and come to a clearing where three trails meet. There is a small peasant hut to the west of the crossroads. Smoke comes from a stone chimney above the thatched roof. There is a garden near the hut, and a grave is nearby. Looking at the grass, you see broad scorch marks.
>
> Also in the clearing is a signpost with three markers on it pointing in different directions. The signs read: Silverwood, Manglo, Elfwoods.

If the PCs examine the post, they discover it has been rotated recently, as the dirt is disturbed around its base. If the PCs listen, they hear sobs coming from inside the cottage.

The hut belongs to a jackalwere, who is appearing as a human. His mate was slain yesterday when a half-dozen humans calling themselves "The Collectors" passed through. He is willing to speak with the PCs if they do not threaten him. He knows that The Collectors included a spellcaster and a fighter with a flaming sword. They were talking about finding this tree called Silverwood that they were hired to cut down. The jackalwere did not know or care what they were talking about. He was stricken with grief over the death of his mate. He saw them move the signpost and then start up the trail on the hillside.

Jackalwere: Int Very; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA Gaze causes sleep; SD Hit only by iron and +1 or better magical weapons; SZ S; ML 11; XP 420.

Silver Confrontations

When the PCs are finished with this area, they can continue on their mission. If they did not talk to the jacklewere or inspect the signpost, it is possible they will take the trail that the sign designates as "To Silverwood."

If a PC with the tracking proficiency makes a successful check, he or she notices day-old human tracks that follow the trail up the hill. If the PCs take this trail, they are on course. Otherwise, allow them to follow one of the other trails until they are hopelessly lost. Eventually they will come back and take the right trail.

The Collectors have left a rear guard to watch the trail. From their high vantage point on the hill, they spotted the PCs at the cabin, and they believe the PCs are jackalweres following them to take revenge. The Collectors have set up a trap of rocks and dirt, and when the party passes a certain point, the evil humans will start a landslide and continue on their way. One of the Collectors, Jalock, stays behind to pick off any survivors.

There are several ways to detect the trap if the PCs are paying attention to their surroundings. A PC with tracking skill or a ranger can notice signs that the human bootprints are fresher, and it is obvious a pair of humans stayed in one spot for some time. This spot has a clear view of the cabin below.

If the PCs move off the trail and travel through the woods on the hill, they will avoid the landslide. However, if they continue on the path, The Collectors set the rocks and dirt cascading down on the heroes. The PCs caught in the slide suffer 3d10 points of damage, save vs. paralyzation for half damage.

Once the trap is sprung, Jalock, who is perched in a tree higher up on the hill, begins to fire arrows at them.

If Jalock is captured and questioned, he reluctantly admits that there are seven Collectors, one a spell caster. He does not know who hired them, but he knows they are supposed to kill a big silver-tinted tree. His job was to guard the spell caster. He said they decided to attack the jackalweres in the cabin just because they saw possible profit in the deed.

Jalock: Int Average; AL NE; AC 4 (chain, shield) (AC 0 because of his cover); MV 9; HD 3 (F3); hp 26; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or 2/1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger), 1-6+1 (*arrows +1*); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 13; XP 175.

Jalock carries 14 *arrows +1*, 20 regular arrows, a silvered broad sword, and 120 gp in a small leather pouch. He wears an ornate silver ring on his left hand (worth 320 gp).

> Finally, you look down the hill and see a tree-covered plateau bordered by steep walls. The land has a silvery cast to it. There are a few crags, and boulders dot the landscape. The boulders are immense, 20 to 30 feet across. As you move closer you can see that all of the trees are oaks. There is no willow tree in sight.

Silverwood is here, using its *veil* power disguise itself as an oak. The Collectors arrived here before the PCs and found no sign of Silverwood, either.

The Collectors are here, too. If they hear the PCs approach, they hide behind boulders and prepare their strategy. They still believe the PCs are jackalweres bent on revenge.

The wizard begins by casting a *lightning bolt.* The *invisible* thief sneaks around behind the PCs and attempts to backstab a spellcaster, while The Collectors' fighters rush forward to melee. The wizard stays behind a boulder, popping out to cast spells.

Fighters (3): Int Average; AL NE; AC 4 (chain, shield); MV 9; HD 3 (F3); hp 24 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 13; XP 120 each.

The fighters each have 120 gp.

Dirty Mok Rake, leader: Int Average; AL NE; AC 3 (plate); MV 6; HD 7 (F7); hp 53; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-10+3 (STR, *+1 flametongue*; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 13; XP 1,400.

Dirty carries a scroll tube and a *potion of speed,* which he will drink if he hears the PCs coming. Dirty does not have anything else of value—he can't hold onto money. Inside the scroll tube is a piece of parchment that reads: "Mok, take Amezir the wizard and your motley band. Bring me three lower branches of the great silver willow tree. They must be harvested with a flaming blade at midnight. Wrap the branches in blankets padded with the tree's leaves. Then bring them to me...J.L."

Human Thief: Int Average; AL CE; AC 3 (DEX, +1 leather); MV 12; HD 5 (T5); hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+1 (short sword +1); SA backstab x3; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 13; XP 420.

The thief carries picks and tools, an opal (worth 325 gp), and a blue pearl (worth 513 gp).

Human Wizard: Int Exceptional; AL NE; AC 6 (DEX, *ring of protection +1*); MV 12; HD 7 (W7); hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6* (staff); SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 13; XP 1,400.

The wizard also has *winged boots*, a *staff of striking (22 charges),* 87 gp, 7 pp.

Spells remaining: *Magic missile* (×2), *charm person, invisibility, web* (×2), *fireball, lightning bolt.*

> The evil band lies in defeat. Before you can attend to your own wounds, you discern one of the oak trees shimmering. Its leaves take on a silver glow, and the tree becomes a majestic willow. A craggy face forms on the trunk.
>
> "Thank you for answering my summons. Your defeat of these evil men is just the beginning. You have much work to do. You must find the person who ordered my destruction. A good place to start is the soil where these evil humans came from. It is a village called Manglo. You will have to retrace your steps, for it is on the other side of the hill. Begin there in your search for the mastermind."
>
> With that, the tree falls silent, its branches shimmer, and it once again looks like an oak.

Toward Manglo

The party should head down the trail to the south toward Manglo. Near midday it starts raining, lightly at first, but it turns to a steady downpour. As they press on, the PCs enter a section of woods claimed by a group of kech. The creatures have dug a pit in the trail and covered it with leaves, hoping to easily snare some dinner. Unless the PCs are being cautious, the lead party member will fall into the pit, suffering 1d6 points of damage.

If someone falls in the pit, or if the PCs detect it and step around it, the tree branches shake and the kechs begin screeching. The creatures will only fight if they are attacked or threatened.

If the PCs search the area, they find a single gold piece inside a splintered and scorched dogwood tree.

Kech (3): Int Average; AL NE; AC 4; MV 15, Cl 6; HD 5; hp 26, 23, 20; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-6; SA −5 to opponents surprise rolls; SD Traps; SZ M (6′ tall); ML 12; XP 650 each.

Manglo

As night falls, the rain stops and the PCs spot the lights of Manglo. The village is muddy and deserted. The only building open is the inn (location 9).

There are about 180 villagers, the majority of whom wear shabby clothing. Most of the residents are both poor and greedy. The village has eight major buildings and 30 peasant residences, each with four to eight occupants. The peasants are distrustful of outsiders, especially non-humans. Their lives are hard, and they have little useful information. However, from time to time one of them will say, "beware the shattered bark." People have disappeared in the vicinity of the dead dogwood tree.

1. Stable: There is nothing here except for a few tired plow horses.

2. Barn: Four pathetic-looking cows and a run down horse are the only animals housed here. Little Billy, age 9 and short for his age, shovels hay during the day and cares for the animals. If the PCs chat with Billy, he reveals that a powerful wizard who had lots of spells came through the village a few days ago. His description matches the wizard the PCs fought near Silverwood. Billy says the wizard spent a night at the inn.

3. Granary: There is nothing of interest here. There is a little grain stored here, but most of it is moldy.

4. Mill: This water-powered mill is operated by the Miller family: Storg, Millie, and their children Helda and Gavine. Their home is attached to the mill. The Millers are better off than most people in the village.

The Millers also rent and sell canoes. They charge 50 gp to rent a canoe for two weeks, 100 gp to buy a canoe. The canoes seat three people, and they have five available.

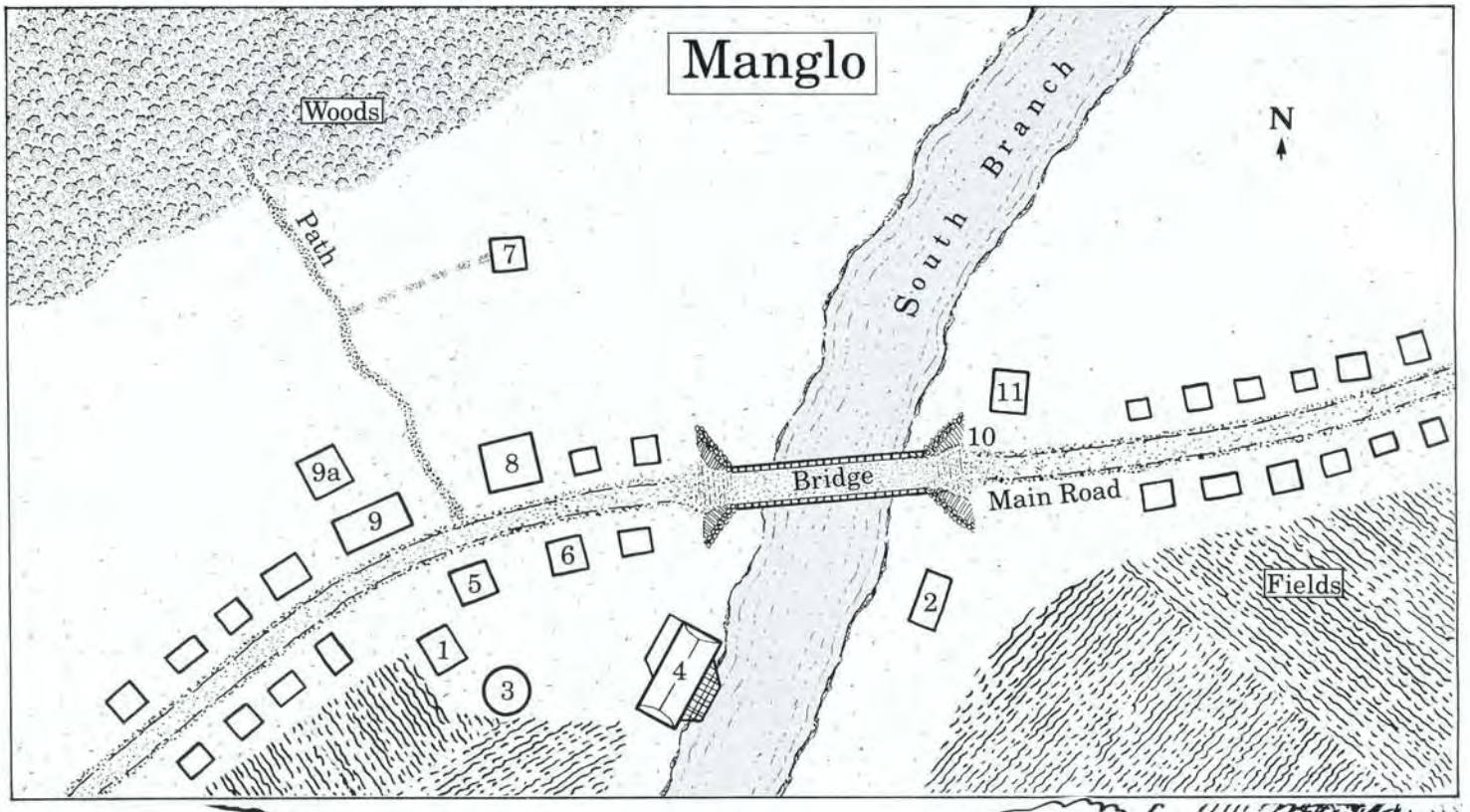
If the PCs treat the Millers with respect, they tell the PCs that they know a wizard named Amezir passed through here with a party of armed and dangerous men. The group spent an evening at the inn. If the PCs ask about J.L. Storg says he knows six people in town with the initials J.L.: Jamie Lacour, a peasant; Jim Lang, a peasant; Joe Lark, the clerk at the village hall; Jarni Larn, a ragged-looking trapper; Jack Loon, a handsome young man who works at the inn; and Jillian Loon, his wife.

5. Village elder's residence: This place looks like a mansion compared to the buildings in the rest of the village. The elder is Norgul Hemp. He is old, hard of hearing, and fragile. He is served by his equally-elderly assistant, Silvia. If the PCs ask Norgul a question, he thinks and thinks and thinks, then nods off to sleep. When the PCs wake him up, he replies to their question.

Norgul knows there are a couple of people in the village whose initials are J.L.—Jack and Jillian Loon. There is another individual, but he says he can't remember that person's name. With prodding, he recalls that the individual is Jolly Lawrence.

If the PCs ask Norgul why he hired Lancaster (see locations 9 & 11), he will first send Silvia out of the room and says it is none of the party's business. "I have my skeletons and I want them to stay in their closets." He will say no more. (Lancaster blackmailed Norgul into hiring him. Many years ago, Norgul "fixed" the bidding on the town portrait, see location 8. This knowledge would make Norgul very unpopular if word got out.)

6. Grim Residence: This home is much larger and better maintained than the other residences in the village. The PCs have no reason to visit it, but it might attract a curious PC's attention. It is home to Bill and Sally Grim, a wealthy couple. They are both bitter, as they lost two sons to the elves. The sons were caught poaching, and when an elven


Manglo
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patrol asked them to surrender they were too proud to comply. They fought and died. Their bodies were returned.

Bill is zero level (AC 10, 3 hit points). If the party presses for information, Bill gets indignant and pulls out a staff. He starts yelling and attacks the elves in the party. If he is injured or killed, the watch from location 11 arrives with weapons drawn. The watchmen arrest the party. If the PCs fight back, the watchmen use their *rod of rulership* on the party.

7. Larn Residence: Jarni Larn lives here. Jarni is a wereboar and a trapper by trade. He has dark hair and a crooked nose. He doesn't want to answer questions, and would prefer not to let the party in. If treated badly, Jarni tells the party to leave. As they turn to the door, he changes to boar form and attacks. The party receives a −1 to their surprise roll.

Jarni, Wereboar: Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 26; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; SD Silver or +1 or better weapons to hit; SZ M; ML 13; XP 650.

If the party searches the place, they find 175 sp, 25 gp, 1 pp, a moonstone (45 gp), a topaz (650 gp), a gem-studded gold bracelet (4,000 gp), and A log of his hunting and trapping activities. The information in the log is useless to the PCs, and the handwriting does not match the scroll the PCs got from The Collectors.

8. Village Hall: This building has a main room filled with benches for town meetings. There also are two small offices at the back. The walls are decorated with many crude paintings of the village. Each year the village commissions an outside artist to paint a village scene. Each year a different person pays money to get his building or home painted at the center of the picture.

Joe Lark with his young apprentice Ethrea, is caretaker of the village archives. For a little money, Joe and Ethrea can give the PCs the names of all the villagers who have the initials "J.L." They are: Jamie Lacour, Jim Lang, Joan Land and Jole Land (peasants); Jarni Larn (trapper); Jack & Jill Loon (inn employees); and Joe Lark himself.

Ethrea remembers The Collectors, especially the dashing Bron. She is waiting for him to return.

9. The Brown Cup: This place is named for its earthenware cups, which are not only brown, but very dirty. That only adds to the foul taste of the local ale, which sells for 2 cp a cup, 4 cp to non-humans; cheap wine costs 1 sp, 2 sp to non-humans. There are five rooms upstairs; room rates are 5 sp for humans, 1 gp for non-humans. Both prices include breakfast. There is only one guest, Tal Ric (who is asleep), at the inn when the PCs first arrive in Manglo.

There is a much-used dart board in the main room. During the day and early evening the main room also holds 1d12+2 peasants who stare darkly at any non-humans in the party. All the locals have gone home for the night when the PCs arrive. Due to the hour, the inn staff will not be at all talkative during the PCs' first night.

Near the end of the PCs' first day in Manglo, two human knights arrive at the inn. They leave their war horses at the Brown Cup's stable (9A) and settle in for a long rest.

Sir Lawrence: Int Average; AL LN; AC 3; MV 9; HD 7 (F7); hp 61; THAC0 14; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8+5; SA two attacks a round with long sword at +1 "to hit," +3 damage from specialization and Strength 17; SZ M; ML 15; XP 975.

Magic Items: *Shield +1, potion of extra-healing, ring of spell storing* (*detect lie, speak with dead, detect charm*).

Sir William: Int High; AL LG; AC 3; MV 9; HD 7 (F7); hp 66; THAC0 14; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8+5; SA two attacks a round with long sword at +2 "to hit," +5 damage from specialization and Strength 18/23; SZ M; ML 15; XP 975.

Magic Items: *Chain mail +1.*

Lawrence and William are on an inspection tour for Duke Edouard, who is overlord of just about all the land from here north to Ravens Bluff. They are cordial to the PCs, but they have only just arrived and are tired. They are sympathetic to the party's cause, but they need to leave in two days and cannot help them.

The inn staff includes Jack and Jill Loon, a middle-aged couple who like to meet people, even non-humans. Jack cooks, and Jill is the bar maid. Buril, the owner, is very distrustful of non-humans, especially halflings. He refuses to allow halflings inside unless he receives a 100 gp deposit, returnable upon departure.

Buril is be very closed-lipped around the party. Jack and Jill, however, will find time to chat with the PCs. If asked about any other travelers in the past few days, they mention Bron, who impressed Jill (which still makes Jack jealous), and Mok Rake, who impressed Jack with his fighting stories. They were supposedly just passing through this area. The pair were heading north to Ravens Bluff with several companions in tow, but they changed their plans after talking with one of the local watch members.

The Loons are not sure which watchman it was; they think it was Lancaster, the leader, who is a big, brooding man and new to Manglo. They are not sure of Lancaster's last name, but the know it's something with an "S," either Shalm or Sholm. The village elder, Norgul, just hired him. After Bron and Mok Rake talked with the watch, something was exchanged between them, and the spell caster with Bron mentioned something about restudying his spells for the woods before retiring for the night. Nothing else happened and the party left early the next morning.

After the PCs talk with Jack and Jill, one of the peasants a little too abruptly gets up and heads out. If questioned, he appears nervous, but says it is getting late and he needs to get back to his mistress. He skulks his way to the gatehouse (location 11), and informs the watch of what has transpired.

10. Wooden bridge: There are four canoes tied up here. Everyone knows that they belong to the Miller's and would not dare touch them. The canoes are secured with a chain and padlock.

11. Gatehouse: This building has a single room in front and two cells in back. There are six watchmen: Eric, Dan, Jarm, Roak, Mandriff, and Lancaster, their captain.

Watchmen (6): Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 9; HD 3 (F3); hp 20 each; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2-8+2; SA three attacks every two rounds with broad sword at +1 "to hit," +2 damage from specialization; SZ M; ML 15; XP 120 each.

Lancaster: Int High; AL N; AC −1; MV 9; HD 7 (F7); hp 49; THAC0 14; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8+7; SA two attacks a round with morning star at +4 "to hit," +7 damage from magic, specialization, and Str 18/42; SZ M; ML 16; XP 975.

Magic Items: *Shield +1, morning star +2, potion of hill giant strength, rod of rulership* (5 charges).

When the party first arrives, Lancaster is not around. The other watchmen say Lancaster is new to this area and recently hired by Norgul.

Mandrif was with Lancaster when he talked with Bron and Mok Rake. However, Mandrif will not say what happened in front of the other watchmen, and he wants at least 50 gp for his information. After he is paid he will relate that Lancaster hired Bron and his group to go recover some silver. The details were on a scroll Lancaster passed to the group. Mandrif doesn't know what was on the scroll.

Railroaded

After the party has explored for the day, Lancaster confronts the PCs. The rest of the watch is present to back him up.

Lancaster charges the party with malicious conduct and subversive behavior. A crowd of peasants begins to gather. If the party does not go quietly, Lancaster uses his *rod of rulership* on the party. Any PC affected by the *rod* will immediately comply with Lancaster's orders to surrender. Lancaster deals with unaffected PCs by threatening harm to his prisoners. If the party is being difficult to capture, Tal Ric appears and tries to persuade the party to give up. If the PCs still refuse to surrender, the watchmen attack to subdue.

Angry peasants (75): Int Low; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 2; Dmg overbear, wrestle; SA make overbearing attacks in groups of six for a "to hit" bonus of +5; SZ M; ML 9; XP 15 each.

Once subdued, the party is escorted to the gatehouse, and all of their items are confiscated and stored away. Everything—including material components—is taken. Spell-casting PCs are manacled.

Lancaster searches the PCs' belongings; if the PCs have not hidden the silver sliver, he finds it. Lancaster sends it to his boss, Jalena Lavender. Lancaster also wants to find out what the party knows and what has happened to The Collectors. Late at night, or if the party is about to break out, Tal Ric appears outside their jail cell:

> "Don't worry. I don't think you'll come to harm. It is amazing the ignorance of these humans. When they return in the morning, you need to show them you are not ogres. Offer to do them a favor. That should appease them."

Next morning Norgul tells the watch to bring the party to the village hall. The hall is full of villagers. Lawrence and William Lancaster also are present, sitting right up front with Lancaster and Norgul. Tal Ric is at the back. Norgul opens the proceedings:

> The village elder clears his throat and motions for silence. When the room is quiet, he addresses you. "Lancaster has accused you of many crimes, not the least of which is the murder of Bill and Sally's sons. While you specifically might not be guilty, you will answer for crimes of your elvish friends—we know they sent you here. Do you have anything to say in your defense?"

If the party offers to do a favor, as Tal suggested, the villagers suggest clearing out the evil force that seems to dominate the woods—that force caused one of the villagers, Randal, to disappear last night. They want the PCs to bring Randal back. Everyone is very happy with that idea, as either the problem will be cleared up or the party will be killed.

If the PCs agree to the task, all of their items will be returned, excluding the silver sliver. If they ask for its return, Lancaster and the watch pretend to know nothing about it. In any case, the villagers brook no delays—they want the PCs to leave now. They point the way east:

> "You should stay on the trail until you reach the shattered dogwood tree. Be careful, all the villagers avoid the place, which is full of evil spirits."

If the PCs proceed to the dogwood, they find the pit from the kech encounter. It has been concealed once again. As the PCs examine the area, they hear a cry for help, a man's voice from off the trail to the right.

The kech have laid several new traps, and they hope to lead the PCs through all of them. They take the captive Randal and drag him through the forest, letting him yell for help all the time.

For every turn that the party is out searching, roll a 1d6 and add +1 for every turn previously spend searching. The result corresponds to an encounter:

1-3 Cry for help in a different direction.

4-6 Pit 10′ × 10′ × 10′. Characters who fall in suffer 1d6 points of damage.

7-8 Deadfall of logs cover an area 10′ wide and 30′ long, victims take 2d6 points of damage, save vs. petrification for half. Characters in this area catch glimpses of leafy-green shapes among the trees.

9+ Kech attack by jumping down onto the party.

Characters with tracking or find traps ability can detect and avoid the traps by making a roll vs. one half their normal success chance.

Kech (3): Int Average; AL NE; AC 4; MV 15, Cl 6; HD 5; hp 33, 30, 29; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-6; SA −5 to opponents surprise rolls; SD Traps; SZ M (6′ tall); ML 12; XP 650 each.

If the PCs did not kill the three kech from the earlier encounter, they will be here, too.

After the kech are defeated, the cries for help continue. After one turn of searching—and one more deadfall trap, the party finds Randal tied up and looking nervous. In the small encampment the party can find: 10 pp, 280 gp, 5 ep, a *scroll of protection from gasses,* a *ring of truth,* and a *chime of hunger.*

Once they find Randal, the party can now return to Manglo in triumph. The villagers are delighted. There will be a feast in the village hall.

Ask the characters if they are feasting, if not, the villagers are deeply offended. If they do feast, Lancaster has arranged to slip a knockout drug into the party's food. Every PC who eats must save vs. poison. Failure results in a −4 penalty to all combat rolls, proficiency checks, and saving throws for 2d6 hours. Drugged PCs don't know what hit them—they just feel woozy.

When the PCs leave the banquet, Lancaster drinks his *potion of hill giant strength* and attacks them. The potion increases his damage bonus to +11. Unless the PCs specifically state they are on the lookout for trouble, Lancaster ambushes them and automatically gains a free attack.

As Lancaster charges, he yells, "I don't know what you did to The Collectors, but I have sent your sliver ahead to J.L." He fights to the death.

The Root of the Problem

When PCs awake the next morning, one of the townspeople gives them a package and a note, which reads:

> "Good morning. We did not want to wake you, so we proceeded without you. We have questioned, using spells, the criminal Lancaster. He did not relate much. The most important information is that his employer, the mysterious J.L., lives to the east, just up the river. The rest of the information can be gleaned from his diary. We have left you the relevant pages. We are taking the rest of the diary. At the duke's expense, we have rented the Millers' canoes for your use. We expect a full report upon your return."
>
> Good Luck,
> Sir Lawrence, R.O.R.
> Sir William, R.O.R.

The writing in the diary does not match the writing on the scroll signed by J.L. The passages in the diary are:

> **23** Today I have come to the dump called Manglo to do your bidding.
> **20** Today I have found no one of use in this cesspool. I will check travelers.
> **13** I have still found no one suitable.
> **5** I have contacted a party led by a mage named Amezir. They seem suitable, so I have given them the scroll as the pass sign and told them to use the canoes upon their return with the bundle.
> **4** Today I have sent you Amazeir's name and that the task is being attempted.
> **2** Another party has arrived. I confiscated an item of some interest. I have sent it on to you. They seem to be interested in the Silver tree. Today I will face this new party. Make note to send to J.L. where I got the sliver.

Once they read the diary, the party should load the canoes and proceed east up the river.

Each canoe can hold two people. Characters with armor should take it off for safety, but the DM shouldn't insist on it.

Water Under the Hill

> Your journey takes you into a stretch of calm water. Ahead, you see a great hill that could take days to cross. The stream disappears into the hillside, which is sheathed in fitted stone. The water flows through a gap about four feet high. Trees reach across the river from both banks, their branches dangling above the water, and their leaves rustling gently in the breeze. One tree has a polished silver bell hanging from it.
>
> Your canoes easily can fit through the gap. The bell is fitted with a pull rope and hangs 70-80 feet from the gap.
>
> This is a very pleasant area, and not just because of the water and trees. Brightly colored flowers grow in profusion all around.

Pause for a moment to let the PCs take this in.

> While you study the scene, you detect a rustling in the bushes—it's an eavesdropper. Tal Ric, the merchant, slowly rises from his hiding place. He looks you in the eye, then stands a little taller. "I am *Inspector* Tal Ric of the elven forest guard. I have been assigned to find out who was violating the treaty line. While I cannot bring this J.L. to justice, I can return with his or her description and full name. I will wait here for two days for you to return with the information. Someone should at least return with J.L.'s location. Maybe you can get into the hill and beyond. I sure couldn't."

Tal doesn't have much information for the PCs. He couldn't find another entrance into the hill, and he is no swimmer. He is convinced, however, that this is where "J.L." can be found. Now that the PCs have arrived, he expects them to investigate the interior of the hill.

If the PCs look over the flowers, they note the following varieties, in order of their numbers: daisies, violets, tulips, roses, and lilies. The flowers are domesticated, not wild, and have been planted in a very orderly fashion.

A druid or character with the agriculture proficiency can tell that the flowers have been very carefully tended. Many of the plants have been cut just below the blossom, leaving almost the whole stem intact. A *speak with plants* spell reveals that the inhabitants of the hill cut the flowers and wear them on their clothes.

Jalena's Lair

If the PCs enter the gap in the wall, they soon come to the metal portcullis that blocks the entrance to area B.

Residents get inside by ringing the bell. This alerts the guards in area A, who lower a concealed ladder leading to area A or raise the portcullis leading to area B. If the PCs ring the bell, they'll have to bluff their way past the guards. The guards are expecting The Collectors, so this could work.

The party also might get into areas A, B, or C by using *passwall* or *stone shape* on the wall, which is eight feet thick.

High atop the hill, there is a secret entrance leading to area R. The PCs have the normal chance to locate this entrance if they spend at least two hours searching. Tal Ric will assist them.

The PCs also can force the portcullis using a bend bars/lift gates roll. The guards won't immediately notice if the PCs bend the bars, but there is no way the PCs can get their canoes though the opening, though the PCs could swim into area B.

Lifting the gate is nearly impossible, since the canoes do not provide much stability. A character with the seamanship or boating proficiency must be on hand to steady the canoe, and must make a successful proficiency check at half the normal score or the canoe will swamp while the PCs try to lift the gate. If the canoe is held steady, the bend/bars lift gates roll still must succeed. Only one character per canoe can try to lift the gate.

The PCs can make a combined attempt, but a seaman must be on hand to steady each canoe. The portcullis goes all the way to the river bottom, 20 feet below. A swimming character cannot lift the gate, but a character could stand on the bottom and lift. This would require all the PCs to swim under the portcullis. The water is very cold here, and prolonged exposure can be harmful (see area E).

Finally, the PCs could locate the concealed ladder leading to area A. A normal search for secret doors on the cavern ceiling might locate it; Tal Ric will not help the PCs do this. There is no way to drop the ladder from the outside, except by a *knock* spell. However, if the PCs try to force this portal, the guards in area A will oblige them by dropping the ladder (see below).

Lower Level

A. Entrance Room: At water level, a metal portcullis to the northeast blocks the river, as described above. A folded walkway with spikes disguised to look like stalagmites forms a secret door. If slammed down, it would destroy any canoes underneath and cause 4d6 points of damage to creatures in the canoes.

Four guards always are on duty here. They have been told to expect The Collectors, who bear Jalena's scroll. If the PCs present the scroll signed "J.L." the guards are easily duped into believing that the party is The Collectors.

Each guard wears a daisy, and if the party bluffs their way through, the guards give each PC a daisy to wear. The guards lift the portcullis with a winch, and the PCs can beach their canoes in area B. Then two guards escorts the PCs to meet Gertrude.

If a fight breaks out, three guards attack while the fourth runs to alert the complex.

Guards (4): Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 9; HD 3 (F3); hp 20 each; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg 2-8+2 or 1-8 (sheaf arrow); SA three attacks every two rounds with broad sword at +1 "to hit," +2 damage from specialization; SZ M; ML 15; XP 120 each.

B. Cave: This area contains a few beached canoes, the portcullis winch, and a large raft.

If the PCs bypass area A and enter through the portcullis, the guards will notice them if the PCs are talking. Otherwise, the PCs can sneak right into the complex.

C. Storage Rooms: Rooms 1, 2, and 3 contain crates of food stuffs and beverages. Room 4 holds fertilizer, and room 5 contains gardening tools and seeds.

D. Myconid Colony: A circle of Myconids live here under Jalena's protection. Burlap curtains close off both ends of their domain.

When Jalena comes to meet the myconids she brings a pail of sweet-smelling compost which the myconids regard very highly (some of this is stored in area C4). The myconid king appears to accept the compost, and rapport spores are used to establish communication.

The myconids and Jalena are working on several joint projects. The myconids panic if anyone not bringing compost enters the area; they release their distress spores, but do not attack so long as the party sticks to the clear trail. If the party strays, or tries to enter the king's chamber in the northeast, the myconids use their pacifier and hallucinator spores.

The side chambers are filled with all sorts of fungus, including most of the myconids. The king's chamber has four long troughs filled with multi-colored fungi. They smell very sweet. There are also two workbenches crammed with agricultural equipment and lab fluids.

The king and Jalena do a brisk trade: fungi and magical fluids for the compost. A large clump of fungus at the west side of the king's chamber contains a stock of potions, all the results of the king's latest experiments: *rainbow hues, growth, sweet water, plant control,* and a *philter of love.*

Myconids (25): Int Average; AL LN; AC 10; MV 9; HD varies; hp varies; THAC0 varies; #AT 1; Dmg varies; SA spores; SZ S to L (2′ per hit die); ML 12; XP varies.

1 HD (4); hp 4 each; THAC0 19; Dmg 1-4; SA distress spores; XP 15 each.

2 HD (4); hp 9 each; THAC0 19; Dmg 2-8; SA distress and reproducer spores; XP 35 each.

3 HD (4); hp 16 each; THAC0 17; Dmg 3-12; SA distress, reproducer, and rapport spores; XP 65 each.

4 HD (4); hp 20 each; THAC0 17; Dmg 4-16; SA distress, reproducer, rapport, and pacifier spores; XP 175 each.

5 HD (4); hp 25 each; THAC0 15; Dmg 5-20; SA distress, reproducer, rapport, pacifier spores, and hallucinator spores; XP 270 each.

King, 6 HD; hp 31; THAC0 15; Dmg 6-24; SA distress, reproducer, rapport, pacifier, hallucinator, and animator spores; XP 650.

Effects of Spores: Characters struck by pacifier spores must save vs. poison or take no actions for a one round for each of the myconid's hit dice.

Those struck by hallucinator spores must save vs. poison or suffer one of these effects (1d20): 1-10, cower whimpering; 11-15, stare into space; 16-18 flee; 19-20 attempt to kill closest being. The effects last one turn for each of the myconid's hit dice.

Distress spores alert other myconids to danger.

Rapport spores establish telepathic communication between the myconid and another creature. A save vs. poison negates their effects. If the PCs present the myconids with some choice compost and are effected by the spores (creatures can voluntarily fail their saving throws), they might be able to trade for some of or all of the King's potions.

Animator spores are used to turn slain opponents into zombie-like creatures. If the PCs flee from the area and leave fallen PCs behind, the myconid king uses these spores. Infected PCs become one hit-die zombies under the king's control in 1d4 days. Such zombies rot after 1d4+1 weeks.

E. Pit Trap: This 10-foot square area dumps its victims into the rushing river below. If the PCs locate this trap, they can use a hidden lever to lock it shut. Otherwise, the first characters who step into the area must make Dexterity checks at a −2 penalty. Failure results in a 15-foot drop into the river for 1d3 points of damage. Once in the river, a victim must make a Strength check to avoid being swept down the river to area B. Non-swimmers who are swept away sink and must hold their breaths until rescued. Swimmers must make successful proficiency checks or sink also. In addition, the water is cold. The victim immediately begins feeling numb and after four rounds the character must make a Constitution check each round or lose consciousness.

F. Daisy Entrance: Two displacer beasts guard this area. Bands of small, but sharp, spikes at the narrow ends of the chamber keep the beasts in. Characters without heavy footgear take 1d3 points of damage when crossing the spikes. The party must be actively scanning the floor to detect the spikes.

The beasts sniff everyone who enters. They attack anyone not wearing a flower.

Displacer Beasts (2): Int Semi; AL N; AC 4; MV 15; HD 6; hp 27 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/2-8; SD opponent's first attack misses, −2 on opponents' attack rolls; SZ L 8′-12′ long); ML 13; XP 975 each.

G. Guest Desk: Gertrude, a scribe, is busily at work here; she wears a violet. If the alarm is raised, she runs up the stairs in area K and hides in area M, warning the guards there. She is a non combatant (level 0, AC 10, hp 2).

If the PCs arrive with an escort, the guard flirts with Gertrude briefly and then tells the party to rest, as he will inform J. of the party's presence. Ger-

trude tells the party to wait in their rooms until summoned. The party is assigned rooms H1 and H2. There is a lot of paperwork on her desk pertaining to food consumption for a force of approximately 20 individuals.

If the PCs arrive here on their own, Gertrude is suspicious and frightened, even if the PCs are wearing flowers. She directs the PCs into area H, hoping to make a dash to area V. If attacked or threatened, she gives up without a struggle.

H. Guest Rooms: The doorways to these rooms are curtained. The furnishings are decent, but nothing spectacular. Only room 3 is occupied. A trader, Lacorch, a half orc wearing a daisy, is waiting here after dropping off his goods (food for the complex), which he brought by raft. He arrived from Manglo three days ago, and he is getting a little testy. He wants his money. He does know Jalena by name, but does know that she loves flowers and perfume.

Lacorch: Int High; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 8 (T8); hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+2; SA backstab for +4 attack bonus and 3× damage; SZ M; ML 16; XP 975.

Magic Items: *long sword +2, potion of invisibility, cloak of protection +1, ring of sustenance.*

I. Lower Dining Hall: This area is filled with plain wooden benches and long tables. The kitchen (I1) is separated from the dining area by a wooden partition. If the alarm has not been raised, three cooks, Mica, Sena, and Mersh are here preparing a meal. They will not fight (level 0, AC 10, 3 hp each). All wear violets. If questioned, they say the complex has about a dozen guards, and that the owlbears in area L can be bypassed through area K. The store room (I2) holds assorted foodstuffs. The cold storage area (I3) holds meats.

J. Owlbears' Nest: The west side of this chamber is filled with a big, untidy nest. It smells very bad, and is littered with dung and feathers.

K. Extra Exit: This staircase is not used much because of the smell from the nest. A stone guardian has been placed here to prevent anyone without a violet from going upstairs. Any prisoner the PCs bring here (most likely Gertrude or one of the cooks) tries to escape up the stairs when the stone guardian attacks.

Stone Guardian: Int Non; AL N; AC 2; MV 10; HD 4+4; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2-9/2-9; SA *detects invisibility* continuously; SZ M (6′ tall); ML 20; XP 1,400.

A stone guardian takes quarter damage from edged weapons, is immune to normal missiles, and takes half damage from fire, electricity, and cold. It is immune to a mind-affecting spells and mental attacks, fear, paralyzation, and poison. A *stone to flesh, transmute rock to mud, stone shape,* or *dig* spell kills it with no saving throw.

L. Owlbear Post: A mated pair of owlbears trained to attack anyone without a violet are on guard here. They are also trained to not walk over the purple lines painted on the floor unless they are leashed. There are two leashes on the wall; both owlbears have collars studded with amethysts (worth 150 gp each).

Owlbears (2): Int Low; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 28 each; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; SA Hug; SZ L; ML 12; XP 420 each.

Upper Level

All the ceilings on this level are covered with glowing lichen. This level is much cleaner that the lower level and is pleasantly scented.

M. Rest Area: This room is for relaxing. The place is crammed with plants that give off a calming fragrance. Characters must save vs. spell each round or become passive and unable to do anything violent or destructive. This effect lasts until the character can breathe fresh air (just getting out of the room is sufficient) for 3d4 rounds.

There are also lots of large comfortable chairs, a chess board, and some books. If there have been no alarms, two guards from area U are here relaxing.

N. Armory: There are racks of long swords, long bows, and quivers of arrows here. Two practice targets stand at the room's south end. There is also a pile of worn and broken weapons in the northwest corner, which contains the head of a *battle axe* +2. If attached to a new handle it would be useable. If the alarm has sounded, one of the sergeants from area V waits here, hoping to attack intruders while they are affected by the fragrance in area M. If a fight breaks out, three guards from area P join the fray.

O. Ivy Hallway: Ivy covers the walls. The plants give off a nice smell which permeates the whole level. A side room (O1) contains a privy with a large chamber pot and lots of nice smelling plants.

P. Central Chamber: This area is filled with colorful, fragrant tulips growing in flower boxes. There is a large glass atomizer (one pint) filled with tulip scent under one flower box.

If there has been an alarm, four guards from area U are waiting here. They have been gambling in area R and have 135 gp between them. If they hear fighting in area N, three attack while the fourth runs to get the reserve guards in area U.

Q. Hound: Jalena has placed a *Mordenkainen's faithful hound* here. It attacks any creature that doesn't smell of flowers. (Characters who use the atomizer in area P smell of flowers.)

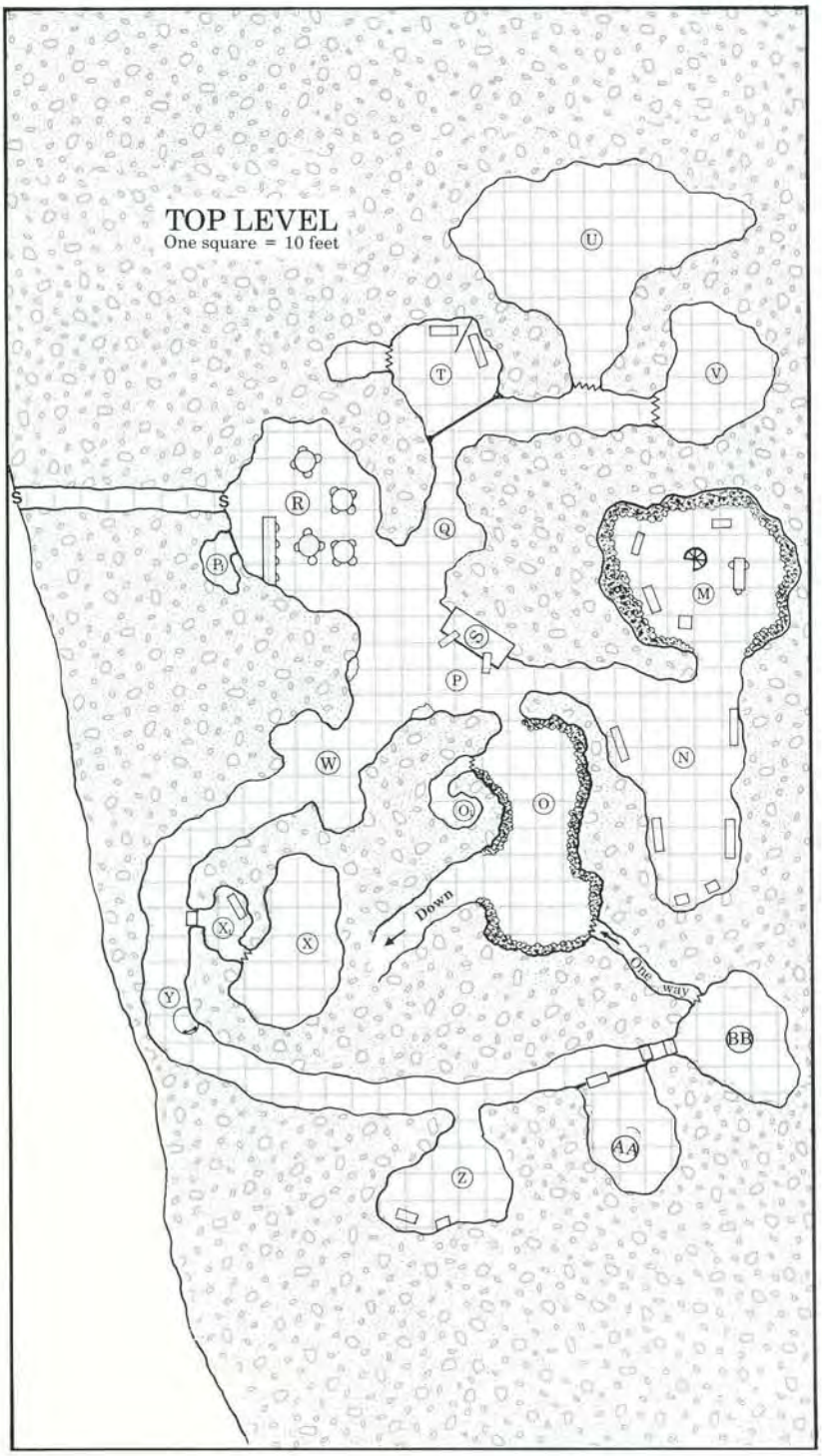
R. Lounge: This area has a small bar and several round tables. A thief, Michecal, is running continuous card games. The current game has been going on for three weeks, with players drifting in and out. If there has been an alarm, only four people are playing, otherwise there are seven. There also is a bartender, Barhlame, and a serving maid, Lisha (both level 0, AC 10, hp 3). The store room (R1) holds a stock of liquor.

Card players (3 or 6): Int Average; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3 (F3); hp 20 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 12; XP 65 each.

Michecal: Int High; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5 (T5); hp 17; THAC0 18; Dmg 1-8; SA backstab for +4 attack bonus and 3× damage; SZ M; ML 10; XP 420.

If fighting breaks out, Michecal grabs the pot, while the other players attack the PCs. He dives under the table, tries to hide in shadows (40%), then tries to sneak out the secret door. The pot contains 174 gp, 30 ep, 5 pp, and silver belt buckle (57 gp).

S. Sky Light: This enchanted item is bolted into the ceiling. For 12 hours a day, it floods area P with sunlight and shows a clear blue sky in its glass



panes. For the remaining 12 hours it emits bright moonlight and shows a starry sky, but it has no real connection to the outside.

A little pool, three feet deep and lined with benches, lies under the skylight. Six goldfish with purple stripes swim in the pool. They are intelligent and long for the wilder life of a river.

If there have been no alarms, Perfume, Jalena's weasel familiar, is eyeing the pool when the PCs enter area P. He hides behind a bench and waits until the PCs leave before going to warn Jalena. If the PCs stop to watch the fish, Perfume bolts into area O. He has a 30-foot head start on the PCs, and if he is not killed or captured in one round he disappears into the ivy. Once there he is out of sight, and the PCs cannot harm him except with area effect spells. A *detect invisibility* spell reveals his location, but does not deprive him of cover. If pursued or attacked, Perfume empathically warns Jalena.

Perfume: Int Low; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1; hp 17; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA Blood drain; SZ T; ML 10; XP 15.

T. Dressing Room: Benches line the walls here. There are several basins of clean water, and a privy hidden behind a curtain. There are also racks holding leather armor, chain mail, shields, and long swords. If the alarm has sounded, the racks are empty.

U. Barracks: Here are bunks for 30 people. If there has been no alarm, seven guards are resting. They surrender if confronted. If there has been an alarm, five guards wait here as a reserve and four take up posts in area P.

Guards (9): Int Average; AL N; AC 4; MV 9; HD 3 (F3); hp 20 each; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg 2-8+2 or 1-8 (sheaf arrows); SA three attacks every two rounds with broad sword at +1 "to hit," +2 damage from specialization; SZ M; ML 15; XP 120 each.

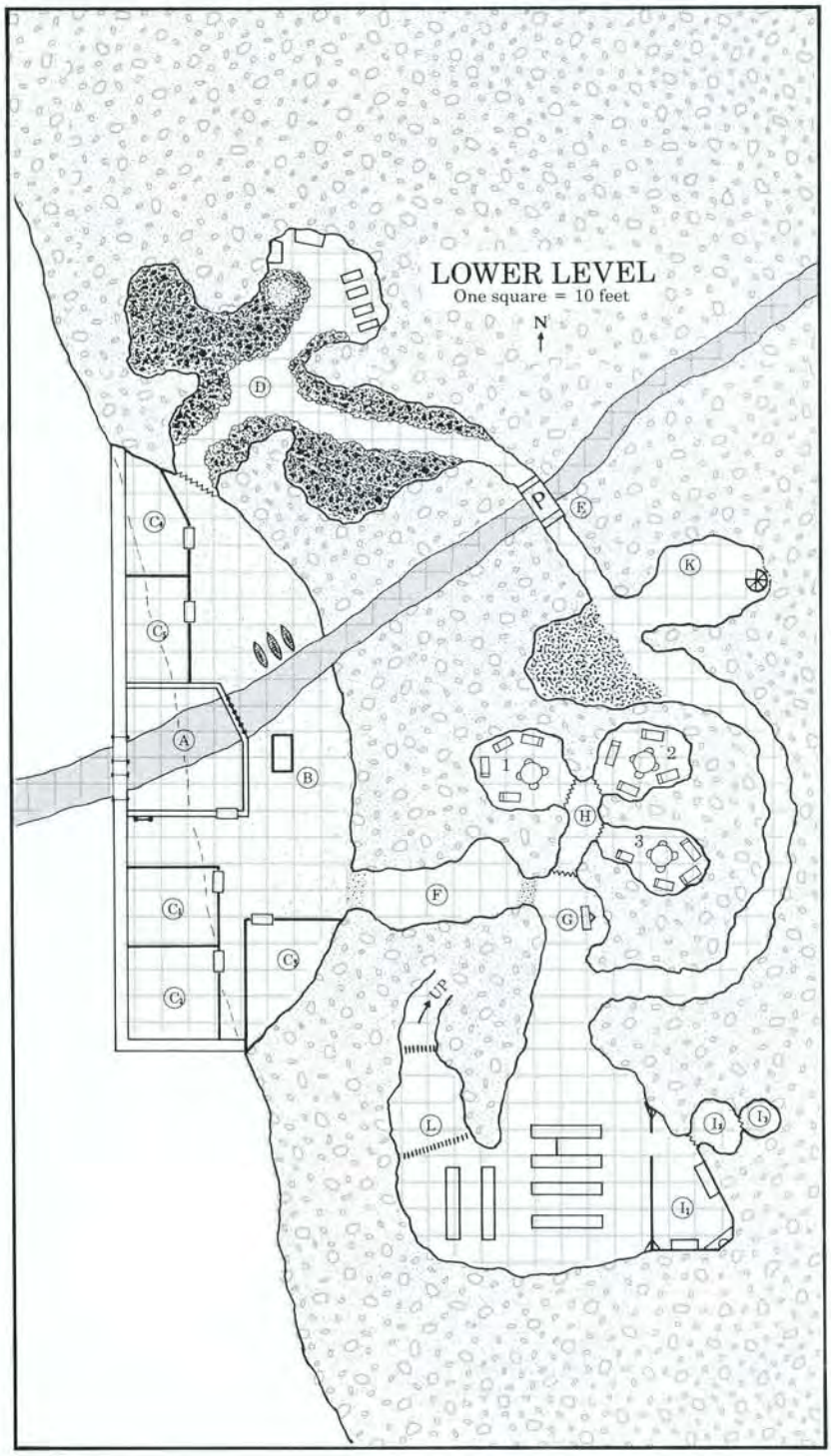
V. Sergeants' Room: The door to this room is locked. Inside, there are two beds, a desk, two dressers, and a rose bush growing in the northwest corner. One dresser has a silver mirror (worth 22 gp). The bottom drawer in the same dresser has a secret panel containing a wooden box. The box is locked and trapped with a needle tipped with type B poison. There are two bags inside the box; the first holds 75 gp, 15 pp, and a *potion of polymorph self.* The second has a bloodstone (47 gp), a chunk of amber (180 gp), a topaz (480 gp), and a flawed ruby (100 gp).

Normally, the sergeants alternately patrol areas N to T, with one sergeant remaining in area V all the time. If there is no alarm, the PCs might encounter a sergeant in any of these areas. The sergeants know the PCs aren't supposed to be here, and will raise the alarm if they can. Each sergeant wears a rose.

When the alarm sounds, one sergeant goes to area N and the other joins the captain in area Z.

Lacam: Int High; AL N; AC 1; MV 9; HD 6 (F6); hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg 2-8+2 or 1-8 (sheaf arrow); SA three attacks every two rounds with broad sword at +1 "to hit," +2 damage from specialization; SZ M; ML 15; XP 420.

Magic Item: *ring of shocking grasp* (fitted with a wire to transfer the current to the sword's blade).



Karnar: Int High; AL N; AC 0; MV 12; HD 6 (F6); hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 3/2 or two; Dmg 2-8+2 or 1-8 (sheaf arrow; SA three attacks every two rounds with broad sword at +1 "to hit," +2 damage from specialization; SZ M; ML 15; XP 420.

Magic Items: *elven chain mail +2,* 5 *sheaf arrows +1, quiver of Elhonia.*

W. Guard Post: A charmed minotaur waits in each alcove. They have orders to attack anyone who is not wearing a rose. They are both a little dense and cannot remember what a rose looks like. They attack anyone not wearing a flower.

Minotaurs (2): Int Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 6+3; hp 30, 35; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-10 (halberd); SA Grapple, charge; SD +2 bonus on surprise roll; SZ L; ML 13; XP 1,400 each.

X. Druids' Rooms: The door to this chamber is iron bound and locked. It has an Iris blossom painted on it.

The two druids living here provide spiritual guidance, help with the plants, and serve as physicians.

The outer room (X1) is filled with potted plants (an *entangle* spell would work in here). The only furnishings are a couch with thin cushions and a forest green curtain covering the east wall and hiding the entrance to the main chamber. The curtain has an iris stitched onto it.

Sheesha, a former warrior and now a druidical acolyte is here practicing a chant, part of her training. She is very pretty (Ch 17). If she hears the PCs fiddling with the door, she throws it open and asks what the party wants. No matter what they say, she says the head druid is much too busy to see them.

Bilik, the head druid, lives in the main room. He is a balding, middle-aged man wearing a kilt and a conical hat. He will defend his sanctuary if necessary, but he is not prone to violence.

If he hears conversation or fighting in Sheesha's room, he and his pet tiger investigate. If the party explains their presence, Bilik listens. He is appalled to learn about Silverwood's peril and directs the PCs to area AA to confront Jalena. He is not quite ready to attack her, much to Sheesha's relief. If the party thinks to ask, Bilik uses some of his healing spells on the PCs.

Bilik keeps no treasure in his room, but a box under Sheesha's bed holds 47 pp and the silver sliver. It is protected with a *fire trap* (1d4+4). Both druids wear roses.

Sheesha: Int High; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 4 (F3/D4); hp 29; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+1; SA spells; SD +3 to saves vs. mental attacks from Wisdom 17; SZ M; ML 15; XP 270.

Magic Items: *scimitar +1, potion of animal control, potion of invisibility,* five *good berries.*

Spells Carried: *cure light wounds* (×2), *faerie fire, entangle, detect magic, heat metal, charm person or mammal* (×2), *speak with animals.*

Bilik: Int High; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 9 (D9); hp 44; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA spells; SD +4 to saves vs. mental attacks from Wisdom 18, shape changing; SZ M; ML 15; XP 3,000.

Magic Items: *cloak of protection +3, broach of shielding* (43 charges) Staff of Woodlands +3 (21 charges) seven *good berries.*

Spells Carried: *cure light wounds* (×3), *faerie fire, entangle, detect magic, create water, heat metal, chill metal, charm person or mammal* (×2), *speak*

with animals, obscurement, summon insects (×2), *spike growth, cure serious wounds, neutralize poison, plant door, animal growth.*

Tiger: Int Semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 34; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-10; SA Rear claws 2-8 each; SD +2 surprise; SZ L; ML 10; XP 650.

Y. Trap Door: This portal is protected by a *fire trap* (1d4+14). It leads to an emergency exit with a rope ladder.

Z. Captain of the Guard: This room has a bed, dresser, and racks for armor and weapons.

Zhakal, the captain, always wears a rose. He is a middle-aged man who is here to get paid for doing his job. He is starting to feel the effects of age and wears spectacles with golden rims (1,153 gp).

Unless there is an alarm, the captain keeps his weapons and armor on the racks. Zhakal also has a book case stuffed with romance novels. On his dresser, Zhakal keeps a picture of a silver-haired lady; it has a silver frame (470 gp) and is labeled "MOM." A large pillow in Zhakal's bed hides a pouch which contains a gold medal studded with gems (417 gp), 175 pp, an opal (1,571 gp), a jade bracelet (2,700 gp), and a ruby (7,304 gp).

If there is an alarm, Zhakal dons his armor and weapons, warns Jalena in area BB, then goes to check the preparations in areas N-V, probably with one of the sergeants in tow (see area V). Once his check is complete, Zhakal and the sergeant either join the guards in area P or stand guard between the two doors leading into area BB (equal chance for each).

Captain Zhakal: Int High; AL N; AC 5 (−5 in armor); MV 24; HD 11 (F11); hp 78; THAC0 10; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8+5; SA +4 "to hit," +5 damage from specialization and magic weapon; SZ M; ML 15; XP 5,000.

Magic Items: *boots of speed, long sword +3 frost brand, potion of fire breath, eyes of minute seeing, plate armor +1, shield +2, morning star +2, long bow +1, 20 arrows +1.*

AA. Laboratory: This chamber's natural mouth is almost 30 feet wide, but this has been sealed with a brick wall and a locked, iron-bound door. A very nice smell comes from the room. Inside, the smell is overwhelmingly sweet. The room is a botanical laboratory for perfume making. There are pots of plants and flowers everywhere.

A cluttered work bench holds several books on growing plants, three *potions of plant growth,* two *potions of plant control,* and a box of fertilizer. There also is a pouch of strange pollen, four pinches worth, which functions as *dust of sneezing and choking.*

BB. Jalena's Room: Both doors are iron bound and locked. The room beyond smells just as sweet as the laboratory. There are fragrant plants everywhere, and the furnishings are grandiose. The largest piece is a huge four-poster bed with purple silk hangings. There is an exquisite reading table made of rosewood (517 gp), but it weighs 100 pounds. A lead-lined compartment hidden under the table holds Jalena's spellbooks. There are also lots of wall hangings. A locked door concealed behind the hangings on the north wall is trapped with a pollen blower filled with the *sneezing and choking* pollen from the laboratory.

An ivory box (175 gp) is concealed under a large rose bush (a character searching here must padded gloves or suffer 1d4 points of damage). The box holds 75 gp, 27 pp, an aquamarine (478 gp), a chunk of quartz (18 gp), a piece of amber (213 gp), and an emerald (3,750 gp).

There is a huge oak dresser with crystal bottles on top. The bottles hold perfume and are worth 50-100 gp each. A pile of perfume-impregnated scarfs, mostly deep red, lies in the southwest corner.

Jalena

Jalena is a large woman in her late 30s. She especially likes flowers and perfumes, but also is fond of money, jewelry, and power. She always wears a fresh lily. She has a *stoneskin* spell running. She also has a *contingency* which *dimension doors* her to area P if she has a spell disrupted in combat.

If the PCs manage to reach her room without raising the alarm, Jalena is wary; she knows they are intruders and cannot be bluffed. She scoffs if accused of plotting Silverwood's death—all she wants are a few branches. Of course, if she can make perfume from them she'll want the rest of Silverwood, too. Jalena will do all she can to put the PCs' minds at ease. However, she regards the characters as Silverwood's agents, and will attack to kill as soon as they let their guard down.

Jalena Lavender: Int Genius; AL CE; AC −2; MV 12; HD 14 (W14); hp 44; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4+1; SA spells; SD +2 to saves vs. mental attacks from Wisdom 16; SZ M; ML 16; XP 8,000.

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 2, dagger +1, scarab of protection, potion of extra healing, potion of heroism, ring of chameleon power, necklace of adaptation, wand of paralyzation* (42 charges).

Spells remaining: *Grease, magic missile* (×3) *detect magic, detect invisibility, invisibility, mirror image, web, wizard lock, levitate, hold person, lightning bolt, slow, dispel magic, sepia snake sigil, dimension door, stoneskin, fire shield, cone of cold, hold monster, wall of force, globe of invulnerability, Tenser's transformation, teleport without error.*

Jewelry: Platinum earrings (2,500 gp), silver leaf pendant (700 gp), 5 ivory bracelets on left arm (150 gp each), silver necklace with gems (3,200 gp), purple silk cap with golden embroidery (2,300 gp).

If forewarned by Perfume, Jalena notifies the guard captain, then uses her *ring of chameleon power* to blend in with the plants in her room. If Zhakal and a sergeant are on guard outside area BB, she appears in the inner doorway while the two warriors fight. If they are defeated, she *wizard locks* the door, then casts *Tenser's transformation* and re-emerges to attack the PCs.

If the PCs attack Perfume in area S, P, or O, Jalena casts *mirror image,* then uses the secret passage to area O and launches a spell assault. This eventually brings the guards from area R into the fray in one round, and the guards from area U two rounds later. She keeps attacking with spells as long as she can, then uses *Tenser's transformation* to finish off the PCs.

Once the party defeats Jalena and leaves the complex, the PCs receive a telepathic message from Silverwood thanking them for their efforts. Thereafter, the PCs become known to the elves in the area as "friends of Silverwood" and always are welcome and respected.

A Living City Adventure

Eye Of The Leviathan

By Randall Lemon and Ed Peterson

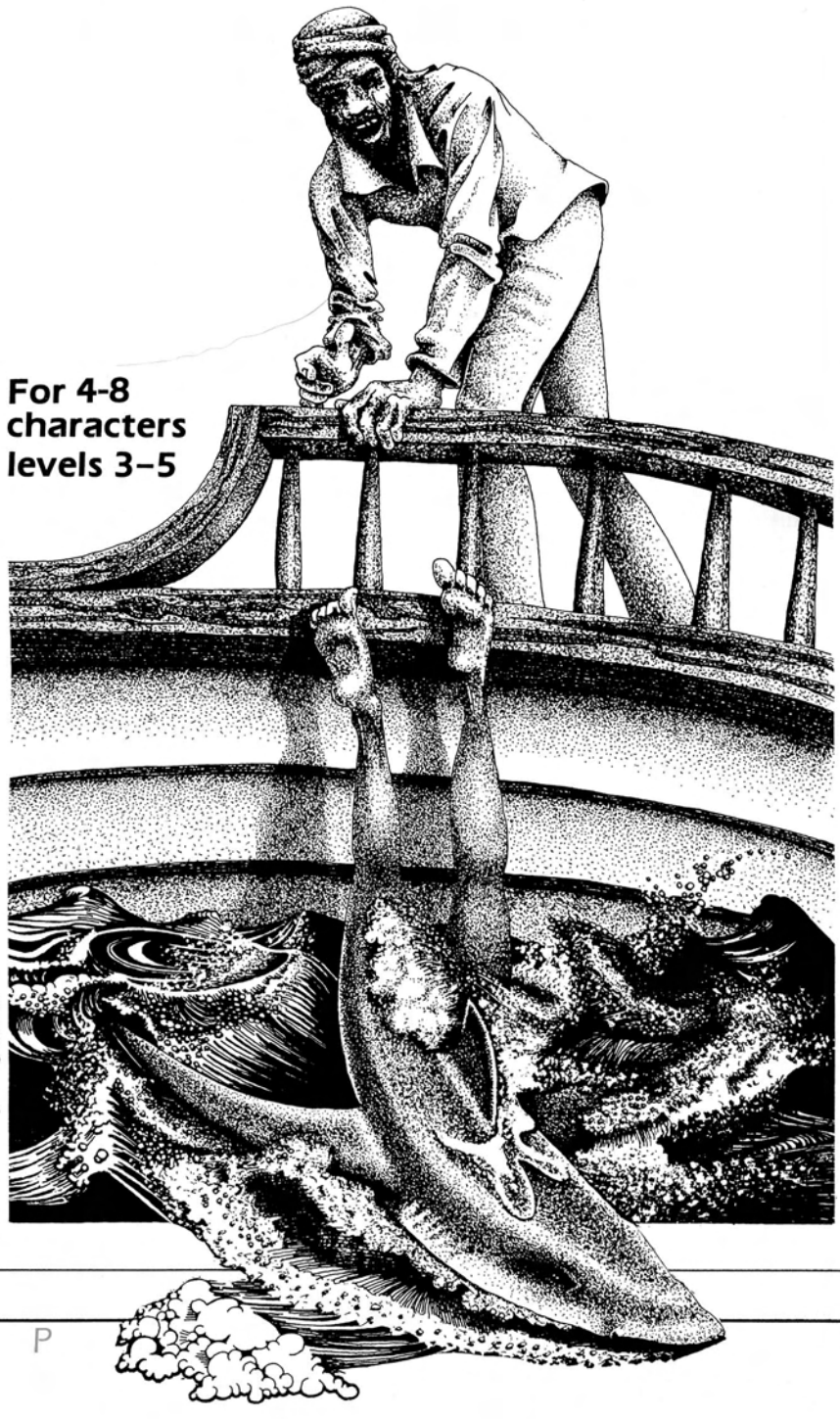


Illustration by Larry Smith

For 4-8 characters levels 3–5

DM™ Background

Centuries ago a great war raged beneath the Sea of Fallen Stars. The malevolent denizens of the deep, led by the evil deities Umberlee and Talos, sought to subjugate the watery realm.

The good creatures prayed to Istishia and Silvanus, and in reply the gods created a powerful artifact, the *Eye of the Leviathan,* and gave it to the king of the tritons. With the *Eye* the king rallied the forces of good and the creatures of the sea, and won the war.

The tritons enshrined the *Eye of the Leviathan* in a temple in the very depths of the Sea of Fallen Stars. There, it remained undisturbed—until recently when a series of events brought it to Ravens Bluff.

An aboleth learned of the *Eye* and concocted a plan to obtain it. At the aboleth's bidding, a tribe of sahaugin attacked the tritons, and a brave sahaugin soldier made off with the artifact. Before he could return the prize to the aboleth, however, the pursuing tritons critically wounded him. The sahaugin hid in a partially-submerged sea cave and died.

A group of smugglers found the *Eye.* They perceived the thing as nothing more than a fancy bauble, and took the *Eye* to nearby Ravens Bluff and used it to bribe Lord Charles Frederick Blacktree, the former speaker of the Advisory Council, into using his wealth and influence to have one of their comrades released from prison.

To further complicate the story, Lord Blacktree only possessed the *Eye* for a week before the smugglers, with their freed friend in tow, broke into the lord's home and stole back the bauble.

Lord Blacktree hires the PCs to retrieve the *Eye.* This is where the adventure begins.

Players' Introduction

A young man approaches as you lounge in the inn's common room. His dress indicates he serves one of city's lords.

"Good day, my fine fellows. You are...?" He pauses, waiting for you to introduce yourselves. "My name is Stephan Loric. He whom I serve has requested I seek you out and bring you to meet him. This endeavor will result in a financial gain for you. But this is a matter of great delicacy, and

he has asked me not to reveal his name. He would like you to meet him at four bells, one hour from now, at an address that I will give you.

"My employer further asks that you leave this inn at different times so that no more than two of you are traveling together. I assure this thing he will ask you to do is legal. The address—25 Ravenwood Lane."

If the PCs ask questions before Stephan departs, he emphasizes the financial rewards for their service. Stephan knows about the city, the weather, the current clothing styles, and trends in exotic foods. Stephan does not know what the mission is. Further, he refuses to divulge the name of his lord. If the PCs magically *charm* him or otherwise force an answer, he reveals he works for Lord Charles Frederick Blacktree, the former speaker of the Advisory Council. If the PCs follow Stephan, he leads them, via a long, roundabout course, to 25 Ravenwood Lane.

As you arrive at the address given to you by Loric, you find a rather nondescript building, probably a residence. Your knock is answered by Stephan, who leads you to a comfortably appointed sitting room.

A man stands at the far end of the room facing into the fireplace. After a moment's silence the figure turns, and you see Lord Charles Frederick Blacktree IV. He is a powerful man in Ravens Bluff.

"I find myself in need of a group with your particular talents. And I am prepared to pay you well if you promise that what we say here will not go beyond these walls."

He pauses for your answer.

"Recently, a number of items were stolen from my estate, among them a valuable heirloom. I do not wish to involve the City Watch, as I fear that a noisy investigation may lead to these items being quickly smuggled from the city.

The heirloom is the *Eye.* Lord Charles does not want the City Watch to know about it because he received the *Eye* as a bribe in exchange for having a smuggler released from prison. If an official were to learn of his indiscretion, Lord Blacktree would be publicly embarrassed. The lord knows only the monetary value of the *Eye,* 5,000 GP, and he has no idea that it is a powerful artifact called the *Eye of the Leviathan.*

Satisfied with your acceptance, Lord Blacktree clears his throat, adjusts his silk ascot, and continues.

"Among the items stolen were a pair of silver candlesticks, a gold neck chain, a small pouch containing 20 garnets, a velvet pouch with 25 antique platinum pieces, and the heirloom itself. The heirloom is a translucent amber orb about four inches in diameter with a large black pearl in its center. The heirloom has been in my family for some time.

"The thief was a servant of mine, who disappeared after the theft. I have made some discreet inquiries on my own and have learned that he frequents an establishment near the waterfront. The place is called, of all things, Embrol Sludge's Eatery & Shell Shoppe. If you undertake this investigation, I suggest that you begin there. In exchange for your help recovering the orb, I will give you each 400 gold pieces.

"I would like to get all of my stolen possessions back, of course. But you must retrieve the orb, as it has great sentimental value. Here are directions to Embrol Sludge's, and an address at which you can reach Stephan once you have recovered my property. Oh, yes, I almost forgot. If you recover things in addition to what I've listed, I suppose you can keep them."

Embrol Sludge

As you approach the waterfront district, you notice a crowd gathering in front of a building. The place's sign reads: *Embrol Sludge's Eatery and Sea Shell Shoppe: Where seafood is held dear, ye are welcome here.*

The PCs can easily elbow their way through the people to the open front door. If they stay outside, this encounter comes to them.

You are greeted by a brawl in progress! A dozen rough-looking sailors are fighting with a few townsmen. A young giant of a man is being kept busy by four sailors. A much smaller young man is fighting with one large sailor. There is also a young woman caught in a corner and being menaced by two more sailors. The other toughs in the fight are engaged in tearing up and smashing tables, counters, bottles, and the like.

The only weapons being wielded are a dagger in the small townsman's hand, belaying pins in all the sailors' hands, and a club in the large townsman's hand.

An elderly man nearby is swinging a chair at the sailors.

As you take in all this, one of the sailors grabs the girl and throws her onto his shoulder. She pummels futilely at his back as he laughs.

The good guys:

Embrol Sludge (elderly man with chair): Int Average; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 5 (F5); hp 38; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (chair); SZ M; ML 18; XP 175.

Embrol is 59 years old, balding, and has a pot-belly. He is 5′10″ tall, weighs 205 pounds, had has steel gray eyes.

Dirk Sludge (young man with dagger): Int Average; AL CN; AC 9; MV 12; HD 1 (T1); hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SZ M; ML 16; XP 15.

Dirk is 15 years old, 5′7″ tall, weighs 148 pounds, and has light brown hair and gray eyes.

Radea Sludge (menaced pretty girl): Int Average; AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 (fist); SZ M; ML 17; XP 15.

Radea is 26 years old, 5′5″ tall, weighs 108 pounds, and has sandy blond hair and sea green eyes. She has a greenish-silver tinge to her complexion, as she is half sea elf.

Buddy (giant townsman): Int Average; AL NG; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1 (F1); hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+3 (club +STR); SZ M; ML 18; XP 15.

Buddy is 6′8″ tall, weighs 285 pounds, has brown hair, brown eyes, and is 24.

The bad guys:

Smugglers (4): Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 1 (F1); hp 10 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3 (belaying pin); SZ M; ML 12; XP 15 each.

Smugglers (4): Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2 (F2); hp 18 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3 (belaying pin); SZ M; ML 12; XP 35 each.

Smugglers (2): Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 3 (F3); hp 22 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3 (belaying

pin); SZ M; ML 12; XP 35 each.

Smugglers (4): Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 4 (F4); hp 34 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3 (belaying pin); SZ M; ML 12; XP 65 each.

Smuggler: Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 5 (F5); hp 38; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (chair); SZ M; ML 14; XP 175.

Just as the PCs subdue or finish off the last of the smugglers, the city guard arrives.

Embrol explains the sailors were spoiling for a fight. A few of them were ogling this orb they had sitting in the center of their table. The orb was translucent amber, about the size of an orange with a large black pearl embedded in it. The sailors were joking about lifting it from some noble's house.

Embrol says one of the sailors ran off with the orb when the fight broke out.

Dirk Sludge says he recognizes the sailor who ran off with the gem.

> "My friends and I spend quite a bit of time hanging around the waterfront. The reason the sailor sticks out in my mind so much is I happened to be visiting a girl who helps old Meg Cracken at her boarding house on the waterfront. As I was sneaking out the boarding house's back door, I almost ran into this guy sneaking in. I'm not sure, but maybe he lives there when he's in port.
>
> "The sailor looked old—at least 30. He had a cutlass strapped to his side, just like a pirate would wear. He had long auburn hair, about the length I'd like mine to grow, and he had a straggly red moustache. He was wearing black leather armor when I saw him—the same outfit he had on at Meg Cracken's. And he has a tat*too of a dancing girl* on his right forearm. He was kind of neat looking, and at the same time he definitely looked kind of dangerous."

Dirk supplies directions to Cracken's Berth and Board. Dirk does not know the name of the sailor, nor the ship he works on.

The city guards have no intention of investigating the amber orb, as no one has reported such a thing missing.

Meg Cracken's

> The sights and odors of the waterfront assault your senses. The smell of fresh and not-so-fresh fish mingles with the briny sea air as merchants hawk their wares and longshoremen manhandle bulky cargo. Soon you arrive at your destination, a ramshackle two-story building with a weathered shingle proclaiming *Cracken's Berth and Board.*
>
> An equally weathered old lady dressed in a gray smock is putting up a vacancy sign as you approach.

The lady is Meg Cracken, the proprietor of the boarding house. If the PCs question her, she demands to know why the party is interested in one of her tenants. Before giving them any information she bemoans the high cost of operating a business, obviously looking for a bribe.

If the party offers sufficient money (at least 2 gp), she says a man matching the description stays here when in port. Another gold piece yields the man's name—Jud Jimson—and that he left a little more than a half hour ago, muttering about landing a job on a big merchant ship leaving right away. Meg suggests the PCs ask some of the dock workers if they have seen the man.

The Docks

> There are only three sizeable ships in port, though there are also a small number of fishing boats. Walking the length of the wharf, you can see the names on the ships' sides—*Fleet Wind, Captain's Pride,* and *Sea Foam Follower.* Numerous sailors are loading cargo on and off the ships.
>
> There are also people who might be ships' officers and a smattering of merchant-types going in and out of a wooden building at the end of the wharf. A large sign with the official city seal hangs above the building's door. It reads *Harbormaster.*

The party can either question the sailors or go to the harbormaster.

The sailors are glad to take a break from their work and gab. However, no long conversations are possible because mates in charge of work details make the sailors go back to work. The following information may be gained by talking to the sailors:

• The *Fleet Wind* is a speedy packet ship that primarily delivers mail up and down the coast. Most of the mail consists of contracts, instructions from a city or country to its ambassador in another country, and other official forms. There is, however, also a small amount of personal mail delivered. Because of the official nature of most of the mail, there is always a small detachment of guards aboard. The current guard unit is from Ravens Bluff. The *Fleet Wind* is heading for Calaunt by way of Tantras. No passengers. No new crew members.

• The *Captain's Pride* is a freelance cargo vessel. Bolts of cloth are being loaded on her to be taken to Tsurlargol for sale. There are three passengers, all male: two young men traveling together (late teens, early 20s), and one much older (early 50s). No new crew members.

• The *Sea Foam Follower* arrived earlier today from Tantras and is still offloading its cargo of spiced wine and various dry goods. Its next consignment of goods is already on the docks. It is headed to Procampur. The captain just hired three new seamen.

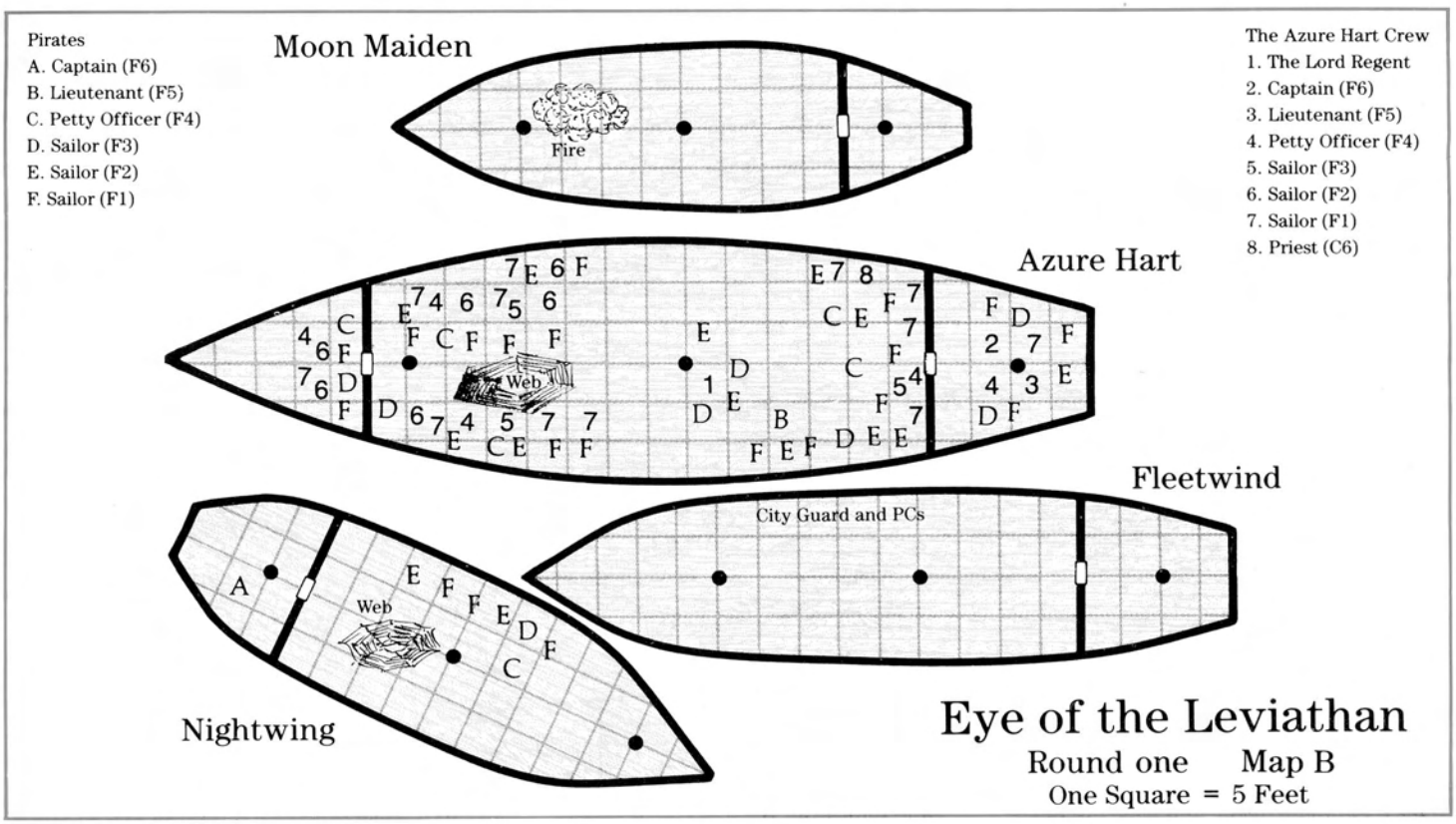
• Two ships left recently—the *Azure Hart* and the *Moon Maiden.* the *Hart,* which belongs to Lord Regent Thomas Raphiel, left a little more than an hour ago. Lord Thomas himself is aboard, and is headed to a diplomatic mission of some kind or other in Tantras. As for the *Moon Maiden,* the sailors all feel the crew is a bad lot at best, and many of them suspect the ship of smuggling and worse. They know that this fast ship left a little over a half hour ago, and its crew departed in great haste.

Sailors (lots of them): Int Varies; AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3 (belaying pin); SZ M; ML Varies; XP Nil.

The Harbormaster

If the PCs go to the Harbormaster's office, they find the harbormaster studying maps. He knows roughly the same information as the sailors.

Inside the Harbormaster's office is a salty old sea-dog, who listens in on every conversation. If the PCs mention the *Moon Maiden,* the sea-dog interrupts the conversation.



"Harrumph! Harrumph I say!" The voice obviously belongs to the crusty old sea captain sitting near a large barrel. He motions for you to approach. You notice that his left eye is milky white. He turns, and you see that his left leg is missing below the knee. He wears an ivory peg leg, which he thumps on the ground as you walk near.

"The *Moon Maiden?* You're asking about that bucket?" He snorts derisively. "The *Moon Maiden's* a black scow, almost as black as the crew what sails 'er. Wherever the *Moon Maiden* sails, she leaves tainted water beind. 'Er crew's the flotsam 'n jetsam o'the inner sea. Cutthroats an worse be those that man 'er. Blest be the rock or reef that rips 'er hull and sends 'er and 'er scurvy crew to the bottom. As soon as she leaves port, it's not long after that we hear of some ship scuttled, or attacked by pirates, or just plain disappearin', ne'er to be seen again. But I guess you'd say that was just a mighty big coincidence, wouldn't ya? I heard the *Maiden's* headed for Tantras. Harrumph! More likely headed toward ships going that way."

Seeking Passage

The only ship headed north is the *Fleet Wind,* which is just getting ready to leave. The PCs can book passage, though their quarters won't be anything fancy. Passage is 5 gp each.

A small detachment of city guardsmen are on board. A few of these helped with the altercation at Embrol Sludge's.

At Sea

Dawn has broken on a brilliantly beautiful day as you climb up on deck for some fresh air. The steady southerly wind has hastened the *Fleet Wind* on her journey. Suddenly, the lookout in the crow's nest shouts, "Ships ahoy! One point off the port bow!"

As you strain your eyes toward the northern horizon, a bright orange ball sprouts from the midst of the distant ships and just as quickly goes out, leaving a blooming mushroom of black smoke in its wake.

You hear the ship's captain bark commands, and the crew jumps to obey. A guard sergeant rushes to the quarterdeck and joins the captain in scanning the distance. The captain curses and hands his spyglass to the sergeant, who, after a brief scrutiny, hands it back and shouts to his men.

"It's the *Azure Hart* all right, and she's bein' waylaid by two ships flyin' the skull an' bones!"

One of the ship's petty officers unlocks a padlock securing a pair of sturdy double doors revealing a well-stocked weapons locker. Cutlasses, rapiers, and daggers gleam brightly in the morning sun.

The officer starts handing out weapons to the sailors who are arriving on deck. Your eyes are drawn to the battle in the distance. You can see the three ships locked in a deadly dance.

The guard sergeant approaches while tightening the straps on his chain mail.

"The Captain says that's the lord regent's ship, the *Azure Hart.* You can just make out the pennant of Ravens Bluff flyin' from her mast. The one on the right, the one burnin,' he tells me is the *Moon Maiden.* The other one he's not sure about, but he thinks it may be the *Nightwing.* Now I know this ain't your fight, but we're goin' in, and their ain't no

guarantees that you won't get dragged in anyways. The captain is gonna bring the *Fleet Wind* in fast and try to wedge her between the *Azure Hart* and the unhurt pirate, hopin' we can break her loose. We'll board the *Hart* directly. Me and my men are goin' over the starboard side onto the *Hart*. We sure could use a hand on that side if you're willing."

Run the battle depending on the PCs' actions. As the *Fleet Wind* quickly approaches, the action becomes clearer. Most of the fighting is on the *Azure Hart,* and it looks as if the *Moon Maiden's* crew is abandoning their flaming ship in an attempt to take the *Hart.*

The results of several *web* and *hold person* spells are visible.

The bow of the *Fleet Wind* slips cleanly between the *Azure Hart's* stern and the pirate's bow. As the *Fleet Wind* grinds to a halt, sailors hurl grappling hooks onto the *Hart.*

Guardsmen scramble over the rail and onto the deck of the *Azure Hart,* to be met by a force of seven pirates. The PCs see one of the brigands, with long auburn hair, a red moustache, and wearing black leather, break off from melee and dash onto the burning *Moon Maiden.*

It is up to the PCs what part they take in this battle. If they pursue the man in black leather, read the following:

As you search for your quarry, you see an older gentleman in fine clothing. He is fighting four of the brigands single-handedly with his back to the mast. You realize it can be none other than Lord Regent Thomas Raphiel. The lord is wounded and in need of aid. The man clad in black leather has reached the burning ship's deck and seems to be making himself scarce.

The PCs can help the lord regent, pursue the man in black leather, or fight some of the other pirates. It is likely the PCs will separate. It is easy for the party to tell the pirates from the crew of the *Azure Hart.* The crewmen are in blue and gold uniforms, and the pirates are in a motley mix of clothing and armor.

If the PCs come to the aid of the lord regent, three attacking pirates turn their attention to the PCs, while one pirate continues on the lord regent. Use the statistics for 3rd level pirates below.

If the PCs attempt to join the *Fleet Wind's* crew in a general melee, use the statistics for the pirates below, mixing their levels. Make sure each PC has two or three pirates on him or her at all times.

If the PCs chase the man in black onto the flaming *Moon Maiden,* a few 3rd level pirates attack them. The pirates slow the PCs down by dropping burning sails on them, swinging the rigging, and starting sword fights. Burning yardarms fall in their paths, and other obstacles prevent the PCs from catching their target.

Eventually, allow the PCs to make it across to the *Moon Maiden.*

As you scramble over and around the dead and the dying, you cross the gangplank onto the blazing *Moon Maiden.* The hatchway to the lower decks bangs open, and two naked men, one with a small wooden chest in his hands, run out and dive over the starboard rail. A third naked man runs out, pursued by a bloody pirate dressed in black leather and wielding a cutlass. The naked man turns to face the pirate and blocks a cutlass stroke with his bare arm. The man is unhurt; he laughs maniacally, and swats the pirate to the deck with his open hand. The naked man turns and dashes to the starboard rail.

The PCs can now react; roll initiative. If the naked man wins, he hurls himself overboard. The PCs see the man transform into a shark as he hits the water. If the party wins initiative, they can get one round of free attacks before he dives overboard. PCs who dive overboard can fight the wereshark in the water.

Assume the first two weresharks got away with the *Eye*—this is crucial for the rest of the adventure. The aboleth mentioned in the introduction sent the weresharks.

If the PCs check on the downed man, Jud Jimson, they find him near death. If the PCs cure Jimson, he confirms that he stole Lord Blacktree's bauble, and that it was in the chest that went over the side. Jimson has no idea where the naked men came from.

Crew of the *Azure Hart*

Lord Regent Thomas Raphiel: Int Exceptional; AL LG; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5 (F5); hp 31 (currently 11); THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10+3; SZ M; ML 19; XP 270.

Lord Thomas is 6'2" tall, 195 lbs., 67 years old. His magic items include *Bracers AC 6, ring of truth, quarterstaff +2, long sword +3.*

Captain Jonas Weatherby: Int Average; AL LG; AC 8; MV 12; HD 6 (F6); hp 42; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+1; SZ M; ML 14; XP 270.

Lieutenant: Int Average; AL LG; AC 8; MV 12; HD 5 (F5); hp 28; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SZ M; ML 13; XP 175.

Petty Officers (2): Int Average; AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; HD 4 (F4); hp 30 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 11; XP 120 each.

Sailors (3): Int Average; AL NG; AC 9; MV 12; HD 3 (F3); hp 25 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 10; XP 65 each.

Sailors (6): Int Average; AL NG; AC 9; MV 12; HD 2 (F2); hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 9; XP 35 each.

Sailors (12): Int Average; AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1 (F1); hp 8 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 9; XP 15 each.

Hendra Tredwell: Int Average; AL LG; AC 2 (plate and shield); MV 6; HD 6 (P6); hp 33; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7; SZ M; ML 16; XP 650.

Spells remaining: *Cure light wounds* (×3), *withdraw, know alignment, chant, continual light*

Sardoli Quislin: Int Exceptional; AL LG; AC 2 (*bracers of defense AC 2*); MV 12; HD 9 (W9); hp 23 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 12; XP 3,000.

Sardoli Quislin is incapacitated by a *hold person* spell.

Spells remaining: *Light, scare, dispel magic, invisibility, stoneskin, dimension door, airy water*

City Guardsmen Detail (8): Int Average; AL NG; AC 7; MV 12; HD 2 (F2); hp 16 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 14; XP 35 each.

Guard Sergeant: Int Average; AL NG; AC 4; MV 9; HD 4 (F4); hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 15; XP 175.

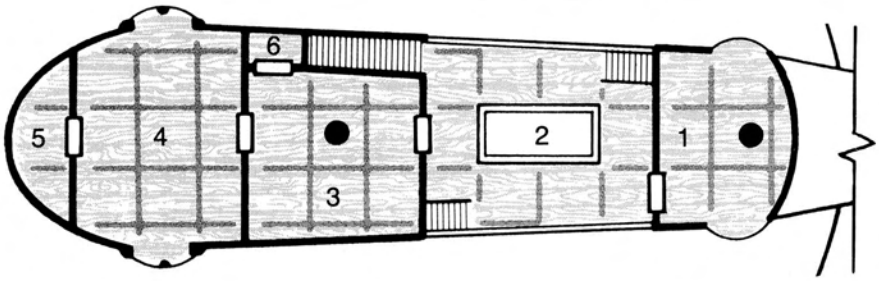
Pirate Crew

Pirate Captain: Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 6 (F6); hp 38; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8+1; SZ M; ML 12; XP 270.

SQUID SHIP

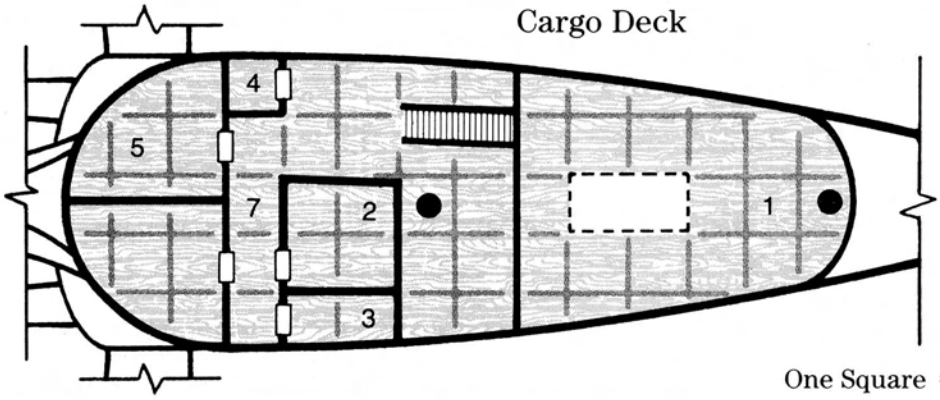
Main Deck

1. Spelljammer Helm & Chart Room
2. Cargo Door
3. Saloon/Galley
4. Captain's Quarters
5. Storage
6. Head/Storage



Cargo Deck

1. Cargo Bay
2. Crew Quarters
3. Bosun's Locker
4. Head Storage
5. Crew Quarters
6. Officers' Quarters
7. Companionway



One Square = 5 Feet

Lieutenants (2): NA 2; Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 5 (F5); hp 28 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 10; XP 175 each.

Petty Officers (7): 7; Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 4 (F4); hp 30 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 10; XP 120 each.

Sailors (8): Int Average; AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 3 (F3); hp 25 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 10; XP 65 each.

Sailors (16): Int Average; AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 2 (F2); hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 9; XP 35 each.

Sailors (16): Int Average; AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 1 (F1); hp 8 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 9; XP 15 each.

Jud Jimson: Int Average; AL NE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 3 (F3); hp 28 (currently 1); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 8; XP 65.

Weresharks (3): Int Average; AL NE; AC 0; MV 12, Sw 21; HD 10+3; hp 45 each; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20; SD Hit only by silver, or +1 or better magical weapons; SZ L; ML 17; XP 2,000 each.

Fires rage around you, and a smoke-shrouded man waves you aboard the *Azure Hart.* You see figures scurrying about preparing to cut the lines that bind the *Hart* to the burning and sinking pirate vessel.

You rush onto the other ship just as the lines are cut and sailors push the fiery hulk away from the *Hart* with long poles. The *Moon Maiden* begins a slow descent to its watery grave.

Turning in the opposite direction, you see the other pirate ship making good its escape. Lord Thomas limps toward you with his hand extended.

"Your actions were truly heroic, and I owe you my appreciation. If there is a favor I can do, name it."

If the PCs tell the lord they are searching for something taken into the sea, Lord Thomas says there is a colony of aquatic elves nearby who know this area of the sea extremely well. These elves might be able to help them find the item they're looking for. He offers to sail the party to just above the elven community and give each PC three *potions of water breathing.* Each potion contains four doses, guaranteeing each PC a minimum of 12 hours total underwater. He also offers the party a formal letter of introduction (on a wax tablet) to the elven community's leaders and a request that the elves help the PCs.

When the PCs travel underwater, pay attention to the spells they cast and weapons they use. Type S and type B weapons do not work, but type P weapons, such as spears, do. Consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information about fighting and casting spells underwater.

The Sea Elves

You dive below the waves and soon the *Azure Hart's* anchor comes into view, planted firmly on the rim of a large undersea valley overgrown with giant kelp. A pair of dolphins dart away and disappear into the kelp.

The dolphins are scouts for the sea elves. They bring a patrol of elves to meet the PCs.

The leader of the patrol addresses the

PCs in Elven. If the PCs do not know this language, they have to communicate via hand signals.

> The sea elf swims back and forth in front of you. "What is your business in our realm?"
>
> He is armed with a trident and net and is wearing chain mail. There is a conch shell horn slung over his shoulder. His eight men are nearby.

If the PCs state their intent and display the lord regent's letter, the sea elf agrees to take the party to the sea elf city. The elven patrol forms around the party and leads them down into the valley. It takes two hours to reach the city. The community is centrally located and is home to nearly 300 elves. The buildings are "grown" from living coral and are surrounded by beautiful gardens of various marine flora and fauna. An elderly male elf wearing ornate scale armor approaches the PCs. He is Marafaristin, the elder of the village.

If the PCs show him Lord Thomas's letter, Marafaristin says his scouts reported that a pair of weresharks (or three if the third got away) preceded the PCs and swam in the opposite direction of the sea elf city. He is certain they are going to their cavern, about a dozen miles from here. He can provide the PCs precise directions, as the sea elves watch the weresharks closely. It takes the PCs about five hours to walk there.

If the PCs describe the amber orb, a concerned look clouds Marafaristin's face, but he shrugs it off. Marafaristin has heard vague legends about the *Eye of the Leviathan,* but doubts that the party could have anything to do with the artifact.

If the PCs ask for aid in breathing underwater, Marafaristin provides each PC with two *potions of water breathing.* each with four doses.

Ship Ahoy!

> In the murky distance, an ominous, gigantic shape looms. It is long and low, lying along the bottom.
>
> Even at this distance, the size and shape of the creature leaves no doubt, you are looking at a giant squid, one of the most fearsome predators of the deep!

No matter how long they watch the squid, it does not move—and there is apparently no way around it. Eventually, the party has to approach it.

> As you come to within 100 yards of the giant squid's head, you realize it is not a monster. It is a ship in the shape of a squid. An odd, but rhythmic rumbling comes from inside the ship.

If the PCs bypass the ship, go on to the next encounter.

If the characters approach the ship, they can tell the strange sounds are coming from behind a hatch on the main deck. If they open this hatch, they are greeted by a strange sight. A large gray walrus dances and sings in the middle of a comfortably appointed room. The walrus croons the following verse to the tune of "I'm Gettin Married in the Morning" from *My Fair Lady.*

> *"Im going fishin' in the morning,*
> *Ding-dong the bells are gonna chime.*
> *I'll catch some long ones an' maybe some small ones*
> *Oh get me to the fishin' grounds on time."*
>
> He notices you and breaks off his song and dance.

If the PCs do not threaten the walrus, he relaxes. If they talk to him, he breaks into another song, this one to the tune of "I Am the Walrus" by the Beatles.

> *"You are all strangers, ohhhhhh*
> *Why should I trust you? ohhhhhhh*
> *I am the walrus, GooGooGooJoob."*

This should prompt the party to either introduce themselves or ask for information. The walrus's name is GooGooGooJoob, and he only communicates by singing. He responds with his next ditty to the tune of "Come Home to Bonnie Jean" from *Brigadoon.*

> *"In far Calaunt I used to roam*
> *Though never one place could be called my home*
> *that was in past years—ten*
> *but I won't be there again.*
>
> *A bard I was in that past life*
> *And if I'd stayed away from that wizard's wife*
> *A bard I still might be*
> *But that bard's no longer me.*
>
> *Not me!*
> *Not me!*
> *The bard's no longer me.*
> *Not me!*
> *Not me!*
> *No... a walrus now I be."*

If the PCs haven't yet introduced themselves, or if they ask about the ship the walrus is on, GooGooGooJoob responds with the next song, to the tune of "If I Were a Rich Man" from *Fiddler on the Roof.*

> *"If I knew who you were*
> *I might ask you to come in and take a seat within my house,*
> *then we could together have a chat*
> *Unless you mean to do me harm—eh?*
> *We could share some fresh fish*
> *and you'd tell me what a group as strange as yours is doing here.*
> *I might try to help you if I can...*
> *But only if you'll sing a song for me.*
>
> *I'd...like...to...hear you sing of gold and adventure and of exciting fights you've had.*
>
> *Tell me what you seek and if I can help.*
>
> *And...if...your...song is pleasing you might find that I have some presents for you all,*
> *And then we'd bid farewell as good, old friends.*
>
> (Sigh)
>
> *You, who have come unbidden to my home,*
> *now should entertain me with a song or poem,*
> *Can you sing of adventures that you've known?*
> *If...you care to be my friends!"*

The characters must come up with a musical reply or the walrus won't have anything to do with them.

Once the party indicates they need to move on or reacts to the presents line in the "If I Were A Rich Man" tune, GooGooGooJoob respond with the next offering, sung to the tune of "On the Street Where You Live" from *My Fair Lady.*

> *"I have often searched through this ship before,*
> *But there's little here that I cannot ignore.*
> *Still there's many things, that might have worth to kings.*
> *Yes, there here on the ship where I live.*

You may check the ship and take what you will.
In exchange you leave me bait fish or a mackerel.
Leave me one for each, you keep in your reach,
And I'll feel you've been honest to me."

GooGooGooJoob, Bard Walrus (1): Int Low; AL CN; AC 1; MV Sw 18; HD 8; hp 54; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (tusk gore); SZ L; ML 10; XP 650.

GooGooGooJoob used to be a high-level bard. The only bard skill he has retained is his singing ability. Whenever talking as GooGooGooJoob, the DM should sing.

GooGooGooJoob knows nothing about the weresharks, the *Eye,* or anything else really useful to the party.

As he finishes his last song, he moves to the cabin door and points out. Immediately across from his quarters is the chart room. The spelljamming helm was kept here. However, it was looted long ago. The other door is a closed hatch going below decks. After he has pointed out the two doors, GooGooGooJoob points at a school of bait fish swimming nearby the ship, rubs his tummy, and ducks back into his quarters.

Exploring the Squid

Cargo Level

The Cargo Bay is not illuminated and is consequently pitch black. Once a light source has been provided, read the following.

Down below is what appears to be the main cargo hold. It is slightly over 20 feet wide at its thickest point and approximately 40 feet long. It is piled high with large crates and wicker baskets. Forward in the cargo bay is an opening leading forward.

Most of the boxes, crates, and baskets are tied down and clearly marked. One group of crates is labeled wine, the baskets are marked grain, and another group of crates is labeled silks. There are also a few loose crates.

Searching the first two piles of crates (grains and wines) reveals nothing of interest. Hidden among the crates marked silks is a smaller crate marked F-R-A-G-I-B-L-E. Inside is packing material protecting six crystal vials. The vials are clearly marked: three are labeled *healing,* and the others are labeled *extra-healing.*

Most of the loose crates contain worthless material, however one is marked "Danger, do not tamper." The box has a *glyph of warding* spell on it. Setting off this trap results in a nasty electrical shock. PCs standing within 10 feet of the box suffer 25 points of temporary damage and must make a successful saving throw vs. spells or lose consciousness for 1d20 rounds. Lost hit points return at a rate of one per turn. Carefully packed away inside is a bright lime green *cloak of protection +2.*

Main Deck

Exiting from the cargo bay through the forward passageway puts the party in the companionway. Here, the PCs see a stairway leading up to the main deck on the starboard side. There is also a door across from the bottom of the stairs. There are four other doors leading off the companionway: two leading forward and two aft. Consult the map to determine which rooms the PCs enter.

Storage: Rope is kept here. Hidden among the coils of rope is an oilskin package containing a pair of *gauntlets of swimming and climbing.* PCs must actively search to find the package.

Crew Quarters: Inside are nine bunks and nine sea chests. A skeleton sits at an awkward angle on the nearest chest. The skeleton is harmless, and the chests are filled with clothes.

Officers' Quarters: Almost identical to the crew's room, the beds here are bigger and the sea chests more elaborate. The first chest opened contains a pouch with 20 gp, a normal short sword, and a silver-edged dagger. The second chest contains a dagger with a symbol that looks like butterfly wings inlaid on the pommel. As the third chest is about to be opened, a lamprey darts out from under the bed, biting at whoever is nearest the chest. It makes this one attack and then attempts to flee. Rolled up in the leg of a pair of breeches in the chest is a package containing a scroll: *protection from lycanthropy.*

Lamprey: Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV Sw 12; HD 1+2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA Suck blood for 2 hp a round; SZ L; ML 7; XP 35.

More Crew Quarters: The first door going aft off the companionway leads to a room with six bunks and sea chests. There is nothing of value in this room.

Locker: Inside are racks of cutlasses, daggers, and light crossbows. There is also a brace of harpoons and lances. If a character looks up, he sees a worn-looking short sword with a wire-wrapped hilt (*short sword +1*) hanging suspended above the racks.

Galley: There are tables and benches here to accommodate 20. There is also a cook stove, shelves, and cabinets along the starboard wall. A large post is sunk through the middle of the room from ceiling to floor; this is what's left of the main mast. All the cabinets hang open, and the room is the picture of chaos.

Empty Storage: Opening the starboard door reveals a 3′ by 5′ bare closet.

Captain's Room: Inside is a room with portholes port and starboard. The place is furnished with a single brass bed, a massive table and chair, a small writing desk, a wardrobe, a sea chest and an armchair. Bits of paper that might have been charts hang from the walls. A pipe collection is bolted to the wall above the small desk. There are five pipes in it, with an empty chamber meant for a sixth.

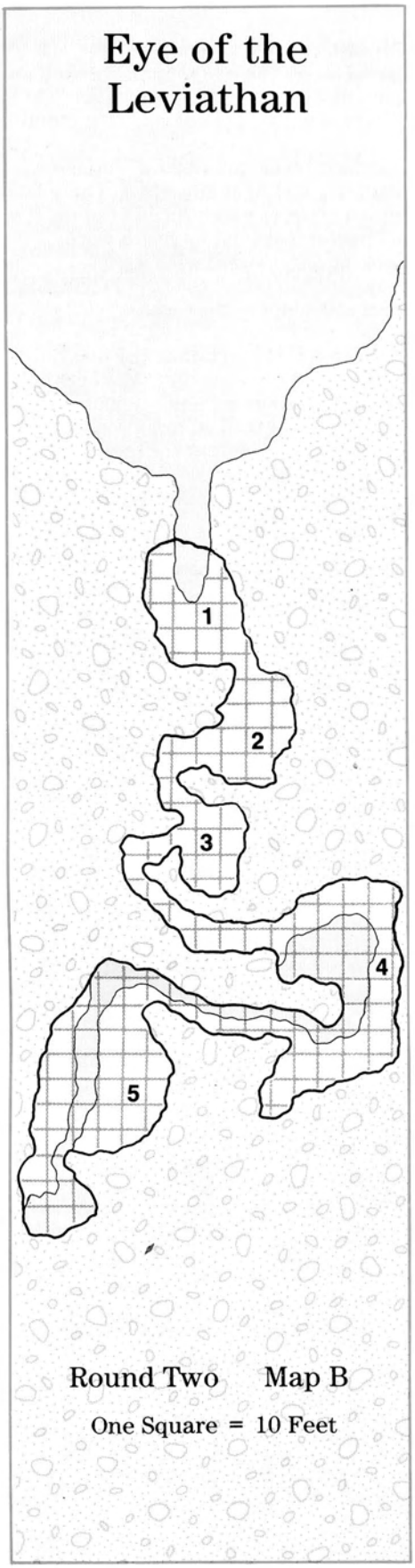
The sea chest has been overturned and emptied. The desk drawers hang out at crazy angles, and the table has been tipped on its side. The bed is torn apart. The wardrobe doors have been ripped off, and the wardrobe is empty. The armchair's cushions have been slit.

It will take diligent searching to find the treasure. Inside the bowl of one of the pipes is a prism-shaped dusty rose stone (*ioun stone, +1 protection*).

If a PC searches through the mess on the floor, he or she notices a throw rug. Underneath it is a hidden compartment containing an oilskin pouch with five sheets of vellum. Each is a scroll with one spell on it: *enlarge, feather fall, gust of wind, wizard eye,* and *Otiluke's freezing sphere.* The spells were written at 9th level.

Wereshark Lair

You have followed the canyon to its end. At the mouth of a cavern you see an opening into a cliff face about 10 feet above the sea floor.



Consult the numbered map as the PCs move into the cave to investigate.

1. The cavern opens into a 15-foot wide tunnel that slopes upward at a 45-degree angle. The passage dead ends, but looking up reveals light coming down, which is actually the surface of the water overhead. The tunnel leads to an air-filled cave. The walls are covered with phosphorescent fungi. Although the cave above is unoccupied, a noisy party will attract the occupant of area 2.

2. This room is occupied by one wereshark in human form, wearing black robes with a long sword belted to his waist. He is sitting at a small table playing a solitaire card game. If the PCs enter this room, he orders them to leave. He starts a fight if the PCs refuse. He fights with the sword at first, trying to force the party back to the room with the water pool. If he loses half of his hit points, he flees to the pool, dives in the water, and transforms into a shark.

The room contains three beds, a table, three chairs, a foot locker, and a small puddle of water near the south wall. Closer inspection by the puddle reveals a concealed door, which is a hinged block of rock that easily can be pushed inward. The foot locker contains 350 gold pieces and six gems worth 10 gp each. At the bottom of the foot locker is a blanket. Under it are a *potion of extra-healing,* and a scroll containing: *mirror image, invisibility,* and *wizard eye* spells.

Wereshark: Int Average; AL NE; AC 0; MV 12, Sw 21; HD 10+3; hp 60; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20 (bite in shark form) or 1-8+2 long sword (and STR bonus); SD Hit only by silver, cold iron, or +1 or better magical weapons; SZ L (shark) M; ML 14; XP 2,000.

3. The concealed door leads into a corridor that turns to the east and opens into a large cavern. This otherwise empty cavern is guarded by five sahuagin. The sahuagin immediately attack.

Sahuagin (5): Int High; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12, Sw 24; HD 2+2; hp 13 each; THAC0 19; #AT 5 or special; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4/1-4/1-4; SA Special; SD Special; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175 each.

4. This large cavern opens up on a fetid pool of water, with a passage that curves around it and dog legs back toward the east. It is occupied by a cloaker, which will first use its subsonic moan at the second of four intensities. All those within 30 feet of the cloaker must save versus spell or flee in terror for two rounds. When the cloaker is first spotted, it appears to be a normal black cloak.

Cloaker: Int High; AL CN; AC 6 (1); MV 1, Fl 15 (D); HD 6; hp 30; THAC0 13; #AT 2 + special; Dmg 1-6/1-6/ + special; SA Special; SD Special; SZ L; ML 14; XP 975.

It flies to attack the party, and any target struck is engulfed. An engulfed character suffers 1d4 points of damage, plus the character's unadjusted armor class. The cloaker uses its whip-like tail to fight anyone who attempts to rescue the victim, inflicting 1d6 points of damage per hit. Any attack on the cloaker causes half damage to the cloaker and half to the victim. The tail is AC 1 and can be cut off when 16 points of damage are inflicted.

A search of the area reveals a small alcove in the eastern wall that contains a straw sleeping mat strewn with bone fragments. PCs looking under the mat discover a small pouch containing six pearls worth 100 gp each and two potion bottles that are labeled *extra-healing.* A passage exits from the southern wall.

5. The passageway that leads to this cavern is 10 feet wide, but the western half is submerged with the same fetid water that filled the pool in room 4. The water is 10 feet deep in the passageway and deepens to 20 feet as it enters cavern 5. Although unpleasant, a PC could enter the water without harm, but would effectively be blind while submerged. The channel bisects the cavern and terminates in another large pool in the far eastern corner. The aboleth will be in this pool when the party arrives.

Also in the cavern are five humans, four sahuagin, and six koalinths—all enslaved minions of the aboleth. The humans and the koalinths are camped on the north side of the cavern, while the sahuagin are standing guard on the south side. The water can be crossed at the far eastern side of the cave where it narrows to only five feet wide. The slaves attack the PCs to defend the aboleth.

A small pile of treasure is visible on the south side near the large pool. Several sacks, weapons, coins, and two small chests can be seen. The aboleth will be aware (psionically) of any fight taking place in the cavern. It is holding the *Eye of the Leviathan* in one of its

tentacles, and has been hoping the PCs would arrive soon so it can test some of the *Eye's* powers. The aboleth waits until the PCs defeat most of its minions, then it rises out of the pool and gloats.

> "Tremble before me, puny surface dwellers! I wield the *Eye of the Leviathan,* and no power can stand before me!"

At this point, it tries to activate the *Eye.* Instantly, there is a bright blue flash as the *Eye* discharges a shock of electrical energy into the aboleth's tentacle. The aboleth suffers 20 points of damage, roars in pain, and drops the *Eye.* The party automatically wins initiative over the momentarily-stunned aboleth, and can easily grab the *Eye.*

If the PCs elect to stay and fight, the aboleth directs its remaining slaves to fight for it. The enslaved human mage casts his *sleep* spell on the PCs. At the same time, the aboleth uses its *illusion* ability to create the image of dozens more sahuagin coming to join the fray.

If the aboleth is killed, its slaves are freed. The sahuagin and koalinths continue the fight.

The treasure pile contains the following: a leather sack filled with 12,000 sp; a canvas sack containing 4,200 gp; another 100 gp and 400 sp are lying loose on the ground; a *crossbow +1*; a *broad sword +2*; a bandoleer with three *throwing daggers +1*; a chest containing a *wand of magic missiles* (22 charges); a scroll with the following spells: *unseen servant, web, blink,* and *haste*; and a *raise dead* scroll.

Men (3): Int Average; AL N; AC 4 (chain and shield); MV 9; HD 3 (F3); hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3/2 (specialized in long sword); Dmg 1-10+1 (STR bonus); SZ M; ML 12; XP 120 each.

Thief: Int Average; AL N; AC 0 (bracers of defense AC 4, DEX); MV 12; HD 3 (T3); hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SA Backstab dmg ×2; SZ M; ML 12; XP 120.

Wizard: Int Average; AL N; AC 6 (Dexterity); MV 12; HD 1 (W1); hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (staff); SZ M; ML 12; XP 35/

Spell memorized: *sleep.*

Sahuagin (4): Int High; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12, Sw 24; HD 2+2; hp 13 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1 or special; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4/1-4/1-4 or trident 2-7; SA Net; SD Special; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175 each.

Koalinths (6): Int Average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1-6 (spear); SZ M; ML 12; XP 35 each.

Aboleth (1): Int High; AL LE; AC 4; MV 3, Sw 18; HD 8; hp 40 (20 after trying to use the *Eye*; THAC0 12; #AT 4; Dmg 1-6 (×4); SA Psionics, enslave others, illusions; SD Slime; SZ H; ML 17; XP 2,000.

The Way Out

> As you exit the cave, passing into the sea, weighted nets fall all around you, and you are borne to the bottom by a group of humanoids with the upper bodies of men.

The PCs' captors are a group of tritons sent here to recover the *Eye of the Leviathan.* Their clerics revealed the presence of the *Eye.* They wear scale armor, and their hippocampi are waiting just around the edge of the cave mouth. To escape from the nets, a PC must make a successful bend bars/lift gates roll.

There are 15 tritons, five to a net. The tritons attack to kill if it appears the PCs are trying to run with the *Eye.*

In addition, there are 15 large hippocampi in the background. These mounts defend the tritons if it appears the PCs are winning a fight.

If the PCs do not attack the tritons, or if the tritons subdue them, the leader steps forward. He addresses the PCs in Common, explaining that he and his followers want the *Eye of the Leviathan.* He explains the history and the powers of the *Eye* and that the *Eye* was stolen.

If the party voluntarily turns over the *Eye,* the leader rewards them with a black pearl worth 10,000 gp. He calls a group of hippocampi to transport the party back to within an easy swimming distance of Ravens Bluff or the lord regent's ship.

If the PCs kill the tritons, they can take the *Eye.* Searching the bodies reveals the 10,000 gp pearl.

Tritons (14): Int High; AL N(G); AC 4; MV Sw 15; HD 3; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (trident); SA Net; SD Special; MR 90%; SZ M; ML 13; XP 270 each.

Triton leader: Int High; AL N(G); AC 4; MV Sw 15; HD 8; hp 40; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7+1 (trident +1); SA Net; SD Special; MR 90%; SZ M; ML 13; XP 4,000.

Hippocampi (15): Int Average; AL CG; AC 5; MV Sw 24; HD 4; hp 20 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ H; ML 12; XP 120 each.

Resolution

The outcome of the adventure will depend on whether the PCs killed the tritons to keep the *Eye,* or let them have the artifact. Lord Blacktree will be pleased if the PCs recovered the *Eye,* and furious if they do not have it.

The only way to placate Lord Blacktree is to give him the 10,000 gp pearl or at least 10,000 worth of magic items. If he is not satisfied, Lord Blacktree, a man with great influence and wealth, vows they will have a very hard time finding work in Ravens Bluff again.

The Eye

The Eye of the Leviathan:

Created by Istishia the Waterlord and Silvanus, the God of Nature, the *Eye* grants its possessors several powers:

1. Functions as a *rod of rulership* three times a day.

2. Mammal control at will.

3. Constant *invulnerability,* as the potion.

4. Summon and control water elementals, three times a day as a *bowl of commanding water elementals.*

5. *Hold monster* three times a day.

6. *Control weather,* as the priest spell, once a day.

7. *Water breathing* at will.

8. The *Eye* emits a psionic distress call whenever in the hands of one who is evilly aligned.

9. Inflicts a shock equivalent to a 12th level *shocking grasp* spell when activated by those of evil alignment.

If the *Eye* spends more than one month out of the water, it loses all of its magical properties.

The Ugly Stick

An AD&D game adventure for 4-7 not altogether attractive characters of Levels 1-7

Illustration by Steven Schwartz

by Rembert Parker

Players' Introduction

It just isn't fair—some people grow up charismatic, some people grow up beautiful, and some people grow up attractive both inside and out.

For all your skills and abilities, there are times when you would trade them all for just a little more physical beauty. Many merchants and other folks treat attractive people with more respect and attention, it seems.

Oh, sure, you're not really bad looking. But you don't consider yourself truly dazzling. This week you might have a chance to change all of that.

About two days' journey southwest from here is the famous Poston Plateau Resort. A long-dormant volcano there left behind soil rich with ash and pumice, and to this day hot water rumored to have magical restorative effects bubbles from the ground nearby. As children, some of you made fun of the wealthy old men and women who spent their fortunes on treatments to stay young and attractive. But now you are older and more concerned with your own aging—and now you also have reason to believe there's something to the stories about the plateau after all.

Recently, your party acquired a small chest filled with cheap jewelry. While climbing the stairway to the second floor of an inn, one of you dropped the chest, and the lid split open. While trying to repair it, you noticed that the lid had separated slightly, revealing an old piece of parchment inside. Your rising excitement was rewarded when you unrolled the parchment to find a map to the Poston Plateau—a map which revealed the location of a *wand of beauty!*

You spent all of yesterday dashing from store to store, acquiring the goods that necessary to make the journey and find the wand.

Soon, you'll be off to the plateau.

Notes to the DM™

The map the PCs have is correct—the plateau is home to a *wand of beauty;* it is also the home to a *wand of ugliness!* The two wands were fashioned using lava from the volcano and are virtually

indestructible. The *wand of beauty* can provide one point of Comeliness for each charge expended, but it can be charged only by beating someone with the *wand of ugliness.* Each strike by the *wand of ugliness* provides one charge on the *wand of beauty* and reduces the victim's Comeliness by 1d6 points, though it does no other physical damage.

Comeliness rules are explained at the end of this adventure.

Using the *wand of ugliness* is a chaotic evil act, and continued use eventually changes the wielder's alignment to chaotic evil.

Each strike with the *wand of beauty* adds one point of Comeliness. When a person attains a Comeliness of 18, it requires 20 charges to increase Comeliness another point, so a character with a Comeliness of 18 must expend 20 charges to attain a Comeliness of 19.

The two wands have been discovered and removed from their hiding place by a cleric, Fawn, who is working at the Poston Plateau Resort.

Fawn used the *wand of ugliness* to charge the *wand of beauty*, slowly and secretly increasing her own beauty. To keep others from noticing the changes in her looks, she has learned the disguise nonweapon proficiency. As a result of the repeated use, her alignment has shifted to chaotic evil, but she has become stunningly beautiful.

Once Fawn's Comeliness reached 18, she discovered to her great anger and frustration that she could gain more beauty only by expending 20 charges of the *wand of beauty.* When she was passed over for a promotion at the resort, her frustration boiled over and she began taking her revenge.

The insidious Fawn began sneaking into guests' rooms and hitting them with the *wand of ugliness* to charge her *wand of beauty*. She now makes a lucrative living blackmailing the resort, for the management has been unable to determine why some of its guests are growing uglier, not more beautiful.

History of the Wands

When an evil sorceress created them centuries ago, the wands were thought to be indestructible. However, a group of good wizards and priests worked for months finally to fashion a method for dealing with the foul magic items. They constructed a magical container from the volcano's lava. The container consists of five parts: a sturdy box open on the top, a red velvet cushion with indentations for the wands, a glass lid, and two metal fasteners. When the wands are sealed within the container, all of their effects are immediately reversed. The container is not only indestructible but also sentient—it wants to contain the wands.

The priests and wizards put the wands in the box and buried the box on the plateau—many, many, many years ago. Unfortunately, Fawn undid their work by unearthing the devices.

Visiting The Plateau

When the PCs arrive at the plateau, they can visit the various shops and the resort itself if they wish. Anyone with a Comeliness lower than 13 will be treated politely, but coldly; anyone with a Comeliness lower than 10 will be treated rudely (the lower the Comeliness, the more rude the treatment). The resort caters to the rich and beautiful, and the party members are most likely neither.

Following the map, the party finds a tunnel which leads to a cave. The cave mouth, however, has been crudely hidden with a stack of rocks. The opening leads to a cavern guarded by animal zombies. In the cavern floor is a hole into which Fawn threw the stone tablet that described how to use the neutralizing container. Fawn also accidentally dropped one of the metal fasteners into the hole.

Once she discovered that she could not destroy the container, she took it apart and hid the remaining four pieces in various places on the plateau.

When a PC picks up the fastener and has read the tablet, he or she can hear the other pieces of the container calling out. This effect does not occur if the same person carries one of the wands as well as the container, so Fawn never noticed it. To complete the adventure, the party must assemble the container.

- The box is now in the home of a high-level wizard, Esmerelda, who filled it with soil to plant flowers. The party must persuade her to give it to them.

- The lid is in the bottom of a pool of mud filled with mudmen.

- The velvet holder is buried in a field of tri-flower fronds.

- The second fastener is secreted in the back of a drawer in the plateau security department's office.

Since one of the PCs can hear the pieces calling, the party can recover them in any order. Once the container is reassembled, the bearer can hear the wands calling from Fawn's room; the final encounter is a confrontation with Fawn.

Getting to the Plateau

The PCs can travel to the plateau by any means available to them. Once they reach the mountains, however, they must leave any mounts behind. There is no way to take any land-based mount up the steep cliff.

The Plateau

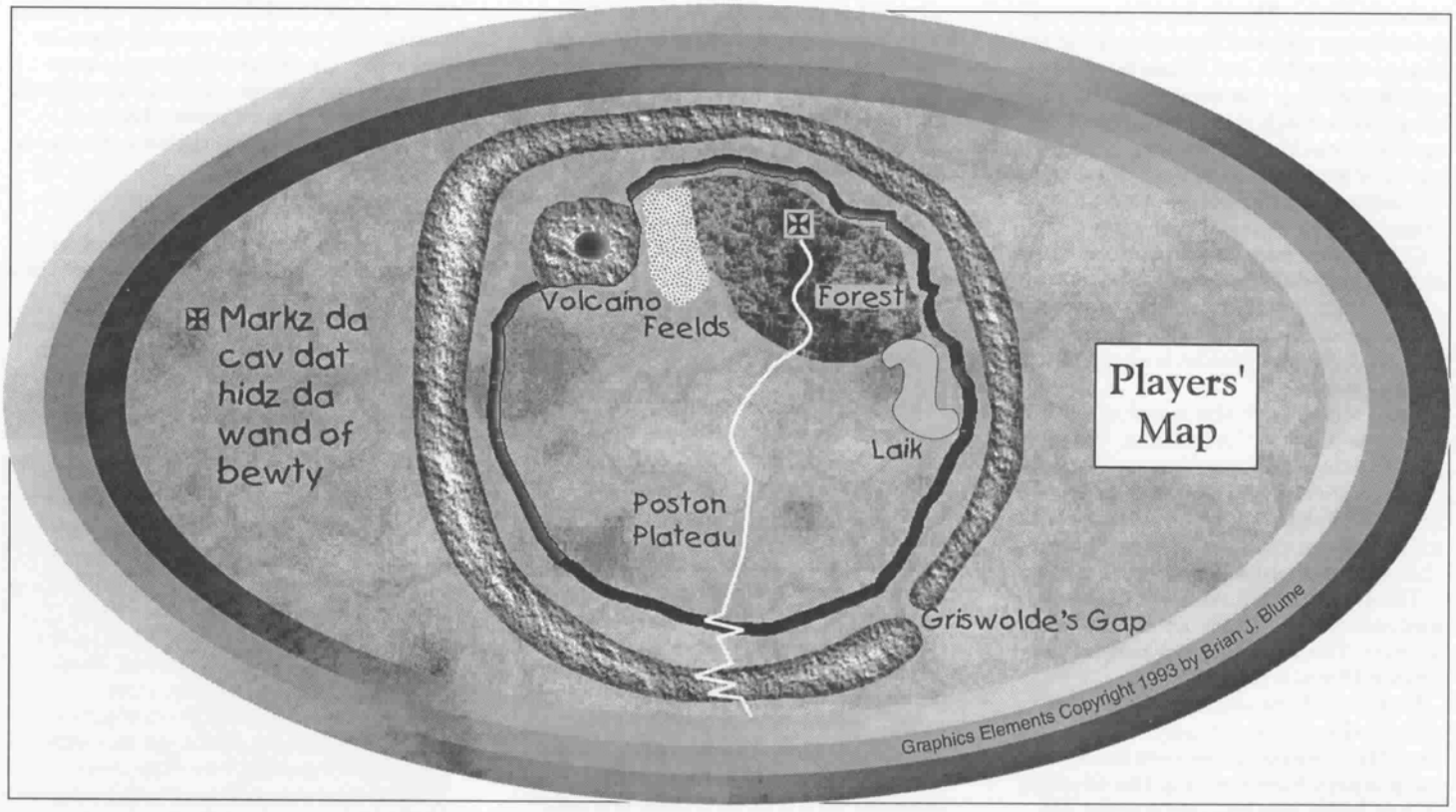
Most of your journey to Poston Plateau was quick and uneventful, but the final two miles were arduous. The mountain trail climbed nearly straight up, and you had to stop for rest several times. With a weary sigh, you round the last curve in the trail and find yourself facing level ground—and an impolite sign:

"Poston Plateau is private property. Visitors are welcome, but only registered guests may stay overnight. The owners accept no responsibility for injury or death resulting from camping in the forest."

The area beyond the sign is beautiful. A cluster of quaint shops sits to your left, with the dormant volcano towering behind. Straight ahead, you see a forest bright with autumn colors. Ahead and to your right is the famous Poston Plateau Resort. Although this land is level, it is ringed on nearly all sides by taller mountains. The only breaks are the path you have just ascended and a small gap in the mountains to your right and slightly behind you. This gap is partially filled by a log cabin floating about 20 feet in the air.

As you look around, a man in well-tailored gray and mauve clothing walks smiling toward you. As he gets closer, the smile disappears and he looks as though he wishes you would as well.

This man is Quincy, one of the resort escorts who would normally show guests around the plateau. After seeing the party, he quickly loses interest in them, particularly if not all of them are very attractive or appear wealthy. He introduces himself, asks if the group has a reservation, and (after assuring



himself that they are not on his list) excuses himself back to his post (a chair in the shade). If the PCs ask for any information, he hints about a tip. At least six silver pieces must be forthcoming or he becomes rude and mutters about people who insist on going places they are not welcome.

If the PCs offer an adequate tip, Quincy tells the party the names of the various shops, but then starts muttering anyway.

Once Quincy takes his leave of the PCs, the party is free to investigate the shops and the resort.

If the PCs walking directly into the forest, Quincy warns them that the forest is dangerous after dark.

DM's Guide to Poston Plateau

Although the shops make different claims, they all have the same price—100 gp minimum a visit. There are extra fees for extraordinary treatments.

Unsoiled Beauty: This shop provides mud treatments alleged to tighten and soften skin. The proprietors are Bertha, Betty, Bobbie, and Sal.

The Springs of Youth: The back rooms of this shop open directly into the hot springs; partitions in the springs allow patrons to bathe privately. A pair of elves, Timster and Kimmie, supervise the shop. Nightly sessions for a full month will restore one point of Constitution lost to age or system shock failure.

Nature's Remedies: A half-elf couple, Cytaren and Bonnieverla, run this shop. They provide special ointment treatments and vitamin regiments from plants they have found in the forest. These help to cure diseases and reverse artificial aging. As a lucrative sideline, they operate as alchemists by night, supplying powders and potions at inflated prices.

Recoveries: Anasteria and her three assistants provide superior makeup, including a two-month supply of the ingredients necessary to look one's best every day. At night, Anasteria teaches the disguise nonweapon proficiency for an extra fee.

Esmerelda's Log Cabin: This cabin floats 20 feet in the air, offering a spectacular view for the 14th level magic user and Esther, her chimp familiar.

The Poston Plateau Resort: This is possibly the area's best (and certainly most expensive) vacation spot. Behind the security wall are areas for horseback riding, swimming and diving, nature walks through a safe but exotic forest, organized sports, daily exercise classes at all levels, and superior dining and accommodations. It caters primarily to the rich and beautiful—power is optional but desirable.

Pricing and Efficacy

There is no guarantee that the treatments in the shops actually work, and the DM™ must set prices to fit the campaign. The suggested price range for restoring lost Constitution at The Spring of Youth is 5,000 for a treatment that is 25% successful. Each additional 1,000 gp spent on treatments increases the chance of success by 10%, and any failed treatment restores lost Constitution only temporarily (1d4 + 3 weeks).

The suggested price range for regaining a year of unnatural aging at Nature's Remedies is 8,000 for a base 25% chance of success. Again, each additional 1,000 gp spend on treatment increases the chance of success by 10%.

All payments for exotic services must

be made in full at least a week in advance, giving the proprietors a chance to move the money off the plateau and to a safe place, just in case the customer is dissatisfied.

Into The Forest

The map leads the party into the forest. Note that although they can enter the forest from the resort grounds, surrounding the resort is a fence which cannot be easily passed due to a series of *avoidance* spells cast on it.

Once the PCs enter the forest, it takes them 30 minutes to find the area where the tunnel entrance should be. The entrance has been camouflaged with several logs covered with a pile of large stones and dirt. Three small trees have been transplanted around the stones.

The party can find the entrance to the tunnel in several ways:

- Success with the observation proficiency reveals that the rocks are piled up deliberately.

- Anyone with the agriculture proficiency (or a background in forestry) recognizes that the trees have been transplanted—something very unusual in a normal forest.

- Anyone with the mining proficiency realizes that the stones in the pile were brought here from somewhere else.

- Successful use of direction sense allows a character to follow the map exactly, which leads the character to the pile of stones.

- With a successful die roll, an elf or half elf character can recognize the pile of rocks as a concealed door.

If PCs dig at the pile of rocks, they uncover the cave. If all else fails, a randomly chosen PC can step on a weak spot near the cave and sink into the ground.

Into the Cave

Inside the cave mouth, you find a tunnel that slopes down about 15 feet before leveling off in a circular cavern about 30 feet across. The roof is at most six feet high, but a number of stalactites and an occasional large root cause the ceiling to be as low as four feet in places. There is little doubt that you are in the right place, for in the center of this man-made cave is a four-foot cube of stone. Unfortunately, that is not all that is here.

You see seven gray squirrels, eight orange and white striped tabby cats, one fluffy white dog, four large raccoons, and four big badgers shuffling woodenly toward you.

Fawn used a scroll to animate these undead. Their orders are to attack any who enter the cave.

The creatures fight until destroyed. If turned, they flee to the cavern's outer walls. If they are subsequently attacked, the turning is broken and they fight anew.

Animal Zombies (24): Int Non; AL N; AC 6; MV 4; HD 1+4; hp 8 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; MR Special; SZ M; ML Special; XP 65 each.

Zombies move slowly and always lose initiative. They are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death magic,* poisons, and cold-based spells. A vial of holy water inflicts 2-8 points of damage upon a zombie.

When the party examines the cube, they find a 24″ square and 6″ deep indentation on the front. They also discover that a portion of the top (which weighs nearly a hundred pounds) slides back to reveal an empty compartment about 30″ long, 12″ wide, and 18″ deep. The compartment is empty; this is where the container and the wands were kept.

The indentation marks where a stone tablet describing the container once rested. If the PCs examine the indentation, they find several long scratches in the stone.

If the party members search the cavern, they find a trickle of water coming out of the northwest wall. The water runs through a groove cut into the stone floor and flows into a hole about five feet wide.

If the party investigates the hole, they see that water falls about 30 feet into a pool of mud. There, a flat piece of stone with writing on it juts out of the mud. The party is too far away to tell what the writing says.

If the PC remove the tablet, they see something—perhaps a gem-sparkling at the bottom of the cavity the tablet left in the mud. Even as they watch, the mud quickly fills the cavity after the tablet is moved. However, the PCs can fish out the shiny object by digging quickly in the mud. If the PCs ignore the object, the hole collapses, burying one or more PCs up to their necks in the mud. As they free themselves, one PC's hand closed on a small, metallic object.

The object is one the container's fasteners. The character holding it begins hearing voice faintly calling: "Over here! We're over here!" Any PC who holds the fastener can hear the voices.

The PCs can read the tablet only if they have a light source.

The inscription reads: "Here lie the accursed *wands of beauty* and *ugliness.* They cannot be destroyed, but this container neutralizes them and any mischief they have done. Place the wands in the container, seal it with the two fasteners, and their baneful effects will cease until the wands are freed again. Woe be to any who uses the wands, for they darken the heart.

The Fastener: Examining the piece of metal reveals that it is merely a small clip which might hold together two pieces of material.

The voices the holder hears come from the direction of the resort; from now until the end of the adventure, anyone holding a piece of the container hears the other parts calling out.

As the party returns to the resort with the fastener, the voices diverge and come from several different directions.

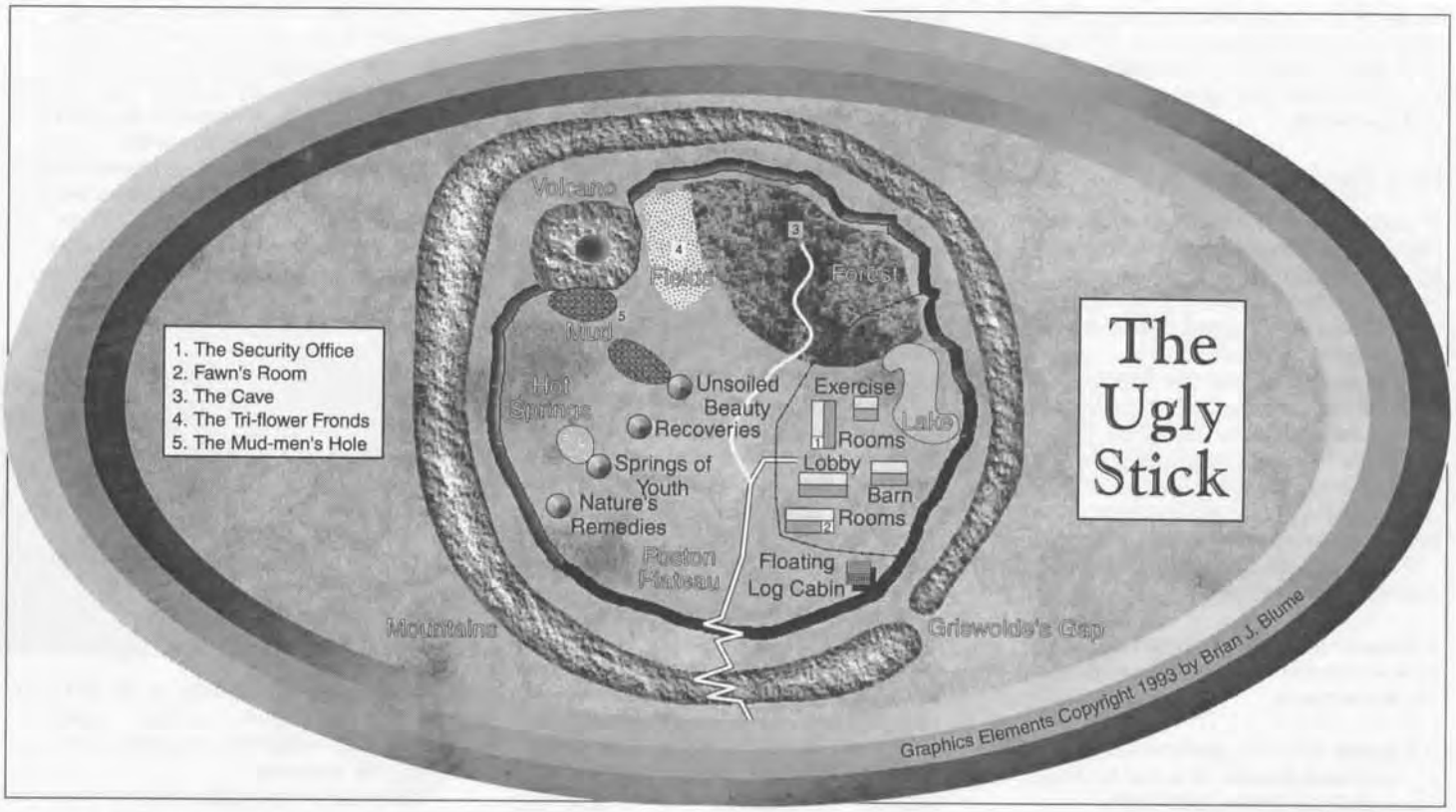
Into the Fields

As the party leaves the forest, one of the voices calls to them from the right.

As you walk through the forest, the air begins to smell much sweeter and the tree cover comes to an abrupt end. Ahead, you see a field of short grasses sprinkled liberally with flowers of all colors. In some patches the flowers grow higher than the grasses. The voice is calling to you from one of these areas—a patch of white and blue and violet flowers that range from two to eight feet tall.

The item, the velvet cushion, is buried several feet below the edge of a patch of tri-flower fronds.

Tri-flower frond: Int Non; AL N; AC 9; MV nil; HD 2+8; hp *; THAC0 16; #AT Varies; Dmg Special; SA see below; SD nil; SZ L; ML 14; XP 420.



* If the PCs' levels total less than 22, the plant has 18 hit points. If the PCs' levels total 23-25, the plant has 22 hit points. If the PCs' levels total 26+, the plant has 24 hit points.

Tri-flower fronds have dark green stalks topped by three flowers—blue, violet and white. The blue flower has eight pollen-covered tendrils which are three feet long. The plant attacks with these tendrils. On any successful hit by a tendril, the victim must save vs. poison or fall into a coma for 1d4 hours.

The plant's sensitive rootlets allow the plant to locate sleeping characters, and the violet flower squirts an enzyme on the victim. This enzyme inflicts 2d4 points of acid damage each round until it is washed off. Each pint of water reduces the damage by one point. Complete immersion removes the enzyme and stops the damage.

Once the enzymes start to work, the white blossom extends tendrils into the comatose character, draining bodily fluids for 1d6 damage per round until the plant or the victim is killed.

If more than three people are attacking the plant, a second, smaller blue flower can attack as well. This one has only three blue tendrils, and the party can simply back away from it to avoid additional attacks.

Once the plant is dead, the party can dig for the cushion. The field is filled with chunks of lava rock that make digging difficult.

The cushion is three feet down and is wrapped in a dark green cloth.

Into The Mud

Another voice, this one from the container's glass lid, comes from the far western side of the plateau, behind the shops and close to the volcano. The party must sneak around Unsoiled Beauty and past the mud holes to reach it.

> You slip past the mud holes at the back of the Unsoiled Beauty and approach the volcano. It is warm and humid here, and you are surprised to see tropical plants and even a few fruit trees with some small oranges and grapefruits. There is also a banana plant with nearly ripe bananas. There are many small springs all around, and one of them comes splashing down the volcano and into a puddle of mud that is almost 50 feet across. The voice is now quite loud, and is calling to you from below the waterfall.

Somebody has to go into the mud and retrieve the item. When the PCs disturb the mud, it begins to stir in a number of places, and mottled-brown heads rise up. Roundish bodies and pairs of arms quickly follow, and the creatures sling mud at the PCs.

The first time the PCs rouse the mudmen, the creatures ambush the PCs and get a free attack. If the PCs retreat, the mudmen sink back into the pool, but they return each time the PCs disturb the mud.

Mud-men (*): Int Non; AL N; AC 10; MV 3; HD 2; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1 ; Dmg Special; SA Mud-throwing, suffocation; SD Special; SZ S; ML; XP 175 each.

*If the PCs' levels total less than 22, there are 8 mudmen. If the PCs' levels total 23-25, there are 9 mudmen. If the PCs levels total 26+, there are 11 mudmen.

Mud-men are unintelligent life forces that inhabit pools of mud. They attack any who enter their pool by hurling mud at them. Their attacks treat targets as AC 10, adjusting the AC only for Dexterity. The mud does no damage, but a successful hit lowers the target's movement rate by 1. While they attack,

the mudmen also move forward, throwing themselves at any target within 10 feet. A miss forces the mudman to spend one round reforming out of the mud, while a successful hit destroys the mudman but lowers the victim's movement rate by 4. Once an adventurer's movement reaches zero, he is covered with mud and starts to suffocate, suffering 1d8 points of damage per round until somebody else spends one round clearing out his nose and mouth. Once the melee ends, any lost movement rate is restored.

Mudmen are affected by all spells that cause damage to living creatures, but *dispel magic* and *dig* act as *fireballs.* They are immune to all poisons and are unaffected by spells that influence the mind.

Once the PCs dispose of the mudmen, the party can retrieve the glass lid.

If the PCs search through the mud further, they find several mud-soaked items: two pairs of boots, a hat, a cloth arm band, two suits of leather armor, and a backpack. A *detect magic* spell reveals that several of the items are magical. The loot includes *boots of varied tracks, boots of the north,* a *Heward's handy haversack,* and a *phylactery of long years.*

If the party examines the top of the waterfall, they find a small, battered brass shield blocking a tiny stream. This is a *shield +2.*

Into The Arms of the Law

The container's second fastener is calling from within the resort. It is not exactly guarded; it is in the bottom left-hand drawer of a desk in the security office. There is always at least one security guard on duty in this room, although a diversion might cause the guard to run off. Suitable diversions might include an illusory monster, a fake robbery, or anything else that impresses the DM™.

The security office is located on the first floor of the resort, just north of the bar and restaurant. To get there, the party must come through the front gates, go to the lobby, and register for a room (no unregistered visitors are permitted). The DM should make this as uncomfortable as possible, as snobs run the resort. If the party makes a particular nuisance of itself, be sure to have security keep a special eye on their activities.

Since the PCs don't have reservations (and probably don't look presentable), the staff puts them up in a "special" area. Normally the resort charges 100 gp a week per person; however, they have a special room that they are willing to make available to the party for 5 gp a night per person. After the gold has changed hands, the resort staff directs the PCs to one of the stalls in the horse barn. Of course, fresh hay will be supplied. Food is extra, supplies are extra, drinks are extra, use of the facilities is extra—everything is extra! All prices in the resort area are about three times normal; the employees insist that the extra costs are due to the difficulty of bringing supplies up to the plateau.

If the PCs start a fight here, a security force quickly arrives. A hotel staff member asks the PCs to quiet down or the guards will attack. Captured PCs are thrown in the resort's two holding cells (see the Dealing with Dan section for details). The special force consists of two marids and several humans.

Marids (2): Int High; AL CG; AC 0; MV 9, Fl 15; HD 13; hp 65 each; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 8-32 (8d4); SA Special; SD Special; SZ H; ML 16; XP 16,000 each.

Marids can use the following powers, twice each per day, at 26th level: *detect evil/good, detect invisibility, detect magic, invisibility,* assume liquid form, *polymorph self,* and *purify water.* Marids can perform any of the following up to seven times per day: *assume gaseous form, lower water, part water, wall of fog,* and bestow *water breathing* upon others for up to one full day. Once per year a marid can use *wish.*

Marids are not harmed by water-based spells. Cold-based spells grant them a +2 bonus to saving throws and a −2 to each die of damage. Fire inflicts +1 per die of damage, with saving throws at −1.

Head of Security, Dan: Int Average; AL CG; AC 2; MV 12; HD F5; hp 42; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 or pummel, wrestle; SZ M; ML 18; XP 420.

Magic items: *Bracers of defense AC 2, dagger +3*

Guards (12): Int Very; AL CG; AC 4; MV 9; HD F3; hp 22 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA pummel, wrestle; SZ M; ML 18; XP 175 each.

Equipment: Chain mail, dagger

These security guards arrive in groups of 12. There are 72 guards at the resort, and a prolonged fight eventually will attract every one of them. All the security forces prefer non-lethal combat. Dan and the guards have the punching and wrestling specializations from the *Complete Fighter's Handbook;* if your campaign does not use the handbook, Dan and the guards get three attacks every two rounds and gain a +1 "to hit" and a +2 damage bonus when punching or wrestling.

If the PCs decide to cooperate and make reservations, continue with the adventure. Once they pay their money, the resort staff makes them feel reasonably welcome.

Fawn is one of the people the PCs meet. She is clothed in a green dress and a gray cloak that hides her stunning figure. Make sure she introduces herself by name so that the party recognizes her later. Fawn can fill many posts at the resort: door person, registrar, hostess, or anything else the DM finds convenient.

When the party goes after the second fastener, they can follow the voice to an unmarked door near the bar. If they watch the door, they see a number of people coming and going from this room. If the party has had any dealings with security, they recognize the people. If the haven't tangled with security, perhaps they notice that the only people they have seen with weapons are those going in and out of this door.

The Security Office

There are always 1d3 guards in the office, and Dan spends about half his time in here. If the PCs watch the door carefully, they can get in while Dan is away and only a single guard is inside.

If the party just barges in, they have an all-out fight on their hands. Use statistics from the previous encounter.

Getting inside is a simple matter, all the PCs have to do is knock politely on the door. The guards are accustomed to handling special requests and questions from guests, so the PCs can enter the office on the flimsiest pretence. Once inside, the party will have to come up with a plan either to trick the guards out of the room or to find some trick or spell that temporarily puts them out of commission. If a fight breaks out, it is likely that the PCs will be either captured or removed from the premises.

Inside the room the PCs find three chairs facing a large wooden desk. Behind the desk is a comfortable-looking leather chair. At the back of the office are two small open cells, each of which contains several jars and bowls and a

single cot. A map of the resort covers one wall. The other wall has lists of guests by room, lists of employees, etc. In the bottom left-hand desk drawer, under a stack of blank paper, is the other fastener.

If the party has the time and inclination to search, they can discover other things. The middle right-hand desk drawer has a box with five master keys. Four of them can be used to open any room in the resort. The fifth key opens the holding cell.

Dealing With Dan

If the PCs were thrown into the security cells, Dan questions them. He wants to know why the PCs have come to the resort. He also wants to know where they are from and what they are after. If the PCs are anything but contrite and deferential, Dan asks whether they would rather be tossed down the side of the mountain or walk peacefully away after paying a 200 gp fine.

If the PCs mention the *wand of ugliness*, Dan becomes friendly. He knows something has been making guests uglier, and he has been trying to get to the bottom of it. If the PCs explain about the tablet and their efforts to put the box together, Dan agrees to release them and let them pursue their quest—after dark.

He doesn't want the resort owners to know he is letting prisoners escape. Further, he doesn't want the PCs mentioning the wands to the guests. He warns the PCs that doing so would certainly make him inclined to throw them down mountain.

If the PCs do not reveal their mission to Dan, they'll either have to break out of the cells, pay their fine and leave, or be thrown down the mountain (3d6 points of damage and all equipment makes two saving throws vs. crushing blow).

If the PCs subsequently get into trouble inside the resort or start to blabber about the *wand of ugliness*, a squad of guards appears and escorts them to the holding cells.

Once the PCs are locked up again, Dan talks to them privately. He'll release them as long as they promise to keep him posted on their progress in finding and neutralizing the wands. He warns them not to tell the guests about the wands. It would be bad for business if word leaked out that ugliness was stalking the plateau. The PCs won't receive a third warning about keeping the wands a secret. If they talk about them again, they are summarily removed from the plateau.

Up Into the Air

The gap in the mountains southeast of the plateau affords a beautiful view of the land below. The view from the log cabin that floats 20 feet in the air here is even more spectacular. Esmerelda, a retired adventurer in her 50s, lives here with Esther, her chimpanzee familiar.

Fawn hid one piece of the container in the cabin. When the locals threw a party for Esmeralda's birthday, Fawn filled the box with dirt and planted some flowers in it. The box now rests in one of the cabin's windows.

The party hears the box calling from the cabin, but they cannot tell exactly where it is until they enter the cabin. If the PCs can't fly or levitate, the only way they can get in is to get Esther's attention.

If the PCs stand beneath the cabin and call out, Esther pokes her head out a window and screams at them. If the party keeps calling, Esther hops around, screeching and taunting the PCs.

Esther is feeling a little hungry, and she wants the PCs to give her food (in particular, one of the bananas from the muddy area). If the party doesn't think of this, Esther leans over the rail holding a piece of bread, takes a bite, then rubs her stomach and screams.

If the party offers a banana, Esther lowers a rope ladder and scampers down to get the fruit.

The ladder leads to the front porch, which holds several plants and a large rocking chair. If the PCs knock on the door, Esmerelda answers. She is very pleased to have company, but tends to be condescending toward "poor, sad, plain-looking folks" because she is sure that they won't find many friends on the plateau.

If the party explains their problem, Esmerelda is more than happy to help—she gets the planter out of the window and presents it to the PCs, but only after she transplants the flowers to a small flower pot. She does not remember who gave her the box, "There were just so many nice people giving me presents that day!" She urges the party to be careful, as she suspects that anybody using the wands must be evil because the wands must use a specialized form of *vampiric touch* to produce their effects.

Into The Arms of Real Trouble

Once the party acquires all the parts of the container and assembles them, they can find the wands—the container will lead the PCs to them. The person holding the container hears two voices saying, "Go away box, leave me alone."

The party can follow the voices to Fawn's room in the resort. The door is locked, and unless the PCs have the master keys from the security office they'll have to pick the lock, use a *knock* spell, or batter down the door.

> You open the door to a small room. There is a bed with a green lace bedspread, a little pine dresser, and a wooden table and chair which have been stained green. The table holds a fine mirror and countless brushes, combs, and small bottles. The scent of floral perfume pervades the room.

The bottles contain the makeup Fawn uses to disguise her looks.

The party can hear the wands' voices coming from under the floor in one of the corners. A cursory investigation reveals a loose floorboard; underneath, there is a small metal box and a rolled-up towel.

As PCs begin examining the box and the towel, the door opens behind them.

> A woman dressed in a gray cloak and hood and a green dress opens the door and gasps in surprise. "What are all you people doing in my . . . Oh, it's you people again. I'm Fawn. Remember, we met when you were checking in. Are you here to get Robin's sticks? He said somebody would come for them." She looks both ways down the hall and comes into the room. Three muscular gentlemen follow her.

Fawn is playing for time. She heard the party in her room, cast a *protection from good* spell, and removed her makeup. Once inside the room, she reveals herself in all her artificial glory.

> The woman pulls back her hood and throws off her cloak, and you find yourselves viewing the most beautiful creature you have ever seen.

Fawn explains that Robin is her boyfriend, he gave her the "sticks" for safekeeping. While talking, she uses the *charm* power from her *ring of human influence* on as many male PCs as she

can affect (maximum 21 levels worth). Each target can save vs. spells to avoid the *charm*. Unless the PCs are wary of a trick, Fawn gets a free round to use the *ring*.

The fighters are *charmed* resort guards, and use non-lethal combat. Once the PCs begin resisting, Fawn takes the following actions for the first three or four rounds while her fighters press the attack:

1. Casts *charm person or mammal* on a PC to keep him or her friendly.
2. Casts *hold person* on one PC.
3. Casts *heat metal* on an armored PC or uses the *suggestion* power from her *ring of human influence*.

When the non-lethal spells are gone, Fawn goes for the kill, using her *cause light wounds* on PCs, then attacking with her *staff*.

If the battle goes against her, Fawn casts *feign death*, hoping to get a chance to slip away.

If Fawn wins the battle, she ties up all the PCs. If any have been reduced to fewer than zero hit points, she tries to cure them. Once she has her prisoners secure, she begins bopping them with the *wand of ugliness*. Each PC gets hit once, decreasing his or her Comeliness by 1d6. Eventually the PCs will wake up in their home city, uglier, but otherwise none the worse for wear. Fawn, of course, is long gone; she leaves the plateau and goes looking for other victims to plunder in the pursuit of beauty.

Fawn: Int Exceptional; AL CE; AC 2; MV 12; HD P5; hp 30; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or spell; Dmg 1-6+2 or by spell; SZ M; ML 18; XP 650.

Magic items: *Bracers of defense AC 6, staff +2, ring of human influence,* three *potions of extra healing.*

Spells: *Cause light wounds* (×2), *protection from good* (already cast and running at the beginning of the encounter), *cure light wounds, charm person or mammal, hold person, aid, heat metal, feign death*

Fighters (*): Int Average; AL CG; AC 4; MV 9; HD F3; hp 22 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA pummel, wrestle; SZ M; ML 18; XP 175 each.

Equipment: Chain mail, dagger

If the PCs' total levels are less than 22, Fawn has three charmed fighters at her beck and call. If their levels total 23-29 she has four fighters; at 30-35 she has five fighters; and at 36+ she has six fighters.

The Aftermath

If the PCs are victorious, the non-charmed security guards quickly arrive on the scene, lead by Dan. The PCs are declared heroes.

The metal box in Fawn's room contains a few gems, the proceeds from a few secret "ugliness cures" Fawn sold to resort guests on the side. The DM™ is free to give them a value appropriate for the campaign; 3,000-18,000 gp is the suggested range.

Once the PCs put the box together, they can use it to neutralize the wands. When that happens, Fawn loses her stolen beauty (with a shriek of pain), and her victims regain the beauty they lost. Dan gives the PCs Fawn's treasure as a thank you.

Further, the resort staff extends their thanks by allowing the PCs to use the resort's facilities, gratis. Each morning, a cosmetologist comes to the PCs' rooms and helps make them more presentable. Finally, each of PC is given a chance to select *one* additional reward:

- A PC who has an available non-weapon proficiency slot can learn the disguise, land-based riding (horse), spellcraft, swimming, or wrestling proficiencies from the resort staff at no charge.

- A PC can receive treatments that will raise the character's Comeliness score one point.

- A PC can choose one item from the following list: *powder of coagulation* (character gets four tubes), *powder of the hero's heart* (four packets), *powder of magic detection* (packet of a dozen pinches). These items are described in the *Tome of Magic*.

In addition to experience from defeating foes, the party receives an additional 5,000 xp for neutralizing the wands, 3,000 xp for putting a stop to Fawn's shenanigans at the resort, and 2,000 xp for capturing Fawn alive.

Comeliness

Much of this scenario relies on the Comeliness rules from the Network's Living City tournaments. The DM™ can institute this rule, or the DM can simply substitute Charisma whenever the scenario mentions Comeliness. Here are the Comeliness rules:

Comeliness reflects a character's physical attractiveness. It can influence the initial reactions NPCs have to a character. Comeliness is not Charisma. The latter score represents a character's force of personality.

Unlike in the original edition of the AD&D® game, a character's Comeliness score is not adjusted based on Charisma, nor can characters with high Comeliness scores "fascinate" others. Comeliness in Living City play affects reaction bonuses that are tied to Charisma. Therefore, a character with a high Charisma and a high Comeliness has a significant reaction bonus.

Comeliness	Reaction Adjustment
6	−2
7	−1
8-12	0
13	+1
14	+2
15	+3
16	+5
17	+6
18	+7

Shhh!

by Mary Konczyk

DM™ Background

The player characters in this adventure are servants of the Temple of Zorakiah. And, like all of the servants, they are priests who live and work in silence and peace on the temple grounds. The priests farm, manufacture dairy products, and spend many of their waking hours in prayer—and watching the convicts.

Because the temple is dedicated to law, order, and discipline, convicts from nearby communities are sentenced to time at the temple, where they are put to work in the fields under the priests' direction.

While the majority of local residents and the priests are satisfied with the arrangement, Sean Larken, an elven troublemaker, is not. Sean, who has dubbed himself Liberator, has dedicated himself to freeing the oppressed, including the convicts sentenced to time at the Temple of Zorakiah. He operates out of a camp several miles from the temple and periodically descends upon the Temple, freeing the oppressed convicts.

This adventure centers on the PCs escorting one convict to the Hill of Thorns, where he is to be executed for murdering two acolytes. The high priest hopes Liberator will strike along the way and that the PCs will deal with him by passing off a cursed scroll.

To complicate the PCs' task, they must keep to their vows of silence on the mission. They are allowed to speak only at certain times. These are:

* During mealtimes.
* In chanting prayers to Zorakiah up to 12 times a day.
* In brief, chanted prayers once per hour—on the hour.

The PCs can say anything as long as it can be passed off as a prayer and lasts no more than one minute. These prayers must be addressed to Zorakiah. Prayers not addressed in this matter are a violation of the priest's oath. Violations incur the god's displeasure in the form of −1 on "to hit," damage, and saving throws per transgression. Of course, the PCs likely will not discover the seriousness of the penalty for transgressions until they are in the thick of battle.

If the PCs elect to communicate by writing notes back and forth, picture what this looks like. The PCs have rolled parchment, ink bottles, and quills. Writing while they walk is not productive, although not impossible. Further, writing in this manner makes it easy for the prisoner to attempt an escape. PCs who quickly abandon their writing to pursue the prisoner or to draw weapons undoubtedly drop their parchment, ink, and quills. No ink, no more messages.

Player's Introduction

The temple of Zorakiah, god of law and justice, has long been at peace with the surrounding communities. Citizens often rely on the temple priests for healing when diseases sweep the towns, and they rest easy knowing that criminals are held at the temple and forced to do menial labor as a sentence for their crimes. The prisoners are guarded by the priests and acolytes of the temple and are treated well, though of course it is sometimes necessary to use disciplinary measures.

Despite the watchful priests, there have been several escapes recently.

An elf who calls himself "Liberator" claims to have aided in those escapes and has vowed there will be many more.

The high priest has devised a plan to put an end to this affront using one of the prisoners—a thief who is sentenced to die because he killed two acolytes during an escape attempt. You six priests have been selected to escort this thief to the Hill of Thorns, where you will execute him either at noon, or as the sun sets. The timing, of course, will depend on how long it has taken you to get to the hill. The high priest believes Liberator will, in his flamboyant style, attempt to ride to the rescue.

The high priest has prepared a specially cursed scroll which, when read, will cause the Liberator to sicken whenever he comes within 10 miles of the temple. This scroll must somehow be placed upon Liberator's person while he attempts to free the convict. The high priest believes the upstart elf will read the scroll out of curiosity. This will call the curse down upon him.

Your mission is to escort the thief to the Hill of Thorns and watch out for Liberator, who could strike anywhere along the way. You are not to kill Liberator, as he is a fearsome fighter. The lives of the servants of the Temple of Zorakiah are far too valuable to throw away on such a worthless individual. You are merely to make sure he somehow gets the scroll—whether by planting it on him or by making sure he steals it. If might be necessary to relinquish the prisoner to accomplish your goal. It would be a small price to pay to be free from that elf.

At dinner the day before your departure, the high priest addresses you:

"I will take advantage of this mealtime, during which Zorakiah graciously releases us from our vows of silence, to give you my blessing and remind you that although you travel beyond the confines of our temple, you remain bound by our silence rule. You are fortunate that this week falls during the Festival of the 12 Attributes of Zorakiah. As is tradition during this time, the god mercifully permits that in addition to the seven verbal prayers at dawn, the hourly praises, and the vesper chant, we may each offer him 12 additional prayers, chanted to him in our own words—provided that we return to our silence before a minute's sands have fallen in the hourglass. You may still speak freely at mealtimes and in casting your spells, of course. I need not remind you of the gravity of breaking your vow of silence.

"Garwood, I trust that you will lead your brethren well. All honor and praise to Zorakiah!" He makes the sacred sign of Zorakiah, raising both hands to shoulder level, palms up, to symbolize the pans of a balance, then bringing fingertips together, pointing up, to symbolize the blade of a sword.

The high priest sips his drink, eyes you carefully, then continues. "Your route will be direct. This will help ensure that Liberator strikes. You must take the field path, then follow the chasm path. Travel time along these paths will be approximately six to eight hours, not including time for meals or sleeping. You must carry out the execution two days from now, so you are limited to the amount of time you can sit back and enjoy nature. Dallying too long will no doubt upset our god.

"Therefore, one more time will I reiterate when you can speak. At mealtimes. Up to 12 times per day in special prayers. This is in addition to dawn, vespers, and hourly prayers. All prayers, of course, must be in the form of a chant, addressed to Zorakiah. Each prayer cannot exceed one minute. Gestures to communicate with each other, such as pantomime, and writing is acceptable. Violations incur the wrath of Zorakiah.

"Here is a pair of manacles and some stout rope. Secure the prisoner as you desire. Mealtime draws to a close. I must be silent now."

The high priest will not answer any questions, nor should the PCs talk, as mealtime is over and the vow of silence again holds sway.

The Prisoner

Lucien was caught burglarizing the home of a wealthy merchant nearly six months ago. Though this was the crime that earned him a sentence at the temple, it was far from his first offense. He began his thieving career to keep his family from starving, but eventually he came to enjoy the excitement of breaking into people's homes.

He tried to escape his 12-year-sentence at the temple by making a run for it while he was working in the fields. When the two acolytes guarding him tried to stop him, he hit them with his fists. Unfortunately, Lucien wore a set of iron manacles at the time, and the impact killed the acolytes. Lucien considers the priests of the temple a pack of narrow-minded hypocrites. He believes in situational ethics, so the inflexible teachings of the temple are abhorrent to him.

Lucien wants to be free, and during the course of this adventure he will work his bonds in an attempt to get loose. Of course, he will be careful so the PCs do not spot him.

Prime times for escape attempts include: 1) If the PCs get into a discussion amongst themselves and pay less attention to him. 2) If the PCs begin writing notes back and forth. PCs writing notes can't concentrate on the prisoner. 3) If the PCs get into combat with the alu-fiend or leucrotta. 4) The bridges, as mentioned in the encounters. 5) Other opportunities as they present themselves.

Lucien Vellared: Int Average; AL N; AC 7 (Dex); MV 12; HD 5; hp 30; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Swimming (18), escape artist (15), endurance, tightrope walking (19), read lips (15), appraising (19).

Climb walls: 80%. Lucien's other thieving abilities are irrelevant for this adventure.

The Field Path

The path the PCs must take to the Hill of Thorns is a narrow dirt road that passes through the temple's lands. To the left are walled meadows where the sheep and cattle are grazed; to the right are fields of grain.

> You strike out on the path to begin your mission. To your left are meadows where dozens of sheep and nearly one hundred dairy cattle owned by your temple quietly graze. To the right you see endless fields of grain. The gentle breeze blows the grain, making it look like a sea of dark yellow. You notice a pair of prisoners working in the fields, scaring animals away from the wheat. The priest guarding the prisoners waves a friendly greeting to you.
>
> Farther down the road you notice the wheat to the right is rustling in a peculiar manner. It appears that some large creature is moving amid the wheat stalks, likely making a meal of the crop.

A few moments more scrutiny reveals that a black and white calf has gotten into the wheat and is munching away, destroying a hefty amount of grain. The party passed a gate in the meadow wall about a hundred feet back, through which the cow could be driven back into the pasture. Point out the gate. If the PCs avoid the cow, continue to the next encounter. However, if they attempt to move the cow or go closer, they will have a fight on their hands.

The cow is really Culbraxa, an alu-fiend under a *shape change* spell. She is recuperating after a battle with a paladin and does not want to go home until she is fully healed—she has an image to uphold.

If the PCs attempt to move her, she tries to *charm* the closest one and telepathically instructs him to touch her. This will allow her to hit point drain the priest, which will help her heal. The alu-fiend tries repeated *charms* until she is discovered.

If the PCs threaten Culbraxa, she changes into her true form and attacks with her short sword. If she is brought to within 10 hit points of her life, she casts *dimension door* to escape.

Alu-fiend: Int Average; AL CE; AC 3 (*ring of protection* +2); MV 12, Fl 15; HD 5; hp 40 (currently 26); THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 (fist) or 1-6+2 (short sword +2); MR 30%; SZ M.

The alu-fiend is harmed only by magical or cold-iron weapons. On a successful roll to hit for "hit point drain," she saps her victim for 1-8 hit points, healing herself for half that number rounded up. She has the following spell-like powers which she can use at will, one per round: *charm person, ESP, shape change,* and *suggestion.* She can cast *dimension door* once a day. Unlike other alu-fiends, Culbraxa cannot *shape change* into various humanoid forms. She is cursed and can only *shape change* into animal forms.

Following this battle, the characters can tell by the position of the sun that it is noon and therefore time to eat. During the one-hour meal, they are permitted to talk. The prisoner will be glad to voice his opinions of their beliefs and lifestyle—and will do so in a most annoying manner until they shut him up.

The Bridge

> The next two miles pass by uneventfully. The air is pleasantly warm, the birds provide beautiful traveling music, and walking is giving you just the right amount of exercise. You certainly needed this mission. Your prisoner isn't enjoying himself, however. He is carefully scrutinizing the countryside and muttering to himself.
>
> Ahead is a suspension bridge that crosses a sluggishly-flowing river. The prisoner seems a little nervous as he stares at the water far below. Perhaps he doesn't know how to swim or he doesn't like heights. Or perhaps he is thinking about his impending death.

The suspension bridge has been tampered with. The rope rails that used to be set waist-high and shoulder-high have been cut. The PCs cannot detect this as a trap. Because of the absent rails, the bridge is prone to swing. One misstep will dump whoever is crossing into the river.

The bridge will stay balanced only if pairs of people with similar weights cross together, side by side. This will become apparent to PCs experimenting with the bridge. If the PCs do not balance the bridge, any PC crossing must roll under half of his or her Dexterity score or plummet into the water.

The prisoner has been carefully working his bonds loose and intends to make his move here. He knows how to swim—expertly. He is just trying to get the PCs to believe he doesn't know how and is afraid of the water. If he is not closely watched while others are on the bridge, he will free one hand from the manacles (allow any character who has stated he's watching the prisoner an Intelligence check to see if he notices) and run for the bridge, trying to topple anyone on it into the water. The prisoner will jump for the river if he is not stopped, and swim downstream with the current.

The river is nine feet deep in the center and 18 feet across, with a fast current. Characters will be swept down-stream at a rate of about seven miles an hour. Characters in the water must make a Strength roll each round to determine if they can keep from going under. If a PC fails a Strength check, he or she is in danger of drowning. PCs drown in a number of rounds equal to their Constitution scores unless they are rescued. PCs who can swim and are relatively unencumbered do not have to make Strength or Constitution checks.

If the PCs effect a reasonable attempt to recapture the thief, allow it to work.

The Chasm Path

> Your path takes you toward the great chasm. The trail leads south, beyond the temple property, then winds steeply up to the top of a tree-covered plateau. After a few miles it turns north-west and then continues on through the woods, running parallel to the edge of a cliff.

The winding trail by which the characters reached the top of this cliff seems to be the only easy way back down; the drop gets steeper the farther northwest the characters walk. For about an hour nothing unusual happens. There are deer which freeze into graceful statues as the party passes. There are birds calling in the trees and small animals scampering about. After about two hours, the party hears a cry for help. It sounds like a woman, weak and fright

ened, and the voice is coming from the direction of the cliff. The "woman" is actually a dangerous leucrotta looking for victims.

> Your quiet walk is suddenly interrupted. "Help me!" cries a voice. It sounds like a woman. The voice is weak and frightened. "I'm down here!" she calls. "Is anyone there? Please, please help me before I fall."

The PCs can easily find where the "woman" is, although they cannot see her. The leucrotta is on a ledge partway down the cliff, about 20 feet below the party. If the PCs communicate with her (a possible violation of their silence oath), she whimpers that she fell over the cliff while hunting deer. She thinks she has broken her left leg. It is impossible to see her ledge from above. The ledge is about four feet wide but is obscured by the shrubs and underbrush that grow along the steep face of the cliff. Broken branches seem to back up her story.

She says there is a hollow in the face of the cliff that she's using as a shelter. She wants a strong PC to climb down and carry her up. She cannot move enough to reach a rope.

PCs who closely study the area can find a deer path going down the cliff, but it is too steep for a human to climb down without the aid of a rope. The PCs will not find human footprints around the cliff edge. However, there is no dirt in which the woman could have left prints. There are deer prints on the deer path.

If one or more PCs climb down, the leucrotta attacks. If she is reduced to five hit points or less, she attempts to flee down the deer path. Pursuit is impossible.

Leucrotta (1): Int Average; AL CE; AC 4; MV 18; HD 6+1; hp 31; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18; SA Special; SD Kick in retreat; SZ L; ML 14; XP 975 each.

The Chasm Bridge

Nothing eventful happens as the party walks through the woods. However, the prisoner will continue to criticize the Temple of Zorakiah and attempt to make the PCs upset. Eventually, the group reaches the next suspension bridge. The ropes tying this suspension bridge to its supports on the near side—the side by the PCs—have been cut. The bridge hangs down the opposite wall of the chasm, which is 40 feet across. Again, the prisoner will attempt to jump into the river to escape. However, it is likely the PCs will be more closely watching him this time.

> You continue on your journey, knowing there are not too many miles left to traverse before reaching the Hill of Thorns. Ahead is another suspension bridge. The ropes that would have tied the bridge to this side of the chasm have been cut, and the bridge hangs flat against the far side of the chasm. The cliff sides are too steep to climb down. And if you go around the chasm—which could take at least a week—you will miss your deadline of executing the prisoner. Your god will be displeased. The high priest will be unhappy. You will have failed in your mission. What are you to do?

If the PCs spend several rounds examining their surroundings, they can find a tree which will help get them across.

> There is a large tree growing at an angle over the chasm's edge. A limb extends out over the chasm by nearly 20 feet. However, the chasm is twice that wide, and the bottom is about 50 feet below.

Indeed, climbing down the edges of the chasm would be foolish and possibly fatal. However, the tree is another alternative. Characters could climb onto the branch safely up to 10 feet out if they are heavy, 12 feet out if are of average weight, and 14 feet out if they are slight. At these distances the branch will bend, but will not break. There is a 20% cumulative chance per additional foot climbed that the branch will break between the character and the tree trunk. If the branch breaks, all the PCs on it will be plunged 50 feet to the river below.

The PCs could tie a rope to the branch and swing over to the cut bridge. They could use a second rope to bring the bridge back to their side of the chasm and refastened it to its supporting posts.

Hungry Prisoner

If the prisoner did not get away in the previous encounter, he demands to be fed. It doesn't matter how long ago he ate, he claims he is hungry and wants a last meal. It is up to the PCs whether they comply. If they do, he eats slowly, talks quite a bit between bites, and complains about the food. He does not want to die and is dragging out the expedition as long as possible.

Blind Faith

A priest of Bithumy, the local river god, is using this path. The priest is blind, but his cooshee guide dog has very good hearing and lets him know people are approaching from the opposite direction. The cooshee tugged twice on the blind man's hand to indicate the oncoming party has a priest in its ranks.

> Another is using this path. An elderly man walks toward you. He is using a long, white staff for support with his right hand. His left holds the leash of a beautiful brown and green dog. The dog looks up at you, wags its tail, and gently tugs twice on the old man's hand.
>
> "Oh," the old man says glancing in your direction. His eyes are glazed over, and you cannot tell who he is looking at. "A priest," he says.
>
> The dog tugs on his hand again.
>
> "No. More than one priest. Good. It is a pleasure to meet people of the same vocation. I have been traveling this path for quite some time, and I want to make sure I am going in the right direction. Please, kind priests, give me directions to the Temple of Zorakiah."

The blind priest wants directions to the PCs' temple because he is friends with one of the lesser priests there and he intends to visit and give his friend a birthday gift. The blind priest is hard of hearing, and the PCs will have to speak up. If the PCs do not talk to him, he becomes upset and calls them rude and uncaring. His Zorakiah priest friend always talked to him. Of course, the blind man always visited during mealtimes.

The dog is at least as intelligent as the blind man. It can understand any of the PCs' visual gestures and can get the blind priest to the temple based on their directions.

Blind priest: Int Average; AL NG; AC 4 (bracers); MV 9; HD 9; hp45; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+3 (staff +3); SZ M.

Spells memorized: *Cure light wounds, command, detect evil, protection from evil, charm person or mammal, dust devil, heat metal, know alignment, call lightning, create food and water, tree, cure serious wounds, speak with plants, flame strike*

Cooshee: Int Average; AL N; AC 5; MV 15, sprint 21; HD 3+3; hp 25; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 7-10; SA Overbearing; SZ M.

Hill of Thorns

> At last you have reached your goal, the Hill of Thorns. It will not be a long walk to the top of the hill, only about 200 feet. You see a few small animals scamper out of your path. A wide-eyed brown bunny looks up at you and then bounds away. Your prisoner shivers as he stares at the myriad of thorn bushes that dot the hill.

The Hill of Thorns is so called because it is covered by thorn trees. It is uninhabited except for rabbits and other small animals. It is a traditional place of sacrifice for the priests of Zorakiah. At the top of the hill is a clearing ringed by stones carved with words of praise to Zorakiah and mystical symbols expressing his perfection. In the center of the ring of stones is a slab covered with runes and symbols. There is also a wooden stake with plenty of firewood piled around it.

This situation will present a moral dilemma for the PCs. Are they willing to kill the prisoner and carry out the death sentence? As the PCs mull over the task, the prisoner demands to speak. If the PCs do not gag him, he begins:

> "So this is your idea of justice—killing a man for the crime of being too poor to feed his family! I got a wife and two children to feed, and no trade. What's to become of them now? When they have to steal so they can eat, are you going to make slaves out of them, too? I'll bet you're not going to feed them, or find them work. Your god doesn't care about them until they break somebody's precious rules. And you think that's justice!" His anger and emotion overwhelm him, and he suddenly falls silent.

Hiding amid the thorns is Liberator and his horse. He intends to charge the priests as they tie the prisoner to the stake or put him on the slab. If the PCs let the thief go, Liberator will not strike, although he will watch to make sure the thief gets away.

It is possible the PCs will decide to let the thief go, but only after using him as a lure for Liberator. Play out this final encounter based on the PCs' actions.

Liberator will approach from the direction with the fewest priests between him and the prisoner. Liberator plans to leap from his saddle, cut the thief free, and defend him while the thief mounts the horse. Then Liberator will vault into the saddle with the thief and ride away. His actions will vary based on what the PCs do.

Liberator doesn't want to kill anyone, so he will flee with the prisoner at the earliest opportunity, trying to avoid combat. However, he will not leave without the prisoner.

If the PCs break their oath of silence and talk with Liberator, he lectures them about freedom, honor, and the value of life. The PCs will not be able to convince him their order is acting correctly. Liberator has his mind made up.

Liberator, Sean Larken, elven fighter: Int Very; AL CG; AC −3 (Dex, field plate); MV 9; HD 9; hp 68; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-10+3 (long sword +3; SZ M.

Liberator also carries a lance. His long sword, Freedom, is intelligent and possesses the following abilities: *remove curse* and *dispel magic* once a day, and *heal* once a week. On a successful hit, the sword has a 90% chance to sever ropes and a 50% chance to sever chains.

Resolution

The PCs are considered successful in the eyes of the high priest if they placed the scroll on Liberator. Of course, the PCs and the high priest have no idea that Liberator's sword can easily remove the curse. Liberator intends to plague the temple and the priests for a very long time. ❑

Servant Garwood

6th level human male priest

STR: 12
INT: 13
WIS: 17
DEX: 14
CON: 10
CHR: 10
AC Normal: 5
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 20
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
THAC0: 16

Age: 68
Height: 5′9″
Weight: 176 lbs.

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, mace, hammer
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Cooking (14), etiquette (10), singing (10), religion (18), read/write Common (15)
Magic Items: *Staff +1, boots of elvenkind, ring of swimming, potion of sweetwater*
Spells/Day: 5 5 3
You have access to the following spheres: All, Charm, Combat, Creation, Divination, Elemental, Healing, Guardian, and Protection
Equipment: Chain mail, one torch, one flask of oil, one vial holy water, two water flasks, canvas bag, scrollcase with cursed scroll, one day's rations, quill, bottle of ink, two blank scrolls, small knife, white robe, black cowl

You are feeling your age . . . unfortunately. Perhaps because of that you inwardly doubt your ability to lead this expedition. Still, you are the most experienced of the six.

Your joints are stiff, and sometimes your memory is a little faulty. And, of course, you are painfully self-conscious about your increasing frailty. Age. It is a blessing to live so long. But it is a curse to be old.

You suspect the others in your group are concerned about you as well. Perhaps they have a right to be, but you will do your best to show them "old" does not mean "infirm." You have a wisdom all of them lack. In fact, you are concerned about them and their abilities. You wonder about the rules of your order as taught by the temple. Your god, Zorakiah, demands retribution from every transgressor. And although the god is always just, you sometimes ponder if it isn't better to consider the circumstances surrounding a transgression, or the motives of the transgressor. Perhaps the Temple puts too small a value on mercy. Perhaps law and justice are not always the same.

Servant Straitor

4th level human male priest

STR: 17
INT: 11
WIS: 17
DEX: 10
CON: 16
CHR: 10
AC Normal: 4
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 31
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
THAC0: 18

Age: 36
Height: 6′
Weight: 200 lbs

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, mace
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Religion (17), herbalism (9), swimming (17), spellcraft (9)
Magic Items: *Mace +2, powder of coagulation* (two pinches), *powder of magic detection* (two pinches)
Spells/Day: 5 4
You have access to the following spheres: All, Charm, Combat, Creation, Divination, Elemental, Healing, Guardian, and Protection
Equipment: Chain mail, shield, one torch, one flask of oil, one vial of holy water, three water flasks, canvas bag, one day's rations, quill, bottle of ink, two blank scrolls, small knife, white robe, black cowl

Though not old, you are from "the old school." You find comfort in history, the rules, rituals, and tradition. You are particularly opposed to the creeping liberalism which has tainted some servants of the temple—especially the insidious belief that your god Zorakiah may allow the requirements of the law (whether it be the legal code, manners and decorum, civilized conduct, or the rules of the temple) to be tempered according to individual circumstances. If this sort of bleeding-heart pulp is allowed to continue, the world will end up going to the elves! Rules are rules. Laws are laws. Tradition must hold sway. Vows are also important.

While on this mission, you must look to Garwood for leadership. He was appointed the leader, and therefore according to the rules his decisions stand. However, if Garwood were to stray from the rules, it would fall to you and the others to see that the rules are upheld.

Servant Laska

3rd level human female priest

STR: 12
INT: 12
WIS: 18
DEX: 18
CON: 17
CHR: 15
AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 21
Alignment: Neutral Good
THAC0: 20

Age: 18
Height: 5′ 6″
Weight: 126 lbs.

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, mace
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Religion (18), dancing (18), cooking (12), swimming (12)
Magic Items: *Necklace of memory enhancement, staff +1*
Spells/Day: 4 3
You have access to the following spheres: All, Charm, Combat, Creation, Divination, Elemental, Healing, Guardian, and Protection
Equipment: Chain mail, shield, one torch, one flask of oil, two vials of holy water, one water flask, canvas bag, one day's rations, quill, bottle of ink, two blank scrolls, small knife, white robe, black cowl

You came to the temple four years ago, leaving your merchant parents on good terms. You did not fit in there, as the family tried every day to make more and more money. You only wanted to give your money to those who were poor and who had fallen on hard times. You enjoy life at the temple. Your life there is peaceful and nearly worry-free. Still, you must work hard to understand all the rules. The temple teaches that kindness is important, but only to a point. It teaches that people are poor because they have not learned to help themselves.

Your life changed one night at dinner when you glanced across the women's table and your eyes met those of a handsome priest at the men's table—Leavitt. You can't stop thinking about him. It must be love. But will it be unrequited love? Priests are not permitted to marry at the temple. You must think about this, decide what you want to do with your life. This mission will help. Leavitt was assigned to the group. You will be able to talk with him at meal times.

Servant Leavitt

4th level human male priest

STR: 17
INT: 11
WIS: 16
DEX: 17
CON: 15
CHR: 17
AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 22
Alignment: Neutral Good
THAC0: 18

Age: 24
Height: 5′ 10″
Weight: 181 lbs

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, mace
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Religion (16), dancing (17), weather sense (15), fire-building (15), rope use (17)
Magic Items: *Mace +1, Puchezma's powder of edible objects*
Spells/Day: 5 4
You have access to the following spheres: All, Charm, Combat, Creation, Divination, Elemental, Healing, Guardian, and Protection
Equipment: Chain mail, shield, one torch, two flasks oil, one vial holy water, one water flask, canvas bag, one day's rations, quill, bottle of ink, two blank scrolls, small knife, white robe, black cowl, 30' rope

When you were only 13 years old your parents sent you away to become a Servant of the temple. At first you fit in, accepting all the rules and laws, following all the vows to the letter—including the vow of silence. The vow of silence you all took is one of the order's most revered oaths. You speak only when allowed—prayers and meals.

However, lately you have begun to question the temple's strict nature. There are prayers for everything, rituals for everything. What, you wonder, is really the point? Shouldn't law and order be a means to an end rather than an end?

You do not believe that your god sees only right or wrong, with no degrees between. You suspect the priests through the years have become so caught up with the rules and laws that they have created the black and white barriers. The only reason you have not left the service of the temple is Laska. You have loved her since the first time you saw her. If you could only convince her to leave the temple with you! You will try. But it is hard to persuade someone when you are vowed to silence except at meals. Perhaps the silence vow is not so important where love is concerned.

Servant Katan

4th level human male priest

STR: 18
INT: 14
WIS: 15
DEX: 16
CON: 17
CHR: 11
AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 25
Alignment: Lawful Good
THAC0: 18

Age: 40
Height: 5′ 6″
Weight: 168 lbs

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, mace
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Religion (15), jumping (18), running (11)
Magic Items: *Mace +1, shield +1, potion of sweetwater*
Spells/Day: 5 3
You have access to the following spheres: All, Animal, Charm, Divination, Healing, Plant, Protection, Sun
Equipment: Chain mail, one torch, one flask oil, three vials holy water, one water flask, canvas bag, one day's rations, quill, bottle of ink, two blank scrolls, small knife, white robe, black cowl, 30' rope

You are not native to this part of the world, coming from eastern lands far away. You worship Shashayu, the eastern god of the forest. Priests of your god have slightly different spheres than priests of Zorakiah. Zorakiah priests have access to the spheres of All, Charm, Combat, Creation, Divination, Elemental, Healing, Guardian. Because you do not have access to all those spheres, you are cautious of what spells you cast in other priests' presence. Still, you like to use some of the spells they do not have access to.

You have been masquerading as a priest of Zorakiah for the past six months—at the request of your own temple. The priests there want to learn about other religions, particularly this one, as your high priest does not approve of the way this foreign temple operates.

As a priest of Shashayu you worship all of nature and delight in every blade of grass, every ray of sun, every flower petal, every insect, every animal, everything! You are quick to help those in need, although you must be careful in your approach so you do not give yourself away to the other priests.

Servant Tora

4th level human female priest

STR: 11
INT: 12
WIS: 16
DEX: 17
CON: 17
CHR: 17
AC: 4
Hit Points: 30
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
THAC0: 18

Age: 28
Height: 5′ 9″
Weight: 139 lbs

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, mace
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Appraising (12), reading/writing Common(13), swimming (11), rope use (17)
Magic Items: *Mace +1, bracers of defense AC 7, Heward's handy haversack*
Spells/Day: 5 4
You have access to the following spheres: All, Charm, Combat, Creation, Divination, Elemental, Healing, Guardian, and Protection
Equipment: Chain mail, one torch, one flask of oil, two vials of holy water, one water flask, canvas bag, one day's rations, quill, bottle of ink, two blank scrolls, small knife, white robe, black cowl, 30' rope

You believe there is no such thing as "right" or "wrong" outside the framework of societies' established laws and customs. Rights and wrongs are determined by the wealthy and powerful, and by rising in the favor of your deity you hope to become wealthy and powerful. Soon.

If you had a little more power right now you would be leading this group. You are more capable than Garwood, and you certainly have more abilities than the others in this group. It is difficult to work with lessers. However, the laws and rules of the temple instruct you to work with others, so you will follow the laws and rules to the letter. In fact, you can quote the Laws and Rules almost as well as Straitor.

There is no place in life for spontaneity, informality, or openness—and you try to pontificate on this matter so your beliefs will wear off on others. Of course, your sermons are limited by the vow of silence. The vow you all took is one of the order's most revered oaths. You speak only when allowed—for prayers and during meals.

❑

River Rats

A GREYHAWK® Setting Adventure for Player Characters of 4th to 6th Level

by Keith Polster

Players' Introduction

You sit in the conference room of the Greyhawk Adventurers Guild, waiting for an assignment that will bring you gold and fame. After all, that's why you joined the guild. Members are assigned to investigate ruins, explore dungeons, and slay dragons—all ventures that yield treasure.

Your wait is short. Waltzing across the chamber toward you, his head bathed in a blue-gray fog of cigar smoke, is the assistant guildmaster. The dwarf glares at you disdainfully.

"So, you maggots," bellows Zuaak in a voice that will echo in your head for days. "I hope ye're ready for yer next assignment!"

Finishing off the first putrid cigar and pulling out another, the dwarf continues. "This is an important job I'm about ta give ya scum, so you'd better listen up. And if ya do good, maybe ye'll get yourselves out of da gutter. Last night I got a visit from Lord Zoran Sarraith, a rich Rhennee who forked out a big retainer for da guild ta do a job with no questions asked. Ye're ta meet him at da River Rat, a central gathering place for Rhennee in the river quarter. It's along da Strip, and it's full of Rhennee, so watch your P's and Q's about their strange customs or ye'll end up as rat food on da bank of da Selintan."

Zuaak takes a bite out of his cigar, swallows it, and adds, "Ya lumps belong to Lord Zoran for the next week. I sure hope ye last!" With a wicked snicker and a belch, the repugnant dwarf leaves.

DM Background

The player characters are being set up. Several years ago, Lord Zoran located the *hasty barge of Nyr Dyv*. This magical barge is an ancient relic of the Rhennee with special powers that allow it to travel fast and far, with

little chance of it being attacked by monsters in the Nyr Dyv. Zoran stole the *hasty barge* from a Rhennee named Dolcan Esquard, whom he killed during the theft.

Zoran wanted the *hasty barge* so he could better serve his masters, the Cult of the Shriven Sickle. The members of the Shriven Sickle faithfully serve Nerull, the god of darkness, death, and dissolution. The cult was pleased when Zoran announced he had the *barge.* But as of yesterday the cult is very upset. The *hasty barge* has been stolen again, and Zoran has no clue who took it.

During the adventure, the PCs will be under the watchful eye of Grotnek Urtekknis, a brutal half-orc mercenary employed by the Shriven Sickle. Grotnek and the forces of the Shriven Sickle will shadow the PCs until they have recovered the *hasty barge*, then they will try to dispose of the heroes. The Sickle opposes witnesses.

You leave the guild headquarters and walk down the Strip toward your appointment. Shadows coat the streets as night comes to the city. Eyes peer out from the darkness as you journey deeper into the Strip, and the few souls you encounter are uncouth and seedy. Your journey abruptly ends as you find yourselves before the battered structure called the River Rat. Loud laughter and song spills from the place.

The windows of the building are boarded up, and several unconscious people lie sprawled in front of this disgusting establishment. While you take in the scenery, the laughing ceases, the swinging doors burst open, and a drunken patron is tossed out into the street, sliding a couple of feet in the fresh mud to rest before you. After a short pause, the laughing and shouting of obscenities from within again rises to a roar.

When the PCs enter the River Rat, all conversation ceases and the patrons stare at the newcomers. After several silent moments, the chatter begins again. The patrons never quiet down for long. The River Rat is crowded, and the PCs will have to elbow their way up to the bar.

None of the Rhennee patrons will have anything to do with the PCs; however, the bartender is willing to point out Lord Zoran if the PCs ask.

You look where the bartender points and see a finely-dressed Rhennee. As he begins to speak, you notice a large scar curving from just below his left ear to his throat.

"I am Lord Zoran," he begins. "I presume you are from the guild? I do not believe you've been told my problem, so I will start at the beginning. A barge that has been in my family for more three generations was stolen from its dock at Barge End last night. During the bloody theft, two of my closest friends were slain and my wives were beaten and tossed overboard. I wish my barge returned, and I am willing to pay handsomely for it. If you bring this barge back, I will see that Zuaak gives you each 700 gold for your troubles, with an additional 300 gold each if you bring back the head of the scoundrel who beat my wives.

"I and all of my children were born upon that barge, and I mean to have it back! I have business to attend to before you depart, so I shall meet you at Barge End in 30 minutes. Do not be late." Lord Zoran nimbly springs to his feet and ducks out a side door, leaving you to exit this hole on your own.

Barge End

Barge End is a docking place for the Rhennee's barges in the murky, mosquito-infested Selintan backwater. When the PCs arrive, two of Zoran's lackeys escort them to the lord's pursuit vessel, where they are presented to Lord Zoran and Dmitri Valonis, the vessel's captain for this mission.

The scent of the stagnant waters of the Selintan fills your nostrils as the guides take you to Lord Zoran. As you travel deeper into Barge End, you see more than 40 barges docked along the back water wharf. Your guides escort you across a few scattered planks and onto the deck of an impressive two-masted barge. Standing on the deck, flanked by several Rhennee, is your employer.

Getting right down to business, Zoran gestures to the man on his right, "This is Dmitri Valonis, one of the fastest bargewrights on the Selintan. You are to help our combined crews assure the return of my barge. This two-masted barge, the Dyvwraith, will easily catch the thieves in two days, before the scoundrels can lose themselves in Wooly Bay. You leave at first light, and do not forget the bonus!"

After a few words with his men, Lord Zoran disappears into the night mist. A Rhennee tells you to stow your gear and get a few hours of sleep, for you leave at first light.

The Dyvwraith is manned by nine Rhennee. Four of these men are members of Lord Zoran's personal guard but are not members of the Shriven Sickle. The remaining five are Dmitri and his master bargewrights. None of the crew are members of the cult of Nerull. They are of honorable Rhennee background and will follow the words of Dmitri to the letter.

Zoran's guards (4): AC 6; MV 12; HD 4 (F4); hp 24 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL NE

These men were told to make sure all of the thieves of the *hasty barge* are killed and to help Grotnek slay the PCs after the barge has been retrieved. These men are Zoran's regular crew on the *hasty barge*, and they know how to pilot the magical craft. They are also familiar with Grotnek and his squad. The barge men speak little with the PCs during the journey. Observant PCs notice that the crew does not mingle with them.

Dmitri Valonis: AC 4 (leather armor +2); MV 12; HD 7 (F7); hp 45; THACO 14; #AT: 1; Dmg: 1-8+2 (*long sword* +2); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL N

Dmitri wears a *medallion of ESP* that can be used three times a day.

Dmitri is 24 years old, 5'1" tall, and weighs 130 lbs. Despite his small size, this Rhennee is the best bargewright in the Greyhawk area. Since his latest barge race victory, Dmitri has acquired quite a following among the Rhennee and has decided to help Lord Zoran only to prove that he can accomplish something that the Rhennee lord cannot. Since Rhennee lordship is based on one's power and deeds, Dmitri has much to gain by returning the barge.

Dmitri seeks to further his power base at any cost. He treats the PCs well, but does not reveal much regarding his goals. He is polite to any spellcasters, for they are rare and their favors are considered a means of gaining power among the Rhennee. As far as the

mission is concerned, Dmitri follows Zoran's orders until he is betrayed or until he can change the rules of the game to better suit his own needs.

Dmitri's Barge Crew (4): AC 7; MV 12; HD 5 (F5); hp 30 each; THACO 17; #AT: 1; Dmg 1-8+1 (long sword + STR bonus); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL N

These men are loyal to Dmitri and are his hand-picked crew of talented bargewrights. They are all Rhennee, and they will speak rarely to the PCs, as sailing the barge consumes most of their time. However, if the player characters befriend Dmitri, the crew will treat the PCs with mild respect. The opposite applies if Dmitri holds the PCs in low regard. Each of these men carries a long sword and knife and 4d10 gold coins.

The River Blue

Allow the player characters to spend time role playing with members of the crew for the remainder of the day. When it gets near sunset, read the following:

> The gypsy folk move their craft quickly through the placid waters of the Selintan. When the crew finally anchors near the center of the river, one of Dmitri's men tells you this is to reduce the likelihood of a bandit attack. As the daylight fades, the bright moon Raenei glimmers overhead, sending fleeting shadows across the calm river water.
>
> As you start to settle in for the night, you are interrupted by Dmitri.
>
> "As you can see my friends, it is a splendid evening. I do not wish to cast a pall on the atmosphere, but I believe we are being followed. A group of men on the river road has been shadowing us since we left Greyhawk." As he points off the port bow, you see the flickering light of a campfire.

Dmitri and the Rhennee are confident they are in no danger where they are anchored. However, the lord would not object to the PCs investigating the camp. If the player characters decide to do so, they must swim to the shore 35 feet away. If the party does nothing, the night passes without incident.

The men following the party are Lord Zoran's assassin squad lead by Grotnek. With the help of their Shriven Sickle contacts, Grotnek and his men obtained uniforms of the Greyhawk Nightwatch Patrol, and are wearing them now. If the PCs approach them, Grotnek and his men present themselves as official members of the Greyhawk Guard with (forged) papers giving them authority to patrol along River Road. As far as the party is concerned, everything looks in order. If the party attacks, Grotnek's men fight to the death while Grotnek escapes.

Grotnek Urtekknis: AC −2 (field plate +1, DEX bonus); MV 9; HD 8 (F8, T8); hp 76; THACO 9; #AT 3/2; Dmg: 1-10+5 (*two-handed sword* +2, STR bonus); SA X4 backstab; SD Nil; AL NE

Grotnek has the following thieving skills: PP 50, OL 55, FT 55, MS 70, HS 50, DN 30, CW 90, RL 15. He carries a *potion of healing* and wears a *necklace of missiles* with one 5-dice missile remaining.

Grotnek is 6'10" tall with thick, black, wavy hair and brown eyes. He weighs a remarkable 352 lbs with not an ounce of fat on him. This repulsive thief chews tobacco and spits great plugs while he talks. His clothes are constantly sweat-stained and malodorous, while his greasy hair falls uncombed around his deep-set coal eyes.

During this encounter, Grotnek will control his considerable temper, but he will throw a tantrum once the party is gone or after he escapes. Although he is the main muscle of the Shriven Sickle, Grotnek watches out for Grotnek above everyone else.

Grotnek's Grunts: AC 6 (leather & DEX 16); MV 12; HD 4 (F4, T3); hp 15 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+1 (short sword + 1; SA X2 backstab; SD Nil; AL NE

These men also carry light crossbows with 10 bolts, as well as 2d10 silver coins. Two of the men have bruises covering their faces (the results of Grotnek's bad temper), and each has a scar running from below the ear ending near the throat. These scars are the mark of the Shriven Sickle and are identical to the scar on Lord Zoran. The only way the PCs will see these scars is if they capture or kill the grunts.

The Roaring Rapids

The following morning the PCs get an early start down the Selintan River.

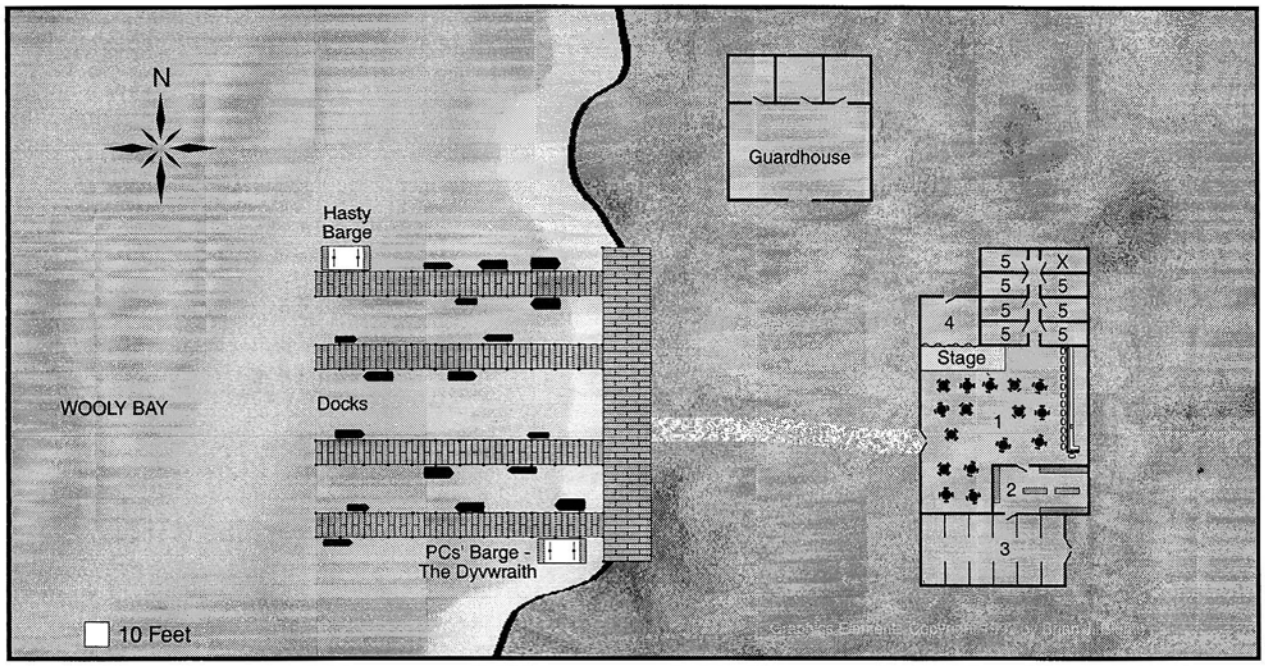
> As the morning floats into afternoon, you find yourselves gazing over the bow of the boat at the river. Suddenly, the sluggish current increases, and you spot a large sign on the shore that reads "DANGER AHEAD." Before you can warn Dmitri, you see another sign which reads "REAL DANGER AHEAD." The water again increases its speed, and you note a third sign. The words have been crossed out by black paint, but you can make out enough of the letters to know it said, "SERIOUSLY DANGEROUS RAPIDS AHEAD."
>
> Before the rapids can significantly hamper the Rhennee's control of the barge, Dmitri orders his men to navigate toward a stone breakwater off the port bow. As you get closer to this peculiar structure, you notice on the breakwater a small figure—a rather excited gnome. As you steer toward the gnome, you see a huge block and tackle pulley system along the shoreline. Using this system appears to be the only safe way to navigate these savage rapids.
>
> "Hey! Hey you there!" shouts the gnome. "Throw us a line or you'll be wrecked!" You notice that Dmitri reluctantly gives the order to throw the gnome a line.

Any attempt to run the rapids causes the barge to capsize—even though the rapids are not what they seem. Several years ago a brass dragon devised a get-rich-quick plan that would take advantage of all travelers up and down the Selintan River by requiring them to pay for a barge steering service. With the help of a few *earthquake* spells in a *ring of spell storing*, the dragon created his own rapids by altering the pitch and speed of the river. The nearby residents believe the whole process occurred naturally. The dragon and his gnome helpers use illusions to make the rapids seem even fiercer than they are.

This deception has been going on for several years, and only a few of the regular river travelers (including Dmitri) know the secret. They don't, however, wish to upset the dragon by exposing him, so they pay the fees of the barge steering service and continue on their way.

There are seven gnomes involved in the operation, all working for the dragon, magically disguised as the gnome on the breakwater. He goes by the name of Walter Simkins.

The Spotted Cow Inn



The steering process requires nearly 20 minutes of block and tackle pulling, with most of the hard work being faked by the gnomes. During this time, Walter chats with the PCs. He wants to know what they are doing on the river, what they think of the rapids, and what is the current state of politics in Greyhawk. If the PCs try to disbelieve the rapids, Walter becomes angry and threatens that "Nasty things can happen to people who don't consider the rapids fierce and awesome. Nasty things can happen to people who don't pay the barge steering fee."

If the PCs truly upset Walter, Dmitri tries to intercede and begs the PCs to apologize. Walter demands 10 gp per player character—in addition to the barge steering fee. If the PCs refuse, the dragon sinks Dmitri's barge. This will force the PCs to find new transportation to continue the adventure.

On the other hand, if the PCs befriend Walter in his gnome form, he chats pleasantly with them. Some of his phrases include:

"Hey, nice weather we're having, huh?"

"Do you guys fish? I caught a big one yesterday! As big as this barge. It was tasty."

"Are you fellows looking for the bandits in the area?

"Are you following those other Rhennee that came through here yesterday?"

"Do you know you're being followed?"

"I hear the mayor of Greyhawk is being bribed by the Carpenters' Guild."

"Does it still smell like dead rats in the city?"

Walter's ramblings continue until the barge reaches the far side of the rapids, or until the PCs press Walter for further information. If questioned about any of the above quips, Walter's memory suddenly gets foggy until a few coins are pressed into his greedy palm.

If properly bribed and questioned, Walter has the following additional information:

"A very fast barge crewed by at least six men came through the rapids yesterday. The men on it seemed quite pleased with themselves." Walter didn't learn much from them, as he did most of the talking.

Human and demi-human bandits are common around here, but they leave Walter and his gnomes alone.

"Four or five men are following you. They look like Greyhawk guards, but they're definitely out of their jurisdiction. Their commander is pretty bad-tempered for a military officer."

Walter Simkins, Brass Dragon: AC −1; MV 12, fl 30; HD 10; hp 65; THACO 11; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 1-6 + 5/1-6 + 5/4-16 + 5; SA Breath weapon 10d4 + 5, tail slap, wing buffet; SD Nil; MR 15%; S S as gnome, G as dragon; AL CG (neutral tendencies)

Spells carried: *Change self, alter self*

Walter would rather talk than fight, but if his secret about the rapids is threatened, he will turn violent. The barge steering service is Walter's means of increasing his horde, and he doesn't want it jeopardized.

Walter's Gnomes (7): AC 10; MV 12; HD 2 (I2); hp 6 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA Nil; SD Nil; AL NG

Spells carried: *Phantasmal force, audible glamer*

The gnomes help Walter create the illusion of the rapids because they are paid well for relatively little work. They attempt to avoid conversation with river travelers, as they are afraid they will burst out laughing at the travelers' gullibility.

The gnomes constructed the block and

tackle rig, and it is sturdy in design. If the river were truly filled with savage rapids, this method of traversing the raging water would work.

Docking for the Night

The evening after the PCs encounter Walter, they arrive at the edge of Wooly Bay, near the Spotted Cow Inn. Dmitri steers the barge toward the docks.

> You realize your time is running short as the setting sun glimmers off the edge of Wooly Bay. Just ahead is the famed Spotted Cow Inn, the last stop for weary river travelers before they brave the depths of the gigantic bay. If your elusive adversary has not lost himself in the deep waters, he may yet be found replenishing his supplies at the Spotted Cow.

Jacque Esquard and his crew are indeed at the Spotted Cow Inn, prematurely celebrating their escape from Greyhawk. As the PCs' barge docks among the many craft here, one of Lord Zoran's men spots the *hasty barge* docked on the far side of the wharf. Six of Jacque's crew are guarding the craft haphazardly, drinking and laughing loudly in the slowly gathering darkness.

What the player characters do is up to them. They can confront Jacque or they can try to take the barge and run. The Rhennee will let the PCs decide the best course of action.

If the PCs immediately try to steal the *hasty barge*, Jacque's guards suffer a −2 to their surprise rolls because they are tipsy. This will give the PCs an edge. If the PCs dally on the docks, however, a patrol of armed guards passes within four rounds. Now the PCs will have to devise a distraction, as the guards have a 75% chance of noticing the PCs near the *hasty barge* and sounding the alarm. The guards fight until more than half of them are slain, then the remainder escape to bring reinforcements. Reinforcements consist of four guards arriving every four rounds until a total of 32 guards have been called.

Jacque's Tipsy Guards (4): AC 8; MV 12; HD 4 (F4); hp 20 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL LN

These guards are −1 on all attack, damage, and reaction rolls because of their condition.

Guards of the Spotted Cow (8): AC 5 (chain mail); MV 9; HD 2 (F2); hp 10 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL LN

These guards patrol the wharfs and grounds belonging to the owner of the Spotted Cow Inn. They do not accept bribes, and they are well paid for their services. Guard reinforcements use the same statistics.

The Wharf

There are 60 boats docked here, clearly showing the inn's popularity among the river folk.

Any trouble going on at the wharf has a 20% chance to be reported by wandering patrons. The inn's proprietor offers an "all you can drink" reward for anyone helping to prevent thefts and fights. There are at least two guards here at all times.

The Spotted Cow

The Spotted Cow Inn is the pride and joy of Ivan Lockswell. The establishment is prized by many river and bay travelers. Located just northwest of Hardby, the inn boasts a hearty crowd of 35 patrons this evening, many of which are regulars. The remainder of Jacque's crew, including Jacque himself, are inside the inn, resting and planning their return home in the morning. As the PCs enter the inn, one of Jacque's men alertly spots them and slips away unnoticed to warn his master.

When Jacque realizes that the jig is up, he sets the inn afire in an attempt to escape pursuit in the panic that will follow. Consult the map when referencing the following areas.

1. The Bar

This is the largest section of the inn, serving as a bar and dining room. Tonight the tables are packed with fishermen and merchants of the Wooly Bay. Several comely barmaids dash between tables, while a group of performers enchant the crowd with a cheery drinking tune. There appear to be no Rhennee in the place, except for any whom the player characters might have brought with them from their barge. Drinking to the good health of his patrons, Ivan easily can be picked out of the crowd.

2. The Kitchen

This room also serves as a storage area for the inn's many supplies, including several kegs of ale. Ivan's wife, Kika, and his only daughter, Sara, constantly run between this room and the bar. A door at the north wall leads to the stables.

3. Stables

Resting in the stalls are nine horses belonging to various patrons. Tending to the horses is Ivan's youngest son, Ivan Junior. Two guards are always within earshot.

4. Entertainer's Room

A thick wool curtain separates this section from the main bar. A few musicians and some of Ivan's favorite dancing girls rehearse their acts in this quaintly-furnished room. When the PCs arrive, a father-and-son juggling team and Belinda the Belly Dancer are waiting here to perform.*

5. Boarding Rooms

This newly-added section of the inn has several boarding rooms, half of which are occupied. The room where Jacque and his men are staying is marked on the map with an "X." After Jacque starts the fire in the hallway between rooms, he and his men exit through his room's southern window. They flee to the *hasty barge,* and then to the waters of the Wooly Bay if they are able. See "The Fire," below.

The Fire

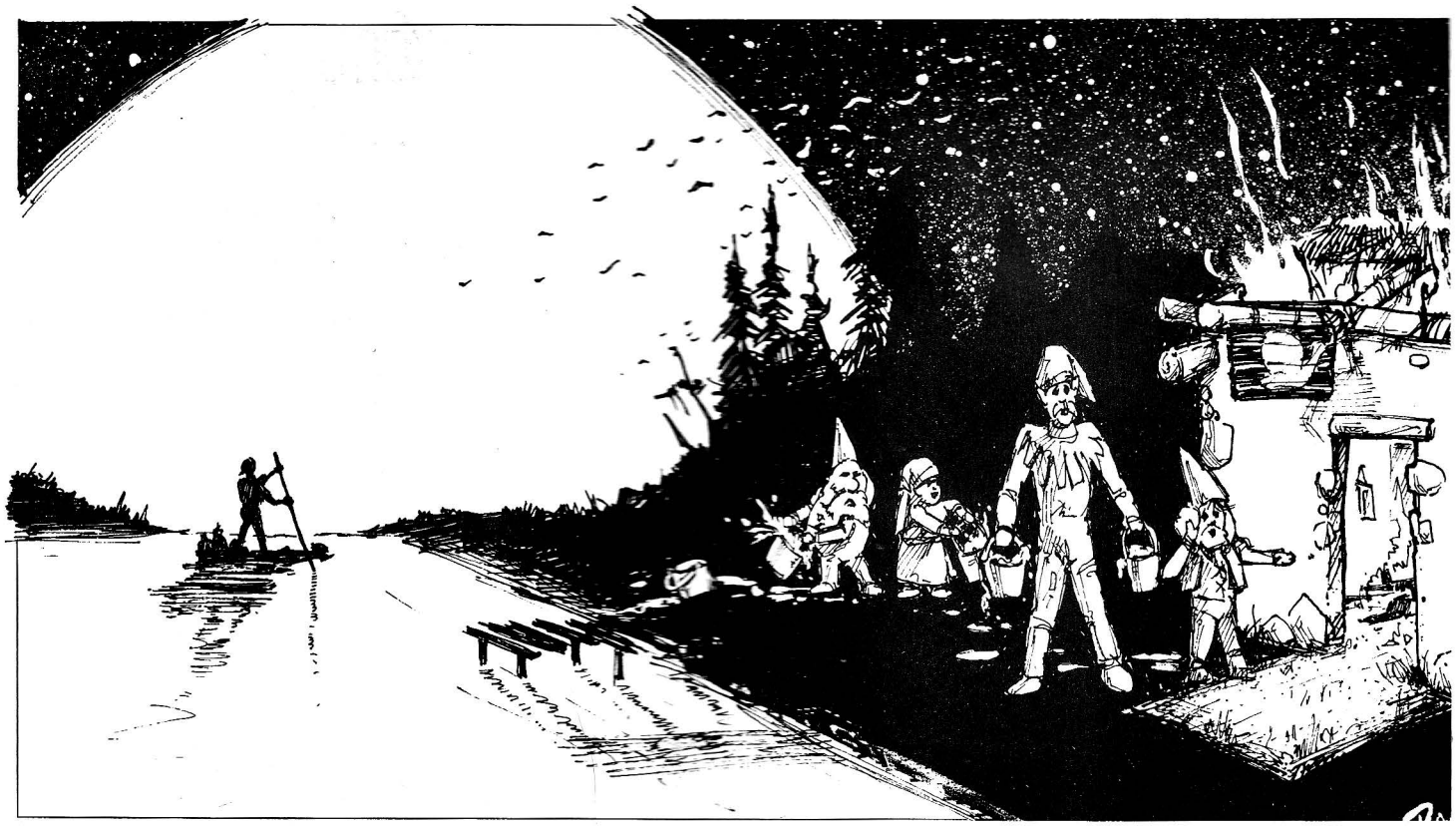
If the PCs have been spotted by one of Jacque's men, Jacque uses his last missile from his *necklace of missiles* (5-dice missile) to start the fire. After crawling through the window, Jacque screams "Fire!" to draw the attention of the eight-man guard patrol outside the nearby guardhouse, creating a panic. Use the statistics of the guards presented earlier.

The building's dry wood ignites quickly, catching the attention of everyone near the docks.

Jacque will reach the *hasty barge* six rounds after starting the fire. It will take him an additional two rounds to get the craft away from the docks and out on the river. Four rounds later, Jacque and his *hasty barge* are considered lost in the darkness.

The fire will take almost an hour to get under control. It will be up to the PCs whether they fight the blaze or attempt to stop the barge.

If the PCs have acted quickly enough to reach the *hasty barge* before it disappears in the night, Jacque orders



his men to fight to defend the craft. Jacque joins in the battle if necessary.

If the PCs are successful, and they return the *hasty barge* to Dmitri, the bargewright will be ecstatic. Lord Zoran secretly instructs Grotnek and his grunts to eliminate the PCs so there will be no witnesses who are not members of the Shriven Sickle.

Jacque Esquard AC 5 (*studded leather +1*); MV 12; HD 8 (F8); hp 42; THACO 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8 +1 (*scimitar +1*); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL LN

Jacque is of mixed Rhennee stock, 32 years old, 5' 9" tall, and 150 lbs. From the city of Fax on the Wild Coast, Jacque has searched for years for the *hasty barge*, which used to belong to his father. Jacque's father died at the hands of Lord Zoran, and he believes that keeping the *barge* from Zoran is only just.

Jacque's Followers (7): AC 6 (studded leather); MV 12; HD 4 (F4); hp 42; THACO 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; AL N

Grotnek and the Grunts

Grotnek strikes just when the PCs think they have completed their assignment and can go home. However, Grotnek not only goes after the PCs, but also turns on Dmitri. Grotnek wants to claim all the credit for retrieving the barge.

If the PCs fought Grotnek's men before, assume that he gathered more from the ranks of the Sickle. Use the same statistics for Grotnek's grunts presented in an earlier encounter. Grotnek and his men attempt to strike with surprise, attacking any spell casters first. If any of Dmitri's crew is still alive, they quickly change loyalties and strike against the PCs and Dmitri, too, in an effort to save their skins.

If the PCs defeat Grotnek, his grunts, and Dmitri's men, they can take the *hasty barge* and return to Greyhawk. If it looks like the PCs are going to lose the fight, allow reasonable attempts to escape to succeed.

Conclusion

If the PCs come back to Greyhawk with the *hasty barge,* city officials take possession of it. After several hours of deliberation, the High Council of the Rhennee orders that, until this matter can be referred to the Rhennee in Fax on the Wild Coast, the *hasty barge* will be held by the Greyhawk Adventurers Guild. That's the good news.

Weary from your ordeal, you reluctantly drag your feet back to the Greyhawk Adventurers Guild to report. Once in that all-too-familiar conference room, Zuaak calmly saunters over with a considerable grin on his homely kisser.

"Well, well, well," Zuaak chuckles. "It seems you cow pies finally did something right. You brought back da stolen barge, and it turns out to be the one and only *hasty barge of the Nyr Dyv.* I'm impressed! It's too bad, though, dat you guys don't get paid. Lord Zoran ain't around to cover the commission. Maybe you'll get a reward after possession of da *hasty barge* is decided by da Rhennee Councils of Greyhawk and Fax."

Pulling out one of those nauseating cigars, the beaming dwarf concludes, "And da way they argue, that reward should come through sometime in da next 30 years!" As Zuaak struts out the door, your hands rifle through your pockets in search of anything you can pawn for a meal.

❑

The Cult of Ao

Who Watches Those who Watch over You?

Steven E. Schend

The Cult of Ao . . . not a dangerous group really, but a volatile source of religious fervor without divine direction or restraint. While I have cause to applaud some of their efforts, there are times they prove disruptive to the delicate peace the Lords keep in our City of Splendors. Their views are extreme, and those that preach them are trouble, no matter what their cause."

Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun

History

The Time of Troubles, now nine years past, revealed much to the people of the Realms. It showed their gods to be petty, grasping beings—little better than many who worshipped them. While magical and physical chaos rocked the lands, centuries of theological discussions among priests and laymen alike were answered by the actions of the gods themselves. The banishment of the gods to the Realms, at the very least, acknowledged the existence of an "overgod," a mighty power with the ability to punish and reward the gods for their actions (or inactions). A number of cults to this overgod, Ao, grew swiftly after the Time of Troubles. Many fell apart just as swiftly when priests realized they did not receive spells from Ao—but not everyone lost faith.

The largest and grandest of the cults was based in Waterdeep, as many of the populace heard Ao's voice over Mount Waterdeep after the vanquishment of Myrkul and the ascension of Midnight and Cyric's godhood. A large marble temple was built in less than a month upon the ruins on Trader's Way (the site of Myrkul's death). Many worshippers flocked to the temple, including many nobles intent on following what seemed the latest fashion. After six months, the temple's flock was reduced by mortal and divine disinterest. Soon, the temple was empty save for a few sporadic services. The Lords of Waterdeep annexed the temple building and have since put it to use as a public hall, available for rent by nobles (and up-and-coming merchants) for parties, balls, weddings, etc. Its name of the "Highest Temple of the Overgod," carved into the frieze, has been magically altered to its new name: The Cynosure (a title both apt and ironic, given the Pavilion of the Cynosure, the celestial meeting place of the gods). Despite the secular use of the building now, there are still a few who worship Ao within its walls.

The Cult of Ao is currently reduced to less than 50 known and active members throughout the Realms, the largest collection residing in Waterdeep and the Sword Coast lands. The Waterdeep sect, by far the most organized, now meets in secret in various cellars, taprooms, and (rarely) at the Plinth or within the walls of their former temple. While comprised of people of all callings, the Cult of Ao does not include any of the spell-less priests of Ao (though a few priests of other faiths belong to the Cult as swayed ideologues). The Cult has enthusiastically embraced their god's apparent tenets heard during the Time of Troubles:

I. Ao created the Balance to establish Order.

II. The Balance among gods and men must be maintained to keep Order.

III. The Duties of gods and their servants are tantamount to maintaining the Balance.

IV. It is the Duty of the Eyes of Ao to be ever-vigilant that gods and their servants fulfill their Duties.

V. It is the Duty of the Eyes of Ao to enforce the Balance and keep Order.

There are also several lesser teachings within the Cult, and they deal with the gods' new status in the Realms. With their powers dependent upon their number of worshippers, the gods are vulnerable. They have become the servants of the masses, just as their priests are their servants. If there are ever situations where priests, paladins, or a church as a group does not (in the Cult's view) serve its worshippers, the Eyes of Ao will try to force the god and its servant to perform their duties to the people. Whenever clerics or servants of a deity place their welfare ahead of the welfare of their god's followers, the Cult of Ao seeks heavy reprisals in bringing that servant back into Balance.

The Cult of Ao is led by Touras Niveradon, a powerful wizard and worshipper of Oghma, the god of knowledge. As the head of the cult, Touras magically keeps watch over the clergies within Waterdeep (and beyond, through the eyes and ears of his agents), making sure none stray from duty's path. Many of the cult also worship other gods devoutly, though they are perceived as the most extremely conservative of worshippers in terms of interpreting the god's teachings. If there is any softening or change in the god's teachings by the priests or the holy warriors (paladins), the Cult of Ao quickly investigates to ensure that they do not stray from the duty of that god (or that the god itself does not stray).

Cult Activities

In the nine years of the Cult's existence within the City of Splendors, the Cult has performed quite a few memorable feats in their zeal to protect Ao's Balance. The Cult does not actively hunt down and destroy evil cults (such as the Cult of Ghaunadar) any more than it persecutes the good clergies. If any one god gains a large number of followers, the Cult uses its financial influence to promote the worship of an opposing god; failing that, they may be forced to act directly against a growing church. When a ship sponsored by Maxtilar Rhebbos and the priesthood of Sune arrived in Waterdeep with a load of statuary for the Temple of Beauty four years ago, it mysteriously sank just south of the City; Touras felt "Sune's duties and monies should go to her people in Waterdeep, toward making a place of worship look like an overgrown festhall." Now the beautiful statuary occupies places of honor on a small underwater reef outside of Waterdeep's harbor and formalizes the worship of the mermens' deities; "An adequate balance, all in all, and nothing is truly lost save the arrogance of a spendthrift Sunite." Similar actions have occurred. For instance, cultists defaced the

opulent Spires of the Morning while funding smaller places of worship within the Trades and North Wards.

Cult Membership

While there are at least 20 cult members within or near the city of Waterdeep, the members are not known to the city watch or the guard; the Lords may know more, but they reveal few secrets. Among the members are:

Touras Niveradon: (CN hm W17) Well suited to his leadership of the Cult, Touras is one of the most knowledgeable sages on all the Realms' gods, their churches, and their practices beyond the church. Unfortunately, his involvement with Ao's worshippers began tragically.

Formerly a native of Silverymoon, Touras left his home in grief when his wife died from one of her miscast spells during the Godswar; a simple knock spell brought the wooden door to her home to life, and it strangled her. Arriving in Waterdeep during Myrkul's attack, Touras watched in horror as panicked priests abandoned their charges and fled from battling the dark minions in the streets; he saved a small group of children and quickly blasted the offending cleric who left them to die. When Helm's voice boomed over the peak of Mount Waterdeep, Touras headed up the mountain to hear Lord Ao stating "I created the gods to serve the Balance, not to twist it to your own ends." Since then, Touras holds the gods and their servants responsible for his tragedy and focuses all of his energy into keeping them on what he sees as the path of Balance as Ao intends it. While not a leading member of the Cult when publicly known, his quiet yet forceful presence speaks volumes for him now.

Ewsav Lection: (LG hm F5) A Waterdhavian guardsman and griffon-rider, Ewsav watched as three mortals confronted Helm, his god, and Helm's master on the peak of Mount Waterdeep. Profoundly moved by his encounter with the gods, Ewsav embraced Ao's cult and remains a member today. He rarely acts in the Cult's behalf while on duty—if he encounters a violation of Ao's order during his shift, he waits and covertly acts with allies against the transgressor, taking care to not be connected with such reprisals.

Thur Aquarvol: (CG mermaid C3 "shaman" of Deep Sashelas) With the sinking of the *Goddess' Glory* and the dumping of several precious statuary, Thur finally established her long-desired reef temple to Deep Sashelas, Umberlee, and all the sea gods. Thur's involvement with the cult comes from her belief in establishing a balance between land and sea gods, "as there are other powers beneath the waves that are ignored by myopic surface dwellers." Of late, Thur's behavior has been quite erratic and she disappears for two or three days' time with no explanation.

Kerritas Reefsilver: (LN merman F4) A member of the Waterdeep guard specifically assigned to the underwater harbor patrol, Kerritas is a cult member simply to keep the harbor peaceful. After Myrkul's minions claimed the lives of many of his fellow mermen guards, Kerritas vowed to do whatever was necessary to keep such an invasion from happening again; answering a summons, he met with Touras Niveradon and learned of Ao's Order which he adopted (though not as passionately as his betrothed, Thur Aquarvol). Kerritas and two sea elves

were responsible for the sinking of the *Goddess' Glory,* Maxtilar Rhebbos' ship.

Syrella Bronzeleaf: (NG hef R9) Syrella makes her home among the trees of the High Forest. While she keeps her reasons to herself, she does journey to Waterdeep at least twice a year and keeps in touch with Touras. Syrella doesn't pay much attention to the wider picture, but she fervently makes sure that all worshippers of nature (Silvanus, Mielikki, Chauntea, Eldath, and even Malar) adhere to her strict ideals. She once killed a small band of adventurers whose member druid didn't protect the forest from their axes with enough fervor.

Tiber Flinteye: (NE dm F6) Tiber Flinteye, a dwarven adventurer who winters in Waterdeep at the Raging Lion inn, is a close-minded, stubborn old dwarf with an undeniable hatred of elves. Tiber visits his bitterness on the elves, as their god Labelas Enoreth attacked and wounded his god Clangeddin during the Godswar. Tiber joined the Cult of Ao in hopes of restoring his race's life while restoring the Balance and to hunt down worshippers of the hated Enoreth.

Player Characters & The Cult

When Dungeon Masters bring the Cult into role-playing, keep in mind that any members of this band are extremist in their views and rarely (barring incredible feats of role-playing and logic) change their minds once set in their viewpoint. So entrenched are they in their adherence to Ao's Balance that their agents tenaciously dog the steps of transgressors (and potential transgressors!) for many a tenday, watching to ensure that clerics and paladins alike stay on the conservative path that their gods set before them (and, in this way, the gods attending their flocks through their servants).

How can the Cult of Ao become a part of your on-going Realms campaign? In a city the size of Waterdeep, it's certainly not hard to meet someone you've never met before—it could be a Cult member. If visiting a shrine in another major city on Faerun, chances are (depending on the DM) you could find another devotee of Ao's Order. But how can the Cult truly have an impact on the game? How do you avoid "You see a raving madman arguing with a local priest of So-And-So . . ?" Here are a few suggestions:

As Members

Player characters can join the Cult if they find a way to contact Touras Niveradon; many rumors place him often at the Font of Knowledge, the new temple to Oghma in Waterdeep's Castle Ward. Other options include engaging Touras in theological discussions at the Plinth or in Philosopher's Square. Touras doesn't accept everyone into this sect, being rightly paranoid, and player characters must prove they believe in Ao's Balance (or at least want to free clergies and the worshippers from corruption).

If accepted as members, the campaign could become what the players wish it to become, depending on how literally they adopt the five codes of the Cult. Options for PC members include many extreme (and not-so-extreme) methods to show Ao's will.

* Some members could adopt a "witch-hunt" attitude, actively hunting down guilty transgressors of their own faiths (or not-so-guilty clerics who seem guilty); this, of course, leaves the PCs with quite a few enemies.

* Another option is to add a little more depth and thought to the clerics and paladins in the FORGOTTEN REALMS; as members of the Cult of Ao, the player characters are now far more alert about church practices, proper conduct, and the responsibilities inherent with the service of the gods.

* Touras can uncover some rare religious texts among the texts at Oghma's temple, and he sends the PCs off to corroborate such information with more books and evidence. This establishes the PCs as archaeologists of sorts as well as historians; a Sword Coast campaign from Waterdeep to Candlekeep's libraries and back could be entertaining and educational!

* The Cult requests that the PCs entrench themselves within the order of some other god (within Waterdeep or anywhere in the Realms) and act as the Cult's eyes in keeping that particular faith within the boundaries of Ao's Order.

Whether used as an adventure motivation (hunt down the guilty, find evidence of Ao's existence for disbelievers) or as more background depth and color ("proper" clerical services, etc.), being members of the Cult of Ao will certainly change how you look at the Realms!

As Targets

A far more interesting way to work the Cult of Ao into a Realms campaign is to put the PCs (specifically the clerics, druids, and paladins) under the scrutiny of a powerful cult member. Just as being a cultist can show PCs the intricacies and details of religious service, now the PCs are being watched to make sure they uphold those same details, and any transgressions from them are often viewed with extreme prejudice.

* A large, burly man joins the PCs and looms over the clerics and other religious characters, making sure they uphold their vows to protect their worshippers and follow the tenets of their god.

* A better cult member to dog the PCs' steps is a rogue—what better way to make clerical PCs nervous than to have someone sneak into their tents at night, silent and unseen, to whisper warnings to them about their duty and slip away to return later? If that doesn't have your PCs jumping out of their skins after the third visit, nothing will.

* Judgment by the cult doesn't mean a battle with the agent, though it sometimes does (with a number of fatalities on both sides of the issue). Some transgressors are brought to Waterdeep "to answer for their crimes," while some are directed to places in which to do penance. ("To redeem yourself and restore your good ability to the service of your god and the Balance, go to Candlekeep and learn what you can of the older ways of worship of both your own god and the god of your enemies.")

Regardless of the form or the outcome, the scrutiny of the Cult and its agents should be an irritating, suffocating, and tense situation for players' clerics and paladins.

Current Cult Activities

* Touras had been funneling funds to a pair of agents operating in Cormyr and the Dalelands to fund a number of local shrines for villages away from major

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Cult of A0

Continued from page 14

population centers; at last notice, the two agents simply took the money and fled. The PCs are assigned the job of tracking the two rogues down, recovering the funds, and distributing funds as originally planned.

* Several members of the Cult are deadlocked about the current rise in Tyr worshippers within Waterdeep and their growing movement to right the wrongs of the Realms. Tyr's power is growing out of balance with other gods along the Sword Coast, and to counter this, current plans stand to aid some minor Cyricist movements within Waterdeep and Luskan (such as sink a number of supply and passenger vessels for a Tyrite foray south to Calimshan and the Shaar).

* Ewsav Lection, from his views of seeing Ao, believes Helm to be Ao's main agent among the gods of the Realms. He would like to unite more Helm worshippers into the cult and make it a better organized and more powerful force to implement Ao's will and punishment. This plan is done without Touras' knowledge, and Ewsav wants the PCs to work with him in infiltrating the ranks at the Hall of Heroes in Waterdeep to gain soldiers for Ao.

* The lone agent of the Cult around the Moonsea was killed six months ago by Zhentarim. Touras hopes to reestablish a Cult presence in that area both to bolster the good gods in opposition to Cyric and covertly to aid in rebuilding some organized faith of Cyric.

Sweet Revenge

An AD&D® game adventure for characters 1st-3rd level

by Rick Reid

Players' Introduction

The Keep at Ongoin is much like every other heavily fortified little village you have visited—with one major exception. The local economy is based solely on the output from a wondrous series of caverns to the north dubbed the Caves of Confection. Within these caves can be found thick veins of rock sugar, bubbling pools of caramel, and natural springs of chocolate sauce.

Life was peaceful and serene in the little village until one month ago when Fizzie, the priest of the local and very powerful Temple of Confection, mysteriously declared the caverns a holy site and forbade further mining. The miners were quickly laid off, and the stock of sugary treats in stores and inns were consumed. Now the townspeople are out of sweets, and the economy is in ruins. At least Fizzie the priest is happy.

Since it is unthinkable to defy the wishes of the temple publicly, you and a group of concerned citizens decided to meet in secret to discuss what can be done to save the keep's economy. After much heated debate, punctuated by townspeople's cries for sugar, you decided to travel to the caves and peek inside. Perhaps there is something within the rock candy walls that has scared Fizzie enough to declare the caves off-limits. Perhaps you can set things right.

It is nearly midnight when you conclude your meeting and make your way out the basement and through the darkened streets of town. You notice that the full moon is glowing with a strange light and a hazy glaze surrounds it.

The streets of Ongoin are worn and potholed, and tall weeds grow between the cracks. The cottages and shops are rundown and obviously neglected—all because the people are distraught over the mines and the lack of sugar. In front of one of the closed shops sits a group of emaciated men, women, and children dressed in tattered rags. A small fluffy white dog sits next to them and howls forlornly. Next to the beggars are crudely painted wooden signs reading "Will Work for Candy."

As the PCs approach the group, the beggars hold out chipped sugar bowls and grunt and drool. They surround the characters, brandishing their spoons and chanting, "Sweets for the Poor!" The younger children start gnawing on the characters' boots. The beggars continue to follow the PCs until they are given something sweet or until the PCs make it clear there are no sweets to relinquish. As the PCs continue through the rest of the adventure, consult the lettered text that corresponds to sections of the map.

Through the Woods

The path through the woods north of town is quiet . . . almost too quiet. The strangely glowing moon seems to coat the bare trees with a frosted haze. The only creature you meet in passing is a lone squirrel hanging from a branch on a tree to your right. As you walk by, the squirrel chatters at you and slowly shakes its tiny head as if questioning the wisdom of your mission.

A. The Caves of Confection

After a journey of approximately a half hour you come upon the face of a towering cliff. At the base is a dark, roughly circular entrance approximately a dozen feet in diameter. There are tall piles of rocks and boulders on both sides of the cave mouth.

Across the entrance are two thick wooden boards with writing on them. Standing in front of this barricade is a squat humanoid figure. The creature's smooth shell-like skin shines with a yellow glow in the moonlight. There is a faint odor of lemons in the air.

The creature is a lemon drop golem created to guard the entrance to the caves. If anyone approaches within 10 feet, it immediately attacks. The boards across the entrance read "Closed by Order of the Temple of Confection—No Mining, No Admittance." The boards easily can be removed by anyone with a Strength of 12 or greater.

Golem, lemon drop (1): INT Non; AL N; AC 2; MV 9; HD 6; hps 41; THAC0 19; #AT 2; D 1-8/1-8 (fists); SD immune to *sleep, charm* and *hold* spells, edged weapons inflict one-half damage, cold or water-based attacks inflict double damage; S L (10' tall); ML 12; XP Value 270

B. The Caves

Past the entrance you see a cavity extending 60 feet north and then veering to the east. The walls, floors, and ceiling are hard and rocky, and the cavern is dark and gloomy.

If the PCs examine the floor, they discover it is sprinkled with a coating of sugar. Human and monster tracks can be seen in the spilled sweetener.

C. Semi-Sweet Stream

In the north tunnel, a thick, cloying odor of chocolate fills the air. The northern passage continues for about 40 feet and opens into a large chamber. Intersecting this chamber is a stream of thick brown fluid which flows sluggishly from an opening in the east wall and disappears into a similar opening in the west wall. Across the stream is an exit in the center of the north wall. Several messy, brown, vaguely humanoid footprints are on the northern bank of the stream. The footprints seem to emerge from the stream and follow the northern passage out of the chamber.

The stream, which is three feet deep, is not actually chocolate but is composed of run-off from the sugar mines mixed with naturally-occurring subterranean

vegetation and minerals. This gives the thick liquid the taste, appearance, and texture of real chocolate.

The footprints were made by skeletons that Fizzie, who is actually an evil priest, controls and orders about at his whim.

To go farther north, the PCs will have to ford the stream. Those doing so must make a successful Dexterity check with a −3 penalty to avoid slipping and covering themselves and their possessions with the chocolate goo. Gooey PCs suffer a −2 penalty on all movement, attack, and saving throw rolls until they are thoroughly cleaned off. If the PCs investigate the footprints, reveal that they lead down the north tunnel and eventually dry up.

D. Land of the Giants

You continue along the east passage for several yards before emerging into a big cavern. You spy shadows moving along the walls and hear a strange shuffling sound followed by a loud "crack!"

This is the main sugar mine of the caves. The rough rock walls are impregnated with thick veins of raw sugar. There is an opening in the north wall and a very crude tunnel in the south wall. Inside the cavern are six giant sugar ants, partially cloaked in the shadows of the cave walls. During their perpetual tunneling, the ants broke through the walls of the cavern and discovered the mine. The ants are mining the sugar from the cavern, breaking large chunks off the walls with their powerful mandibles and piling the chunks in the center of the room. The ants ignore the PCs unless the PCs attack, interfere with their mining, or enter the southern passage which leads to their nest.

Ants, giant sugar (5): INT Animal; AL N; AC 3; MV 18; HD 3; hps 16 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1; D 2-8; S M (6' long); ML 9; XP Value 35

E. Nest Sweet Nest

The passage meanders in a generally southern direction for approximately 60 feet and ends in a natural cavern. Piles of rock, dirt, and sugar lumps litter the floor. A half-dozen pieces of large, pale yellow fruit sit before a massive ant.

The passage was dug by the giant sugar ants and leads to their nest and the queen. When the ants realize that the PCs are about to enter their domain, they will follow the characters down the passage and attack them in the nest. The ants fight to the death to defend the queen. The fruit is known as "fruit of the gods" and serves as food for the queen. Each piece of the fruit consumed heals 2-12 points of damage.

Ant, giant sugar queen (1): INT Semi-; AL N; AC 5; MV 18; HD 6; hps 40; THAC0 13; #AT 1; D 2-12; S L (10' long); ML 9; XP Value 175

F. Troll House Cookies

You exit the sugar mine to the north and travel down a long corridor. Suddenly your noses are assaulted by a sharp burning smell in the air. Up ahead you see thick clouds of roiling black smoke filling the tunnel.

The corridor ends in a cavern that is used as a bakery. Heat is provided by naturally occurring veins of magma which flow beyond the walls. Several large iron doors are built into the walls,

and the goods to be baked are placed into cavities behind the doors and are heated by the magma. There are two long wooden tables in the room.

The occupant of the room is a troll that was summoned to bake cookies for the rest of the inhabitants of the caves. The troll is upset because he hates fire and he does not know how to cook.

> With watering eyes and involuntary coughing fits, you make your way to the end of the corridor. It opens into a large room that seems to be the source of the smoke. Inside are two long wooden tables piled high with burnt cookie sheets. Stuck to the sheets are blackened round objects that might have been cookies. A miserable-looking troll is attending to what seems to be large smoking ovens set into the east and west walls. The entire front of the troll's body is blackened with soot, and he is wearing a scorched apron reading "I'm a Cute Cookie." On his hands are over-sized oven mitts.
>
> As you watch, the troll flings open one of the oven doors, yanks out a smoking pan of blackened cookies, and tosses it on the pile.

As soon as the troll becomes aware of the PCs' presence, he shrieks, "What! You want cookies? I'll give you cookies!" He grabs the nearest cookie pans and begin hurling them at the PCs. Then he chases the characters while yelling, "Get out of my kitchen! Out! Out!" If the PCs retreat beyond the room, he stands in the doorway with his hands on his hips and glowers at them.

The troll will not fight the PCs unless they insult his cooking or attack him. However, he will attempt to chase them out of the room every time they step inside.

If the PCs defeat the troll and search the room, they find under a tall pile of cookie sheets a thin, red wooden wand. This is a *wand of baking* and is usable by a wizard. The *wand* projects a 60-feet long and 30-feet wide cone-shaped ray of heat, baking anyone in its path for 2-12 points of damage, save vs. wands for half damage. There are six charges.

Troll (1): INT Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hps 30; THAC0 3; #AT 3; D 1-3/1-3 (because of the oven mits)/5-12; SD Regeneration; S L (9' tall); ML 14; XP Value 1,400

The troll regenerates three hit points per round, beginning three rounds after it has suffered damage. It cannot regenerate damage from fire or acid attacks.

G. Wandering Monster—GRANNY!

> As you travel down the north corridor, you see a bobbing yellow light and hear a soft "tap . . . tap . . . tap." The light seems to be moving in your direction. Before you can react, the stillness is shattered by a shrill, elderly female voice calling, "Where are you hooligans?"

The voice belongs to Granny, one of the townspeople who was at the meeting attended by the PCs. Granny got worried that the PCs went off into the caves not properly dressed. She has brought them scarves and mittens so they will stay dry and warm.

If the PCs fail to show the proper gratitude for her gifts, she swats them with her cane. After the PCs have accepted the scarves and mittens, she announces she has decided to accompany them to make sure they don't step in any puddles. It will take a lot of convincing on the PCs' part to get Granny to go home. If Granny stays with the PCs she continues to scold them for this and that, making any attempts by the PCs to be quiet impossible.

Granny (1): INT Average; AL LG; AC 10; MV 9; HD 1; hps 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; D 1-4 (cane); SA Blistering tongue-lashing; S M (5' tall); ML 18; XP Value 75

H. Pass the Syrup

> You barely have a chance to recover from your close encounter with Granny, when your steps lead you into a circular chamber. There is a pool filled with a thick, brown-tinted liquid in the center of the room. Next to the pool is a long-handled iron ladle and a ceramic plate holding a stack of pancakes. The sweet, over-powering scent of maple and sugar fills the room. Beyond the room, the passage continues north.

If the PCs gaze into the pool, they barely will be able to make out the form of a dead goblin lying on the bottom. The goblin is clutching a knife and fork in his stiffened fingers. A long, thin, white object dangles from the goblin's belt.

The pool is filled with warm, natural maple syrup that was formed by a combination of hot underground springs, runoff from the sugar mines, and an overflow of sap from the maple trees outside. The pool is also the home of a syrup elemental. The elemental will allow anyone to dip a dipperful of syrup from the pool, as long as they throw him a pancake first (something the goblin neglected to do). If the PCs try to remove anything from the pool, including the dead goblin, without first throwing in a pancake, the syrup elemental will attack. The elemental prefers to look like a plump woman in a long dress, hair in a bun, and hands clasped in front of her.

On the goblin's belt is a foot-long white metal rod known as the *rod of refrigeration.* This rod, usable by a wizard or thief, projects a 30-feet wide by 60-feet long cone-shaped ray of frost which freezes anything in its path for 1-10 points of cold damage, save vs. wands for half damage.

Syrup Elemental (1): INT Very; AL N; AC 2; MV 18; HD 8; hps 40; THAC0 13; #AT 1; D 1-8; SA Stickiness; S H (20' long); ML 16; XP Value 1,200

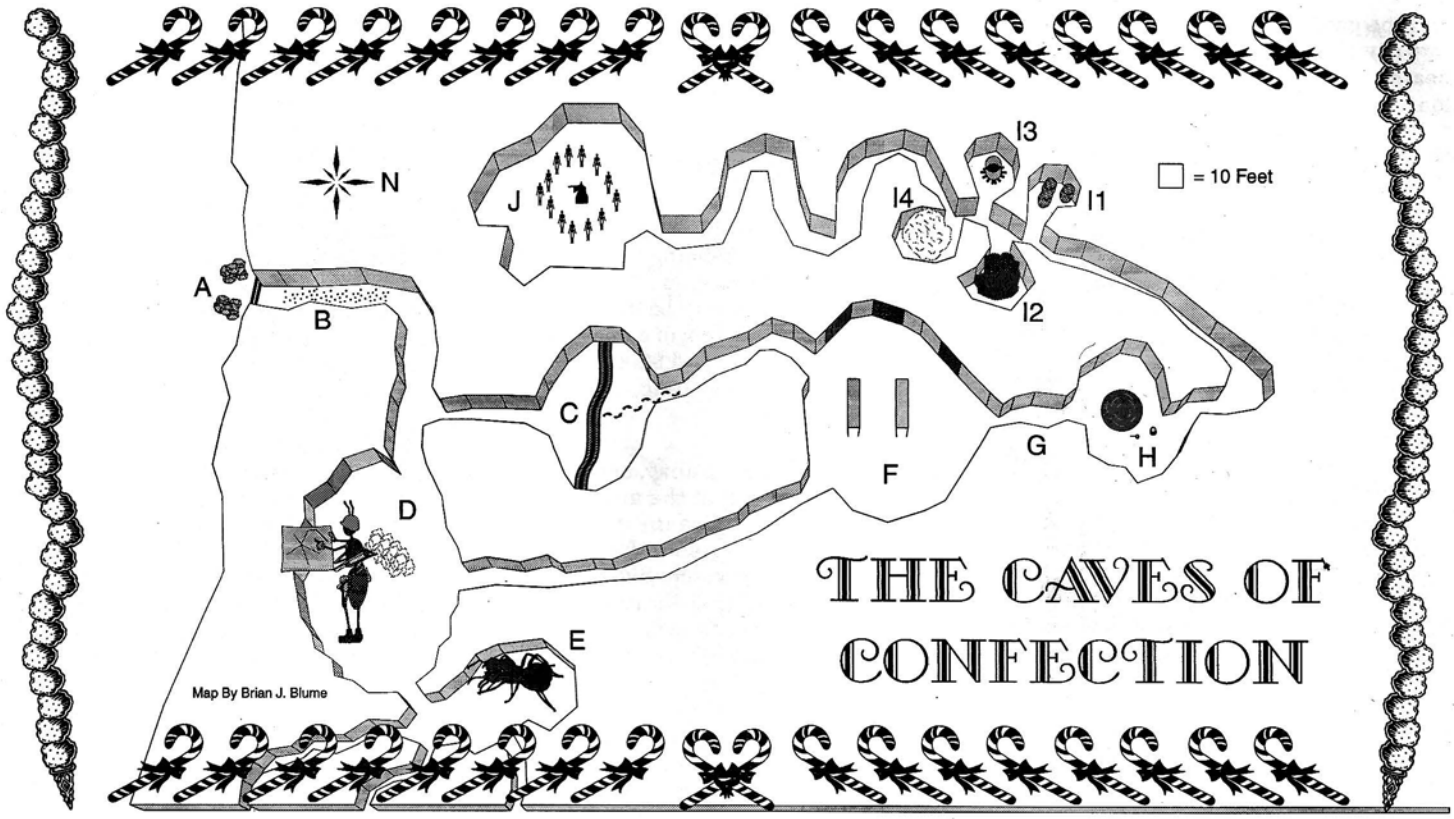
If the elemental successfully strikes a target, that target must make a successful saving throw vs. paralysis or be covered in thick syrup and be unable to move for 1d6 rounds. The elemental cannot move out of the pool, nor can it send a pseudopod of syrup more than 10 feet away from the pool.

I. The Rooms

Past the pool, the passage continues north for about 50 feet and then makes a bend to the southwest. After 80 feet, the tunnel opens into a series of four small caverns. The four rooms in this area are roughly 12 feet square and contain the following:

Room 1

Numerous empty bags of flour, salt, baking soda, and seasoning are scattered across the floor. In addition, there are half-full barrels of vinegar, vanilla extract, sugar water, chocolate sauce, and maple syrup, as well as empty jars and bottles of spices and flavorings. A small scratching noise can be heard coming from one of the barrels. If the PCs investigate, they see that a



small cave mouse has eaten its way into the bottom of a barrel of molasses. The mouse has consumed so much of the molasses that it could not get out of the hole. It is stuck halfway in the barrel, with its lower body protruding out the hole. If the PCs free the mouse, it will thank them by nipping them on the thumb (no damage) and running away.

Room 2

A thick cloud of blue smoke drifts from the entrance to this room. Inside, an ogre is sitting on a large wooden chair, smoking a cigar and staring at an unrolled scroll that bears a picture of a scantily-clad ogre woman. Next to him is a short table littered with garbage, dirty dishes, cigar butts and an over-turned hourglass. When the ogre realizes that someone has entered the room, he jumps up, looks at the hourglass, and stammers, "Whoops! . . . Ah . . . I just sat down . . . ah . . . hey! You're the good guys aren't you? Wait a minute, just let me get my weapon . . . Now where did I put it?"

The ogre begins rummaging through the mess on the table and then, empty-handed, sheepishly turns to the PCs and whines:

> "Hey . . . ah . . . you know, there's six of you and only one of me. That's not really fair now, is it? Ah . . . why don't we just forget the whole thing . . . I won't tell anybody you are here if you won't."

The ogre is supposed to be helping the kobold in room #4 do the dishes. But he has been goofing off since he arrived at the caverns. If questioned by the PCs, all he can tell them is:

> "I'm just a peon. I don't even know what I'm doing here. I had a strong urge to come to the caves, and when I got here, some guy in robes assigned me to . . . ah . . . guard the place. Listen, if you happen to run across a little dog-faced guy . . . ah . . . don't tell him you saw me, okay?"

The ogre fights only to defend himself, as he realizes he is no match for armed and armored adventurers.

Ogre (1): INT Low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 + 1; hps 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; D 1-10; S L (9' tall); ML 11; XP Value 270

Room 3

A large fire pit dug in the center of the room is filled with charred wood. Over the pit hangs an iron caldron. The inside of the cauldron is caked with some type of burnt chocolate residue. This is where the frosting for the ultimate dessert (see cavern J) was cooked. The fire is out and the caldron is cold.

Room 4

Great billowing clouds of steam pour from the entrance to this room. Inside, surrounded by towering piles of dirty pots, pans, and dishes, a lone kobold is bent over a huge tub of hot, soapy water. The sweating kobold is trying to make some headway in getting the dishes washed, but is not having much success. When he hears the PCs enter the room, he screams, "Well, it's about time! Grab a dishtowel and start drying!" The kobold has mistaken the party for the ogre that is supposed to be helping him. When he realizes his mistake, he tries to bully the PCs into staying and helping him do the dishes. The kobold is headstrong, and even the fact that he is greatly outnumbered will not keep him from shaking his fist at the PCs and threatening them. The kobold does not

know what is going on in the caves, as he was summoned like the rest of the creatures.

Kobold (1): INT Average; AL LE; AC 7; MV 6; HD 1/2; hps 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; D 1-4; S S (3' tall); ML 18; XP Value 7

J. The Ultimate Desert

As the PCs continue on their trek through the caves, they enter a large cavern and hear chanting.

> *Oh, Great Rotter of Teeth, Despoiler of Appetites, Ravager of Smooth Skin, Hear My Call.*
>
> *Ye of the Smeared Mouth and Sticky Hands, Ye Who Eateth Between Meals, Ye Who Passeth Gas in Public, Ye Who Taketh Two Desserts, Appear Unto Me.*
>
> *Oh, Great Stomach Acher, Oh Great Heart Burner, Keeper of the Eternal Indigestion, Bane of the Four Basic Food Groups, Dine on My Offering!*
>
> In the center of a rough-hewn cavern stands a ring of 13 skeletons that are covered head-to-toe in chocolate sauce. On the top of each skeleton's head is a flickering candle. Inside the ring of undead is Fizzie, the head of the Temple of Confection. He is wearing a stained white apron and a wide white sash. Stuck through the sash are a mace, a hammer, and a thick leather-bound book.
>
> The priest is sweating profusely, and his glassy eyes are rolled back in his head. His arms are extended in front of him as he chants and gestures over what appears to be a double-dark chocolate supreme six-layer devil's food cake with triple-butter fudge frosting and whipped mint creme and brown sugar filling sprinkled with honey-glazed coconut and topped with caramel-coated pecan slices and a drizzle of rich rum raisin sauce that rests under a glass cover on a small pedestal.
>
> A shimmering, sparkling form seems to be taking shape over the dessert, growing more substantial as you watch in horror. There is a large opening in the ceiling of the cavern through which the frosted moonlight bathes the entire tableau in an unearthly glow.

The priest is indeed Fizzie, and he has just completed the ceremony to summon the sweettooth fiend, the sparkling form taking shape over the Ultimate Dessert. The book under his belt is a magical item he discovered that corrupted him and brought about his decision to close the caves.

Fizzie will not attack the PCs himself, but will laugh at them and taunt them in a low, guttural voice for their failure to stop him. He orders his chocolate-covered skeletons to: "attack them, my sweets!" Fizzie fights only if the skeletons are destroyed.

The sweettooth fiend will gain form after four rounds. The fiend appears to the PCs as a tall gingerbread man with glowing red raisin eyes and a twisted frosting grin. As soon as it gains form, it roars, "What's for dessert?" In this form, the fiend is relatively weak and must eat the ultimate dessert within 10 rounds to gain its true form and powers and be able to remain on this plane. If the dessert has been destroyed, the fiendish cookie flies into a rage and attacks the PCs until the 10 rounds are up and it is recalled to its own plane.

The sweettooth fiend does not want the PCs to know how vulnerable it is and how much it needs to eat the dessert. It tries threatening them, bribing them (free desserts for the rest of your life!), and if nothing else works, attacking them. If the gingerbread man is defeated, either by reducing its hit points to zero or by destroying the dessert before it can eat it, the fiend breaks apart while screaming, "I'm Crumbling! I'm Crumbling!" and dissolves into a pile of cookie crumbs before vanishing.

If the sweettooth fiend is allowed to eat the dessert, he regains his true form—that of a monstrous 20-feet tall slobbering pig—and powers (AC −2; HD 30; hps 180; #AT 3; D 1-12/1-12/2-24), and roars from the cave on a rampage of destruction and gluttony, eating and destroying everything in his path. Needless to say, it is not in the PCs' best interests to allow him to eat the desert.

If Fizzie is rendered unconscious or if the sweettooth fiend has been vanquished, he is freed from the effects of the evil book at his waist and he returns to his normal, lovable self. He shakes his head and mutters, "Where am I? Where am I?" As his faculties return, he warns the PCs to destroy the book—but not touch it.

Skeletons, chocolate-covered (13): INT Low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hps 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; D 1-6; SD Edged weapons inflict half damage; S M (6' tall); ML 18; XP Value 65

These skeletons cannot be turned.

Fizzie, possessed priest (1): INT Very; AL CE (normally LG); AC 5; MV 12; HD 7; hps 32; THAC0 17; #AT 1; D 1-8; S M (6' tall); ML 18; XP Value 750

Spells remaining: 1st Level *cause light wounds, resist cold;* 2nd Level *hold person, resist fire;* 3rd Level *remove curse;* 4th Level *cause serious wounds*

Gingerbread Man/Fiend (1): INT High; AL CE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 4; hps 28; THAC0 16; #AT 1; D 1-8; SA Sugar drain; S M (6' tall); ML 18; XP Value 750

If the fiend scores a successful hit, the sugar is drained from the target's body causing lethargy and reducing the target's "to hit" and damage rolls by −2 for 1-8 rounds.

A Sweet Ending

If the sweettooth fiend is defeated, read the following:

> It was a long, hard battle, but the world is again safe from evil cookies. Now all that remains is to sweep up the crumbs.

The PCs can climb up the sloping walls of the cavern and exit from the hole in the ceiling or they can backtrack through the caves to find the path back to the Keep at Ongoin. As the PCs pass through the woods, a small squirrel nods his head at them and gives them the "paws up" sign.

> As you approach the town, you see the houses ablaze with lights and scores of townsfolk, dressed in their nightclothes, assembled in the square. Somehow the news of your victory has reached the village, and as you enter their midst they all break into spontaneous song and dance. The mayor, pushing his way through the revelers, red nightcap askew on his bald head, hands you each a bag of gold. And even Granny has a grudging word of congratulations!

Your Tax Dollars At Work

An AD&D 2nd Edition game adventure for 1st-3rd level PCs

by Rob Nicholls

This adventure is set in the city of Ravens Bluff in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting, though with a few changes it can fit any fantasy world.

The action begins with the PCs being appointed members of the Special Advisory Council Guard, unkindly referred to as "Spags." Intended to serve as a prestigious and useful task force, the Guard has degenerated into a scorned and ineffective agency due to the ineptitude of its director, Bradlie Tagart. For years Bradlie moved from post to post, always using the resources and people at his command in ploys for increasing his own position instead of doing the job. This practice has made him a great manipulator, but a terrible administrator. If not for the political clout he gained by his boot-licking ways, Bradlie would have been kicked out of government years ago.

Recently, Bradlie concocted a daring scheme to better the position of himself and his son, Noland.

William Strong, the young nephew of Lord Regent Thomas Raphiel, is visiting Ravens Bluff, and the Guard is to serve as the child's escort. Bradlie's plan is to spring the orders on the PCs at the last moment and hurry them off to meet a fake nephew he has hired. This "William" will try to lose the PCs in the city sewers while bandits (hired by Noland) kidnap the real nephew. The frustrated PCs will then be arrested and brought before a special meeting of the Advisory Council. Here, Bradlie will accuse the PCs of being incompetent and claim their story of meeting a fake nephew is all to cover up their mistake of going to the "wrong" address. The PCs will be suspended pending a decision by the Council. Bradlie and Noland then plan to meet with their hired thugs and "rescue" the nephew to gain fame and a sizeable reward.

The PCs must uncover the plot, rescue the nephew, and expose the Tagarts for the corrupt individuals they are.

Players' Introduction

You have been appointed members of that elite organization, the Special Advisory Council Guard. You walk at the elbow of the rich and powerful. You are the vigilant protectors and servants of one of the most august political bodies in Ravens Bluff. As such, you are respected, revered, and well-rewarded.

And if you believe all that, my brother will sell you Zhentil Keep and the Boarskyr Bridge. Cheap.

Respected? Respected people aren't jeered at and called "Spags" by beggars and urchins. Revered? Revered people don't get sympathetic looks from others when you announce for whom you work. Well-rewarded? Rewarded people line their pockets with gold, not with copper and the occasional silver piece.

Let's face it, you will never do well for yourselves as long as Bradlie Tagart is in charge of the Guard. What an imbecile! His preoccupation with increasing his personal status has made a shambles of this organization. How many times has he handed out assignments at the last minute, giving you no time to prepare? How many projects have you completed only to find they were not for the Advisory Council but to earn Bradlie some political favor? How many times has he sent you out to get a cup of sand and you come back to find you were supposed to be getting a bucket of water? Of course, all of these mistakes are all your fault. Bradlie Tagart is perfect and infallible. Just ask him.

Anyway, until something better comes along (nothing could be much worse) you're sticking around because you need the money. As one of your predecessors once stated, "Nobody works here because they WANT to; its because they HAVE to." Of course, some of the guards stick around for a chance to prove what a creep Tagart really is. You are gathered in the common area of the Guard office mulling over these and other things when the door to Bradlie's office suddenly bursts open. He hurries out, looks at you all as if you had three heads and were drooling slime, and then shouts wildly, "WHAT ARE YOU DOING JUST SITTING AROUND! You have to meet Lord Raphiel's nephew at Embrol Sludge's Eatery and Shell Shoppe in 20 minutes! Oh, what am I going to do? Don't sit there like idiots staring at me! Get off your lazy ends and MOVE!"

Hopefully, one of the PCs will ask for a few details, such as the nephew's name, what he looks like, and what they are supposed to do when they meet him. Bradlie hurriedly says the boy's name is William Strong. He is slender with freckles and brown hair, and that the Guard is supposed to be his escort while the youngster tours the city. After that, Bradlie will be too concerned with getting the PCs out and on their way to answer anything else. If anyone thinks this is strange, remind them that this is Bradlie's normal operating procedure. It normally takes 15 minutes to get to the Eatery from the Guard office, thus they have some spare time, but not much.

Rush Hour Traffic

Although it normally takes 15 minutes to get to from the office to Embrol Sludge's Eatery and Shell Shoppe, this morning it will take longer.

You are making good time down the streets, and, once you pass through the Open Air Farmers Market, you should arrive at the Eatery with a minute or two to spare.

However, any hopes of a speedy arrival are dashed as you round a corner and see the crowd which fills the market. Not even at Jack Mooney's Circus have you seen such a packed mass of people stalls. The sale going on may be good for the merchants, but certainly not for you.

You have a little more than 10 minutes left to get to the Eatery. What are you going to do?

Here is a list of some options the PCs might consider. As the DM, you should give a close (although not necessarily exact) estimate of how much time each option would require, but only if a player asks.

* Going around the market and avoiding the crowd. Time: 20 minutes.

* Pushing their way headlong through the crowd. Time: 30 minutes.

* Announcing that they are members of the Special Advisory Council Guard and demand that they be let pass. Time: 40 minutes, as a few people will shout, "Here come the Spags!" and purposely impede the PCs' progress.

* Announcing that they are members of the City Watch and demand that they be let pass. Time: 45 minutes, as it will earn them not only all the grief listed in the previous option, but also a five-minute lecture from a nearby Watch sergeant on the various fines and punishments for posing as a member of the City Watch.

* Traveling along the tops of the stalls. Time: 15 minutes, but this will require crossing at least six stalls. Each PC must make a Dexterity check for every stall to cross it safely. A failed check means the character has slipped and will fall into the crowd, bringing the stall down with him. These unfortunate PCs can quickly climb back to the stall tops with a successful Dexterity check. Otherwise they will be beset by irate customers and an angry merchant who will detain the PC until he or she pays for the damages. These PCs will not be allowed back up to the stall tops, but will be roughly passed overhead by the crowd and thrown to the feet of those Guard members who were dexterous.

The options listed are by no means all of the possibilities, and many players will no doubt come up with clever, unusual, or even magical schemes. However, you should not allow the PCs just to argue over various methods. The characters are on a tight schedule and should be constantly reminded that time is ticking away.

A Child Shall Lead Them

Depending upon how they handled the crowd at the Open Air Farmers Market, the PCs may actually arrive on time at the Eatery. However, as they will soon realize, their punctuality or lack thereof will make little difference.

As you approach the Eatery, you see a young man of about thirteen summers standing impatiently outside. Dressed in expensive-looking attire, he matches the vague description Bradlie gave you. Indeed, as you come closer, the boy lifts his freckled nose and asks, "Ain't you the guys . . . I mean, are you not the escort for whom I have been awaiting?"

Once the PCs identify themselves as the Special Advisory Council Guard, the young man will begin berating them about being late, the sloppiness of their dress, their lack of breeding, and anything else he can think of. He will identify himself as William Strong, nephew of the Lord Regent. Actually, his name is Phil Krisp, an imposter hired by Bradlie. Phil knows enough about Lord Raphiel (such as his description, his job, where he lives) to answer most casual questions. If asked anything of a personal nature, he will say it is none of their business and berate the PCs about prying into the affairs of their betters.

However, if asked why the nephew of the Lord Regent was picked up outside a restaurant instead of at the Regent's house, Phil will hesitate and mumble something about security precautions. If pressed, he claims his uncle ordered it and again, it is none of their affair.

Phil's manner of speech will often shift, ranging from the haughty tones of a snob to the rough language of a street urchin. These things should put the brighter players on their guard.

"William" claims a desire to see the waterfront and leads the PCs to the docks. Once there, he wanders about looking at boats, throwing rocks at sea gulls, and occasionally making insulting comments about various individuals. After the third or fourth such comment, the PCs will gain some unwanted attention.

As you pass by an open sewer grate, you suddenly find yourselves surrounded by a dozen tough-looking boys. A scruffy looking ball of dirty white fur that might be a dog growls at you from behind the largest boy's legs. The youngest boy looks to be about half William's age, while the oldest could hardly be more than 15. These are obviously not babes, however. Their faces hold grim smiles, and in their eyes you can see years of hard living, of sleeping in the streets or under docks, of eating scraps thrown out to dogs. You also see a great deal of annoyance, and perhaps a little hatred.

"Oy!" shouts the oldest boy, "Ye be hanging out with Spags now, eh Phil? That make you good enough to come back and make smart 'marks against us, eh? Well, me and the mates here think maybe you should be paying for your smart talk. We'll take coin or blood; your choice."

"William" claims the boys have mistaken him for someone else and demands that the PCs disperse the rabble. If pressed on the subject, he says the boys are just hoping for a handout from a rich person such as himself.

Actually, these boys are members of a gang that Phil used to run with until he was kicked out. He is using the presence of the PCs as an opportunity to get a small amount of revenge on the youths.

Although they outnumber the PCs two-to-one, the gang members realize that they are no match for the PCs and do not really wish to start a fight. However, they are willing to risk it for a shot at Phil. Should the PCs offer each member a few coppers to move on (Phil will object, as he wishes to see the gang thrashed), they will accept and combat can be avoided. Otherwise, the gang will attack. The dog snarls and barks at the PCs, but doesn't attack effectively.

Gang Members (12): Int Average; AL N (E); AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 2, 2, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6, 6, 7, 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg pummel; SZ M; ML 10.

The PCs should carefully consider how much force to use in this fight. While they would be within their rights to use deadly force, it would not be good or moral to do so if it could be avoided. It would also not be good for the Guards' already poor public image if they were to become known as slayers of children and little white dogs. Therefore, most players should opt for one of the subduing combat methods outlined in the *Players Handbook*, pages 97-98. If a PC wishes to inflict lethal damage, allow him to do so. But such actions should earn him many dark looks from bystanders as well as his fellow characters.

Down the Drain

As the battle (or discussion, if the PCs settle things peacefully) comes to an end, Phil decides the time has come to lose the PCs. He leaps into the sewers and makes his escape, using the *dust of disappearance* that Bradlie gave him.

Just as you finish dealing with the street gang, William cries out, "So long, Spag-heads!" As you turn in his direction, he sprinkles something over his head and vanishes.

To have a chance at stopping Phil, the PCs must block the sewer grate IMMEDIATELY. Any player who has his character block the grate can attempt an overbearing attack (see PHB, page 98), at a −4 penalty and any penalties for armor as listed on page 97, table 57. Success indicates that the character has tripped and pinned Phil. If more than one PC blocks the grate, treat it as a combined attack, using the character with the best base THAC0. Even if that character has a hefty armor penalty, roll once for the single character, who gets a +1 bonus for each extra PC involved.

Allow the PCs no more than 10 seconds to declare actions. If they are slow, Phil gets away clean. Note that Phil has initiative and becomes *invisible* before the PC can do anything. Unless a PC has a *detect invisibility* spell running, Phil can't be hit by spells such as *magic missile* or *charm person*, though area effect spells could get him.

If the PCs overbear Phil, they can capture him so long as they are careful to keep a grip on him. If a PC does not specifically state he is holding onto Phil, the boy squirts out from under the pile when the PCs return to their feet. Only a thin elf could follow the boy without opening the grate. The grating is very heavy, and even a strong PC or group of PCs will need a few minutes to open it, giving Phil ample time to escape.

If the PCs let Phil get away, read the following:

Sewage of a terribly potent vintage flies up and splatters upon you all. As you quickly peer into the dark aperture, you can see no trace of the boy in the odorous tunnels. What a revolting development this is! Do you give chase through the smelly muck? Or would you rather tell Bradlie that

you lost the Lord Regent's nephew down a sewer grate?

The PCs should definitely have their doubts about "William" now and will probably give chase so they can question him. Even if they have no suspicions, the PCs should chase the boy out of sense of duty or for fear of a reprimand by Bradlie.

Phil is *invisible* and knows the tunnels well. Smart PCs should realize that wandering very far into the dark and damp maze of corridors will probably get them lost. Phil cannot be tracked with infravision; beyond 10 feet the misty atmosphere of the sewers masks temperature differences.

Furthermore, the stench in this section is quite overpowering to those unfamiliar with it. Each character must make a saving throw versus poison for every three rounds that he is in the sewer or become violently ill (-4 to all dice rolls). This should encourage the characters to vacate the foul area with haste. PCs will be restored to normal after a couple of rounds in the fresh air.

If the PCs decide to blunder on after Phil, be sure to inquire about their light sources and choices of direction. The sewers are such a trackless maze that no map is necessary. You should simply give out directions at random until it becomes obvious that any mapping by the players will be useless.

Leaving the sewers should be no problem, as there are numerous grates in this area. Should the PCs exit through a different grate than the one they entered, an open doors roll will be necessary to tug the grate free.

If the PCs captured Phil before he dove into the sewers, the boy tries to continue playing his William role and accuses them of telling the "ruffians" where he would be so they could beat him up and take his money. He's a closed-mouthed little urchin, and he won't reveal what he's really up to. If the PCs treat him as a prisoner, he maintains his William role and threatens them with his uncle's wrath. If the PCs still have not tumbled to him, Phil "apologizes" for doubting them, and promises to act "as a highborn Ravens Bluff lad should." Then he tries to escape again. In this case, just roll initiative, and give Phil a −4 bonus if he's still *invisible*; if he wins initiative, Phil sprints into a crowd and is gone.

A Trying Experience

After their encounter at the sewer grate, the PCs should realize that something was wrong with the young man they had been escorting. Read the following if Phil escaped into the sewer:

Your little ordeal with the sewers has left you with sodden clothing and troubled thoughts. How are you going to explain to Bradlie that you lost Lord Raphiel's nephew? In the sewer no less! But William didn't fall into the sewer, he jumped. And he vanished into that stinking abyss too quickly and easily. Something about this situation (other than yourselves) just doesn't smell right.

Your thoughts are interrupted by the approach of several men. Their uniforms mark them as members of the City Watch. While this would normally be a heartening sight, you are all dismayed to see Bradlie's son Noland leading the patrol.

Good old Noland Tagart, a man of such resourcefulness and intelligence that he'd be scraping the barnacles off boats if his father hadn't gotten him a job with the Watch. When Bradlie isn't in the office, you can count on Noland stopping by to give a friendly smile, make some small talk, and then run to tell his father what you were doing in his absence.

However, Noland's smile is more wolfish than friendly now. Wrinkling his nose, he marches up and says, "Been playing in the sewers, eh Spags? You'll all make a fine sight at the meeting, I must say. Come along, Spags. You're under arrest."

If the PCs ask for details, Noland smugly tells them they are being charged with "Gross Negligence and Dereliction of Duty." The details concerning these charges will be explained to the PCs at the special meeting of the Advisory Council to which he is escorting them. After that, all the characters can get out of Noland are sneers. If they ask to clean up before going to the meeting, Noland says that they are to report to the Council at once. "It will teach you not to play in the sewers."

If the PCs still have Phil, read the following:

Your ordeal with this screaming brat is beginning to wear on you. First he tried to jump into a fetid sewer, than he tried to dash away and lose himself in a crowd, and now he's telling everyone within blocks that he's being abused and abducted. If you stopped to tie a bootlace, the civilians probably would lynch you. Bradlie Tagart has a lot to answer for this time.

William's cries and protestations seem to have drawn you some additional—and very unwanted—attention. Several men approach. Their uniforms mark them as members of the City Watch. While this would normally be a heartening sight, you are dismayed to see Bradlie's son Noland leading the patrol.

Good old Noland Tagart, a man of such resourcefulness and intelligence that he'd be scraping the barnacles off boats if his father had not gotten him a job with the Watch. When Bradlie isn't in the office, you can count on Noland stopping by to give a friendly smile, make some small talk, and then run to tell his father what you were doing in his absence.

Noland's smile is more wolfish than friendly now. Wrinkling his nose, he marches up and says, "Been playing a little game of tag, eh Spags? You'll all make a fine sight at the meeting, I must say. Come along, Spags, you're under arrest. You stick with me, my boy," he says to Phil, taking him by the arm.

Point out that the 15 men in Noland's patrol are not street thugs but armed regulars of the City Watch. The PCs should realize that any fight with the Watch will be more trouble than its worth and agree to go along. However, if they do decide to fight, it is their choice.

City Watchmen (15): Int Average to High; AL NG; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3 (F3); hp 25 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 15.

Fighting the Watch will result in the arrival of 15 more regulars (statistics as above) if needed, and the PCs being captured and taken to the Council meeting in chains as well as under guard.

You find yourselves in one of the great meeting chambers of the Advisory Council. You feel embarrassment at your filthy condition as you are ushered into

this finely-decorated room of paneled walls and marble columns. The stern expressions on the portraits are mirrored in the faces of the Lords waiting to greet you. A few noses wrinkle, a few whispers are uttered, and then a profound silence comes over them as you are lead to your seats. Not since your younger days has any of you been the target of such disapproval. Obviously, the Council is displeased with you.

A door to the side opens and admits your director. Bradlie gives you all a look of contempt and then meekly speaks to the assembled Lords.

"My esteemed councilors, I am most ashamed and embarrassed to be here. I have just been informed of the failure of my subordinates and would take all blame and guilt for their stupidity if I could."

Bradlie then whirls upon you and shouts, "However, I cannot accept the blame for these miserable persons. Their incompetence has endangered the life of a young, innocent child. Oh, if only I were allowed to hire worthy individuals, people with the brains to follow simple orders!"

The PCs are accused of failing to meet young William Strong, a rotund child with curly blonde hair, at the residence of Lord Raphiel and thereby allowing the boy to be kidnapped. They have been brought before the Council to explain their failure. Allow the players to relate their story to the Council. Try to cultivate a serious courtroom atmosphere, even though this is a council hearing and not a trial. Calm and courteous behavior should be better received than angry accusations and denials. Each PC will be asked to relate his or her version of the events.

Of course, Bradlie will deny sending them to the Eatery instead of Lord Raphiel's residence. He will accuse the PCs of making up their story of meeting a false nephew as a ploy to hide their guilt. "Where is this nephew you met? Down the sewers? A likely story!" If the PCs still had Phil in their custody when arrested and they mention this to the council, Bradlie still is contemptuous: "What!? This street urchin mistaken for William Raphiel? Obviously this boy has been employed—by these mountebanks—to add credence to their ridiculous story!" Phil responds by acting another role—he cries and shivers so hard his knees knock together. He's doing a very convincing imitation of a frightened child.

When the PCs finish their account, the Lords announce that the PCs are suspended from duty pending a decision by the Council. This decision will be handed down in one hour, and the PCs are expected to return at that time. "However, " one Lord tells the PCs, "It does not look good for you. Perhaps you should find a good lawyer—hopefully one without a sense of smell." The characters are warned that the Watch will be on the lookout for any attempt to leave the city. After that, the PCs will be released on their own recognizance.

If Phil was present at the meeting, he is mysteriously absent when the PCs are released. If the PCs ask one of the guards where the boy went, they learn that Noland quietly let him out a side door about five minutes ago.

Crime and Punishment

After being released from the hearing, you have your first chance to actually take a moment and examine two important facts.

Bradlie lied to you about where to meet William and about what the boy really looked like. A fake William was ready to meet you, keep you occupied, and then lose you by fleeing into the sewers.

It's obvious that you've been set up. The question is, what are you going to do about it?

Let the players discuss their options for a minute or so, then read the following:

As you ponder your futures outside the council chambers, a smartly dressed, eager-looking half-elf presents himself with a bow. "Well met, thou under-appreciated servants of Ravens Bluff. I am Robyn Pryce, and I have some small skill in persuading the disgruntled to be forgiving. Judging from what went inside chambers just now, I'd say you need an advocate. I offer my services, for a small retainer of course."

"Robyn Pryce" actually is Mortimer Mittlemer, one of Ravens Bluff's most notorious con artists. He sees the PCs as easy pickings. He reveals the following if the PCs converse with him:

* The charge against them is quite serious, and Bradlie Tagart is likely to set them up as scapegoats to advance himself. (True, but obvious.)

* He assumes the PCs are innocent, and thinks he has a good chance to get them off, provided they can accompany him to his office to answer a few questions and sign a few papers allowing him to act on their behalf. (Mortimer knows they're innocent, as he has been using *ESP* on them. The council also knows they're innocent, at least of complicity in the kidnapping, as they have access to various divination spells, too. The real question facing the PCs is whether they are guilty of gross stupidity or negligence. Actually the worst thing that could happen to the PCs is that they could be fired and disgraced.)

* The PCs should let him look after their affairs while they go home and clean themselves up. (This is the very worst thing they could do).

If the PCs refuse "Robyn's" offer, or refuse to talk to him, he follows them discreetly and creates an incident:

Smooth-talking half-elven lawyers are not what you need in this case. You'll handle this yourself. You stride purposefully down the street, considering your next move. Your thoughts, however, are interrupted by a frenzied scream: "Call the watch! Monsters in the city!" Panicked citizens are fleeing in all directions. "By all the powers!" shouts one shopkeeper as he shutters his store. "Where did they come from?"

They you spot the catalyst for all the ruckus, four large humanoids with hyena faces, grey skin, and straw-colored hair. They ignore the startled civilians and move directly toward you, though you hardly are the easiest pickings on the street.

The monsters are gnolls, brought into being with Mortimer's *monster summoning II* spell. The conniving mage drank his *potion of speed*, got ahead of the PCs, and laid this little trap for them. He intends to stage a dramatic "rescue" of the PCs in his Robyn Pryce guise. The combat goes as follows:

Round 1: Mortimer, under the effects of a *potion of speed* and an *Improved invisibility spell*, casts *monster summoning II* and directs the four gnolls it produces to attack the PCs. The PCs see the gnolls about 40 feet

away and moving toward them; they can take no action yet.

Round 2: The gnolls close and melee the PCs. The PCs might have time to launch missile attacks if they win initiative. If the PCs declare missile attacks and lose initiative, they must spend the remainder of the round changing weapons. If the PCs think the gnolls are illusory and attempt to disbelieve them, they lose all attacks and the gnolls receive a +2 "to hit" bonus against them.

Round 3: The gnolls continue to melee. Mortimer casts *demi-shadow monsters* and creates a troll, which immediately charges the PCs from an alley about 15 feet away. The PCs see it immediately. Attempts to disbelieve receive a −4 penalty (−2 from the spell itself, −1 because Mortimer is an illusionist, and −1 because the PCs have just encountered "real" summoned monsters). The PCs must declare they are disbelieving to get a roll at all. Note also that the troll still can hurt the PCs even if they disbelieve (see PHB, page 167).

Round 4: The troll joins the melee, while Mortimer circles around behind the PCs.

Round 5: The troll and surviving gnolls melee the PCs. Mortimer casts an *audible glamer* spell, and the PCs hear harp music behind them. The duration on the *potion of speed* expires.

Round 6: Mortimer, still disguised as Robyn Pryce and now visible, runs up the street, harp in hand, and joins the PCs' rear rank. He tells the PCs to stop attacking the troll so he can charm it.

Round 7: If the PCs don't stop attacking the troll, "Robyn" shouts at them to stop, because they are preventing the charm, he suggests they simply parry the beast's blows.

Round 8: "Robyn" strums a chord or two on his harp, and the troll stops attacking. The chord is not musical, but only PCs who are specifically listing to the harp can tell this. The troll stops fighting. If the PCs are attacking, they hit it automatically and it falls to the ground. If the PCs aren't attacking it, the troll walks up to Robyn and bows its head, which Robyn promptly strikes off with a short sword.

If the PCs are having difficulty with the gnolls, Robyn eliminates them, too:

Afterward Robyn helps the PCs burn the troll. Robyn suggests that the PCs' enemy must want them dead pretty bad. He points out that it's very tough to smuggle monsters into the city. Shortly afterward, the city watch arrives to take charge of the situation. They question the PCs, then invite them to move along.

Robyn once again offers to help them win their case. If they refuse again, he smiles, and asks them if they'd really enjoy breaking rocks for the next 20 years. If they still don't agree, he leaves, cursing them for their "stupidity."

Gnolls (4): Int Low; AL CE; AC 5 (10); MV 9; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (weapon); SZ L; ML 11.

Troll (1): Int Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 33; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 5/8-5/8-6-12; SD regenerates 3 hp/round starting the 3rd round after taking damage; SZ L; ML 14.

Hooked

If the PCs agree to hire "Robyn Pryce" as their lawyer, he leads them to a small loft a few blocks from the council chamber. He invites them to sit and starts rummaging around in a desk.

> "I think your case is a pretty simple one," says Robyn. "But is there anything I should know about it? Something you didn't mention in chambers?" The half elf raises his eyebrows.

Allow the PCs to waste as much time as they want in pouring out their troubles to Mortimer. When the PCs are finished read the following.

> "Excellent!" exclaims Robyn. "Not only can I get you cleared, I think we just might catch that crooked Bradlie Tagart and his toady of a son, too. However, to pursue this case, I'll need you to empower me to make certain motions and inquires on your behalf. Normally I would charge at least 600 gold pieces for such work, but the Tagarts are crooks, and I want their hides. I will, of course, need something to cover my expenses. Let's see, I'll need about 3 gold to cover materials and at least another 25 to, shall we say, pay certain fees and tariffs?"

If the PCs refuse to pay, or start to haggle, Robyn puts his head in his hands: "Please good people! I can't do this thing for any less! Okay, I'll skip lunch for next week and do it for 20 gold!" When the PCs Finally Pay:

> Robyn produces six contracts. "These are powers of attorney," he says. "They give me the right to act as your advocate, to argue your case before the council, and to collect a fee—which you've already agreed to pay. My actions on your part cannot be legal and will not be recognized by the council or any court in Ravens Bluff without your signature, or mark if you don't write." He hands a long, official-looking document to each of you. They are made of crisp, new papyrus.

What's Really Going On Here

The contracts the PCs have been given assign all their property to Mortimer Mittlemer, in return for services already rendered. Mortimer is hoping to the PCs will blindly sign the documents and hand them over. If they do read them, they encounter a section of *illusionary script* and must save vs. spells at −1 (Wisdom adjustment applies) or sign the contract and hand it over anyway.

If Mortimer is found out, he unveils a *continual darkness* spell before the PCs can do anything (treat this as an ambush). Then he uses his *dimension door* or *shadow door* to escape, taking the PCs' money and maybe a few contracts with him. The round after the *darkness* spell is released, Mortimer has a −2 initiative bonus. All attacks against him are at −4. Mortimer's prime motivation is to escape, and he probably should, unless the PCs are exceptionally sharp and lucky to boot. (To kill or capture Mortimer, they must beat him on initiative on the first round and disrupt his *dimension door* spell. Thereafter, they must disrupt his *shadow door* spell, and successfully melee him to death or unconsciousness.

The PCs are free to search the office after Mortimer is gone. The only thing they find, however, is a bottle of ink, some sealing wax, and a few quill pens. If the PCs question the neighbors or the landlord, they learn only that the office was rented by a newcomer named Robyn Pryce, an untalented bard.

If the PCs don't tumble to Mortimer's scam, Robyn tells them to go home, get cleaned up, and meet him at the council chambers when its time for their hearing. Neither Robyn or Bradlie shows up for the session, and the PCs are summarily drummed out of the Guard for "gross stupidity."

Decisions

After the shenanigans at the council chambers are over, the PCs might do several things:

* They could go home and get cleaned up. As the DM, you should point out that by the time they all went to their homes and returned it would be time to hear the Council's decision.

* They could attempt to find and confront Bradlie. However, a quick search will reveal that he and Noland have disappeared and no one knows where they went. If the PCs check their own office, it is empty, as Bradlie and Noland have yet to arrive with the kidnapped nephew.

* They could look for the fake nephew. This is the PCs' best bet. Hopping back into the sewers will only get them more dirty, but a trip back to the docks will prove most valuable, as the PCs will have little trouble finding Phil. If the PCs go to the docks, read the following:

> You've only just returned to the docks when who should come running up to you but the little boy you know as "William." His fine clothes are torn and his nose dribbles blood. Eyes wide, he screams, "You gotta help me. Don't let 'em kill me. Help me! Help me!"

Phil is being chased by the gang members from an earlier encounter. They will pull up short upon seeing the PCs, but will maintain their proximity. This situation may appear to put the PCs in an excellent position to get information from Phil; however, the lad is not dim. Despite his fear of the gang, he knows the trouble the PCs are in and is fairly sure that he is their only lead. Therefore, any threat to turn him over to the gang will be answered by, "Then you'll never find the real nephew." Phil will settle for safe passage from the waterfront and a little money in exchange for his information, but he will try for more if he can get it. Use your imagination concerning Phil's demands. However, he and the PCs should eventually reach a settlement.

Once Phil has been lead to safety, he explains that a guy matching Bradlie's description hired and briefed him to impersonate William Strong. Furthermore, Phil overheard Bradlie tell a trio of tough-looking guys to snatch the real nephew and meet with Bradlie later. When asked where they are to meet, Phil smiles and try to get a few more coins out of the PCs. Whether he gets them, Phil will eventually tell the characters the location of the meeting—the office of the Special Advisory Council Guard.

The Jig Is Up

If the PCs have successfully found Phil Krisp and discovered the real nephew's location, they will have only twenty minutes before they are to return to the Council. They have that long to confront and defeat Bradlie.

> As the sands of time fall away to be lost in the past, you hurry back to the office. Considering all the times Bradlie has berated, chastised, and mentally jerked your chains there, it is only fitting that it be the site of your confrontation.
>
> Upon your arrival, you find the door is locked. Fortunately, you still retain your keys. With a quick turn and push, the door swings wide and you flow into the room. There before you, with looks of panic and fear on their usually pompous faces, stand Bradlie and Noland. Behind them are six men holding a large sack. Judging by the movements within, it holds the captive nephew.
>
> With a sudden shriek, Bradlie screams, "Well, just don't stand there like the stupid morons you are! Go and GET THEM!" At that, the thugs drop the sack and charge at you.

Brigands (6): Int Low; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 24, 20, 18, 17, 17, 15; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8; SA +1 "to hit" +2 damage from long sword specialization; SZ M; ML 11

Noland will fight only to defend Bradlie, and Bradlie will not fight at all. In fact, he will claim that he and his son had arrested the kidnappers and were just about to release William when the PCs burst in. At that point, a patrol of the City Watch will arrive to escort everyone back to the Council.

If the PCs come here without looking for Phil first, they find the place locked and empty. Nobody knows where Bradlie and Noland are. If they carefully search the place, however, they find a windowless room in the basement. The door has a heavy lock, but is open now. Inside, they find a small bed, a jug of water, and a set of chains. This is where Bradlie and Noland plan to keep the real William while they negotiate for his release or stage his "rescue." Further searching reveals a large stock of iron rations in Bradlie's office—enough to feed a 12-year-old boy for about two weeks.

Epilogue

Once again the PCs will be lead into the impressive council chambers and asked to explain themselves. They should use this opportunity to outline Bradlie's treachery. If they thought to keep Phil with them, they can persuade him to tell his part of the story. Bradlie and Noland will claim that the kidnappers confessed that the PCs were behind the plot and that they are the real criminals. But the most important evidence will be presented by the nephew William Strong. For although he has spent most of the day tied up in a sack, he distinctly remembers hearing the Tagarts' voices speaking in league with the kidnappers.

Bradlie and Noland will be suspended and turned over to the City Watch while the Council debates. The PCs will be reinstated to their positions with the promise that a more competent director will be assigned to them. And lastly, each will be given 25 gold.

In addition, Lord Regent Thomas Raphiel offers the PCs any two of the following, to be divided as they see fit:

* Two *potions of extra healing*

* Four gems worth 200 gold each

* 20 *arrows +1*

* A *dagger +2*

* One set of *banded mail +1*

* One block of *incense of meditation*

* A gold and jade ring worth 600 gold; this item will be sized to fit one character and will be inscribed with the words: "With thanks from Lord Thomas and William Raphiel

Any PC who signed one of Mortimer's contracts and didn't get it back has forfeited all legal rights to his property. Tell the PC to cross off all his equipment except clothing and the 25 gold he got from the council. If the player objects, tell the PCs that a large contingent of properly licensed, private guards has arrived to confiscate the property. Ask the PC what he's going to do about it. Fighting doesn't work. The

PC is arrested, but released, for disorderly conduct. Non-violent resistance automatically lands the PC in a civil court where Mortimer's lawyer tries to defend the contracts. The PCs easily can prove they were duped and get the contract declared invalid, but the effort costs them 2d4x10 gold each. If a PC doesn't have that much, the PC begins his next adventure owing the difference to the city.

In the unlikely event that the PCs captured or killed Mortimer, the PCs are awarded 500 gold and Mortimer's *ring of protection +1*. The rest of Mortimer's items are held by the city. (Mortimer successfully recovers them after paying a series of fines.

NPCs

Bradlie Tagart
STR 13, INT 13; WIS 9; DEX 14; CON 18; CHA 14; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3 (F3); hp 17; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 11

Weapon proficiencies: dagger, short sword, club, short bow, knife

Nonweapon proficiencies: gaming (14), running (12), reading/writing Common (16)

Bradlie Tagart is 59 years old, 5′ 10″ tall and weighs 165 pounds. His brown hair is streaked with gray and his face is twisted with a mass of wrinkles. Bradlie has been in government service all of his life, learning not only which forms to fill out but whose brass to kiss. Concerned only with his own personal status, Bradlie has used every post entrusted to him to build up political favors instead of doing his job. This has brought him under attack several times from other bureaucrats and politicians, but Bradlie has always managed to pull together enough strings to save his hide. This has given Bradlie two things; a growing sense of paranoia and the feeling that no matter how badly he screws up, he will always be able to pull his bacon out of the fire. This has led him to concoct more and more radical plans of advancement. Bradlie is also slightly addled. His mood can swing from one of calm, stately grace to that of a hysterical child. However, he never directs the latter toward his superiors, only his subordinates. Bradlie tries to avoid encounters against superior numbers, preferring to stir up trouble in hopes of separating his targets and attacking them individually. He always wears an ornate and ugly suit of *leather +1*.

Noland Tagart
STR 16, INT 10; WIS 6; DEX 14; CON 16; CHA 14; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 1 (F1); hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 10

Weapon proficiencies: dagger, long sword, club, long bow

Nonweapon proficiencies: gaming (14), reading/writing Common (13)

Noland Tagart is 36 years old, 6' tall and weighs 200 lbs. With his broad shoulders and curly brown hair, he appears to be quite a dashing figure. Unfortunately, Noland does not have the brains and common sense to make use of his physical ability. Noland has ambition but not the mental faculties to achieve his desired ends. This (along with having Bradlie as a father) has turned Noland into a very taciturn individual. Whenever an opportunity arises to display superiority, Noland will jump at it. Noland relies upon his father to provide all the necessities of his life. Everything from his job to the color of his underwear is decided by Bradlie. Thus Noland, the dutiful son, will go to great lengths to protect his father, the source of these benefits. Little does he know that he has been raised as his father's lackey and stooge and that Bradlie would sacrifice him in an instant if necessary.

Phil Krisp
STR 12, INT 14; WIS 13; DEX 16; CON 13; CHA 13; AL CN; AC 8; MV 12; HD 1 (T1); hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ M; ML 15

Weapon proficiencies: dagger, knife

Nonweapon proficiencies: jumping (16), gaming (13), tumbling (16), read and write Common (17)

Thief abilities: PP 30, OP 30, RT 10, MS 30, HS 25, DN 20, CW 70, RL 10

Phil Krisp is 4′ 6″ tall and weighs 100 pounds. He is a slender boy with brown hair and freckles. While not especially bright, his quick wit and imagination show that Phil has the makings of an excellent actor. Orphaned very young, Phil has made the rounds with the urchins and beggars about town, as well as a few of the street gangs. Phil is always willing to make a quick copper and is not above a childish bit of petty spite or revenge.

Mortimer Mittlemer
STR 9, INT 14; WIS 16; DEX 17; CON 10; CHA 10; AL CN; AC 1; MV 12; HD 9 (W9); hp 41; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ M; ML 14

Weapon proficiencies: dagger, staff

Nonweapon proficiencies: read/write Common, Thorass (15); local history (11), riding, land-based (horses) (19), appraising (14)

Spells carried: *cantrip, sleep* (x2), *feather fall, audible glamer, fog cloud, scare, ESP, mirror image, suggestion* (x2), wraithform, spectral force, dimension door, monster summoning II, improved invisibility, demi-shadow monsters, shadow door

Magical items: *hat of disguise, bracers of defense AC 5, dagger +3, ring of protection +1, ring of animal friendship, oil of slipperiness, potion of speed, continual darkness* (cast on a coin)

In his "Robyn Price" guise, Mortimer appears to be a half-even bard, about 45 years old (still pretty young for a half elf). He intends to convince the PCs he can help them out of their predicament.

Mortimer has a small cadre of toadies, shills, and assistants, although none of then actually appear in this adventure (except a possible cameo by his wife, Marilyn, a thief). Most of them are loyal to him out of fear, greed, or ignorance. ❑

Tyanna Tymb

Continued from page 16

in the field. Two years ago, during the height of the galactic civil war, she was assigned to handle the SoroSuub facilities in Varada system.

Though her people have thrown their support into the New Republic, Tyanna has always favored the methods and vast resources of the Empire. She continues to trade with the Imperial remnants, though in a less-visible fashion than before. She has an especially close relationship with Moff Poliff of Tunka Sector and with Captain Fessix of the Star Destroyer *Discord*. She regularly provides these two with details concerning her Republic customers.

A rival from the past has recently returned to compete with Tyanna. When Tyanna purchased the trade and resource rights to the seventh star system in the Varada Sector, she found that one planet and its neighboring asteroid field were already under contract to a small independent company called Fax Ventures—a company headed by Tyanna's "old friend" Alara Fax. For the sake of completeness, Tyanna wants the corporate rights to the entire system. She especially wants what currently belongs to her old rival. Never mind the rich deposits of aluminite and corax ore waiting to be extracted from the asteroids, or the lush jungles of Bestal Three ripe for exploitation. The goal to this deal, as far as Tyanna is concerned, is to take away Alara's newest toy. Her associates are already busily scanning textdocs and infiltrating Alara's headquarters. ❑

Alara Fax

Continued from page 16

such an endeavor make her company even richer, if it could be grabbed before Tyanna could get to it then Alara's revenge would begin. In Bestal system, Alara found just the hidden gold mine she was hoping for. Before Tyanna and SoroSuub began expanding throughout the sector, Fax Ventures sealed the rights to Bestal Three and the Kadal Asteroid Field.

To all outward appearances, Fax Ventures is mining aluminite and corax from the asteroids and processing it on the planet. While this is a good cover and the mining is earning Alara a significant amount of credits, the real wealth waits in the jungles of Bestal Three. Here, the crusty seeds of the vortal tree are being harvested for medicinal purposes. Medpacs that use healing stimulants made from the seeds, for example, are 25% more effective than standard medpacs. Alara will be ready to market her new medpacs soon, putting them into direct competition with SoroSuub's proven sellers. She knows that this will hurt Tyanna's pride to no end—and perhaps even disgrace her in the eyes of her SoroSuub superiors. ❑

Going, Going . . .

At this year's Game Fair, support The Hand of Mercy Children's Hospital & Orphanage, and Marigold's Menagerie by participating in the Living City Bazaar auctions! The first auction will begin during Slot 10A, and the second during Slot 11B. Both continue until all items have been claimed.

Attend one or both auctions "in character" and bid on the many fabulous wares in "gold pieces"—*not* the gold pieces your character has accumulated, but actual U.S. currency at the rate of $1 = 1 gp.

There is one exception: at some point during the proceedings of each auction, it will be announced that ONLY Living City money will be accepted for the next item up for bid. At that point, those who wish to bid for the item in question must do so using actual gold pieces their characters have earned while adventuring in the Living City. In other words, there is a chance for your character to purchase a fabulous item for your LC character using imaginary money.

The charities mentioned above as the recipients of the money raised are in actuality The Wisconsin Children's Hospital and the Okada Guide Dog Program, which have been special charities for the RPGA® Network for the past several years. Here's our chance to support them better than ever, and to have a great time in the Living City Bazaar!

A Handful of Dust

An AD&D® Game Adventure for Characters Level 3-5

by John Rateliff

DM Background

The PCs are hired to run an errand for a mage who is desperate to complete a magical experiment. They have only three hours to fetch a small bag of mummy dust from a magic-supply shop. Distractions and delays, such as a gang of marauding berserker barbarians and a drowning child, will hamper their progress.

Matters are complicated by the fact that the dust they need is no longer in the shop. The owner took it home with him. If they can return to the mage with the dust before the three hours are up, he will shower them with gold and let them sample his new potion; if not, the testy mage will hunt them down and polymorph the lot of them into toads.

Players' Introduction

This fine morning you're strolling down King William's street in Ravens Bluff. Your pleasant musings are interrupted by the sound of a crash, followed by an explosion. Shattered glass from a nearby window showers your group, and a bitter-smelling reddish smoke comes billowing out. From inside, a furious voice screams.

"My experiment! Ruined! Idiot! Fool! Imbecile! Look what you've done, you, you, you, toad!"

A second, higher pitched voice pipes in. "I didn't do it! I mean, it just wasn't my fault! I mean, anyone could get those two mixed up! I mean, I really didn't mean to! Don't . . . ribbit! ribbit! ribbit!""

The door flies open and a man pokes his head out, coughing and gasping. His hair sticks up wildly, wisps of smoke rise from where his robe smolders, and his eyebrows are gone.

As he gets his breath back, he glances up the street. Spying you, he points a finger and shouts in a hoarse, craggy voice:

"You! (cough) I'll pay you (cough) a hundred gold pieces (cough) to run a quick errand for me (cough). Five hundred (cough). A thousand! (gasp) Hurry! There's no time to lose!" he adds, vanishing back inside.

If the PCs look about, they notice that the neighbors ignore the incident and carry on about their business as if explosions like this were an everyday event (they are). The rest of this adventure proceeds on the assumption that, attracted by the promise of generous rewards, the PCs take the mage up on his offer.

Inside, you find a room right out of the dreams of alchemists. Retorts and beakers, mortars and pestles, copper tubing and bizarrely-shaped containers of every sort crowd the tables. It's hard to see through the smoke, but most of this equipment still seems to be intact; only the glassware on the table next to the window is broken beyond repair, a sad-looking toad sitting amongst it.

The mage rushes back and forth across the room from table to table, taking a quick inventory: "Quicksilver—yes. Powdered jade—yes. Dragon's tooth—yes . . . no, wait. That's a wyvern's fang. Ah, here it is. Nutmeg—yes. Mummy dust . . . mummy dust! That's the one!" He wheels to face you. "I want you to fetch me some mummy dust. That idiot ex-apprentice of mine," he fumes, pointing at the toad, "threw smokepowder into the mix instead of powdered jade. Now I've got to mix up a whole new batch within the next three hours, or else my experiment will be utterly ruined. Months of work straight up in smoke! Unless you can dash quickly over to Bendekar's Mercantile—that's Bende-kar's—and get me some more of that mummy dust exactly like the batch I bought two weeks ago. "Well, what are you waiting for?

Cordwainer: INT Very; AL CG; AC -4; MV 12; HD 12 (W12); hps 35; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (staff); SA Spells; SD Spells; S M (5'3"); ML 14

Magic items: *Ring of spell turning, ring of protection +5, robe of protection +5, boots of levitation, wand of polymorphing* (36 charges), *crystal ball.*

Spells: *grease, identify, magic missile, friends, alter self, detect invisibility, ESP, mirror image, dispel magic, fireball, lightning bolt, protection from normal missiles, emotion (hopelessness), Evard's black tentacles, fumble, improved invisibility, advanced illusion, improved mirror image, teleport, cone of cold, enchant an item.*

Cordwainer is a highly competent mage specializing in magical research. Unfortunately, he's also very impatient and becomes somewhat bad-tempered when an experiment is going awry. At present, his attempt to create a *potion of wisdom* is going badly indeed, thanks to his apprentice having just caused one vital stage of the experiment to blow up. Unless Cordwainer can reassemble the ingredients and re-brew this final, crucial part of his elixir within the next three hours, he'll have to start all over again from scratch, losing months of work and thousands upon thousands of gold pieces worth of material components. If the PCs succeed, he will reward them handsomely; if they fail, they'll find out about the world as flies see it.

Barbarians at the Gate

When the PCs finally reach Bendekar's Mercantile, they probably will not be pleased to discover a group of barbarian berserkers standing outside the shop getting ready to sack the place before burning it down.

The PCs will see several of the barbarians stacking wood against the side of the building while others are pouring oil over it. These barbarians are seeking to wipe out an affront to their clan.

Eight months ago one of their number, a barbarian named Erland Wolf, boasted during a drinking contest that he would travel to Ravens Bluff and destroy a magic shop a wandering skald

had told the tribe about. He never returned, but months later a report came back that the shop now boasted a wooden statue of a barbarian wearing a wolfskin. Determined to avenge their fellow warrior, they plan to kill everyone in the place, destroy anything which even looks like it could be used for magic, and then burn the building down as their brother's pyre. These barbarians are true berserkers. They dislike cities, hate magic, and destroy it whenever they can. They believe women should be completely subservient to men, and they live only for the joy of battle. It is unlikely they and the player characters will become friends.

Thorkill Egilsson: INT Average; AL CN; AC 3; MV 12; HD 6; hps 62; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10+1 (two-handed sword); S M (6'3"); ML 18

Odd-A-Marklind: INT Average; AL CN; AC 7; MV 12; HD 4; hps 38; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (battle axe); S M (6'); ML 18

Pandi One-Eye: INT Low; AL CN; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hps 29; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+1 (axe); S M (6'); ML 18

Heming: INT Average; AL CN; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4; hps 34; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (battle axe); S M (6'); ML 18

Gram the Bold: INT Average; AL CN; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2; hps 24; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (battle axe); S M (6'); ML 18

The PCs have only two choices if they want to continue with their mission: fight the barbarians or stand aside and see what happens. The barbarians are determined to destroy this place and everything in it; they will not let the PCs enter without a fight. If the PCs fight them and win (the berserkers will all fight until dead or unconscious), proceed to the next encounter.

If the berserkers defeat or drive away the PCs, or if they decide the PCs are not worth fighting (i.e., not enough of a challenge), they will proceed with their plans to destroy the shop. With bloodcurdling screams, they rush inside, weapons drawn—and never come out again. Bendekar's is protected by a powerful wish spell, cast upon it by a grateful wizard in return for a year's free spell components. The exact wording of the spell is not known, but it causes anyone trying to steal from or damage the shop or its contents to become part of the stock for a year.

Bendekar's Mercantile

Once the player characters eventually enter the shop, they find it strangely peaceful after all the excitement outside. The first thing the characters see is a large wooden statue of a barbarian standing just inside the door, seemingly frozen in mid-swing with a ferocious expression on his face. This is Erland Wolf, who will be petrified in this pose for another three and a half months. It is, of course, a perfect likeness, eerily like the work of a medusa who turned people into wood instead of stone.

> Aside from the "wooden barbarian," the shop is practically empty of furniture. The walls are full of shelves crammed with every imaginable kind of spell component: anything a wizard, priest, or alchemist might need to cast a spell, brew a potion, or create a magic item seems to be here. A counter in the back has many jars, a small incomplete chess set, a moth-eaten stuffed crow, and other, unidentifiable objects, as well as a pile of dusty books. Pots, apparently full of yet more stuff, hang from the ceiling. A curtained doorway behind the counter presumably separates the showroom from the rest of the shop.

If the berserkers rushed in before the PCs could stop them, they appear to have vanished without a trace (each character has a one-in-six chance of spotting them among a small set of unusual chessmen at one end of the counter). The "stuffed crow" (it is, in fact, only sleeping) is a familiar belonging to the two Narrs. It awakens if touched or if anyone tries to go behind the counter, croaking crossly "Rrruack! Bailey! Bailey! Rrruack!."

Hearing her name, Bailey enters through the curtain at the back, smiles, welcomes the PCs to the shop, and asks what she can do for them. Once the PCs attempt to explain their errand, they discover that they don't have enough information, particularly if they don't know the name of the mage who hired them (if they didn't ask in the first encounter, they don't know). A lot of mages buy their supplies here, and more than one has bought mummy dust in the past few weeks. Furthermore, not just any old mummy dust will do; Cordwainer asked them to get him more of the same batch. If the players have forgotten this, the DM might want to have Bailey nudge their memory with a few helpful questions ("did he ask for a specific mummy, or just any old dust?").

Eventually the PCs should be able to describe Cordwainer well enough for Bailey to recognize him, at which point she'll turn to the bird and say "Crow—go get Narr." The ragged crow takes off heavily, flying through a gap at the top of the curtain to vanish into the back. Bailey opens up the record books on the counter and begins to look through the past few weeks' transactions, tracing each line of crabbed writing with her finger and muttering to herself.

After a few minutes, Narr, a scrawny, swaying stick of a mage, joins them, the crow perched on his shoulder. When he can't remember having made the sale either, he mumbles "Weren't me—must'a been Narr" and orders his familiar "Go get Narr," upon which the bird once again lurches into the air and vanishes into the back again. Shortly thereafter the other Narr appears, somewhat bleary-eyed, with the crow.

This Narr, whose mumble is even worse, also denies any knowledge of the transaction. After several more minutes' fruitless searching on the part of the three shopkeepers, the crow, and the PCs, Bailey at last finds the correct entry: "Sold, to Cordwainer the mage, one-third of the dust of the mummy of the great vizier Hopet-an-Seti. Price, 500 pieces of gold."

She now remembers that Bendekar wanted to find out more about Hopet-an-Seti, who was rumored to have been a great sage, and decided to keep the rest of the mummy dust for himself as a souvenir; he took it home with him a week ago. Bendekar is currently out-of-town on business, but for 500 gp Bailey will give the PCs a receipt for half the remaining dust and tell them to take it to Bendekar's housekeeper, explain the situation, and ask him to let them collect the purchase.

If the PCs don't have 500 gp, she will take however much they have, plus some of their goods in collateral. Characters carrying money who pretend to be penniless are unlikely to fool her unless their valuables are very well hidden: Bailey is an experienced thief whose specialty is sizing up potential targets

for one of the local thieves' guilds. If they are honestly broke, she will offer them the receipt if they are willing to each sign a promissory note agreeing to work off the debt.

If any PC thief is so foolish as to attempt to pickpocket any item from the shop, there is a blinding flash of light and the character vanishes—only to reappear in the form of the familiar's stand, his arms extended to form the perch. The same occurs if Bailey, Narr, or Narr are attacked while in the shop.

Bailey: INT Very; AL CG; AC 9; MV 12; HD 4; hps 18; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); S M (5'4"); ML 18

Bailey has been working for Bendekar for a little less than a year, but she's already become a popular fixture at the shop. Genuinely friendly, helpful, and attractive, she does her best to make customers feel welcome. Bendekar hired her for her appraising skills; he's come to value the way her charisma and warmth brighten the shop as well.

What Bendekar does not know is that Bailey is a spy placed in his shop by The Four Ravens, Ravens Bluff's underground Thieves' Guild. While the Ravens know better than to try to steal from the shop itself (all curses aside, Bendekar pays them a 10% tithe of his profits), they also know that most newcomers to town pass through the Mercantile at some point. Bailey's job is to size up potential targets for the guild from the folks that pass through Bendekar's doors. When she sees rich-looking newcomers or passing adventurers loaded down with more treasure than is good for them, she quietly passes word along to John Porter, the Ravens' secret guildmaster, and such folk often find themselves relieved of their excess wealth within the next 48 hours. Since Bailey never participates in any of the jobs herself, her role in them has so far gone completely unsuspected.

Bailey gets along well with Narr (both of him) and Crow. She finds Bendekar himself very attractive and is pleased to have recently caught his eye. She'd like to become his fourth wife someday, but is confident enough not to be in any rush. Hence, she never flirts with customers and is careful not to act in a way that will give away her cover.

Narr and Narr: INT Average; AL CG; AC 8; MV 12; HD 4; hps 12; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); SA Spells; SD Spells; S M (5'6"); ML 13

Magic items: *Ring of protection +1* (Narr #1). *rod of cancellation* (Narr #2). potions: *healing* (Narr #1), *invisibility* (Narr #2). small silver mirror (Narr #1). crow food (Narr #2).

Spells (both): *identify x2,mending, knock,wizard lock*

No, you're not seeing double. Narr is an adventuring partner of Bendekar's now fallen on hard times because of his drinking habit. He's still a competent mage when sober, but his inability to remain that way put an end to his adventuring career a few years back. Bendekar came to his old friend's rescue, offering him a job using his *identify* spells to help identify, classify, and sort the things people brought into his shops to sell.

The two Narrs are the result of a poorly-worded *wish* granted the mage after he freed a grateful djinn from her millennia-long imprisonment (he'd actually only been trying to see if the bottle contained any potables). When asked if there was anything he wanted, the befuddled mage said he sometimes wished there were two of him so that one could drink and loaf while the other took care of business. An instant later, his wish came true. Both Narrs are identical in appearance and abilities; both have the same set of memories up until that point; both have the same bad habits. No one, not even they, can tell which is the original and which the duplicate. The two Narrs have adapted by trading off: one gets to work while the other sleeps. While it's a terribly confusing arrangement for everybody else, it seems to work for them.

Crow: INT Average; AL N; AC 7; MV 1, Fl 36; HD 1; hps 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA Eye peck; S M (1'); ML 18

Crow is Narr's familiar. Only Crow can tell the two identical Narrs apart; no one knows how he does this. Unusually intelligent for a bird, Crow is getting on in years and spends most of his time sleeping on his perch.

He often gets second-hand hangovers courtesy of his psychic link with his masters, but he also knows he's long since passed the allotted lifespan of his species. He suspects his familiar status is all that's keeping him alive. As such, he's willing to put up with the endless headaches. He looks ancient, like a badly-stuffed museum exhibit with some of its feathers falling out.

Once the player characters are ready to continue with their mission, Bailey will give them directions to Bendekar's house. If they'd like a guide, she'll send Crow with them.

Drowning Lessons

As the PCs cross a bridge, they hear a commotion far below. Looking over, they see a small child seems to be drowning in the river. The PCs can avoid getting involved if they wish, but good-aligned characters will probably value the life of a five-year old girl above a magical experiment.

The child will disappear under the surface after 60 seconds of real time. If the players begin to argue about the course of action they should take, the point will soon become moot: the child will become unconscious almost immediately after submerging and will drown within a few melee rounds.

The fastest way to reach the child is to dive from the bridge. It is 30 feet to the water. Characters with the swimming proficiency who make their ability checks will be able to dive into the water safely; those who fail suffer 1d12 points of damage. A character who can swim will be able to reach the drowning girl and drag her to safety without difficulty. A heroic but rash character who doesn't know how to swim will be able to stay afloat for a number of rounds equal to his or her armor class plus 1d6. If the characters succeed in rescuing the little girl, they will be thanked by the child's frantic mother, who will take off the amulet she wears on a chain and place it about the neck of the character who, in the DM's judgment, contributed most in the rescue. This family heirloom is a *necklace of memory enhancement*. It makes the wearer immune to natural and magical memory losses, including from spells such as *forget*. Further, the wearer can recall any sight or conversation or any book he read within the previous week. The necklace does not improve spell-casting ability.

Note that if the PC carrying Bailey's receipt jumps into the river, it may complicate matters in the next encounter.

"You Rang?"

Once the PCs finally reach their destination, they find that their guide or directions has led them to the house's back door. This is deliberate; the front door is impassable because it opens

inward, and tons of junk have fallen against the door inside the room, preventing it from budging.

So this is the place! You find yourself standing in front of an ordinary-looking door in a nondescript house that on most days you'd probably pass by without a second thought. The door is on a quiet sidestreet, and there's nobody in sight. A rusty old bellpull can be seen on the upper left of the doorframe. You smell the delicious aroma of fresh baking.

Pulling the bellstring sets off a cacophony which sounds like a hundred steeples ringing their bells at the same time. The racket lasts a long minute.

The noise finally stops, except for the ringing in your ears. As soon as silence is restored, the door swings open (crrreak . . .). Beyond you take in a brightly-lit room—obviously a kitchen.

The air is filled with the smell of muffins, and the muffins themselves sit cooling on the counter. There's a sink with its own small pump, a wood-burning stove, a small wood-bin, and a large wooden table with what looks like a recipe-book open on it, as well as several loose sheets of paper and a quill in an ink well.

Glancing down, you see an elderly halfling with neatly-brushed white hair standing on the welcome mat. He wears an immaculate butler's uniform; the effect is only slightly spoiled by his rolled-up sleeves and the apron he wears over it. He looks up at you with icy calm and says "You rang?"

This is Pence, Bendekar's personal cook and butler. With polite hauteur he will ask the PCs' business, inform them that he regrets to say Mr. Bendekar is away at present, and starts to close the door. If they show him the receipt from Bailey, he will fish a pair of spectacles out of his shirt pocket and read it carefully before inviting them inside. Assuming the PCs are reasonably straightforward and polite to the old chap, he will explain the situation (Crow, for his part, will flop over to a stand in the corner and nibble on a dried biscuit before tucking his head under one wing and going to sleep).

Bendekar is indeed away. Pence has no objection to their taking away the mummy dust, given the urgency of the situation, but he doesn't know exactly where it is. They're welcome to search for it, but he doubts they'll find it in time (the reason why will become apparent to them as soon as they leave the kitchen).

If they've been unusually polite, he'll mention that he believes Bendekar has a *locate objects* spell on a scroll they're welcome to use, if they can find it. He thinks it's probably in the library—perhaps the bedroom or the den. If asked where the library is, he will either be laconic ("upstairs") or at his most politely insulting ("A library, sir. Lye-burr-air-ee. You wouldn't have heard of one before, perhaps. A room full of books—do you know what a book is, sir?"), depending on the questioner's earlier behavior.

Pence will not offer the PCs any of the muffins, however well-behaved they have been, although he might offer then some tea and crumpets. If he learns that a character has taken one of the fresh-baked muffins while he wasn't looking, he will become mildly distressed, remarking, "Oh dear, such a pity." He will not elaborate. The reason for this is that all the muffins are laced with a mild poison which will cause anyone eating them to begin suffering stomach cramps roughly half-an-hour or so later. Unless treated with a *neutralize poison* spell or potion, the character's condition will slowly worsen over the next several hours until he or she is left effectively helpless from cramps, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. It will take strickened characters 2-7 (1d6+1) days to fully recover. Pence will, naturally, try to conceal the muffins' toxic nature, saying that they might be "too rich" for the characters' systems.

Pence: INT Exceptional; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 8 (T8); hps 28; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (kitchen knife); SA Backstab x3, 30' infravision; S S (3'); ML 14

This ancient halfling serves as Bendekar's cook and, to some extent, housekeeper. Venerable and kindly in appearance, he is far, far more dangerous than he looks. Pence is in fact a retired assassin with a highly developed gift for poisons. Some 90 years ago he pulled off a daring and dangerous mission, the assassination of a young elf-lord who was attempting to organize a crusade against the drow. He has been on the run or in hiding ever since. Elves have long lives and even longer memories, and friends of the murdered elf-lord are still looking to bring his killer to justice. Bendekar knows his cook is sometimes unaccountedly shy and guesses that he's hiding from someone, but he doesn't know who or why. Even if he learned the whole story, he would not give away his old friend for something that happened so long ago and far away.

An impeccable butler, Pence keeps Bendekar's kitchen, his own room, and Crystal's room spotlessly clean and well-organized. These are the only rooms of the entire house to which these adjectives can honestly be applied. Pence is a superb cook; his specialties are breads, cobblers, and pastries. But uninvited snackers had best beware: Pence has long been experimenting with the use of toxins as seasonings, and many of his concoctions, while delicious, are quite lethal. Pence is quite proud of his researches, and has compiled a cookbook detailing his most successful recipes.

This cookbook (neatly handwritten and currently open on the kitchen table) is entirely normal in appearance, although anyone with knowledge of cooking (e.g., the cooking proficiency) who examines its recipes will find most of them quite puzzling. This is because Pence uses the names of spices as a code, each "spice" actually being a specific toxin; using the actual spices named in a recipe would result in an inedible mess. The code describing which spice-name represents which poison is hidden by a *secret page* (cast by Pence from a scroll) on the flyleaf. For added safety, Pence scribed the list in Thieves' Cant. Thus *dispel magic* will make the invisible writing appear; a combination of *true seeing* with *comprehend languages* will reveal his secret to all eyes.

Pence has also made a second, and even greater, discovery: a way of making a person immune to virtually any ingested toxin through a system rather like staggered vaccinations. He gives the subject repeated tiny doses at regularly staged intervals, gradually increasing the amount until he or she builds up an immunity and the poison no longer affects him or her. Both he and Bendekar have undergone this "seasoning" (without the latter's knowledge, one might add!). Pence is shy about making his researches public while he's still alive due to a fatal accident involving Bendekar's third wife, who fell ill and

died suddenly after a late-night raid of the pantry (Bendekar is unaware of Pence's role in Crystal's death). Pence's cookbook might be worth as much as 10,000 gold pieces to the right buyer.

Needle in the Haystack

Of all the rooms in Bendekar's house, only the kitchen, Pence's room, and the coffin room are uncluttered and easily passable. All the rest are chocked with Bendekar's "treasures"—a miscellaneous collection of junk of all sizes and descriptions. Bendekar is a hopeless packrat who buys anything that catches his eye and can never bring himself to throw anything away. The worst of it is that this is his third house—the original one became so full of things that it was no longer possible to live inside, so he bought a second house. When that one filled up in its turn, he moved into a third, and it won't be long before it's too crammed to be habitable as well.

Already the front door is impassable, and the only way in or out is through the kitchen. When the time comes that Bendekar can no longer get inside, he'll shrug and go house-hunting yet again, promising himself yet again that this time things will be different.

> The hallway is a sight the like of which you've never seen. Boxes and crates line both sides, leaving only a narrow aisle in the middle. Opposite the doorway you're standing in you see an open door leading to a bathroom; the tub is filled with papers, and stacks upon stacks of papers and books jam the rest of the room, almost completely hiding a small desk from sight. There's a closed door on your left; there seem to be other doors farther down the hall, but it's hard to see because of all the piles of stuff that's in the way.

Characters who look closely at the closed door to the left, the closet door, will see that it bulges ominously.

Anyone so foolish as to open this door releases an avalanche of loose pieces of armor (helmets, cuirasses or breastplates, knee-guards, shields, and whatnot) which comes crashing down upon everyone within 10 feet. Anyone buried beneath the debris suffers 2d6 points of damage. Only a character standing in the doorway to the kitchen or bathroom will have a chance to dodge.

Everyone else near the door is trapped by the lack of maneuvering room. Even worse, the landslide will cause some of the stacks of boxes and crates in the hallway to overbalance and fall on hapless characters in their vicinity. There is a 50% chance each character in the hall will be so affected by this domino effect. Each character hit by falling boxes suffers 1d10 points of damage. While it is not possible for characters in the hall to dodge, the DM should let each PC roll the percentile dice to see if his or her own character is one of the lucky or unlucky ones.

Once the characters have dug themselves out, they will find the hall is still passable, but just barely. Throughout the exploration of Bendekar's house, the DM is well within his or her rights to demand occasional Dexterity checks on the part of individual PCs if they are moving incautiously through the crowded rooms and passages. Anyone so foolish as to try running through these crowded environs must pass a Dexterity check or set off another avalanche.

A brief description of each room follows; DMs are welcome to expand upon them as they see fit and to add others. Pence and Bendekar have a complete set of keys; Bendekar's set is currently in his bedroom, looped over the pommel of his old long sword.

Pence's room. The door to this room is locked. This is by far the neatest room in the house. Its furnishings are simple: a small, halfling-sized bed, a comfortable small rocker with a footstool, a dart board, a bookshelf with perhaps 20 volumes on philosophy, a small round table, a pot-bellied stove, a halfling-sized dresser, and a small closet. Pence keeps his old adventuring gear in a trunk at the foot of his bed, along with a small nest egg of 200 gp.

On the wall near the head of the bed is a beautifully-engraved plaque of black silver bearing the words "Elf-friend" in elegant script (this is a gift from the grateful drow). A well-hidden secret door leads to a hidey-hole beneath the stairs. This refuge contains several of Pence's treasures; an ancient silver dagger (*dagger +2*), a ruby worth 5,000 gp, and a halfling-sized *cloak of etherealness* with seven charges left. If the need arises, Pence will collect the items and use the *cloak* to either escape or spy on the party.

Stairwell. These sturdy steps are, like the rest of the house, choked with items of every description, but they are passable with care. Much of the available space on the landings and banisters is taken up with Bendekar's collection of lamps, candles, and candleholders of every shape and size.

On the walls hangs Bendekar's sword collection, making travel here even more hazardous. Characters moving at half their normal rate can climb safely; those who try moving at normal rates have the usual chance of mishaps, as described earlier.

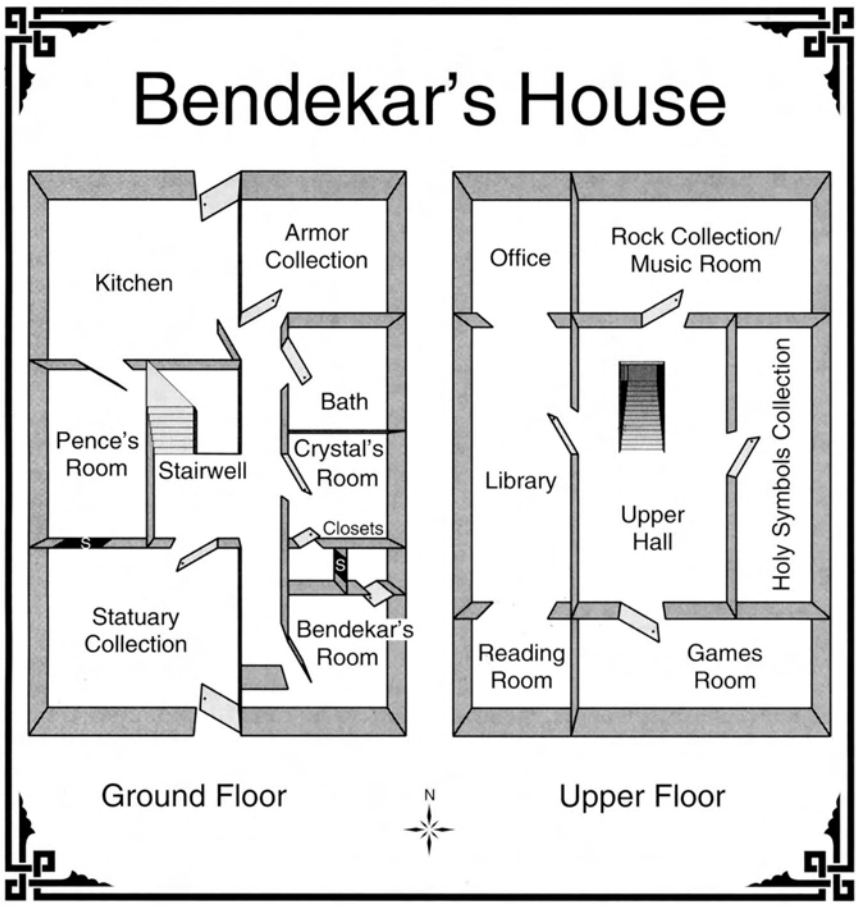
Running here is a sure recipe for disaster: anyone attempting this foolhardy feat must roll half his or her Dexterity or less on 1d20 or come to grief. Anyone falling down the steps suffers 2d6 damage from the fall and must make a saving throw vs. death magic or be impaled on one of the weapons, doubling the damage suffered in the fall.

Armor collection. This room is now completely impassable; if the door is opened, disaster will ensue, as described above. While it would take an enormous amount of time and labor to dig through all this stuff, practically any kind of armor can be found here by the doggedly persistent (although very few of the sets are complete; most are missing a piece or two). One of the special features of the collection, now obscured by all this disarray, was that most of it is armor for non-humans, from halfling plate to a set of magical lamia barding. Good and lawful PCs will, of course, realize that taking anything from the house besides the dust they have the receipt for would be stealing. The DM should note that while Pence would be glad to be rid of the whole mess, it's not his to give away, and he will not look kindly on wholesale looting of the premises (also, armor is a lot harder to smuggle out than most other items).

Bathroom. The books are ledgers and accounts relating not just to the Ravens Bluff Bendekar's Mercantile but its dozen branches (in Daggerford, Waterdeep, Suzail, Ordulin, Heliogahalis, Turmish, Alaghon, Ormpetarr, Ormpur, Riatavin, Emmech, Huzuz, and Calimport). The scattered papers are invoices and tax papers relating to the franchises' business transactions.

Surprisingly enough, any PC who examines one of the account books carefully will be able to discover that Bendekar keeps accurate records.

He or she will also find out (a) that the shops are very profitable, and that Bendekar must be one of the wealthiest men in Ravens Bluff, (b) each of the



branch shops is run by a relative of Bendekar's—nephew, ex-wife, cousin, (c) plans are underway to open a new shop in Amruthar, and finally (d) Bendekar pays a regular tithe of 10% of all profits from his shop to the local thieves' guild.

Crystal's room. The door to this room is locked. If the PCs pick or force the door, they find themselves in a room startlingly unlike any other in the house.

> The first thing you notice upon opening the door is that the clutter that litters the rest of the house is noticeably absent here. The room is lit by soft candlelight, and a pleasant fragrance of dried flowers scents the air. A crystalline coffin rests on a stand in the middle of the room. Inside the sealed transparent casket is the body of a beautiful woman with pale blonde hair. She wears a yellow and white robe and a deep yellow cloak. She looks serene. A small yellow cat is curled up at her feet.

The PCs may believe they have discovered the daytime lair of a vampire, but this is not the case. The body in the coffin is that of Crystal, Bendekar's third wife, who died suddenly several years ago. Her husband could not bear to part with her, so he had a preservation spell put on her body and turned her sitting room into a shrine.

Everything is just as she left it, down to the book she was reading the night she died (*Confessions of a Doppleganger*) lying open face-down. The cat is her familiar, who died the same time as his mistress.

This simple room's other furnishings include a comfortable chair and a small side table with a drawer (the above-mentioned book is lying open face down on this table; inside the drawer is Crystal's spellbook). The closet is full of dresses. A secret door in the closet leads to the bedroom next door. Several tall candelabra hold yellow and white candles; a small vase on the table is filled with withered yellow roses. All four walls are covered by a fine tapestry showing woodland springtime scenes.

If the characters examine the woman in the coffin carefully, they will be able to see that she is not breathing. The coffin radiates magic, but not evil. They will also be able to tell that she holds a staff (a *staff of thunder and lightning*) and wears a twisted silver ring on her right hand, and a golden ring set with a black stone on her left (a *ring of truth*), as well as a simple gold band on a fine chain around her neck (her wedding ring). Her cloak is a *cloak of protection +3* that Bendekar had a longtime customer of his make especially for her.

The crystal shell encasing her has no latch or opening; if the characters want to loot the body, they will have to smash their way inside. The crystal is AC 0 but can take only 10 points of damage before it shatters. The DM should note that Bendekar will be aghast if his wife's things are disturbed or taken; if the PCs take it into their heads to drive a makeshift stake through her or otherwise mutilate the body, he will certainly take revenge. Crystal's spellbook contains the following spells: *find familiar, friends, identify, light, magic missile, phantasmal force, sleep, unseen servant, forget, invisibility, knock, locate object, pyrotechnics; fireball, lightning bolt, sepia snake sigil, wraithform, Rary's mnemonic enhancer, shadow monsters.*

Bendekar's bedroom. This is where Bendekar sleeps. The room is full of old clothes and more copper pieces than the PCs have ever seen in one place. Most of the clothes are missing one button (somehow Bendekar never finds the time to sew them back on) or else are things he has outgrown but can't bring himself to throw away. The clothes-stuffed closet has a secret door to the closet of Crystal's room. The coppers are Bendekar's coin collection: he collects only copper pieces and has thousands upon thousands of specimens from all over Toril, some extremely old. There are a fair number of valuable pieces here amongst the rest, but sorting them out would require hours of patient work, as well as a collector's knowledge. As a rule of thumb, there is a 1% chance of any individual coin being worth more than a copper.

Statuary collection. This large room was once the main living room and front hall, but it long ago became too full to move through. Statutes large and small can be found here. Some of them are art masterpieces, while others are quite ghastly (Bendekar has several petrified victims of a medusa here, as well

as more conventional sculpture). There are even a few standing stone monoliths, and one henge trilithon in the center of the room, the lesser statues standing around them. One standing stone, several statues, and many boxes of statuettes have fallen against the door to the outside, completely blocking it and making it impossible to open.

Upper hallway. A bannister of dark carved wood surrounds the open space of the stairwell; both it and the walls of the hallway are hung with the rest of Bendekar's weapon collection. Just about any kind of weaponry imaginable can be found here: morning stars and maces, axes and a vast array of knives, collapsible lances and every kind of polearm ever made (guisarmes, glaives, voulges, fauchards, bardiches, halbards, ranseurs, spetums, partisans, pikes, and even the infamous bec de corbin and "lucern hammer"). As with the stairwell itself, all these sharp pointy items lying around make this a hazardous area to move in; characters will no doubt realize this and take appropriate care.

Games room. This room holds Bendekar's game collection—cards, boards, miniatures, rule books, and a mort of dice. There are more than 40 chess sets alone, ranging from a partial scrimshaw set carved by a Great Glacier clan to a magnificent jewelled set with pieces enchanted to move themselves when a player calls out a move. This room, while crowded, is still passable (just); Bendekar and Pence sometimes have a quiet game of checkers up here.

Library. This is where Bendekar spends a lot of his time when he's home, reading. Every wall is hidden behind ceiling-high bookcases, and every shelf of them is double- or triple-shelved. Although stacks of books are piled upon every available flat surface (some of them reaching from the floor to well above head level), this is one of the few rooms where Bendekar knows where everything is. However, since he shelves books chronologically in the order in which he bought them, no one else can find anything. Many slips of paper—letters, invitations, notes to himself, even a few scrolls with spells on them—are used as bookmarks. There are, however, no locate object spells amongst them.

Office. This crowded nook through the north archway is where Bendekar used to do his accounts until it became too jammed with papers; now he does his bookkeeping in the bathroom on the ground floor.

Reading room. This end of the library is Bendekar's favorite room in the house. It contains a shabby but comfy chair and footstool, a fireplace, and a small, battered round table. On the table rest an old pipe, a tobacco pouch, a tinder box, and a scroll with three *locate object spells* on it (useful for a body who lives in a house like this). The tobacco pouch contains the mummy dust the characters are looking for.

Holy symbols collection. This room is full of glass cases. Inside the cases are tastefully mounted a plethora of holy symbols of all sorts, representing virtually every religion practiced in this part of Toril for the past few hundred years. A few of the larger items (scythes, for example) are mounted on the walls. As usual, Bendekar has continued to collect until his holdings exceeded his ability to store them, with the result that the tops of the cases are piled with newer acquisitions. Most of these holy (and unholy) symbols have clearly been used by adventuring clerics and look knocked around a bit. Only a few are merely ceremonial in nature.

Rock collection and music room. This final room houses Bendekar's collection of pretty stones and his collection of musical instruments. The rock collection ranges from pebbles he saw when out walking and picked up because he though they had interesting colors to true oddities, like an intelligent rock, a piece of petrified beehive, and a spider sapphire. A character knowledgeable about rocks (for instance, one with the gem cutting proficiency) could identify some of the stones as uncut gemstones; a few of them of great value. However, to the inexpert eye, they just look like so many rocks. Also mixed in among them is Bendekar's collection of marbles.

The musical instrument collection is an eclectic one: there's a virginal, a clavichord, and a harpsichord (elegant ancestors of the piano); several hautboys (oboes) and bassoons, a thelarr (reed pipe), a zulkoon (bagpipe organ), a variety of shawms, two rebecs and a viol, a cittern, a banjolaile, some sackbuts, a glaur, a gong, and (the prize of the collection) a Mukenize battle horn.

Claiming the Reward

Once they finally get their hands on the bag full of mummy dust, the characters will very probably find that time is rapidly running out for them. It may very well be a race to beat the clock and return the prize to Cordwainer before their three hours are up. If the PCs tear out of Bendekar's house and begin a mad dash down the street, they will naturally attract a lot of attention.

As soon as the PCs come into sight of Cordwainer's house, they will see him frantically pacing the street. Once they reach him he will grab the dust and rush inside with it, hopefully under the wire. There will be another explosion, and more colored smoke. Assuming they made it back within the deadline, he will come back out again seconds later, dishevelled but smiling, proudly displaying a smoking flask. "Success!" he cries. He is so elated that it will take the PCs a moment to get his attention. Once they succeed, he will use a *present* spell to summon identical bags from some secret hiding place, handing one to each PC. Inside are 350 gp.

In addition, Cordwainer produces six magic items. A PC can select a magic item or imbibe one of his *potions of wisdom*. PCs who elect to take a magic item can select from the following list.

Magic Reward: *flatbox, fur of warmth, mouse cart, portable canoe, saddle of flying, Heward's handy haversack.*

If a PC expresses interest in the potion instead, he explains it's a *potion of wisdom*, something he's come up with to help make sure that the city's rulers are wiser than the common run of men. He'll ask if any of them want to try it—he needs test subjects, and he's fresh out of apprentices. Besides, he says the potion shouldn't hurt them, only make them wiser. If it works at all. Which it may not. If it works, they'll get one point of wisdom or more. If any PC drinks the potion, roll 1d6 and consult the table below:

Roll	Result
1-2	1 point of WIS
3-4	2 points of WIS, -1CON
5-6	1 point of INT, WIS, -2 CON

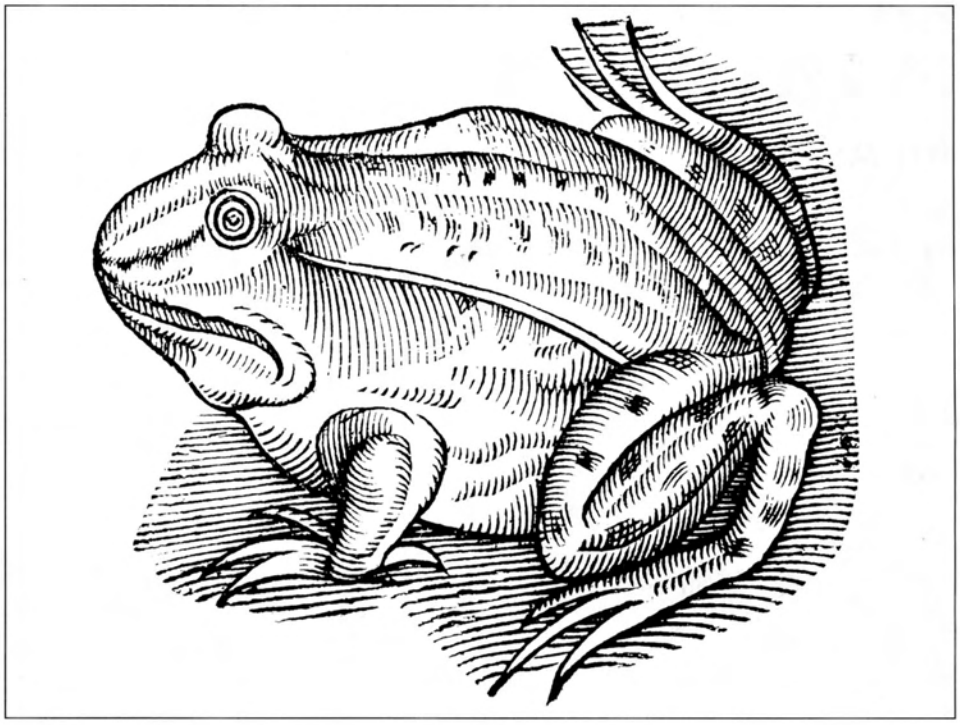
If the PCs arrive too late, they will find a frantic Cordwainer, as above, who will seize the pouch of dust and rush inside, crying out "there's still just a chance; maybe there's still time . . ."

The explosion will be the same, but the smoke will be sickly green and smell of stagnant swamp water. The same result will occur if the PCs return on time but with the wrong mummy dust.

Cordwainer will be furious when he re-emerges. He will ask the characters if

they have any preference of the form they want to take in their next life, listen to their response, and then let loose with his *wand of polymorphing*. PCs who fail their saving throws will be changed either into the form they requested or into toads and flies. Those who make a System Shock roll retain their intelligence; the rest adopt the mentality of their new species (note that this could be very bad if characters changed into toads fail their rolls while characters changed into flies make theirs). Assume that when PCs make their saving throws it means the beam missed them and struck a bystander in the crowd, most of whom will take cover, running for dear life.

All is not lost, however. If they rescued the little girl at the bridge, her mother will plead with the wizard on their behalf. She will soon have Cordwainer dabbing his eyes and conceding to their request. Thus, if the PCs fail because of good intentions and kindheartedness, they will be rescued by those they helped.



Bendekar's Revenge

If the characters defaced Crystal's coffin, damage her body, or robbed her possessions, Bendekar officially notifies the constabulary and swears out a warrant for their arrest. He will not stop there, however; he will also unofficially notify every mage and cleric who buys supplies from his shop and promise a year's free material components to whomever brings the culprits to justice.

He will also notify Crystal's brother, an 8th-level paladin, who will at once swear an oath to quest after the fiends.

Finally, he will let his contacts among both the thieves' guild and the pirates on the Sea of Fallen Stars know that he will generously reward anyone who returns the stolen items, especially if they return the evil-doers along with them.

The result will be a massive manhunt by both the forces of the law and the underworld, the high-minded and the greedy, with the PCs their intended target.

Bendekar can be appeased if the PCs can convince him they made the mistake in good faith, but he will still insist that they expiate for their misdeeds, perhaps by undertaking several dangerous missions for him.

Bendekar: INT Very; AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; HD 5 (F5); hps 34; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); S M (5'11"); ML 17

Originally, Bendekar was a man with a hobby. As a young man, he was an adventurer and something of a packrat. A compulsive collector, he kept a souvenir from every encounter he and his friends met with: a bit of troll ashes, a dragon's tooth, an orcish war hammer, a scrap of torn mummy wrappings, and the like. Eventually carrying around all these "treasures" became something of a problem, as was the ridicule of his fellow party members.

All that changed one day when Bendekar's party was staying at an inn in Telflamm after completing a particularly successful adventure. After hearing his companions boast of wiping out a whole nest of harpies and being kidded for having salvaged a few feathers, Bendekar was surprised to find himself approached by a local mage who wanted to purchase the feathers for use in a spell he was researching. By the time Bendekar had dug the right packet out of the bottom of his pack, the mage had seen so many other useful items that he offered 500 gold pieces for the lot.

Bendekar had made a major discovery by grasping the fact that adventurers who slew monsters and looted their treasuries were leaving another, sometimes greater, treasure behind; namely, the monsters themselves. With this in mind, his career took on a whole new direction. It wasn't long before he began going after specific monsters solely for their resale value to wizards and alchemists. Demand soon began to outstrip supply, leading to his hiring others to help collect the goods.

The Mercantile

Bendekar's is an unusual store, even for the Realms. This supplier of material-components to mages, clerics, and alchemists everywhere is probably the Realms' only franchise. Branches exist in a dozen cities and towns. Rumor has it that negotiations are underway to open a branch in Amruthar in Thay under the close supervision of one of Bendekar's ex-wives, the iron-willed Lady Idis, and that a traveling shop under the control of Bendekar's most adventuresome niece passed beyond the Toadsquat Mountains two years ago and is currently operating as a caravan in Zakhara.

Bendekar's does not deal in magical items. Instead, it sells every imaginable kind of item needed as components to cast spells and create potions. Since it is impossible to keep everything in stock, there is a 60% chance that the store will have a specific item at any given time.

Enemy of My Enemy

An AD&D® Game DARK SUN® Setting Adventure

by Tom Prusa

Background

This adventure begins with the PCs as slaves who are performing as arena contestants. In Athas, the arena is one of the chief forms of entertainment, and the PCs start by fighting each other. The outcome does not really matter, since the PCs are the most well known of their respective noble houses' gladiators. There are templars (priests) waiting to *heal* or cast *raise dead* on them.

While any healing takes place, the sorcerer-king of Urik has a special match. A captured So-ut is featured in a bout against 20 captured slaves. The so-ut, or ravager, has no trouble dispatching the slaves, but is not satisfied merely with killing them. As soon as he gets done with them, he begins to destroy the arena. In the ensuing panic, the PCs are left alone and may escape. They must make their way out of the city and to a village of former slaves, which they have heard of. The halfling druid's guarded land is the mountain on which the village is located.

The PCs are able to leave the arena area, and make it into the city proper. There, they encounter a group of templars. The templars are suspicious of such a group, and they must be bribed or quickly defeated to allow the PCs to leave the town. The PCs must also pick up some supplies, or they will not survive in the wilderness. After obtaining supplies, the PCs may leave the city,and strike out east for the mountain K'lir. After traveling for a while, the characters' water mysteriously starts to disappear. They are being trailed by a sand mother, a Negative Material Plane creature trapped on Athas. After they are out of water, they find an oasis that is really a trap. They must defeat the sand mother before it drains all the life from them. And they still have no water.

The second day after finding the sand mother, the party finally reaches a true oasis.

There they can deal with the elf nomads who have possession of the oasis. A good bit of bargaining allows them to get plenty of water. While at the oasis, an elf shaman tells them of a pursuing band of templars and guards. The elves leave in a hurry, helping themselves to some of the characters' items on the way.

They travel for almost a week without encountering anything that endangers them. By this time, they are running very low on water. They finally come upon a possible source of water, some spider cacti. Unfortunately, the spider cacti do not give up their water without a fight. After defeating the cacti, the party may continue on, with enough water to travel for a while. After going around the silt basin, the PCs finally reach the slave village. There, they are turned away. The village does not want their location revealed to the pursuing templars. Only if the PCs can defeat the sorcerer-king's guard will they be allowed into the village.

With the knowledge of the druid and the ranger, the PCs can set up a suitable ambush. This is important, for the PCs are badly outnumbered. In a final climactic battle, the PCs earn either their freedom or their death.

Players' Background

Tonight you go into the arena again. You sharpen weapons, taking last swigs of water, and in general getting ready.

You hear the roar of the crowd as the poor souls who have to fight in the preliminaries do battle. From the sounds of it, several prospective gladiators are facing a tembo. Too bad for them.

Fortunately, you are head-liners. You fight in the featured match tonight.

As important gladiators (that is to say, moneymakers), you will have templars waiting to heal or revive you if you lose.

Of course, your masters don't like you to lose. You could end up in the quarries. And everyone knows what happens in the obsidian quarries. You won't last long with that razor-sharp stone cutting into your hands. The match tonight is a triple. As you sit with butterflies in your stomachs and sweat on your hands, you all think again how much you hate this. This is not the life for you. You are going to escape, somehow. Athas is a hard world, but there must be better pickings out there somewhere. Then you hear the gong. The last bout is over. You're up next. Checking your weapons one more time, you wish your teammates well. It's time to fight.

Arena

Today's match is a version of the Stones game. The arena is divided into 10-foot squares, five across and six deep.

If miniatures are available, they should be placed on a simple 5" by 6" grid to help indicate positions. If not, you may wish to use dice or something else to keep track of movement.

1. Each PC is given a big red stone. While each man on the opposing team has a blue stone. The first team to collect all of their opponents' stones and return them to the home square is declared the winner.

2. Each team has a captain, chosen by the team. The captain is allowed to move two squares either horizontally or vertically. He cannot move diagonally. The other members of the team may move one square in any direction.

3. The two captains roll a d20, with the higher roll having the first move. Each turn takes place in one round. In a turn, one member of the team may move.

The other members of the team may fire missile weapons or cast spells. Psionics may be used by anyone on either team, no matter whose turn it is. Use of psionics does count as an action. (A PC may not use a psionic power and fire a missile weapon in the same turn.) A team MUST have someone move during its turn. Two members of the same team may not end up on the same square at the end of a turn. The turn then passes to the other team.

4. If two opposing team members are on the same square at the end of a move, they must engage in combat until one or the other is slain.

The game is suspended for as long as it takes to resolve the combat. Other PCs may use psionics, although they cannot fire missile weapons during this combat.

5. Stones must be carried; they cannot be thrown to another team member. They may be passed to a team member in an adjacent square.

6. Each violation of these rules earns a *flame strike* (40 points, save vs. spells for half damage) from the templars.

Set up the game and run through it. PCs who are brought below zero hit points are removed from the arena and healed. Otherwise they are raised, to preserve them for future combats.

Treat this as a *resurrection*, with the PC immediately returned to full hit points, able to move and cast spells. Any raised PCs are subject to a one-point Constitution loss, with corresponding possible loss of hit points as well.

Should a weaker PC decide to fake death, for instance, dropping to the ground while still above zero hit points, the templars on the sides of the squares immediately whip him with glass-edged whips, and call for him to get up and fight.

This whipping causes 1-4 points of damage per round. If the PC continues to lie on the ground after one round, the crowd gets into it, and the PC takes an additional 1-2 points of damage from stones and objects thrown by the crowd. The crowd is here to see a good battle.

It doesn't matter which team wins; all of the PCs are taken or dragged to the same room, a cell just off of the arena. There they are healed (*cure critical wounds* for anyone below zero hit points, *cure serious wounds* for anyone conscious but wounded).

They are locked in while the next match takes place. The next match is the feature, 20 captured Tyrians vs. a So-ut (ravager). This match causes intense interest, since none here, including the sorcerer-king, has seen a ravager in action.

Escape

Following their match, the PCs are all taken to one large cell. There, they are constantly watched by over a dozen guards and templars—that is, until the next match begins. The ravager has no trouble mowing down the captured slaves. But it is not satisfied with the destruction of the humans. So-uts hate all manufactured things, and once the so-ut has finished with the slaves, he begins on the arena itself.

This causes widespread panic, and after checking to make sure the cell door is securely locked, the templars and guards run into the arena to help combat the monster. This gives the PCs their golden opportunity. Only two locked doors stand between them and freedom.

It was a tough match, and all of you are feeling the effects. As you sit in the cell after the match, you can talk with the other team. As you discuss the game, and the possible ramifications for the losers, you can hear the roar of the crowd. A group of captured guards from the city of Tyr are facing some sort of fierce monster.

Then you hear the sounds change. The crowd noise has changed to a panicky sound, and the templars and guards are looking worried.

A templar comes running in from the arena and cries to your guards: "The beast is attempting to destroy the arena itself. He is digging through stone as though it were sand. Hurry, we must help!"

The guards run off, although one of them does stop to make sure your cell door is securely locked.

For the first time in years, you have no guards about. You can escape.

This is the opportunity they have been waiting for. Inform the PCs that if they can make it through the cell door, there is a 50' hallway, with guards at the end—if the guards have not had to go help try to subdue the ravager. At the end of the hallway is another locked door that leads to the outside of the arena complex.

The PCs should immediately pick up on this; no hints should be required. If they seem to be willing to sit and wait, you can point out to the gladiators that they have never had an opportunity like this before. It is time to see if their teammates have any skills that might allow them to escape.

The cell is actually a stone room, with a hardwood door, brass bound. It is designed with the idea of keeping in someone of extraordinary strength. The PCs have three possible methods of opening the door.

1. A thief can pick the locks with a normal open locks roll.

2. A knock spell would be successful.

3. Up to two PCs can cooperate to break open the locked door with their combined Bend Bars/Lift Gates chances.

4. If the PCs refuse to escape, the ravager digs through their prison wall, allowing them another avenue. If they still refuse, they will be forever stuck in arena life.

The PCs have seven rounds to get out of the cell before the templars return. The templars were not able to subdue the ravager, and in the end they were finally forced to kill it, taking significant damage in the process.

Once out of the cell, the hallway lies clear. The door at the end of the hall is apparently unguarded.

It is locked. It can be opened by any of the methods listed above.

Once the door is open, the PCs find that a pair of guards have been left outside.

The guards immediately raise the alarm. Because of the noise from the arena, this alarm goes unnoticed. The PCs must handle the guards quickly.

Guards (2): AL LE; AC 4; MV 24; HD 5; hp 40, 35; THAC0 15; #AT 3/2; D 1d8+2.

The guards are carrying bone long swords, with which they are specialized. They wear hide armor, and use leather shields. Each has a Strength of 17 and a Dexterity of 15.

The PCs do not have much time to deal with the guards. The templars discover that the PCs are missing eight rounds after leaving them. In round nine, three guards and two templars appear in the cell area. The guards have no idea how long the PCs have been gone, and they will return to the palace to send out a group to catch the PCs. If the PCs are still in the cells when the three guards and two templars appear, the PCs must fight to gain their freedom.

Guards, additional (3): AL LE; AC 4; MV 24, HD 5, hp (currently) 24, 15, 8; THAC0 15; #AT 3/2; D 1d8+2. These guards have the same equipment and statistics as the previous guards.

Templars (2): AL LE; AC 1; MV 24, HD 7, hp (currently) 17, 12; THAC0 17; #AT 1; D 1d6+1 (bone shortswords + Str bonus), SA spells, SD spells. These templars have hide armor, leather shields. Strength 16, Dexterity 17, Wisdom 16. Spells still memorized: *command, cure light wounds, cause light wounds, hold person, silence 15' radius, spiritual hammer, dispel magic.*

Since the above timetable could be confusing, the following list summarizes some of the possibilities.

Round 1: Alarm is raised; guards leave PCs in the cell.

Round 2 (or later): PCs unattended, may break out of cell and exit arena complex via the hallway.

Round 3: Soonest PCs could get to outer door.

Round 4 (or later): Must fight the two posted guards.

Round 8: Latest PCs could leave cell and still escape.

Round 9: Latest PCs could leave outer door and still escape.

Round 10: Wounded templars and guards join the battle, if the PCs are still in the cell area.

Try to keep a sense of urgency about this whole encounter. The PCs have one chance. If they blow it, it's the obsidian quarries for sure. No one survives long there, so failure is tantamount to death. In their favor, the guards are arrogant and very sure of themselves. The guards first order the PCs back to their cages, giving the PCs automatic initiative the first round of melee.

Possible problems: The PCs should be able to brush aside the guards in two or three rounds at most. Do not kill the PCs, or blow the rest of the adventure just because the PCs get a series of bad rolls.

Once the PCs have escaped, they see a dirty street stretching before them for about two blocks. There is a noble's estate on either side of the street, on each block. There are many guards outside these structures, so the PCs should realize that would be a bad way to go.

Point out there is a marketplace nearby, and that likely affords the best chance to lose themselves in the crowd.

The Marketplace

The market is a chaotic jumble of merchants selling armor, weapons, foodstuffs, water, and just about anything else the PCs can think of. There are two types of things that will not be found. The first is spell components of any sort, and the second is artwork or books. Spell components and books are highly illegal, and artwork is usually done by slaves. Once they are through the main marketplace, the PCs come upon the elven market, where some goods of questionable origin and value are sold. By asking the right questions, they could find spell components or books here. The party doesn't really have time for a leisurely shopping trip, but the PCs do need water. They can get water for one bit per gallon. A one-gallon waterskin, full, costs 1 cp. For purposes of determining how much water a PC can carry, each gallon with container weighs nine pounds. If the characters really want mounts, allow them to find a dealer in animals. The dealer wants to talk, and moves very slowly. While they are dealing, a group of templars appears at the other end of the marketplace and begins checking out the crowd very carefully.

The dealer notices them, and wonders aloud who the templars are after now. This should get the PCs moving.

Gate to Freedom

At last, you approach the gate that leads outside the city—and beyond the gate is the precious freedom you seek.

A group of templars and dust-covered soldiers is on guard here. As you approach, you can tell that there are at least 50 soldiers and templars . . . a formidable barrier to reaching the outside.

You cannot fight your way past this foe, not in time, anyway. Still, you're not about to give up hope yet. And there are two things in your favor here.

The guards are here to keep intruders out, not in. Also, templars are notoriously greedy. The gates are currently shut and locked, and on either side of the gates is a tower with a group of alert crossbowmen.

As you approach, some of them turn to watch you.

You are the only group heading out of the city right now. One of the templars is on the wall, yelling down at someone out of sight.

Someone must be trying to get into the city after dark. It's probably going to cost them plenty.

The PCs have a few options here. They can wait for the people outside to be let in and make a run for it. They can also try to talk or bribe their way out.

The first option works only if the PCs are lucky. Everyone must make a Dexterity check, and then 25 crossbow bolts are fired at them—four at each PC, with the extra fired at the tallest PC. The crossbowmen have a THAC0 of 18 and do 1d4-1 points of damage (bone-tipped crossbow bolts). They are all AC 5, and have 17 hit points. Each PC must also save vs. *hold person*, but not until after they get through the gate. Any half-giants are too large to be considered a "person" for purposes of a *hold person* spell.

The less dangerous options include talking their way through, or bribing their way. A combination of both is the best plan. The PCs are questioned as to why they want to leave the city.

Traveling at night is not a foolish option, especially on Athas. Why, the temperature is down to almost 90! If the PCs come up with a believable story, the templar on the wall won't give them too much problem, merely suggesting that the half-elf looks like a thief he once knew; perhaps a visit to the prison is in order. This is a hint for a bribe. As long as the PCs come up with a gold piece or more, the templar will let them pass. If the party offers the bribe first, the head templar wants more, perhaps as much as two gold pieces.

One story that would work very well is if the PCs report that they are a special group sent out to capture some escaped slaves. The templars spend a few minutes talking to them, wanting descriptions and numbers of the escaped slaves, laughing about the tortures in store for the slaves when captured, and wishing the PCs luck out there in the wilderness. The templars seem very glad not to have to leave the city, and mention things such as "I sure wouldn't want to be in your sandals, even if you find the slaves."

Guards (50): AL LE; AC 5; MV 24; HD 3, hp 18 each, THAC0 17; #AT 1; D 1d4-1 (lt. crossbows) or 1d6 (bone short-swords). The guards all have a Strength of 17 and a Dexterity of 16. They wear leather armor and have leather bucklers slung on their back (AC 4 in melee).

Templars (5): AL LE; AC 2; MV 24; HD 7, HP 30 each, THAC0 16; #AT 1; D 1d6 (bone short swords); SA spells, SD spells. The templars wear hide armor, and have Strength, Dexterity, and Wisdom of 16 each.

Spells memorized include *hold person, command, cause light wounds* (x2), *cure light wounds, merciful rays* (new spell, listed on the druid's character sheet), *dispel magic, cause disease, silence 15' radius*, a *spiritual hammer*.

If the PCs end up in a battle here, you might mention that this is an unwinable battle, especially since the alarms begin sounding immediately. The only hope is to make a fighting retreat through the gates, and to make a dash for freedom.

On the Road to Freedom

Having finally escaped the city, you set out toward Mount K'lir. Not all of you are sure of the reception you'll get, but you all know that you really have nowhere else to go.

You travel for most of the night, and then look about for a suitable shelter.

As dawn is breaking, and the temperature begins to rise, you locate a rocky overhang that will give you suitable protection from the heat, as well as concealment from any who might be following you.

You settle down for an uncomfortable day of rest.

The PCs can rest here, but the spellcasters cannot get enough good rest to recover more than first- and second-level spells. When they have rested and healed as much as possible, they may continue on the trail. They are currently moving through rocky badlands. They must leave the trail to head for Mount K'lir, located two weeks' travel to the east. Find out when the party intends to march. The best times are the two hours just before and just after dawn, and the same time periods at dusk. This keeps their water intake low and still allows the spellcasters to recover spells. The party may march for three days with no encounters. Play out the healing, for some of the PCs may have been very hurt. Also, keep track of water usage. If the players are getting bored, let the time go by quickly.

After three days, the PCs move into an area of sandy wastes. This terrain type resembles the classic desert, shifting sand, and large sand dunes. On the morning of the fifth day after leaving the city, one of the PCs wakes up to find that a little more than four gallons of the water he carried are empty. There is no clue to the reason for the disappearance. (The water was destroyed by the monster the PCs will soon meet.) This water loss continues for two more days, less if the PCs run out of water before this. The day the PCs are out of water, they come upon an oasis after marching for an hour at dusk.

Sand Mother (new monster) (1): AL CE; AC -1; MV 24, Br 12; HD 9, hp 41, THAC0 11; #AT 2; D 1d12/1d12; SA Energy Drain, spell use; SD only affected by magic weapons.

A sand mother is a Negative Material Plane creature trapped on Athas. It drains one level with each hit. It is not undead, having never been alive, and cannot be turned. It uses its two spell-like powers to mask itself and the area. The first is a *hallucinatory terrain*, and the second is a *seeming*. It appears as an elderly female, trapped at the oasis by lack of transportation.

The illusion of the oasis is very good; only the ranger and the druid even get a chance to disbelieve. Her *seeming* illusion is also nearly perfect; chances to disbelieve are at -4.

When the PCs approach, they see an elderly human waving them over to the oasis. The old lady is very glad to see them, and invites them in for a drink. Use your best old lady voice, and babble on meaninglessly, trying to get the PCs to go ahead and take a drink. The unexplained water loss that the PCs have been experiencing may make them suspicious.

The sand mother's cover story is a typical one: her kank died, and she just found this oasis by luck. She was afraid raiders would find her; she's just so glad that "you brave children" got here first instead. All the while she is talking, she is assessing the PCs. Recognizing that the two gladiators with their magic weapons are the most dangerous to her, she tries to get the spellcasters to take a drink, and then attacks one of the gladiators from behind, if possible. Since the change in terrain from desert to oasis is extreme, as soon as someone takes a drink that character will see through the illusion.

Unfortunately, having a mouth full of dry, gritty sand is not conducive to spellcasting. If a spellcaster "drinks," it takes the character 2d3 rounds to clear his mouth enough to cast spells with verbal components.

The sand mother can attack two foes, if they are side by side. She attacks until she is down to 20 hit points, at which time she disappears into the sand, taking one round to do so. If the party moves on immediately after she disappears, she does not return. However, if the party lingers for more than a turn, she will reappear from behind and continue her attacks.

Since the PCs have no water, on the following day all characters suffer a loss of 1d4 Constitution points, with attendant hit point loss for those with Constitutions of 15 or above.

Elf Nomads

Finally, after you have almost given up, you see what you have been longing to see: an oasis! Your pace picks up for the first time in several days, and you all hurry toward that little sign of life—the small trees and greenery that mean an oasis. But the oasis is not unoccupied. As you move closer, you see signs of many tracks—elf tracks. You can only hope that this is a herding tribe, and not a group of raiders. Still, without water many of you won't survive more than a few days. You head toward the oasis, with a silent prayer to the spirits of the lands.

The elf nomads are a group of herders, keeping a small (about 150) herd of kanks, big insects that provide both food and water in the honey globules that some of them produce on their bellies. Kanks also forage for themselves, and instinctively divide into guards, food producers, and brood queens. This leaves the elves free to do the things they like most, partying and revelry.

Elf Nomads (60): AL N; AC 5; MV 36; HD 3; hp 26 each; THAC0 18 (bone long sword) or 16 (longbow); #AT 1 (sword) or 2 (bow); D 1d8-1 (sword) or 1d6 (arrows).

Elf chieftain, Sancro Lar'inth (1): AL N; AC 2; MV 36; HD 9; hp 54; THAC0 10; #AT 3/2 (metal long sword) or 2 (longbow); D 1d8+1 (sword) or 1d6 (arrows). He wears *leather armor +2* and has a Dexterity of 19 and a Strength of 17.

Elf Shaman, Mordekai, (1): AL N; AC 5; MV 36; HD 7; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 2; D 1d6; SA spells; SD spells. He wears leather armor and carries a longbow and a spear. Mordekai is a priest of water, and has the following spells: *create water* (x2), *cure light wounds* (x2), *sanctuary, hold person* (x2), *silence 15' radius, slow poison, dispel magic, cure disease, paralysis* (reversed *remove paralysis*), and *reflecting pool*.

The elves are suspicious at first; the party is met by a line of grim-looking elves between them and the oasis. The PCs must call out their intentions, and proclaim that they do not mean any harm to the elves; they are seeking only water. The elves then let them in to get a drink (which restores any Constitution losses). They are watched carefully by all the elves while this is going on.

The oasis is a fairly large one, with a pool of water under the shade of some trees that is almost 40' across. On the opposite side of the pool is the kank herd, and the tents of the elves are scattered all around the oasis. When the immediate need for water is satisfied, the chieftain and the shaman want to talk.

The first consideration is if the PCs have a thri-kreen with them. Thri-kreen are noted for eating elf flesh.

The PCs can stay overnight if the thri-kreen agrees to be tied up hand and foot. Otherwise the party must leave immediately, with no time to fill their waterskins.

With most elf tribes, the thri-kreen would have been killed as soon as he was spotted.

Once any thri-kreen aredealt with, the elves relax and become more friendly. They want to know what the PCs are doing in the wilderness. If the story of the escape is told, the elves become more friendly, for they hate the sorcerer-kings more than most, and the thought of slavery is very repugnant to them.

They offer the PCs food and drink; their drink is a heady wine that they have traded for. Most of the elves begin to drink heavily as the night progresses. PCs who drink sparingly and ask the right questions can learn some things that might be of help to them:

1. The sandy waste continues for about one day's travel to the east (for elves, about 50 miles). The PCs are headed straight for a inland silt basin.

2. In the silt, almost anyone suffocates in a matter of minutes. A fall would mean almost certain death for all of them. The silt basin is not large, about 50 miles in diameter.

3. To the south of the silt basin is a tribe of human raiders that the tribe has had trouble with. If the PCs are not very powerful, their journey is likely to end there.

4. It is about a week's travel to the mountains (for the PCs). This assumes they go around the silt basin to the north. If they can cross the basin itself, they can cut a day off of the travel time.

5. The tribe will be moving on in a day or two at most. They move around the area, and will not reveal the location of any other oasis. If pressed for information, they become surly and suspicious.

6. The elves are fascinated with one of the PCs' weapons.

7. Kanks would speed up the journey considerably. They would allow the party to move faster. They want 15 silver for each kank; this includes a riding harness. A kank requires four gallons of water a day, but can carry up to 400 pounds of cargo, including the rider.

Later on, during the night, the elf shaman casts a *reflecting pool*.

He discovers that the PCs are being followed by a group of soldiers and templars.

This is not the elves' fight; they aren't

going to stick around and help the PCs. They pack up and leave within an hour. Have each sleeping PC make a surprise roll; if every roll fails, they sleep through the whole thing. Anyone who drank wine makes the check at -4.

After the elves are gone, the PCs discover that each of them has lost some item or possession. Select items from the PCs at random, but be sure to leave the gladiators their main weapons. Small items such as rings are not taken. Waterskins are also not lost.

If the PCs have purchased mounts, these are also left behind. Before they leave, the shaman tells someone that there are templars on their trail, and they'll be here in less than two days.

Spider Cactus

It has been a week since you left the elves, and you have managed to stay ahead of the templars. Occasionally you can see the dust raised by their mounts; they must be using mekillots, or they'd have caught you by now. You found an inland silt basin, and circled north around it. Now, you are again worried about water—but then you spot a potential source of water. A group of thick cacti growing in a rough circle lies across your trail. You have never seen this type before, but if it's like any other life form on Athas, it's not without its defenses.

Spider Cactus (8): AL N; AC 7; Mv 0; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 8; D 1 + special; SA needles cause paralysis.

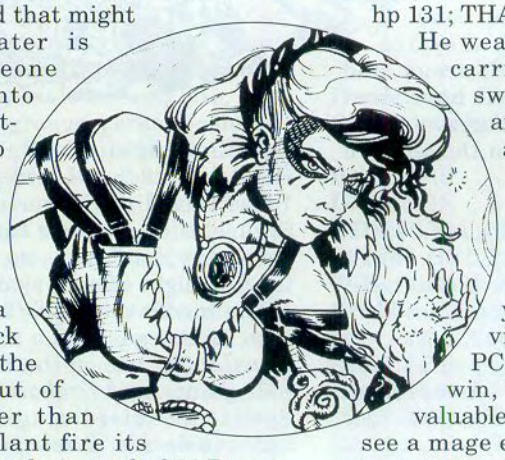
A spider cactus attacks when a victim gets within five feet, shooting out eight needles at its prey. These needles can only be fired once per day, so a cactus is defenseless after it has let loose its volley of eight needles. The needles have strong strands attached to them, which are used to pull the prey into the cactus's body, where the feeding needles begin to suck liquids from a victim's body. Any hit causes one point of damage and also requires a save vs. poison at +2 (the poison is rather weak). If the saving throw is failed, the victim is paralyzed for 2d4 rounds, during which time he cannot defend himself against the needles and must rely on other party members to help him get away.

The strands pull with a Strength of 17, and only those with greater strength have a chance to pull free (or to pull someone else free). It requires an Open Doors roll to pull a needle out of a victim's body, or a Bend Bars roll to break a strand. The strands can also be cut; they have an AC of 5, and suffer 5 points of damage to cut through. Blunt weapons do no damage to a strand. Pulling out one of the needles causes an additional 1d4 points of damage to the victim. If someone is pulled into the cactus, he takes 2d4 + AC points of damage per round thereafter.

When the first PC approaches the cacti, allow him a surprise roll. If he is not surprised, tell him that the needles seem to be moving, and some of them are pointing at him. If he immediately moves backward, a Dexterity check allows him to get out of range just as the needles fire.

This is a simple trap encounter; as long as the PCs stay back out of the needles' reach (15'), they cannot be harmed. If they destroy the cacti with missile weapons, they also lose the water inside.

There are two methods for getting at the water that would work very well. One is to use a *fireball* from the *wand* on the cacti; this fires all of the needles. Have the PC roll the damage for the fireball. If the damage is 30 or less, all of the needles are gone, while the water still remains. If it is more than 30, only the plants that make a saving throw (16 or better) still retain their water. The second method that might save the water is riskier: Someone could dart into range, attempting to jump back in time to get out of the way of the needles. To make matters very simple, a Dexterity check should allow the PC to get out of range. Rather than make each plant fire its needles separately (a total of 64 Dexterity checks!), assume that most of the plants fire at the same individual. A total of 10 Dexterity checks would exhaust the plants. Of course, this means that a failed check causes the PC to be subject to at least 16 or 24 attacks. Eldath's *magic missiles* also might be able to kill a plant with no loss of water.



Each cactus can be tapped for one gallon of water. If the PCs are traveling at dusk and dawn, this is almost enough for two days. This allows them to make it to the mountains, where they can find more water.

You have finally reached Mount K'lir. You approach the hidden village, but are stopped at the gate. A broad tall man, a mul, comes out to meet you. The village is well hidden. You have the uncomfortable feeling of being watched.

Slave Village

The PCs are met by the village leader, Kaftan, a former gladiator himself. He is not pleased with the party, because they have led a group of templars straight to the village. The party has two choices: They can turn around and surrender to the templars, so that the templars do not continue on to the village, or they can wipe out the pursuers, keeping the secret of the village. Kaftan is adamant; the only other choice is for the villagers to kill all the PCs and leave the bodies as though some monster had killed them. This is very harsh, but the world is a harsh one, and the village cannot afford mercy.

Kaftan, village leader: AL N; AC 0; MV 24; HD 14 (mul gladiator 14th level); hp 131; THAC0 3; #AT 5/2; D 1d8+10. He wears *leather armor +3* and carries a rusty metal long sword. He has a Strength and Constitution of 20 and a Dexterity of 18.

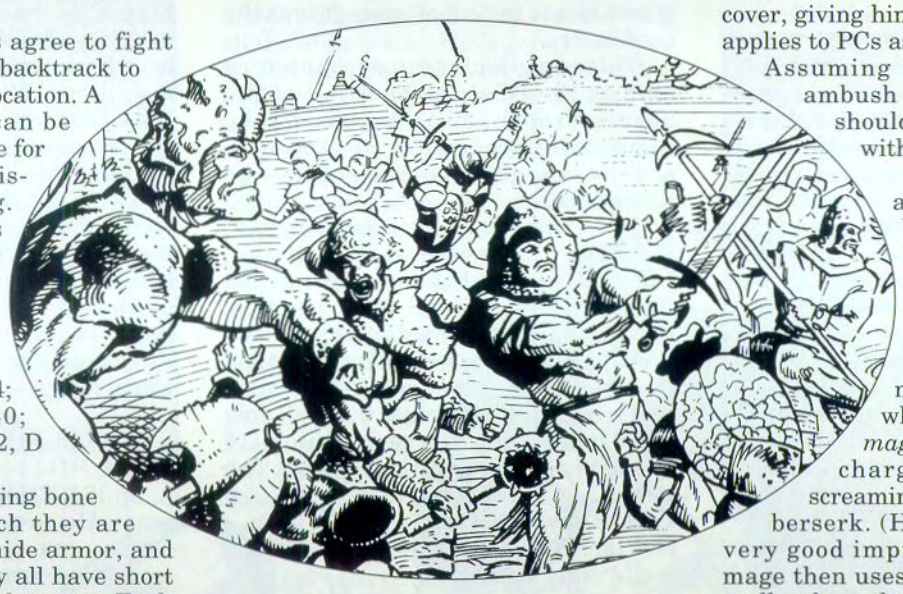
Kaftan used to be well known among gladiators, and has been the leader of the village for over two years. He will not risk the village's existence for six PCs. He hopes that they can win, for their skills would be valuable. He would even be glad to see a mage enter, for they only have one preserver mage in the village, and while that mage is very powerful, he is also old.

Kaftan reports that one of their psionicists has been watching the party for the last day, and has also spotted the pursuers. The templars are only about four hours behind the PCs. They have

10 guards, five templars, and a defiler. (There were more, but the chase has taken a toll on the pursuers.) He offers water, food, and weapons to those who need them. He really wants the PCs to join the village, but they must prove themselves first, and he won't ask any of his villagers to risk themselves for strangers.

This is a no-choice situation. There is plenty of reason for the PCs to fight. If the party agrees, they are given food and water and replacements for any weapons they need. (Melee weapons are made of bone, and are -1 to hit and damage.) Should anyone be wounded, a priest of earth comes out and heals them. No magic is available; the villagers do not want to risk losing irreplaceable magic items in case the PCs are defeated.

If and when the PCs agree to fight the templars, they must backtrack to find a suitable ambush location. A high-walled passage can be located. This allows space for the PCs to set up for missile fire or spellcasting. Several large boulders are present to allow the gladiators to hide behind them, and then charge.



Guards (9): AL LE; AC 4; MV 24; HD 5; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 3/2 or 2, D 1d8+2 or 1d6-1.

The guards are carrying bone long swords, with which they are specialized. They wear hide armor, and use leather shields. They all have short bows with 20 bone-tipped arrows. Each has a Strength of 17 and a Dexterity of 15.

Templars (4): AL LE; AC 1; MV 24; HD 7; hp 29; THAC0 17; #AT 1; D 1d6+1 (bone shortswords + Str bonus); SA spells; SD spells. These templars have hide armor and leather shields; each has a Strength of 16, Dexterity of 17, and Wisdom of 16. Spells memorized: *command, cure light wounds, cause light wounds, hold person* (x2), *silence 15' radius, spiritual hammer, dispel magic, create food and water.*

Guard Captain: AL LE; AC 0; MV 24; HD 10; hp 100; THAC0 7; #AT 2; D 1d8+10. The captain wields a bone long sword +1, wears *hide armor +2* and carries a *leather shield +1*. He also has a *longbow +1* and 20 bone-tipped arrows. He has a Strength of 20 and a Dexterity of 16. He carries an apple of speed, which he will eat in the first round of combat.

Templar Leader: AL LE; AC 1; MV 24; HD 11; hp 49; THAC0 14; #AT 1; D 1d6+2 (metal mace + Str bonus); SA spells; SD spells. The head templar is equipped with hide armor and a leather shield. He has a Strength of 18, Dexterity of 17, and Wisdom of 18. Spells: *command, cure light wounds, cause light wounds, hold person* (x2), *silence 15' radius, spiritual hammer, dispel magic, create food and water, paralysis* (reversed *remove paralysis*), *cause serious wounds, flame strike.*

Defiler Mage: AL LE; AC 9; MV 24; HD 10; hp 24; THAC0 19; #AT 1; D 1d4+1 (obsidian dagger +1); SA spells; SD spells. The defiler cast a *stoneskin* yesterday, and takes no damage from the first eight attacks against him.

He carries a *wand of lightning bolts* with 12 charges, and a scroll with *hold monster* (for use on the thri-kreen and half-giant), and *fireball* at 10th level. Spells memorized: *magic missile* (x2), *burning hands, detect psionics, detect invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, spectral hand, web, hold person, flame arrow, vampiric touch, improved invisibility, dimension door, cone of cold* (x2).

The agents of the sorcerer-king are not stupid. If the PCs have chosen the good ambush spot, the heroes get one free round of attacks. After this, the guards run for boulders and return fire. The captain also takes cover and eats his *apple of speed*. The defiler turns invisible, and then uses *dimension door* to move up to where the PCs are firing, preparing to use his hold spells or his wand, whichever seems more appropriate. The templar leader brings down a flame strike on anyone he can see, and then moves to cover. The rest of the templars try to take cover so that they can use their hold spells or their *spiritual hammers*. The party must be swift to have a chance here. Of course, a *fireball* in the middle of the guards, coupled with a number of missile attacks, can bring down a majority of the guards immediately. Remember that any PC behind a boulder has at least partial cover, giving him a -4 bonus to AC. This applies to PCs as well as guards.

Assuming the PCs set up their ambush with intelligence, they should not have any problem with the enemy forces.

If they do have trouble, and the battle is going badly, they get some unexpected help. Just when things seem at their worst, any held PCs find that they can move again. (The old mage from the village, while invisible, cast *dispel magic*). In addition, Kaftan charges down the trail screaming and attacks as though berserk. (He's not, but he gives a very good impression of it.) The old mage then uses his four *magic missile* spells where they will do the most good. This additional help should allow the PCs to carry the battle.

After the leaders (guard captain, templar leader and defiler) are slain, the rest try to flee. They don't get far before crossbow bolts cut them down.When it is over, Kaftan admits that he couldn't pass up the chance for one more shot at those "dirty slavers."

The old mage, Cerulan, says he needed a new pupil, and he never liked defilers anyway. The PCs are welcomed into the village. Life is rosy, at least as rosy as it can get on Athas. ❑

The Tower Of Gold

A Short Adventure For The AL-QADIM® Setting

by Nicky Rea

Riches beyond imagination and perils unknown await those who seek the golden tower in the ruins of the Ivory Hand. Be swift if you would claim this treasure for your own!

So speaks the message ring the PCs discover among their most recently acquired treasures. The map wrapped around the gold and ruby ring shows the route to the ruin in the mountains and reveals the ring's password, "yaed" (hand).

This is a short adventure outline for up to six characters of any levels. It is intended that the DM flesh out details such as the maps and the NPCs' statistics. Monsters can be found in either the *Monstrous Manual*™ or the AL-QADIM MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® supplement. The DM should customize this scenario, add encounters or treasure, and enrich the basic storyline with subplots or complications. The Genie's Curse is the story behind the adventure and may be told to the PCs if they successfully complete the quest. The four encounters should be used in order and form the basis of the scenario.

The Genie's Curse

Once a noted citadel located high in the mountains above the desert, Baelaed Yaed'aeg (the city of the Ivory Hand) long ago fell into ruin—the result of an offended djinni noble's curse. It was laid upon raqi Husam Ibn Hatim, a sorcerer of wind and flame, because of his mistreatment of captive djinn and his insatiable greed. The curse stated:

Your city shall wither and die. Your children, the jewels of your heart, shall remain alone and friendless, never aging, but unable to depart from a tower of gold that I shall build from your hoarded riches. There they shall remain until such time as brave and clever heroes set them free. Three tests shall there be—one for each daughter. Should they triumph, the heroes shall be rewarded with riches unimaginable.

Realizing his folly, and unable to lift the curse of so powerful a being, the sorcerer could do naught but send forth magical rings, each imbued with a message designed to entice heroes to rescue his three beautiful daughters. Alas, all were ignored, destroyed, or lost. One hundred years passed. The city now lies in ruins, the heroes who would have sought the treasure have long been dust, and the sad maidens of the golden tower have waited in vain—until now. For now, the last ring has imparted its message to a group of heroes worthy of the challenge.

The Old Man

After crossing the desert (and experiencing any encounters the DM wishes to add), the PCs find the landmark indicated on the map. Though almost eradicated by time and sandstorms, an old trail leads up into the mountains, twisting into switchbacks as it climbs ever higher. At one of the most precarious points, where the road is wide enough for only one horse to pass, and a sheer drop-off of three hundred feet awaits the clumsy, an old man in dirty rags blocks the way.

"Most noble travelers, have you any small bits of food—and perhaps a magical gift you are willing to give a poor old beggar?" he whines piteously.

The PCs should generously give him food and water, as this shows charity. They may be less willing to part with a magical item, but that is his price for allowing them unhindered passage. Though he appears defenseless and feeble, he is actually the noble djinni who laid the curse. If the party protests, he hints at "treasures unimaginable" to be had for the price of but a single magical item. If they refuse, he uses his whirlwind to damage or blow away most of their equipment and/or animals, bids them think upon the perils of greed, and leaves them to proceed onward.

Sharifah

As they near the city, the PCs clearly see a broad road leading directly to a dazzling tower of gold. A swordsman clad in desert robes, keffiyah, and facecloth stands upon the twisting stairs which lead up to the entrance to the tower.

He does not speak, but as the PCs climb the stairs and near the elaborately decorated window set into the tower behind him, he raises his hands. Searing flames take the shape of a glowing scimitar and dance in place before him.

"Who shall meet the challenge of my blade? Any who seeks to pass must defeat it alone; none may help. Each must overcome the test, or none shall pass," the swordsman whispers.

This is actually Sharifah, eldest daughter of the sorcerer and a practitioner of great talent herself. The flaming sword is AC 0, has 20 hit points, and inflicts 1d8 damage plus another 1d4 from flame. It can be defeated either through swordplay or by dousing it with water. Once it has been doused, however, water will not extinguish it again. Other clever methods of defeating or bypassing the sword should have a chance of working as well.

Sharifah herself is invulnerable so long as she remains within or upon the tower. She cannot be removed from the tower until the tests have been successfully completed. If the PCs seek to overpower her or get through the window, they find that she cannot be harmed or moved, and that the apparently open window is blocked by an inpenetrable force field. Any PC who looks closely at the window notices the figure lurking within the tower. This is Lateefah watching the outcome of the sword fight. Once each PC has fought the sword, all may continue up the stairs. Sharifah disappears.

Ruqayyah

At the top of the stairs is an impressive golden door. The "door" will not open regardless of the PCs' actions, as it is false. When the PCs reach it, the door speaks, saying, "Reveal your greatest desire and your greatest fear to pass."

Ruqayyah, the second daughter, sits on the tower's roof hidden by the dome and by her sister Sharifah's *invisibility* spell. She uses a *potion of ventriloquism*

to make it seem as though the door is talking. Ruqayyah is a hakima and can hear the truth in spoken words. She can tell if and when the PCs lie.

If they do so, the "door" says, "You have not told the truth. Until you do so, you may not pass."

The DM should ask each player if his or her character is telling the truth. If a player claims something as a character's greatest fear, this should be enforced later in the scenario.

Once each PC has truthfully replied, a secret door five steps behind the party swings open. As with her sister, Ruqayyah is invulnerable, and she moves inside behind the party once they enter.

Lateefah

This is actually a series of encounters which the DM should customize for his players. Using the information gained by Ruqayyah as a guideline (Lateefah, the youngest daughter and most powerful wizard) and her sisters create a phantasmic maze of true and illusionary traps and foes for the PCs to overcome.

There should be at least one special encounter designed for each PC in the party.

These should create confusion and challenge the party. Suggestions include: using *guards and wards* to baffle the PCs as to their true direction, creating illusionary monsters or events which reflect the characters' fears, and utilizing a pictographic combination lock which triggers traps or deals damage for incorrect combinations.

The DM is encouraged to be as inventive and challenging as possible, while not turning the tower into an automatic death trap.

The PCs should be able to overcome the obstacles and pass the tests through intelligence and skill.

Special Notes

The NPCs and the tower itself are invulnerable to physical and magical attacks because the tower is in a pocket dimension, and magical entry or scrying into it fail without harm to the PCs. *Detect magic* is inaccurate here, giving wildly fluctuating results.

As in an *Arabian Nights* tale, all the magical effects need not be explained. Doing so reduces the wonder inherent in the scenario.

Ending the Tests

If the PCs triumph, the sisters appear and offer themselves as wives or travelling companions. They are beautiful, intelligent, and have many skills which could be of use to the party. The DM should generate a very generous treasure (remembering to return a PC's magic item if such was given up to the djinni in the Old Man encounter.) In addition to the magical and mundane treasures within it, the tower itself is made of gold. Once the curse is broken, it may easily be melted down. Of course, so much gold requires a great deal of care to transport, and the PCs might well remember the djinni's warning against greed.

❑

Turkey Feathers

An AD&D® Game Adventure For Characters of Levels 2 to 4

by Jan Adamson

In this AD&D® game scenario, a group of inexperienced heroes must take on what seems to be a very ordinary and even boring task: delivering a flock of 500 turkeys from a turkey farm to town.

Unknown to the player characters (PCs), a gang of thieves plans to steal the herd. The PCs' employers—a retired band of adventurers—are aware of the thieves and try to lure them away with an illusionary turkey herd, entrusting the real flock to the PCs.

The turkeys are a special delicacy in a town across the sea, a town that has an annual festival coming up. The townspeople spend more than normal for good turkeys (1 gold piece each), and this is how the PCs' employers make most of their income for the year.

The adventure begins after the PCs have been approached by the turkey farmers, a surprisingly competent-looking group. The farmers offer the PCs 30 gold each to drive the turkeys to town, but they are willing to negotiate as high as 50 gold each. If the PCs need greater encouragement (as well they might), the farmers play upon the character's sympathies, pointing out that they're in desperate need of help.

The introduction below assumes that the PCs are heroic enough to help and have accepted the offer.

> It's time for the annual turkey drive, and you've been hired to see the birds safely to the ships which take them to all the high-paying customers across the sea.
>
> It's a big responsibility because, if you don't succeed, your employers will be going hungry this winter—and you can't allow that to happen.
>
> Fortunately, because you are prepared for anything, nothing bad will happen to the turkeys.

Allow the PCs to equip themselves as they see fit. Their employers, the turkey farmers, supply them with twenty 100-pound bags of turkey feed and a small, mule-drawn wagon.

> The trail thus far has been easy to follow. Although it's not the normal trail you take to town, it is easier to herd the turkeys down. Who would have ever thought five hundred turkeys would be so hard to handle?
>
> The sun is just starting to come over the horizon, so it is time to start the morning routine of counting the turkeys. Luckily, you were able to stop in a stand of trees last night, no standing out in the cold wind like the past two nights.
>
> You turn to where you left the turkey herd bedded down for the night, ready to do the morning turkey count. It wouldn't do to have an inaccurate count of how many turkeys you have thus far. As you stroll through the trees looking for the turkeys on the ground, it hits you all at once. There is not a single turkey to be seen amid the grass.
>
> Looking up in fright, you realize that all the turkeys are in the trees. This won't do at all. You have to be in town in five days, and it will take every minute of that time at the rate the turkey herd travels. There's no hope for it: you'll have to get the turkeys out of the trees.

During the night, all the turkeys took refuge in the surrounding trees. The PCs must get the turkeys out of the trees if they want to get started before mid-morning.

One possible solution is spreading grain under the trees to get the turkeys out of the trees. It takes fifteen 100-pound bags of feed to get all the turkeys to come out of the trees, ten 100-pound bags of feed for half of the turkeys to come out of the trees. If only five 100-pound bags of feed are used, only about one-fourth of the turkeys come down. This is because the turkeys are scattered all over the forest, and—unless a lot of grain is used—not all the turkeys notice the grain.

The PCs can climb the trees and chase the turkeys off the branches. Simple Dexterity checks allow the PCs to climb safely (thief characters can use their climb walls abilities, if those are better). Failed checks indicate a fall. If some of the PCs fall, they may make a Strength check to hang on the branch instead of falling 10 or 20 feet (50/50 chance) to the ground. If the PCs pick up long branches (staves work), they can reach the lower branches of the trees and clear them of turkeys, but the upper branches still contain birds.

The turkeys, if left to themselves, come out of the trees about mid-morning. The turkeys have had a hard couple of days and are not at all eager to move yet. They can be scared out of the trees, but then they run all over the forest gobbling as if a fox were hot on their tail. If forced out of the trees, they go to the ground and scratch in the dirt.

Turkeys (500): THAC0 17; #AT3; Dmg 1/1/1d2; AC 5; HD 1; hp 3; MV 9; INT Semi AL N; SZ S

Wayhouse

Once the turkeys are out of the trees, it is a quiet trip until about mid-afternoon. The trail the PCs are following goes by an isolated cabin. It is nicely kept and fairly new. This is the home of two weretigers.

> It has been an uneventful day after getting the turkeys out of the trees. It is just past mid-afternoon, and time for a small break for a snack. There is a clearing ahead on the trail, with a fairly new cabin in it. Across the middle of the trail is a gate with a split rail fence extending 50 feet on each side of the gate. As you approach, the door opens, and out step a man and a woman. They look fairly young and are tousled as if just woken from a nap.

The weretigers are trying to get some fowl so they don't have to travel into town for food. They don't have much to trade, so they have started a toll gate. There is a gate in the middle of the trail, with 50 feet of split rail fence extending on each side. About 20 feet of open space stretches between the end of the fence and the forest on each side.

"Well, howdy folks. It's nice to see new faces in these parts. I'm known as Sandy, and this here is my wife, Cally. Nice flock of turkeys you've got there. Nice to finally see some honest traffic on this here trail. Hope you can keep them out of my newly sown wheat field. It's all my wife and I have to get through the coming winter. Don't know what we'd do if we lost that wheat."

If the PCs ask about the house, tell them they see two cats in a window (watch cats) and both Sandy and Cally wear short swords. There is a newly plowed field in back of the house, but nothing is planted there yet (any character with the agriculture nonweapon proficiency can automatically know this if the player asks about the field).

There is no way to keep the turkeys out of the empty field. If the PCs don't notice that there wasn't wheat back there, Sandy puts on a long face and continues.

"Oh, my. Look at what them birds of yours did. They ate up all my grain. Now Cally's going to go hungry all winter; the store don't give credit if they don't see a crop coming up. This means we'll have to go live with her folks again. And just when we were gaining some independence. I don't suppose you'd care to leave some of those birds here so we wouldn't have to move back in with her folks would you? It would mean a lot to my wife, us wanting children and all. They sure would make the difference between staying here and moving back in with her folks."

The weretigers initially demand 50 turkeys for passage, but they settle for as few as five. They do not take money, as they cannot eat money and it is too far to town to get supplies.

If the PCs noticed the field does not contain any grain, the weretigers try another tack, playing on their sympathy.

"Well, I guess I did fib a little about that field being planted with grain. But if I wasn't so desperate, I wouldn't have said that. You know how it is when you first start out. Cally's Dad saying we'd never make it on our own. We would have, if the river hadn't flooded and taken our wagon with it. Now all we have is each other."

"If things don't start improving, we'll end back up at her parent's place again this winter. We so wanted a place of our own so that we could start our own family. And you have so much, and we have so little."

Cally looks downtrodden and forlorn at the PC who looks most sympathetic. If asked, she backs up whatever Sandy has been saying, and adds that there is no privacy at her parents' house for newlyweds.

If things go peacefully, Sandy might even throw in a couple bags of grain for the herd, and Cally serves mint tea for refreshment.

If the weretigers are threatened, they back off, keep track of where the turkeys bed down for the night, and "liberate" 30 of the turkeys. If this happens, the PCs can come back the next day, but the were-tigers will not be home.

If the PCs actually attack the weretigers, the weretigers defend themselves until one is reduced to below one-third of his or her total hit points. At that point they retreat and resort to stealing turkeys at night when the PCs are sleeping.

If the PCs kill one of the weretigers, the surviving weretiger has a 50% chance of going berserk and attacking the closest PC until that character stops moving. If the tiger doesn't go berserk, it runs away to nurse its grief.

Weretigers (2): THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 1d8 long sword, 1d4/1d4/1d12 claw, claw, bite; AC 3; HD 6+2; hp 30, 23; SA rake if both claws hit, extra damage 1d4+1/1d4+1; SD +1 or silver weapons to hit; SZ M

Nightwatch

The next night passes peacefully if the weretigers received at least five turkeys. If not, the weretigers steal 30 turkeys if neither of them were hurt. If either of the weretigers were hurt or killed, they steal 50 turkeys.

Unless taking extraordinary precautions, the PCs do not notice the theft until morning, because the weretigers creep up while in wereform to move quietly. This is not the first raid Sandy and Cally have been on. The weretigers wait until the PCs are on the opposite side of the herd before stealing any turkeys.

In the morning, the trail of turkey feathers are plain to any PC making a tracking roll, but the feathers run out in about a mile (the weretigers put the turkeys in bags and took to the trees). If the PCs go after the missing birds, mention the possibility of losing the entire herd over turkeys already missing. If they still decide to go after the missing birds, remind the PCs that it is a long way to town and that they will have to push the remainder of the herd, with a good chance of losing more than were already lost to the thieves. They will have to push on through the nights, losing about 20% of the herd, just making it to town on time. Turkeys like to roost at night.

River Crossing

After a few hours' travel, the PCs come to a river crossing. The water is only about three feet deep at this point, shallow enough for the PCs to wade, too deep for the turkeys to cross. There is a ford down river about 100 yards around a bend. It is currently about six inches deep, shallow enough for the flock to cross. If the PCs check upstream first, about a half mile up there is an old rock slide that changed the course of the river. If they clear some of the debris and roll some boulders into the water, the river flows back into the old river bed. This shifts the river behind the place where the herd currently is being held. The river current at the trail head is about 15 miles per hour. The river is about 30 feet wide, with shallow banks. If the PCs try to block the river here, the river overflows the banks and sweeps away the turkeys. A lower water spell works for one round only, then the river fills in the gap with a splash.

It has been a peaceful day driving the flock closer to town. There has been nothing much of interest besides a few stray foxes to threaten the turkeys. As you come around a bend in the trail, you all realize you have finally made it to the river.

This is the halfway point, according to the farmers' directions.

If any of the PCs inquire, or if they say they are watching the river, they notice that the water is starting to rise. The rain upriver makes the river rise another two feet, making the ford

downstream impassable for the turkeys. If the PCs decide to rest on this side of the stream, they see that the river has noticeably risen by the time they start to move again.

The only way to get the turkeys across then is by shifting the river to the old river bed and crossing at the ford. The PCs could also build a wooden bridge, using large fallen trees. Extra logs from the forest about 200 yards from the river can be found to help stabilize the bridge. It is a little shaky, so roll 3d6 to find out how many turkeys are lost in the crossing.

If the PCs go up river and find the old rock slide, they note the rising of the river—if they haven't already. It takes a combined strength of 30 to move two of the boulders, one blocking the old river bed, another that shifts the river into its new course.

Shifting all the boulders gets somebody thoroughly wet, and when the second boulder lands in the water, it splashes anybody within 20 feet.

> As you walk up river, you notice what appears to be an old rock slide. It seems to have changed the river's path sometime in the past. Upon closer inspection, you see that one boulder is the foundation for keeping the river in its new bed.

Have fun getting the PCs wet, and if anybody is really careless, have him or her get a piece of clothing stuck under a boulder when it is shifted. Using shovels, picks, or other appropriate tools to dig around the boulders makes them easer to shift, a combined strength of 25 is needed.

Smelly Guests

The PCs find an excellent place to camp for the night. There is a ring of hills around a small valley with a spring at the bottom.

> Night is near, and the trail dips down into a small valley, ringed by hills. There is a small spring at the bottom of the valley with a small stream leading from it.
>
> You are all tired from getting the turkeys across the river, and it will be good to get cleaned up and have a peaceful night's sleep.

During the night, a couple of giant wolverines investigate the camp. They are not very hungry, just curious about the strange beings in their territory. If the PCs stay still, the wolverines move on without hurting anything. They just poke their noses into anything not sealed shut.

Have the PCs on watch describe how they are keeping watch. If they are circling the turkeys, they notice the wolverines in camp on their next pass by the camp. If they are staying in camp on watch, the wolverines check out the turkeys first, then walk into camp as the PCs check on the turkeys.

If one PC stays awake in camp, and one is circling the turkeys, they notice the wolverines entering the camp. If the wolverines are attacked, they fight until they lose about three-fourths their hit points, then they try to retreat. The wolverines turn their backs on the PCs who first attacked them and let fly with their musk attacks. Keep in mind that the musk attack is like a cone and may get some of the PCs who are sleeping. The wolverines then attack normally anybody who is in front of them, and spray anybody who attacks from behind. This should leave them a good escape route when the time comes.

After the wolverines are gone, the only way to get rid of the musk stink is by using a *sweetwater* potion. All cloth that was sprayed rots in a matter of hours, and magical cloth and parchment rots if a saving throw vs. acid is failed.

Giant Wolverines (2): THAC0 14; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/2d4; AC 5; HD 4+4; hp 20, 27; MV 15; SA musk spray (20 x 20 x 60 feet, save vs. poison or retreat for one round, lose 50% Strength and Dexterity and blinded for 1d8 hours); SZ M; INT Semi; AL N (E)

Stampede

The PCs travel through a pass with high walls on either side. It is important to know their marching order at this point. The turkeys stampede out of the canyon.

If all of the PCs are behind the herd, the turkeys all charge the rear. If half of the PCs are in front and the other half are in the rear, the herd splits, and half of the turkeys go in either direction. If the PCs are staggered along the herd, the turkeys go wherever they can.

The cause of the stampede is a pair of half-grown mountain lion cubs out chasing rabbits. Once they realize there are humans present, the cubs bolt for shelter, a cave a couple miles away over the mountains. If the PCs are unhappy with the cubs getting away free, let them take parting shots at the fleeing backs of the cubs. But the cubs do not stay around; they are scared also.

> Huge cliffs on either side of the herd make moving the turkeys the easiest it has been since you left home. There is no chance of the birds straying to either side of the trail. You could almost wish that the cliffs lasted all the way into town.
>
> But, all in all, things have been going well. You don't need to hurry the turkeys into town, because with everybody helping, you know you will arrive in town a day early.
>
> As you stop to get your breath for a minute, a sudden disturbance in the herd catches your attention. The turkeys seem to be milling about in some confusion. As you start forward to see what is happening, the entire herd seems to be moving all at once. You can see flashes of the tawny hide of a mountain lion, and then it hits you: The herd is stampeding!

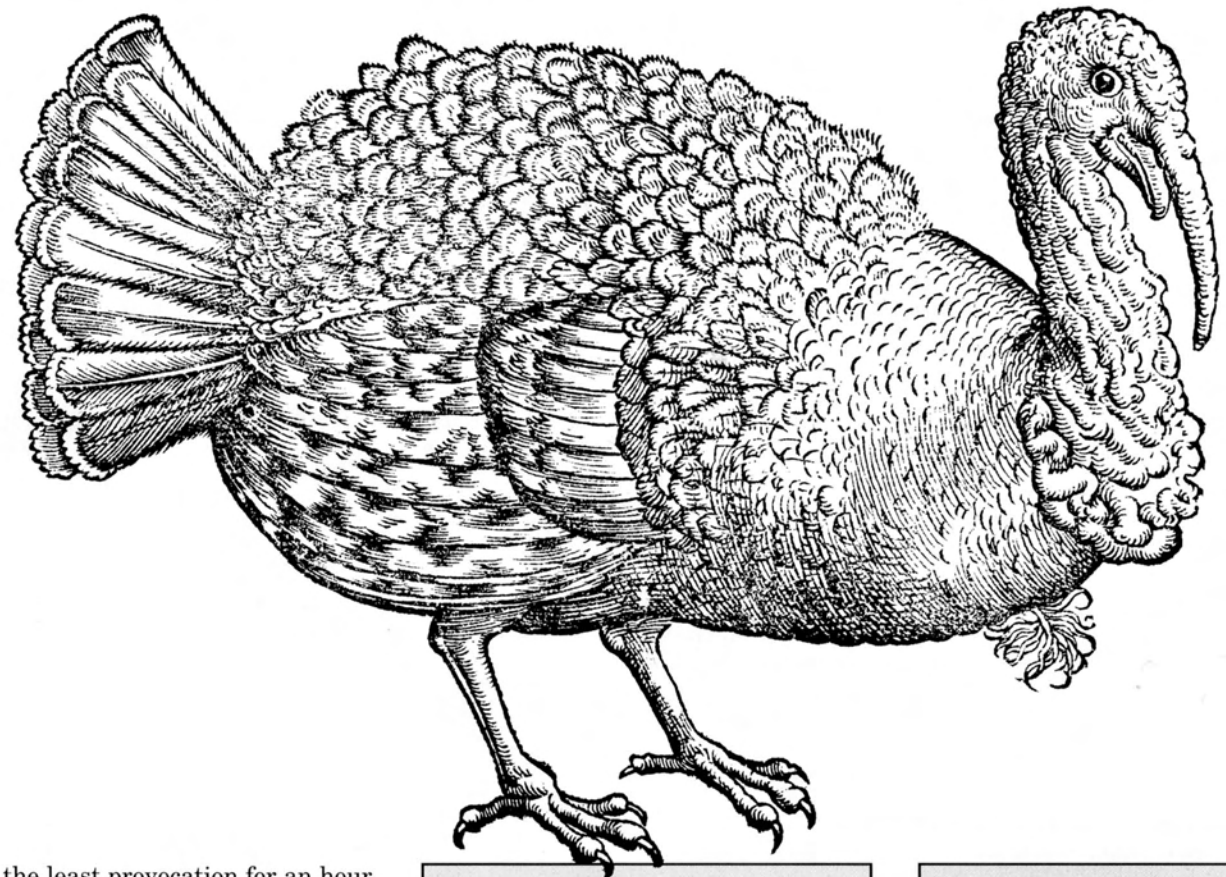
If the PCs immediately take cover behind boulders, trees, or in a cave, they suffer 1d6 damage. If the PCs try to run from the turkeys, or hide in a hole, they suffer 2d6 pecking and trampling damage.

If the PCs hug the cliff walls, they receive 2d4 points damage from wings. If two PCs actually try to turn the herd back on themselves so that they circle, they succeed—but those PCs suffer 2d4 points of damage.

If only one PC tries, he or she will be partially successful, but will still suffer 4d4 points damage.

> As the dust starts to settle, the situation you are in starts to become clear.
>
> The turkeys are scattered all over the canyon. They went running out of the canyon, and are scattering all over the countryside! It's going to take hours to round up the turkeys again.

The turkeys on the cliffs need some encouragement before they descend. Grain on the ground works as before, but having a PC climbing around on the cliff is faster. The turkeys that ran out of the canyon are easily frightened and



bolt at the least provocation for an hour or two. It takes until about dark to gather all of the turkeys back into a herd. If two or more PCs tried to turn the herd, 1d10 turkeys are lost. If only one PC tried, about 1d3 x 10 turkeys were lost.

Lady in Distress

Rose Briarwood is the apprentice of the mage who went to steal the herd from the PCs' employers. She was left here as backup in case the PCs got the herd this far. Rose knows if she kills any of the PCs at this point, she will have a blood feud with the turkey farmers on her hands. Therefore she takes great pains to make friends with the PCs. Rose's only interest is in getting the money from the turkeys as fast as she can, without bloodshed.

Her plan is to get the PCs to trust her by handing out *healing potions* to whoever may need healing, then drug the stew with sleeping herbs at night.

> It has been an uneventful day since the turkey stampede of the day before. It won't be long before you stop for the night. It will be good to finally be in town and have the turkeys at the docks and off your hands.

> The way has been hard but the end is finally within reach. Just one more night on the road. As possible camp sites are being discussed, an unknown voice enters the conversation.
>
> "I know where there is a good camp site for you a couple miles up the trail. There is plenty of grass and a small stream for water."
>
> An attractive young woman steps out from behind a tree. She grins at you and continues "In fact, I'll even help drive the turkeys, if I can have an escort into town."

Rose is looking for a way to stay with the party. She has the following story prepared in case the PCs ask what she is doing in the woods alone:

> "Well, let's just say I made an error in judgment. I went out for a buggy ride with my boyfriend Wilbur.
>
> "It was suppose to be a picnic, but when we got to the picnic grounds, Wilbur had other ideas.
>
> "I decided I would rather walk back to town than have Wilbur escort me back. It was all I could do to preserve my maidenly modesty."

> "And to top it off, I grabbed the wrong sack out of the back of the buggy. This one only contains these five bottles. Do any of you know what they are?"

The bottles are *potions of healing*. Rose gladly gives them to the PCs for an escort back to town.

Rose makes it seem like an offer of gratitude to cook the evening meal. Rose is an excellent chef, and uses herbs from other lands. So while the stew is of gourmet quality (and tainted with sleep-inducing herbs), nobody knows what the ingredients are unless a PC observes her cooking and rolls a successful herbalism or cooking proficiency check at a -6 penalty.

Hidden in her clothes she has an antidote that she takes during a call of nature break. Therefore, Rose eats a hearty meal and keeps track of which PCs are on first watch. The PCs on first watch are the only ones who get a save vs. the sleeping herbs. The PCs who voluntarily went to sleep do not get a saving throw.

The PCs on watch must make a successful save vs. poison at -2 to stay awake. If they make their saves, Rose casts a *sleep* spell from a scroll at them,

making sure all the PCs are asleep. If the PCs don't let Rose join the company, she uses her *ring of silence* and sneaks up on the camp to use the *sleep* scroll. If this happens, she has up to three *sleep* spells on the scroll, plus one she has memorized. She should be able to get in range of all the PCs without their knowledge during the night.

Regardless of what happens, the scroll is used up in this encounter. No matter whether the PCs let Rose join the party, Rose does not let any of her people steal personal possessions from the PCs. The PCs have all of their stuff when they wake up, but the belongings are scattered all over camp. Rose hopes this will give her enough time to get the turkeys sold.

Fight at the Old Oak Corral

When the PCs awaken in the morning, the turkeys are fairly easy to follow. Bird droppings and feathers lead the way. If the PCs pick up the camp carefully, they will have to make a mad dash for town to catch the turkey thieves. If they just pick up what they want, make sure they know everything else is left behind.

> The sun shining into your face awakens you. As you start to open your eyes you have this feeling something is not quite right. Looking around camp, you are simply aghast. It is in shambles. Everything is strewn about like a tornado went through it. It looks like somebody opened up your backpacks, dumped them up-side down, and spread their contents all over camp.
>
> Looking at the rest of your companions in confusion, you notice that they, like you, have been stripped of all clothing down to undergarments. And to top it off, where you left the herd last night, there isn't a single turkey to be seen. Hardly even a feather.

None of the PCs will have trouble following the trail. If anyone asks, the trail points straight at town, and the ship they were supposed to send the turkeys out on leaves at mid-morning (10 o'clock tide). They have about an hour and a half to get to town before the ship sails.

It is four miles to town from the camp. The oaken corrals in which the turkeys are kept before loading are east of the town. There are loading docks connected with the pens, so livestock does not have to enter the town itself. The sea is to the north of the town, while the trail comes out about a mile south of town on top of a hill. There is a square mile cleared area around the town so that herds can go around town fairly easily. Also, the town and docks are visible from the trail.

The PCs can tell that they can't sneak up on the corrals, as the open area around the town includes the corrals. Anybody keeping watch from the corrals will spot a group coming long before they reach the corrals.

Rose and Wilbur are expecting the PCs to show up before all the turkeys are loaded, and they are watching the hills and trees. In the corrals is the turkey herd. The turkey thieves are just finishing loading the turkeys onto the ship when the PCs arrive.

If the PCs scout around first, they will notice that Rose and a strong-looking young man (Wilbur) are near the west fence of the corrals. There are eight men loading the turkeys onto the ships, and they are almost done. Tell the PCs it is customary that animals are not loaded onto the ships until after they have been paid for.

Rose is carrying all the money from the turkey sale (500 gold pieces). Furthermore, the crew that brought in the turkey herd is expected to load them onto the ship. Read the following if the PCs walk calmly up.

> As you walk down the hill to the turkey corrals, Rose and a young man come out to greet you. They seem a little nervous. Behind them are six men who were loading the turkeys onto the boat. They stop about 20 feet away, and look expectantly at you.

Rose wants to delay the PCs with talk as long as possible. She knows that if it comes to a fight she will have to leave town on the ship.

If she can delay the PCs for a couple of minutes, the two men will finish loading the turkeys and be able to come help her. She tries to get the PCs to argue among themselves if at all possible.

If the PCs attack instead of talking, the back row will come forward and protect Rose so that she may cast spells. There is only about a three-feet gap between Rose and the men following her.

If the PCs come charging over the hill, Rose, Wilbur, and four of the men break off immediately to fight the PCs. Two of the thieves wait one round to see if they can backstab somebody, then they join the general fight. The PCs don't know exactly how many people are loading the turkeys unless they ask. The loading crew are not all in place in the corral.

The thieves will be in the following positions if the PCs charge: Wilbur stays beside Rose to help protect her, two sets consisting of two fighters and one thief will be 15 feet ahead of Rose and Wilbur, one set on the left, and the other set on the right. The two remaining thieves are the ones hanging back, and they are 15 feet to either side of Rose and Wilbur.

Rose (M6): THAC0 16; Dmg 1d6; AC 4 (*bracers of defense AC 4*); hp 18; MV 12; AL NE; MI scroll of *sleep, ring of silence* Spells: *reduce, charm person* (x2), *burning hands, darkness 15' radius, blindness, suggestion, spectral force*

Wilbur (F6): THAC0 15, 14 long sword; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 long sword, 1d4 dagger; AC 4 (chain & Dex); MV 12; AL N; MI *long sword +1*

2nd Level Thieves (4): THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6; AC 7; hp 10 each; MV 12; AL CE

2nd Level Fighters (4): THAC0 18; Dmg 1d8; AC 5 (scale & shield); hp 20 each; MV 12; AL CE

If the PCs are losing the battle, their employers show up. Otherwise the turkey farmers will show up just after the battle is completed. If they show up during the battle, the turkey thieves will see them and run for shelter, giving all the PCs parting shots. The only shelter is a stand of trees a half-mile off, on the ship, or in town.

If the thieves make it to town, and the PCs are determined to chase the thieves, let them catch the turkey thieves, but have the guards throw them all in jail overnight for disturbing the peace. If the thieves run for the ship, the sailors will capture them and turn them over to the police.

If the PCs capture the turkey thieves and take them to town, the thieves are recognized, and the PCs and their employers are given the key to the city and are treated like heroes. ❑

A Pirate's Life for Me

A city-based AD&D scenario

by Robert Wiese

This is a city-based adventure for characters levels 2-4. It is set in the western port city of Lidah, on the continent of Nantyr, in world of Alenkirth, which in the ancient common language means "our home soil." With very little modification this adventure can be set in any port city on any world. A map of the region is provided; you will have to draw a version for the players throughout the adventure.

Six characters are provided for use with this adventure, and you may photocopy the character pages for this purpose. If these characters are used, you should be aware that one of them, Aliana Meriadeth, possesses a magic item she does not know about. It is a periapt of wound closure, but she thinks it is just a holy symbol. This is important because she was once a lycanthrope, but was cured. The periapt, however, is making her wonder if she was really cured or not.

Adventure Background

Dakarsh Nei, a smuggler from the Lidah region, had always been a small time criminal, but about eight months ago he decided to get into the big time and began a career of piracy. He recruited some disgruntled sailors and mercenaries, and this group managed to steal a cog called the *DuMark* from a shipyard in Tivas, a city some fifty miles north of Lidah along the coast. Dakarsh has been using it to raid passing merchant ships, striking quickly from lagoons, using surprise and proximity to Lidah to his advantage. The captured ships were sold to other pirates if still seaworthy, or sunk otherwise. The goods are carried by wagon to inland towns where they are sold. Early successes caused Dakarsh to enlarge his crew, and now his band numbers 50 warriors and includes a wizard. He also has a few informants in the port cities along the coast; from these people he learns which ships will be easy prey.

About three months ago, the *DuMark* raided and sank the merchant ship *Victory's Sails*, which was carrying (among other things) cloth for Kuluush, a wealthy orcish silk merchant in Lidah. When Dakarsh and his men captured the *Twin Paradises*, also carrying cloth for Kuluush, the business began to suffer. When the *Wave Catcher* disappeared three weeks ago, Kuluush became desperate.

Dakarsh unfortunately had some difficulties in his encounter with the *Wave Catcher*. Not only was the crew better armed than he had been informed, but another ship chanced to come across the two ships while they were locked in combat. This new ship, the *Invincible*, heavily damaged the *DuMark* before the *DuMark* managed to escape. During the past three weeks, the crew of the *Invincible* have been telling of their encounter with the *DuMark* in taverns.

The adventure begins for the PCs when they are hired by Kuluush to solve the mystery of where all ships carrying fabric for him have gone. Dakarsh, unwilling to leave the area until the DuMark is repaired and hidden, has arranged for another pirate, one Koogan Wellewn of the *Death Wave*, to buy the recently captured goods. Captain Wellewn will collect the goods in a cove south of Lidah three days after the PCs are first contacted by Kuluush, at 1 a.m. If not stopped, Dakarsh and his band will make this delivery and then go to Ragdana, where the the DuMark is being repaired, and continue to victimize shipping in the region.

Timeline of Events

First Day - Kuluush hires the PCs. Dakarsh and his brother are in Ragdana checking on repairs to the *DuMark*.

Third Day - Repairs on the *Invincible*'s rigging are completed. The crew stocks supplies. If the PCs have not figured out the rendezvous point, then a human thief named Feddin, who has been following the PCs, gets captured and points them in the right direction. Dakarsh and his brother meet their gang at an old farmhouse.

Fourth Day - Repairs on the *DuMark* are completed in Ragdana. The *Invincible* sets sail, possibly taking the PCs to the cove. At 10 p.m., Dakarsh and crew leave the farmhouse for the cove. At 11 p.m. they arrive and unload the goods.

Fifth Day - The pirate vessel *Death Wave* arrives just after 1 a.m. Dakarsh's men help the pirate crew load the goods onto the rowboats of the pirate ship. Both pirates and Dakarsh's gang are finished and gone by dawn, unless the PCs stop them.

Sixth Day - If the PCs have failed to

find or stop the smugglers, they retrieve their ship from Ragdana. They will raid another ship on the 14th.

Player Introduction

Your adventures led you to the port city of Lidah some time ago, and you have yet to leave. The city is a fine place to seek fortune and fame, and offers several amenities that the wilderness definitely lacks. Fortune has eluded you so far, but you are reluctant to move on without giving it one more try, and one more, and even one more after that. It is said that everything is possible in Lidah.

The Merchant in Distress

The PCs receive this note in the morning of the first day of the adventure:

Brave Adventurers—

Please come to The Silk Warehouse at 11 this morning. I have a serious problem affecting my business, and I believe that you are the people who can help me. I have heard of you from friends. If you are good enough to help me, I will make it worth your while.

Kuluush

Kuluush is a seller of imported silks and other fine fabrics from various nations of Alenkirth. The fact that he is an orc has in no way hurt his business, because orcs on Alenkirth are one of the dominant and most civilized races. He has been known to guarantee that he can procure any fabric in any color, and he has delivered on this promise more than once. His prices are a little high, but his clerks treat customers with the utmost deference. He has been very successful until three months ago. At about that time, a ship carrying a cargo of his vanished without a trace. It took some time to order more stock, and then that second ship vanished. Two weeks ago, a third ship on which he had cargo vanished as well.

Kuluush has been able to keep up a minimal stock, but soon he will be forced out of businesss. He is very worried, as is his staff. He is behind in his Merchant Guild dues (not uncommon for him), so the Guild is not anxious to help him.

The PCs can obtain the above information about his business by checking with the Merchant Guild (there is a fee of 5 gp), or they can gather parts of the story from the shopkeepers near the Silk Warehouse.

As the PCs approach the silk shop, read the following:

Though the wide doors of The Silk Warehouse stand open, the number of customers passing through is small. Inside you see many tables and racks, most of them thinly stocked with fabrics of varied colors and patterns. A clerk approaches you and when informed of your appointment looks you over appraisingly. He appears to be satisfied, because his smile remains as he leads you to an office. "These people say they have an appointment, sir," announces the clerk before withdrawing.

"Thank you for coming," begins the man inside. "I am Kuluush."

Kuluush expects that the PCs will introduce themselves, as that is the polite thing to do. After this happens, he continues:

"As you may have seen, I deal in imported cloths from all across Alenkirth. I receive most of my supplies by ship. Lately, however, I have been the victim of bad luck. The last three ships that I had cargo on have not arrived. I have been sustaining the business on the fabrics I buy from overland merchants, but I cannot do so for long.

"I would like you to find out what happened to the ships carrying my goods and, if there is some common cause, deal with it. If you can, I would also like you to recover whatever of my goods you can. I will pay you each 25 gp per week for this work, plus reasonable expenses."

Kuluush is willing to pay up to 50 gp each per week, but he haggles hard and will not pay more. He will add a flat 5% of the value for any goods recovered, if the PCs think to mention a recovery fee. Once a price is agreed on, read the following:

"I do not have much information to start you on your mission," he says in a tone of regret. "My cargoes were supposed to arrive at the Weskin Wharf warehouse. And while Weskin says they have not arrived I think he may know more than he is telling me. I will give you a list of the three ships and what they were carrying to help you. If you can show that the disappearances are related, you might get help from the Harbor Guard."

List of Missing Ships and Cargoes

Victory's Sails — A caravel carrying silk, linen, and wool. Departed from Tivas and was supposed to stop at Lidah on its way to the south continent. Expected arrival 10 weeks ago.

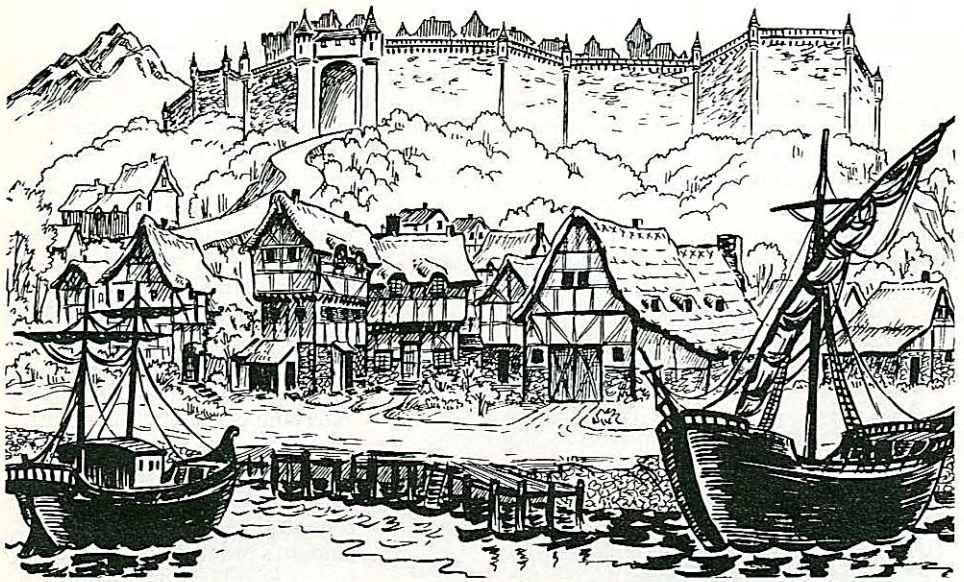
Twin Paradises — A knarr carrying silks and wools from the east coast of Nantyr. Departed from Kubinh (a city on the east coast), and expected six weeks ago.

Wave Catcher — A caravel carrying silk, wool, linen, and cotton from Tivas and further north. Expected three weeks ago.

The Docks

This section covers the docks area, and what happens if the PCs wander around. Random encounters on the docks should happen frequently. Pickpockets, people bumping into PCs (and maybe appearing as thieves), sailors accosting the PCs as old friends but being mistaken, people rushing down the street for whatever reason, begging urchins—all of these are good choices. The idea is to get the PCs interacting with people to find the proper clues.

While talking to people on the docks and around the waterfront, the PCs hear quite a lot of unrelated information. You can either invent this to fit your campaign, or take material from



the Rumors table. Spread useless information liberally, but be sure to mix in the genuine clues below.

• The PCs hear of *Invincible's* attack on pirates, if not from one of Alisha's crew, then from someone who can point them to a crew member. Many of them can be found in the Dolphin's Tail, a tavern located close to Weskin Wharf. For a free drink or two, any crew member can tell an exaggerated version of Alisha's story (Encounter Six), emphasizing his own part and perhaps belittling some fellow crew member—and leaving out the name of the ship. Any crew member can say that Alisha Blackmane is at the Rampant Lion Inn.

• From smugglers, pirates, or other dishonest rogues found on the docks, the PCs can learn of several thieving and smuggling gangs. One of these is the Nei smuggling/pirate band. Some dock people have friends who have joined Dakarsh's band (though they won't advertise it). The Neis are mentioned if the PCs ask about smugglers or pirates working the coast or if the list of missing goods is shown. ***"Yep, the Nei gang were selling just such goods as those about two months ago down south,"*** someone might say. Further questioning reveals that these goods appeared soon after the first of Kuluush's ships was reported missing. For a price, the PCs can learn that the Neis are staying at the Sleeping Bear boarding house. See *The Nei Brothers*.

• On the second day of the adventure, one of the PCs overhears two men talking in a tavern. One of the men mentions that he was supposed to meet Nei in three days, but Dakarsh put him off for two more days. Seems he had to meet someone somewhere out of town. If questioned, they are indignant that the PCs are eavesdropping, and send them to the Dolphin's Tail, saying that Dakarsh was there a while ago and that the PCs can ask him his business themselves.

Dakarsh is not in town, and the Dolphin's Tail patrons and staff claim not to have seen him in days (true). He is not a regular at the Dolphin's Tail, so this is not unusual.

• The goods listed have not passed through Lidah. Even contacts in a thieves' guild (assuming some PC has them) or other underground sources indicate that those goods have not passed through town as listed. If a PC expresses a convincing desire to buy the cargos on the list, the contact mentions that Dakarsh Nei, a known smuggler, has been selling such goods in towns to the south in the past few months. Dakarsh usually stays at the Sleeping Bear boarding house near the docks. Information from a thieves guild should be costly and take a full day to get.

Followed!

About an hour after the PCs start asking questions about the smugglers or the battle, a human thief named Feddin starts following the PCs. He is Dakarsh's contact in Lidah and wants to keep Dakarsh apprised of any possible dangers to his operation.

To determine whether Feddin is detected, consult *The Complete Thief's Handbook*, pages 19-20. Observant PCs can make checks once every three turns, as Feddin begins to feel comfortable after each near miss and lets down his guard.

The Rumor Table

1. An old retired sailor is telling tales of a great sea serpent attacking ships. He claims to have seen it destroy a knarr some 6-8 weeks ago, and he has talked to many others who have seen it.

2. Giants in the hills south of Lidah have begun raiding coastal and plains dwellers. People are waiting for the Prince (the ruler of the city-state) to do something about it. Travel to the south is considered dangerous at this time.

3. Someone of high rank in the Merchant Guild has been hiring men for smuggling activities around Lidah. This person apparently has an expanding operation.

4. Allura, a courtesan patronized by the wealthy and influential in Lidah, has lately become more affluent. Rumor is that she is blackmailing one of her clients.

5. Phaktarr, a smuggler believed to have been killed by rivals, is not really dead at all. He has been running a new smuggling band from the sewers of Lidah. Some claim that he really was killed and is now a vampire. Opinion as to his "status" is varied, but a sampling of people who have opinions will show that 50-55% think him dead, 40% think he is alive, and 5-10% think he is a vampire. No one has seen him in quite a while.

6. The rash of building fires in the past few months are due to an escalation of the rivalry between thieving and smuggling operations in the city. Others blame foreign thief gangs.

If and when Feddin is spotted and captured, he acts fearful of the PCs and hurries to deny that he was following them or has anything to do with them. If pressured, he caves in and tells them what they want to know. "I got three Yellow Boys to follow the swells what asked about the *Wave Catcher* (or anything else they have been asking about). Geez, ya act like I was a prig gonna fork ya." Feddin talks mostly in slang, so the Thieving Cant glossary will be helpful. When asked to name and/or describe his employer, he names and describes Dakarsh Nei.

Feddin (hm T3): Int Average; AL NE; AC 6 (leather armor); MV 12; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4 (daggers); NWP observation* (13), trailing* (15); *ring of protection +1*; Thief Skills: PP 30, OL 15, FT 10, MS 40, HS 35, DN 35, CW 75, RL 0. * proficiencies come from *The Complete Thief's Handbook*.

At 20 years of age, Feddin is commonplace in height and appearance , does not have an interesting personality, does not dress interestingly, and is not interesting enough to stay in one's mind. This makes him particularly good at tailing people, eavesdropping on conversations, and spying. Feddin is cowardly and suffers from a persecution complex. He feels that he is not being given the consideration he is due, and this tends to frustrate him and make him morose.

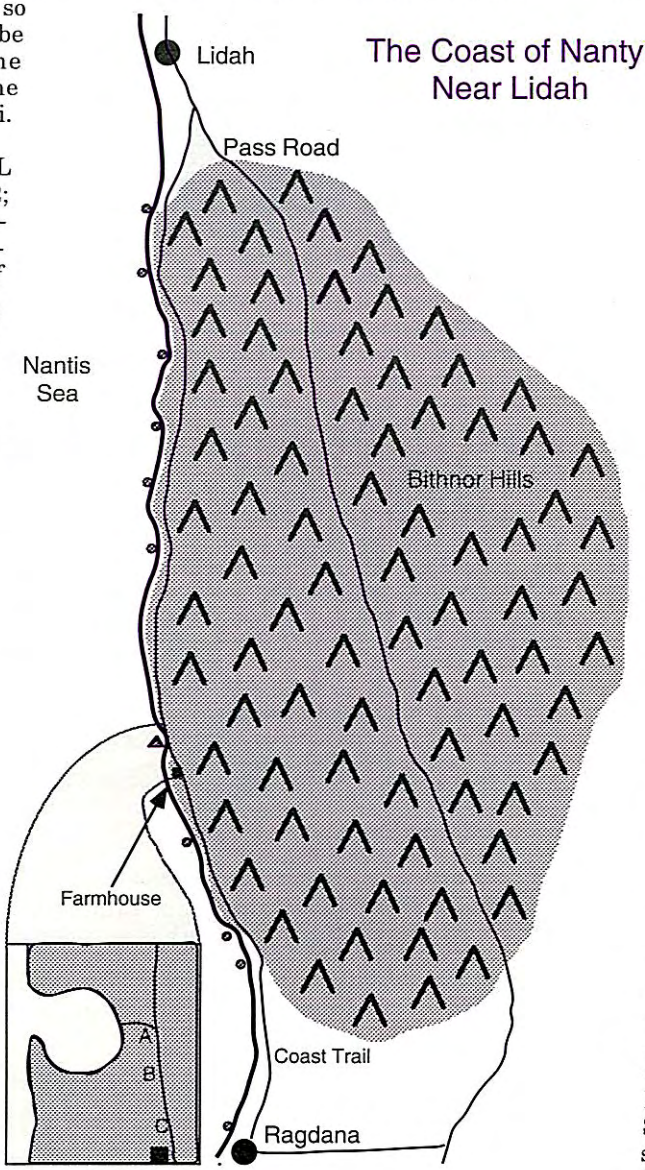
Weskin Wharf

The Weskin Wharf looks very busy as you approach. A merchant caravel, the* Tarsain Queen*, is being loaded and prepared for a voyage. Workers scurry about carrying boxes, rolls, and other packages to the ship. Some distance down the docks you can see a large galleon. Repair men are working on her, laying in some new rigging.

Other than information from the Rumor Table, the only thing the dock workers know is that the galleon, *Invincible*, engaged some pirates and was damaged. They can direct the PCs to the Dolphin's Tail, where some of the *Invincible's* crew are likely to be found.

If they want to see Weskin, they eventually find someone who stops long enough to point up a flight of stairs to where his office is. The guy expects to be paid for this information, though.

The Weskin Wharf company is a large warehouse with an office above the main floor. The *Tarsain Queen* is soon to be on its way to Ragdana and is not involved in this adventure. The large galleon being repaired is the *Invincible*. If asked about it, Weskin says it was attacked by pirates. Pressed for details, he says that he does not know anything and recommends that the PCs talk to one of the crew or to the captain, Alisha Blackmane. Some crew members, he says, are likely to be found at the Dolphin's Tail, "just down the waterfront a bit."



As soon as Weskin realizes that the PCs want only information, he starts grumbling about "being a busy man" and "having a lot to do." He reiterates his previous statement (to Kuluush) that the ships on the PCs' list never arrived at his dock. No ships carrying precisely those cloth cargoes arrived under any name. Similar cargoes have arrived for other merchants though (but not the precise amounts ordered by Kuluush), and as regularly as normal. He is exasperated for having to explain this again. He refuses any requests to search his warehouse, becomes indignant and angry, and dismisses the PCs as quickly as possible.

The Weskin Wharf warehouse is not well protected at night, but there is no information of interest to be gained by breaking in.

The Harbor Ministry

Regional harbormaster offices have records of ships that have come in during the last month. Records dating prior to that are at the central Ministry office. A bribe of at least 10 gp gains a look at the recent records, but the only thing of interest is that the *Invincible* arrived three weeks ago from Tivas.

Information that harbormasters might have about smuggling and piracy should be derived from your campaign, but you can get stuff from the Rumor Table. Eventually, these people will send the PCs to the Harbormaster, Phitas Surengale. His office is in the port section of Lidah, three blocks from the docks proper. Upon arrival, the PCs find themselves ushered into Master Phitas's office without delay.

After waiting in the outer office for some time, you are shown into a crowded but well-appointed office. The chairs are padded and of a dark blue, with wall hangings well

Tanik Obereck

3rd Level Male Human Invoker (wizard specialist)

Str: 11	Int: 17
Dex: 16	Wis: 10
Con: 16	Chr: 11

Height: 5' 8"
Weight: 170 lbs
Hair/Eyes: Black / Blue
Skin: Fair
Age: 25
Alignment: Lawful Good

AC Normal: 5
AC Rear: 7
THAC0: 20
Hit Points: 15

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Direction Sense (11), Endurance (16), Navigation (15), Read/Write Common (18), Riding - Horse (13), Rope Use (16), Seamanship (17), Spellcraft (15), Swimming (11)
Languages: Common

Wizard Spells
Spells per day: 3/2
Choose one spell at each level in Evocation (the starred ones)
Spellbook:
Level One: *burning hands, detect magic, magic missile, read magic, shield, shocking grasp, spook*
Level Two: *ESP, flaming sphere, mirror image, rope trick, web*

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 7*

Possessions: Staff, soft boots, breeches, vest, tunic, belt, wool cloak, 2 small pouches, 10 sheets parchment, 2 vials ink and quill, hooded lantern, 2 flasks lamp oil, flint and steel, waterskin, backpack, bedroll, 12 gp

Character Notes:
You were the son of a wizard who belonged to an evil carde of Invokers, and grew up in a country where evil wizards served the king. You received training from your father in evocation magic, but he thought you would not have a bright future. You were too kind-hearted and not very organized. As you grew up you realized that your morals were in sharp contrast to those around you, and you left home in the dark of night, taking passage on a trading ship headed west. You spent another three years on that ship as a member of the crew before finally leaving the ship in Lidah. You then met Serena Worthwood, and soon after Taldar Everwind. The three of you started adventuring, and soon others had joined your little band.

You are lawful good because you respect the rules of society and desire to do good, but organization is not one of your strong traits. From your family you picked up a liking for destruction and the power of your magic, but now you work to destroy the forces of evil. This could eventually include members of your own family. Thankfully that day has not come yet, as you are not sure what choice you would make. When adventuring you take the lead in fights, you never fight toe to toe with the bad guys. You do not always pay attention to where your friends are when letting off a powerful spell, and you have accidentally caught some of them in the effects a few times. You figure that they should watch out for themselves. You are pleasant to be around, even tempered, and enjoy a good joke.

The others are:

Taldar Everwind - Capable but reckless, sabre hanging jauntily at his side, you were not aware that this elf was a thief until you started adventuring with him. He has become your closest friend.

Crakadan Earthdigger - A devoted priest of the war god Duras and one who certainly would encourage conflict rather than avoid it. Dwarf priests of human gods are unusual, but he brings a fresh perspective to his religion. He preaches a lot but makes it interesting.

Akira Iko - This fighter from the ancient Kito empire is direct, likes action, and is very good at what he does, all qualities that you share. He calls himself a ronin. He treats everyone with the utmost courtesy. You and he have an easy acquaintanceship that you would like to make a friendship.

Serena Worthwood - Your oldest friend in the group. Every bit a lady, she can fight very well for one so slim and petite. She has also learned thievery from Taldar and is an accomplished acrobat. None of these skills are ones that you would guess at by looking at her. You have known her for four years.

Aliana Meriadeth - This half-elf druid is enchanting. She is pretty, well-spoken, devoted to her faith, and cooks very well. She likes taking care of the group; this includes binding wounds and listening when people want to talk. She has an animal magnetism that you feel very strongly.

Taldar Everwind

3rd Level Male Elf Swashbuckler (thief)

Str: 15	Int: 12
Dex: 18 (19)	Wis: 11
Con: 10	Chr: 14

Height: 5' 0"
Weight: 110 lbs
Age: 96
Hair/Eyes: Light Brown / Green
Skin: Pale Fair
Alignment: Chaotic Good

AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 10
THAC0: 19
Hit Points: 16

Weapon Proficiencies: Sabre, Dagger
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Alertness (12), Blind-Fighting, Etiquette (14), Fast Talking (14), Gaming (14), Tumbling (18)
Languages: Common, Elven

Swashbuckler Abilities
1. Disarm attack (-4 to hit, if successful opponent's weapon flies away from him in some direction)
2. +2 Reaction adjustment when dealing with members of the opposite sex (females in this case)

Thief Skills
Backstab at +4 to Hit and x2 Damage

PP	OL	FT	MS
45% (+10)	45% (+10)	35%	35%
HS	HN	CW	RL
35%	45%	80%	0%

Magic Items: *Gauntlets of dexterity* (use stats and bonuses in parentheses above when wearing these), *potion of rainbow hues, potion of levitation*

Possessions: Sabre, 2 daggers, stiletto, hooded lantern, 5 flasks lamp oil, breeches, tunic, vest, boots, cloth cloak, thieves tools, 50' silk rope, grappling hook, 20 caltrops, marked cards, backpack, bedroll, 17 gp

Character Notes:
You are the fourth son of Tal Everwind, the elder of your clan. When you were very young, you fell in love with a girl from your clan and she liked you as well. When the time came to marry, however, she spurned you and married a rival of yours. This was a grievous blow, and the breaking of your heart changed your attitude and your life. Soon after, you left the clan home and

started a life of adventure. Your travels have led you to Lidah, where you joined with Serena Worthwood and Tanik Obereck. Later others joined your group and that is how your adventuring party was formed.

You are now living your life for the moment, experiencing what there is to experience. You have found that your good looks and dashing style are very attractive, and you do not hesitate to make use of these attributes. You love risk and take great pleasure in gaming (especially winning). Your recklessness, however, has caused you to develop the ability to fast-talk your way out of a mess, and you have done so more than a few times.

The others are:

Tanik Obereck - One of your earliest friends in the group, this evoker sometimes scares you. While you like finesse and neatness in dealing with foes, he likes straightforward destruction, preferably through his own magic. He can be trusted to account for many foes, and you have learned to be out of the way when he casts spells.

Crakadan Earthdigger - A dwarf priest of Duras. He is usually too serious, but he loves ale and knows a lot about it. He is always willing to accompany you to a tavern, and equally willing to stay there after you have left with a female.

Akira Iko - This fighter from the ancient Kito empire calls himself a ronin, and that title does not seem to bring him any happiness. He is very polite but also very firm, and an innate superiority in his bearing tells you that he used to be important in his homeland. His weapons and clothing are not like any you have seen. He is very dependable though, and can intimidate the enemy if he so chooses.

Serena Worthwood - This half-elf woman is very attractive, and you have been interested in her since you first met. She is an acrobat and fighter, and thanks to your training a thief as well. She is deceptively strong and good to have at your side in a fight. You have known her for four years.

Aliana Meriadeth - This half-elf is also very pretty, but her demeanor is humble and her nature caring. You are comfortable with her as a friend. She is a druid and an excellent cook. She reminds you in a vague way of a fox probably her auburn hair and the way she wears it.

Crakadan Earthdigger

3rd Level Male Dwarf Specialty Priest of Duras

Str: 16	Int: 9
Dex: 13	Wis: 16
Con: 16	Chr: 10

Height: 4' 2"
Weight: 147 lbs
Age: 65
Hair/Eyes: Dark Brown / Brown
Skin: Ruddy Tan
Alignment: Neutral

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 3
THAC0: 20
Hit Points: 22

Weapon Proficiencies: Footman's Flail, Club
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Armorer (7), Blind-Fighting, Brewery (9), Charioteering (15), Engineering (6), Herbalism (7), Riding - Pony (19), Weaponsmith (6)
Languages: Common, Dwarven

Specialty Priest Powers:
1. Cannot turn undead
2. Berserker Rage - as specialty priest of Tempus
3. Special Weapon - Flail, +1 to hit and damage

Priest Spell Spheres
Spells per Day: 4/3
Major: Animal, combat, divination, elemental, healing, necromantic, protection, weather
Minor: All, guardian, summoning, sun

Magic Items: *Ring of protection +1, flail +1* (this is your chosen flail)

Possessions: Banded mail, an extra flail, metal engraved drinking mug, boots, breeches, tunic, gloves, belt, 2 wineskins with different ales in each, holy symbol of Duras, backpack, large belt pouch, small sack, healing herbs, whetstone, bedroll, 14 gp

Character Notes:

The son of a miner and brewer, your family expected that you would continue in the mining trade and join the clan army. You did neither, as you felt the call of Duras at an early age. You left your people to join a temple of Duras, and when you were a full priest you returned to convert them. Your people evinced little interest. They were very attached to the dwarven gods and not willing to change, which is part of the nature of dwarves and should have been expected. You gave up and came to Lidah. There you joined the temple of Duras and eventually met Akira Iko, a fighter from the ancient Kito empire. He introduced you to the group.

You are a fine example of the dour and serious nature typical of dwarves. The duties of the faith take up what time you do not spend adventuring. You love your god and try to spread the faith wherever you can. You also have a love of brewing and ale, and can drink many other dwarves under the table, not to mention most men.

Worship of Duras - Duras, the Lord of Battles and God of War, is venerated by all those engaged in conflicts, but his regular worshippers are few. The clerical hierarchy is divided into military rankings. Duras's symbol is a pair of axes on a field of crimson, with the symbols for death and life emblazoned on the ax heads.

Tanik Obereck - This powerful evoker is a myriad of strange contradictions. He is very intelligent but very disorganized, he loves to fight but from a distance (and what is a good fight without the risk of death?), and he grew up among evil, yet is good.

Taldar Everwind - This thief is a bit more dashing than you approve of in general. However, he is a very good thief for his age and likes to gamble. He is very attractive to women, and often you and he go to bars together.

Akira Iko - You are certain that Duras approves of your Kito friend. He is fearless and loves combat. You know of the dishonor he feels from his past (he fled west instead of dying with his lord), but you do not regard it as a disgrace. He lived to fight another day, and Duras does not approve of needless deaths.

Serena Worthwood - This woman is very pretty as humans go and appreciates your religious points of view, though she does not agree with them. She fights in an acrobatic style which you both admire and condemn (because you cannot do the same). You have noticed that she can be obstinate.

Aliana Meriadeth - This priestess of the weakling crop god Merrinah seems weak herself. Nice, supportive, and caring, but not a confrontational person unless the principles of her religion are at stake. You feel a bond of priestly camaraderie with her.

Akira Iko

3rd Level Male Human Ronin (fighter)

Str: 16	Int: 14
Dex: 14	Wis: 13
Con: 15	Chr: 11

Height: 5' 7"
Weight: 170 lbs
Age: 28
Hair/Eyes: Black / Brown
Skin: Tan but a little yellowish
Alignment: Lawful Good

AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 6
THAC0: 18
Hit Points: 24

Weapon Proficiencies: Katana specialization, Great Bow specialization, Waki (short sword), Two Hander Style Specialization, Martial Arts Specialization
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Kito Etiquette (11), Read/Write Kito (15), Riding - Horse (16), Calligraphy (13)
Languages: Common, ancient Kito

Ronin Abilities
Kiai Shout - for 1 round strength goes to 18/00, can be used 3 times per day

Magic Items: *Katana +1* and *waki +1* (a set), 2 *potions of healing, potion of climbing*

Possessions: Great bow, samurai scale mail, 24 sheaf arrows in large quiver, boots, cotton trousers, belt (obi), kimono, warm cloak, sandals, outer robe, backpack, bedroll, straw mat, flint and steel, tobacco pipe and 1/2 lb tobacco, 13 gp

Character Notes:

Long ago, many hundreds of years before you were born, the war-like nation of Kidash invaded and conquered the ancient Kito empire and absorbed its people. You trace your family back to the Kito nobility, and your family keeps alive the ancient traditions.

You were a samurai in the service of Lord Akira Hanko, your uncle and a minor noble in Kidash. After two years of controversy and political maneuvering, a rival noble caused your lord to be blamed for the massacre of two villages. He led warriors against your uncle's castle, and though you fought well the defenses were overcome and almost everyone slain. Six samurai (yourself included) escaped with the infant son of the lord. Later, an old retainer of the lord took the infant to some relatives and urged you to flee. The only things of your family that you were able to save were a katana and waki set that had been in your family for 100 years. They are finely decorated and have great sentimental as well as practical value. Two years ago you arrived at Lidah and after a few months joined with some adventurers.

The destruction of your lord and your flight have greatly changed your life. You are now a ronin (a masterless samurai), and your honor is gone. You cannot restore your honor here, and you cannot return to your home, so you are resigned to your current situation. It does make you sad, but life is hard. You are grim and forthright, though always very polite. Samurai are usually a bit arrogant, but your current situation makes such behavior inappropriate, so you try to curb this tendency.

The others are:

Tanik Obereck - A powerful evoker and crusader for what is good. Like a lot of people in the west he is rude, but you know he grew up among evil wizards and spent time among sailors, so his lack of courtesy in speech is understandable. He is pleasant to be around, and especially capable in a fight.

Taldar Everwind - This thief does not act with propriety, but in these lands more freedom seems to be the rule and you do not hold this against him. He is a competent thief and an avid gamester, and can be counted on to raise your spirits when they are low.

Crakadan Earthdigger - You introduced this dwarf priest of the war god Duras to the group, so you feel a little responsible for him. His seriousness is comforting to you. He is a strong support in battles you fight and a good friend.

Serena Worthwood - You were brought up to treat women with respect, but this half-elf commands respect not merely for being a woman. She is a good fighter and very acrobatic, able to counter opponents before they realize they have been countered. She is very beautiful.

Aliana Meriadeth - This half-elf female acts like females from your home. She cooks the food, cares for the horses and heals wounds with happiness, never too busy to do something for someone. She is a druid of Merrinah, the agricultural god. She seems devoted to her faith.

Serena Worthwood

Female Half-Elf 2nd Level Fighter/ 2nd Level Thief

Str: 15	Int: 14
Dex: 16	Wis: 14
Con: 10	Chr: 14

Height: 5' 3"
Weight: 85 lbs
Age: 20
Hair/Eyes: Dark Brown / Green
Skin: Fair
Alignment: Neutral Good

AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 8
THAC0: 19
Hit Points: 11

Weapon Proficiencies: Short Sword, Knife, Light Crossbow, Two-Weapon Style Specialization
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Juggling (15), Jumping (15), Read/Write Common (15), Riding - Horse (17), Rope Use (16), Tightrope Walking (16), Tumbling (16)
Languages: Common

Thief Skills
Backstab at +4 to Hit and x2 Damage

PP	OL	FT	MS
25%	45%	20%	15%
HS	HN	CW	RL
15%	20%	65%	25%

Magic Items: *Cloak of elvenkind, potion of flying*

Possessions: Two short swords, chest bandolier with 5 knives, leather armor, light crossbow, 20 light quarrels in case, cooking pots, tunic, breeches, boots, riding boots, wool cloak, leather gloves, belt, 2 small belt pouches, flint and steel, whetstone, waterskin, 30' silk rope, 8 gp

Character Notes:

Your father was adventuring when he and his friends rescued your mother (and several other elves as well) from evil giants. They fell in love at first sight. You grew up in Lidah, where your father worked as an Enforcer (the equivalent of constables or city guards). He taught you to fight, while your mother taught you acrobatics and tumbling. Your parents instilled in you the concept that the good of all is more important than how it is achieved. When you were 16 years old you met Tanik Obereck, and later when Taldar Everwind came along the three of you

began adventuring together. It was Taldar who taught you thief skills. Last year your family moved away. Recently, due to financial set-backs you had to decide whether to sell your sword or your thief tools in order to keep eating. You chose the tools, and are now saving to buy new ones.

You are petite, slender and very attractive. You are also stronger than you look, and you use this deception to your advantage. An innate curiosity and a streak of obstinacy lead you into scrapes, but your friends are usually there to pull you out.

The others are:

Tanik Obereck - Your oldest friend in the group, Tanik is very pleasant. He is also a powerful but disorganized evoker, and he has singed you once before with a flaming sphere that you couldn't avoid. You find it interesting that he could have such strong principles of good after growing up among evil wizards.

Taldar Everwind - There's no denying that this thief is attractive. He is a good friend and a good thief for one so young. He has frequently expressed feelings for you, but you are not sure he is serious.

Crakadan Earthdigger - You feel sure that your father and this dwarf priest of Duras would get along splendidly. They both like conflict, war and battle. Your father wasn't devoted to the concept of war, and of course your father was taller, but because Crakadan otherwise reminds you of your father you like him.

Akira Iko - This man from the ancient Kito empire treats you with unbelievable courtesy. You can see from his armor and bearing that he was someone important in his homeland, but he does not talk about his past. He seems content but not happy, and you think this is because of his past. He is a very good and very fast fighter.

Aliana Meriadeth - This druid and you have become very close. She claims that she was once a werefox, and if you look closely at her you can sort of see it in her appearance. She says Merrinah saved her from that curse. The effects remain though, as she looks very elven but is completely human. You have promised not to ever tell this secret to anyone. Aliana is very nurturing and likes to cook, care for people and horses, and such as that. Her quiet wisdom is very comforting.

Aliana Meriadeth

3rd Level Female Human Druid of Merrinah

Str: 13	Int: 14
Dex: 8	Wis: 16
Con: 12	Chr: 15

Height: 5' 9"
Weight: 154 lbs
Age: 26
Hair/Eyes: Auburn / Blue
Skin: Fair
Alignment: Neutral

AC Normal: 8
AC Rear: 8
THAC0: 20
Hit Points: 17

Weapon Proficiencies: Spear, Sling
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Animal Lore (14), Cooking (14), Healing (14), Herbalism (12), Religion (16), Weather Sense (15)
Languages: Common, Druidic Tongue, Elven

Unique Power
All wounds that you suffer close instantly and you heal at twice the normal rate.

Priest Spell Spheres:
Spells per Day: 4/3
Major: All, animal, elemental, healing, plant, weather
Minor: Divination

Magic Items: Potion of ESP

Possessions: Simple brown robes with a plain braided belt, holy symbol of Merrinah, mistletoe, necklace with prayer beads and religious symbol, leather armor, spear, sling, 20 sling stones, boots, warm cloak with hood, flint and steel, small cooking pot, knife, backpack, bedroll, hooded, lantern, 1 flask lamp oil, small tent, 9 gp

Character Notes:

You were raised by a werefox and grew to become a werefox yourself. You were very unhappy, because for some reason you did not acquire the usual attitudes of werefoxes. At age 17 you wandered into a temple and started crying. A priest there cured you of your curse, though your elven appearance did not go away. People frequently mistake you for a half-elf or even an elf.

You eagerly joined the temple of Merrinah to repay the god for your deliverance and to give your life purpose. You developed humility and a caring attitude toward others during your training. Merrinah then led you to Lidah, where you met the group you now adventure with.

You are attractive, still retaining a slight fox-like coloring and facial cast. You genuinely care for your friends and try to take care of them. This includes cooking meals, caring for the horses, healing injuries, and listening when they need a friend. You even offer quiet wisdom when you feel it is appropriate.

Recently you began to heal at an amazing rate; any wound you suffer now closes almost instantly, just like when you were a werefox. This is worrying, and you are no longer sure if you are actually cured.

Worship of Merrinah - The god of agriculture, Merrinah is worshipped wherever people grow things. Merrinah's temples are often unostentatious affairs with greenery and wooded glens nearby. His symbol is a stalk of wheat bound with flowers and superimposed on a simple circle.

Tanik Obereck - This man is a powerful wizard but a very compassionate person. He has occasionally caught a friend in one of his spells, but always checks on these unfortunates afterward. He is very disorganized, but you pack for him sometimes and try to keep track of things for him when he is distracted. He is usually pleasant and calm, but doing good is an obsession with him.

Taldar Everwind - A very handsome and dashing thief. He has expressed interest in you, but he seems to be more interested in Serena. He is especially good at locks and picking pockets.

Crakadan Earthdigger - This dwarf priest is much more intense about his god Duras than you are about Merrinah, but Duras is a more intense god than Merrinah. He is very devoted to his faith, and has talked about his failure to spread it among his dwarven people.

Akira Iko - This man from the ancient Kito people seems to take your services as a matter of course, yet he does not treat you like a servant. He can be depended on to save your life when necessary. He has some sadness in his past that he does not talk about.

Serena Worthwood - The only other woman in the group, Serena is a good warrior, acrobat and thief. She is the only one in the group to whom you have confided the secret of your past.

chosen to match them. The whole effect comfortable and yet luxurious. Several large books are crowded among many smaller ones in a bookshelf to one side, and a table with numerous charts piled on it sits across the room. The desk is also littered with paperwork. Standing by the table are two men.

The first, a handsome older man with neat white hair and dressed like a naval captain, must be Master Phitas Surengale. The other appears from his dress to be a minor official. As you enter, they both look up at you.

"Welcome," says Master Phitas. Turning to his companion, he says, "You may go. I don't know how long I'll be with these people. Prepare a report on this and we can go over it later."

Martin, the official, leaves carrying a pile of papers and a chart. Seating himself at his desk, Master Phitas turns again to you, looking curious.

Master Phitas Surengale is a retired captain of the Lidah navy, and very devoted to his current position and duties. He has served the city-state all his life, and takes pride in that. His duties include monitoring the trade that passes through the harbor and fighting smuggling and piracy. He has a bad opinion of the Merchant and Caravan Guild, which frequently violates harbor rules.

Regarding the missing ships, he is not aware of any recent sea creature attacks on ships, at least nothing out of the ordinary, and he would be aware of such a thing. He inclines to the view that pirates are responsible. If shown the list of ships, he sends a clerk to check the records dating back three months. This is a two-hour task that reveals no match of the listed cargoes with any ships that have arrived. Similar goods have arrived for other merchants on other ships, though.

If the PCs start discussing the possibility of pirates, Master Phitas advances a theory about coastal pirates operating near Lidah. He believes that pirates using small coastal vessels could be using any one of several coves along the coast to the south, striking quickly at passing ships and unloading the cargoes before any action could be taken against them. Smugglers would then bring the goods into the city by land, bypassing the harbor and making any attempts at tracing very hard. He thinks such groups could be receiving help from the Merchant Guild, though of course the Guild would never admit to it. He has not been able to investigate this theory fully because he would require help from the Merchant Guild, and they are not giving it.

He brings out a map showing the coast south of Lidah. His ships have made short voyages and noted several coves that could be used quite easily to hide a small ship. These are marked on the map on page 19. The triangle is the site also marked on Alisha's map (see *Alisha Blackmane*). Surengale will give the map to the PCs if they ask for it. The harbor patrols have not actually seen any coastal pirates in operation, but they are considering it a possibility to be kept in mind.

Master Phitas has heard the story of the *Invincible*'s fight with pirates, but he does not have details. No official report has been made. Mention of it reinforces Phitas's theory about coastal pirates. The cog is mainly a coastal vessel, large enough to defeat a caravel (most trading is done with caravels). He is not aware of Dakarsh Nei and his gang..

Alisha Blackmane

The PCs can find Alisha Blackmane, captain of the *Invincible*, relaxing at the Rampant Lion Inn, a short distance from the waterfront. The Rampant Lion is a fancy inn located in the Merchant Quarter. The food is very good (use the good class on the PH price list), and the rooms are 8 sp per day.

The interior of the Rampant Lion is pleasantly decorated, and the low hum of voices stops for just an instant as you enter. The Inn is not crowded. Just to your right there are stairs going up to rooms above. Across at the bar, two men sit talking to the bartender. Sitting alone at a table across the room is an attractive woman with long thick black hair that resembles a mane. The food smells appetizing.

The woman, Alisha Blackmane, is friendly and invites the PCs to join her if they approach. If there is a particularly charismatic man among the group, she may invite him to have a drink with her later that evening.

When asked about the attack on her ship, she tells the following story:

"We were sailing with a good wind to Lidah when our lookout reported a ship battle off the starboard bow. We sailed in closer and saw that a cog had engaged a caravel and was just finishing her off. We sailed in to help, and the cog fired on us, damaging our rigging and putting a few holes in the deck. We returned fire, damaging the enemy and forcing it to flee. Unfortunately we were a little late. The caravel, the* Wave Catcher, *was past help, sinking as we sailed up. The crew was lying dead on the deck, and whatever she was carrying was gone. Too bad we got involved actually. I've been here about two weeks, waiting for the repairs on my ship to be completed, and all for nothing."

Alisha can tell them the site of the *Wave Catcher's* downfall, near a cove to the south. She even marked the spot on her map and invites the PCs to see it. If the PCs want to see it, Alisha takes them to her ship. She says nothing about the cargoes on the PCs' list except that, if she had been carrying them, they would have arrived.

Once the PCs start asking questions, she will tell them that if they want to know about smugglers, they should ask about a man named Dakarsh Nei. He is a small time smuggler, but he knows just about everyone involved in the trade. He has also been known to embark upon unusual ventures. She advises the PCs to ask

around the waterfront for him. Someone there will know where he is.

Alisha plans to sail south in two days. She is willing to take the PCs to the cove if they are willing to pay 10 gp each. She will not wait, since she has business further south. Kuluush will reimburse the passage cost.

Continued conversation with Alisha results in her telling several tales of sea battles with pirates, some of them true. In all of them the *Invincible* either drove off or sunk the enemy. If a PC agrees to have a drink with her later, she tries to move the encounter to more intimate surroundings.

If Feddin (see *Encounter Three: Followed!*) is not yet following the PCs, then by coincidence he is in this bar, overhears the conversation from a nearby but secluded table, and follows them when they leave. If he followed them in, then he is waiting at the bar.

Alisha Blackmane, Captain of the *Invincible* (hf F(Sw)9): AL LN; AC 3; MV 12; hp 47; THAC0 12 (adj THAC0 10); #AT 2; Dmg 2-7 +3 (sabre specialization) or punching specialization; NWP alertness, almost all ship and sailing related skills; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 16, Chr 15; *sabre +2, bracers of defense AC 5, pearl of the sirines.*

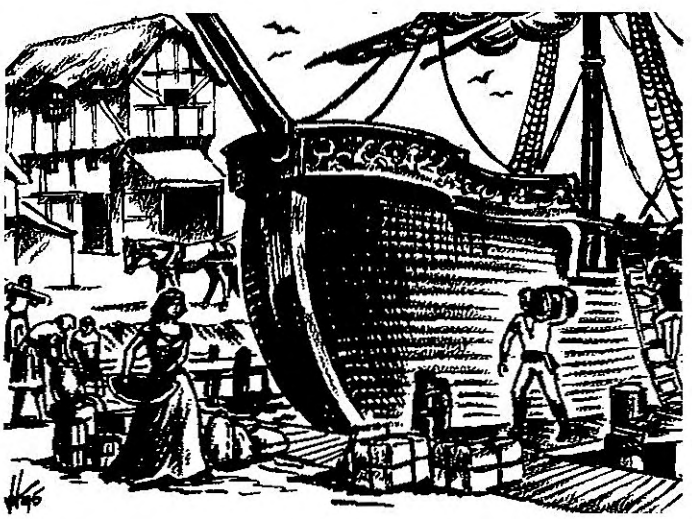
Alisha is an attractive woman with thick black hair that looks like a lion's mane (except that it is black), clear blue eyes, and a browned complexion from years in the sun. She is 31 years old, almost six feet tall and weighs 155 lbs. Alisha is calm and patient, and she rarely loses her cool. She belongs to the Merchant Guild.

The *Invincible*

Alisha Blackmane's ship is a 125 foot long galleon, 30' across the beam. It has fore- and sterncastles, and three main decks built around the cargo holds. The rigging is quite extensive. Two medium catapults are mounted on the forecastles and sterncastles. Crew quarters can be found in the forecastle and on the lower decks near the hull. The central sections have cargo holds and kitchen areas. The crew numbers over 100, but they are all off somewhere in the city. The ship colors are aqua and black.

The door in the sterncastle leads into a short hallway with doors on the left, right, and end. All three doors are locked. The door on the right leads into the ship's office, an 8' x 12' room with a large table in one end. Above the table a map is pinned to the wall. The map is of this part of the coast of Nantyr and has a spot marked on it labeled "wreck of the *Wave Catcher*." The rest of the office has other navigation charts and logs, which indicate that Alisha is a successful merchant trader with several victories over pirates to her credit.

The locked door on the left leads to the first mate's room. It contains his personal effects, which are not interesting to the PCs. The end door leads to Alisha's quarters. These are 19' x 8' and decorated in blues and greens in a feminine style. There is a secret compartment under the bed, but it is empty. Otherwise, there are only clothing and personal effects here.



If the PCs go aboard during the day without escort, the workmen ask them their business, and an unsatisfactory answer results in them being tossed off the ship. If the PCs are accompanied by Alisha, the workmen greet her in a friendly manner and let everyone pass. If they go aboard at night, there is no one else there. The crew stays in the city when in port, and Alisha has a room at the Rampant Lion. Because of the workers, searching the ship is extremely difficult during the day, impossible if accompanied by Alisha, but relatively easy at night.

The Nei Brothers

If the PCs want to try to find Dakarsh Nei or his brother Borlin, they spend hours in a futile search all over the dock area and even into the seedier part of town above the waterfront. Various "helpful" people wherever the PCs ask recall having seen the Neis somewhere else. Many of those questioned ask what the PCs want with the Neis. Unsatisfactory answers give the locals the opinion that the PCs are law agents. Law agents are "helpfully" directed to the worst section of town, where they are most likely to get mugged and killed. If this happens, the PCs are attacked in a dark street by eight thugs who attempt to beat them senseless. Sample dialogue: ***"Nope. They ain't been here. But I think I saw 'em at*** (insert somewhere in town you want to send them) ***a little while back. Try there. By the way, what are you wantin' 'em for, anyhow?"***

The Nei brothers are not in town, so finding them is impossible. They do have a room at the Sleeping Bear boardinghouse, just up from the docks in the poor part of town. Almost everyone who knows of the Neis knows this and will tell the PCs for only one drink, or maybe two.

Several means could be employed to gain access to the Neis' room. An ugly and and sleepy woman, Esmeria, sits inside the front door (outside on hot days, but this is not a hot day) and can be conned or bribed (she'll hold out for at least 3 gp). The back entrance to the boardinghouse is not watched, several of the patrons of this place wanting to slip in and out without being seen. The Neis' room is on the second floor, so climbing and entering by the window is also an option, and PCs might even find a time during the day when this is possible, the window looking onto an alley. Of course they have to identify the correct window first.

When the PCs reach the door they find it locked. The lock is cheap (+50% chance to pick). The room is ill-kept and squalid. Two old cots, a trunk, and a table with two rickety chairs provide the only furnishings. An ugly orange drape hangs part way over a window looking onto the alley outside. There is little here of any interest, but there is one

crucial clue that the PCs can discover. Inside one of the old shirts in one of the chests, there is a scrap of parchment. On it is written "1 a.m., cove" and the date of the fifth day of the adventure.

If the PCs were noticed coming in here at night, then eight thugs are waiting outside for them, having heard that well-dressed (and therefore rich) people were in this neighborhood. If it is day, then Esmeria has sent the word out, and those same eight thugs follow the PCs and try to catch them unawares in an alley. These thugs want only to steal from the PCs—not to kill them—so they attack to subdue.

Thugs (8): Int Average; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 2 (F2); hp 13 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (clubs); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 10.

To the Cove

The PCs can travel by land or sea to reach the cove. Ships are available for hire. Alisha Blackmane will drop them off for 10 gp each, but she will not wait or return them to Lidah. The sea voyage is about 12 hours.

There are two ways to get to the cove by land. The best way is to take the Coast Trail. This route involves two long days of travel to arrive at the cove. The other way, the Pass Road, is much longer, taking almost three days.

A little before dawn on the second day of travel, hungry brown bears wander into camp and dig around in the packs for things they can eat. They only attack if they don't find any other food they can take.

Brown Bears (3): Int Semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-8; SA Hug (2-12 on paw hit of 18 or better; continues to fight for 3 melee rounds after reaching 0 to -8 hit points, but dies after -9 hit points are reached); SZ L; ML 10.

Confronting the Smugglers

The action in this phase of the adventure depends on what the PCs do. The smugglers could be encountered and fought in the cove, with some escaping to the farmhouse. Alternately, the PCs could find the farmhouse during the day and take on the smugglers there.

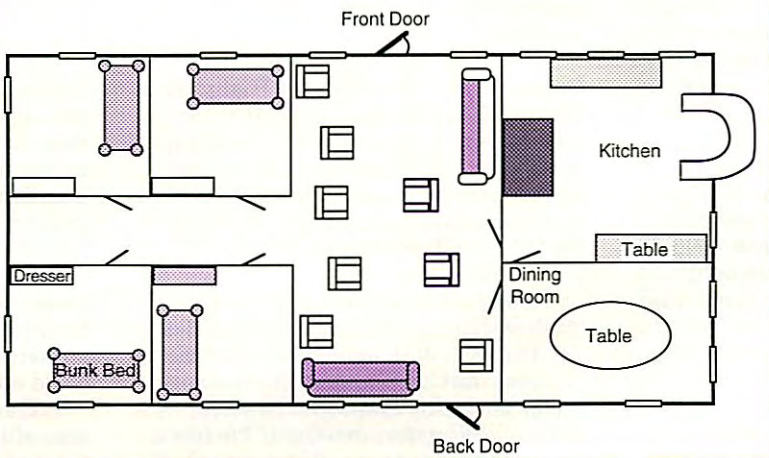
If the smugglers are not stopped, they transfer the goods to the *Death Wave* by dawn of the fifth day. They all head for Ragdana to pick up their repaired ship on the sixth day and resume their pirating.

Pursuit Type	Move Rate	Trap at A	Trap at B	Men at C?
Walking	12	50%	35%	yes
Cautious	24	20%	10%	yes
Moderate	32	10%	5%	yes
Rushed	48	5%	not set	no

The Farmhouse

The farmhouse and barn are in a clearing surrounded by the low scrub and trees prevalent in this area. The clearing is large enough in front for horses and carts to maneuver. There are no tilled fields, for this was never a farm in a true sense. The house was occupied by fishermen and trappers before it was abandoned. There is a garden for vegetables to one side of the barn.

Farmhouse Map



Sixteen smugglers are waiting here to go to the cove. The rest of Dakarsh's 50-man force is away either at Ragdana or trading in one of the smaller towns inland. Horses and wagons are in the barn; the wagons are loaded with goods from the Wave Catcher (see *Conclusion* below for list of goods). If accosted now, they deny all knowledge of any smuggling or pirating. If the PCs start searching the place or are insistent, the gang attacks.

At about 9:30 p.m. on the fourth day, the smugglers hitch up the three wagons (four horses each), saddle eight horses, and 15 of them ride off by 10 p.m. One smuggler remains to watch the house.

There are only two things of real interest, besides some (21) gold pieces and food. Under a bed in one of the far bedrooms is a locked metal box large enough to hold papers. Inside there are shipping manifests from the *Twin Paradises* and *Victory's Sails*, plus a manifest from a ship not mentioned on the PCs' list. There is also a sheet of paper that is in code and can be read only by *comprehend languages* spell, a thief's read languages skill, or knowledge of the code (Dakarsh has this knowledge). The sheet lists work orders for repairs on the *DuMark*.

In the bedroom across the hall, Bruce Pham's spell books can be found wrapped up in cloth under a bunk bed. They have the following spells: *color spray, erase, jump, magic missile, read magic, shield, wall of fog, alter self, flaming sphere, detect evil, Melf's acid arrow, shatter, gust of wind, hold person*

The Cove

The cove is quiet and unoccupied before 11 p.m., when the 15 members of the Nei band arrive. Two men begin patrolling the area, while the rest unload the goods from the wagons. Dakarsh checks them off against the shipping manifest that is included. At about 1 a.m., the pirate ship *Death Wave* anchors off the cove and start sending small rowboats with crew to pick up the goods. The Nei band stays to help load until 5 a.m.

If the sentries spot the PCs, they raise an alarm and attack. Six men led by Borlin Nei engage the PCs while the rest escape on horses, leaving the wagons behind. If the PCs are delayed for five rounds, then the rest have gotten away with a lead. If the PCs are held

for only three rounds, then they can pursue the Nei band (*see below*). The sailors of the *Death Wave*, if present, beat a hasty retreat with whatever goods are already loaded when the PCs attack, because they would rather not be captured. The *Death Wave* sails away as soon as all of its rowboats are recovered. Unless the PCs attack the ship, these pirates should not get involved in any fighting.

Flight to the Farmhouse
The pirates take 20 minutes to get to the farmhouse from the cove. The PCs have some options as to pursuit speed, shown in the table. The percentages for traps indicate the chance of discovering the trap without an active search. If the PCs search, they find the traps automatically. If the PCs do not have horses, they must make a Strength check each round of running or drop to a walk.

If the PCs use Rushed pursuit, they catch the pirates at B. However, each must make two saving throws versus death for his horse on the way. Failure means the horse broke a leg or was injured in some other way which slows the PCs enough to put them in the moderate category (one or two horses lamed) or the cautious mode (three or more horses lamed). If the PCs catch up at B, continue in hot pursuit.

If the PCs are in hot pursuit, the pirates fire 1-3 crossbow bolts at them per round to slow them down, or (if the PCs are catching up) shoot at their mounts. These attacks are at -4 "to hit" the PCs but at normal chances to hit horses. The pirates reach the farmhouse just before the PCs and race for the house door from the barn as the PCs ride up. They make it inside in one round.

If the pirates get away with a lead, Dakarsh sets three traps along the road (marked on the map on page 14).

A: A tied branch that swings into the path when the trip string is pulled. The branch does 1-8 hit points damage and throws the PC from his horse.

B: A dark rope tied across the path which trips any horse passing through. The rider must check against 1/2 Dexterity or horsemanship proficiency or take 1-4 points of damage in the fall.

C: Six pirates are hiding in the trees above the road to leap down onto the PCs as they pass under, and the wizard is hiding in the bushes. This delay allows the remaining pirates to reach the house and take up defensive positions.

Battle at the Farmhouse
The house is well stocked with crossbow bolts and flaming oil (2d6 damage on a direct hit, 1d6 on the second round). The pirates fight until 75% of their number are dead or disabled, then make a morale check. Failure indicates surrender or attempted flight if possible.

Dakarsh attempts to flee after 50% of his men are dead or disabled. A round later, the remaining pirates surrender and tell the PCs where Dakarsh went.

At this point, one of the captives says that Dakarsh murdered their former leader. He even knows where the body is buried and will show the PCs on the way to Lidah. The body is old and partly decayed, but the knife wound in the back is still visible. The turncoat captive wants the PCs to dig it up and take it to Lidah so Dakarsh can be hanged (if not already dead).

Among the cargo there are two *potions of healing* and one *potion of fire resistance*.

Dakarsh Nei (hm T6): Int High; AL CE; AC 3; MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (scimitar) or 1-4 (light crossbow); NWP rope use, set snares; *leather armor +2*, six *bolts +2*, *dust of tracelessness* (4 uses); Thief Skills PP 10, OL 20, FT 20, MS 40, HS 35, DN 75, CW 65, RL 10.

Dakarsh is an orphan with one brother, Borlin. He is 29 years old, 5' 9", 147 lbs, with dark eyes and black hair. His eyes dart back and forth constantly under his bushy eyebrows, like he is always looking for something. He has a reserved manner toward strangers and anyone who is not working for him, and he tends to look shifty. With his men, however, he is somewhat imperious, expecting them to obey immediately. He speaks a lot of thieves' cant and is sometimes hard to follow. He is not fond of anyone but his brother. Dakarsh took over this gang by killing the former leader.

Borlin Nei (hm T4): Int Average; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 +1 (longsword); NWP rope use, thieves cant; *long sword +1*, *bag of holding*; Thief Skills PP 10, OL 15, FT 15, MS 35, HS 30, DN 35, CW 65, RL 0.

The younger brother of Dakarsh, Borlin is bigger and stronger than his brother. Borlin relies on Dakarsh to make important decisions for both of them, and he trusts his brother implicitly. Borlin speaks mostly in thieves' cant, the only real vocabulary he knows, and non-thieves find him very confusing.

Bruce Pham (hm W5): Int High; AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; hp 14; THAC0 20; AL NE; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (staff); Spells 1st - *color spray, jump, magic missile, wall of fog*, 2nd - *flaming sphere, Melf's acid arrow*, 3rd - *hold person*.

Bruce is a cocky 37-year-old with dark hair and eyes and a stocky build.

Pirates (13): Int Average; AC 7; MV 12; HD 2 (T2); hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword or club) or 1-8 (long sword); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 12.

Eight are armed with short swords, three with long swords, and two with clubs. In addition, eight of the men have light crossbows and three have nets. They wear studded leather armor.

Conclusion

Back at Lidah, the pirates are arrested and thrown in the deep dungeons. The next day, a trial is held. With the PCs' testimony, the recovered goods, the manifests, and the other evidence from the farmhouse, the pirates are convicted and thrown into even deeper dungeons for a long time. Dakarsh, as leader, is sentenced to death by keelhauling. If you wish to make this stretch into other adventures, Dakarsh could escape.

The wagons contain four and a half tons of cargo. Two and a half tons belongs to Kuluush and is composed of 10 bolts of rich cloth, 17 bolts of fine cloth, and six bolts of common cloth. This cargo is worth 28,200 gp. The rest of the cargo, worth 15,750, gp belongs to other merchants, who pay 5% of the value as reward. The total reward is 2,197 gp. The PCs also receive their pay for the job, the magic items from the criminals, the potions in the cargo (unclaimed), and the thanks of Kuluush, the Merchant Guild, and Master Phitas Surengale. Dispose of the other goods (wagons, horses, ship) as best fits your campaign. ❑

Runefire

Father Winter's Curse

by Steve Theis, Ed Wilson, Gary Watkins, and Walter Baas

This arctic adventure, designed for characters of levels 8-12, is set a Viking-like village in the far north. It does not reference any particular campaign setting, so it can be used in any campaign. The characters provided are part of the tribe that appears in the adventure, but it would be easy enough to have non-tribe characters undertake the quest. It could be that all the tribe members are too sick and hungry to succeed, for example.

The adventure features the Norse gods Ullr and Loki as the primary motivators, but they can be replaced by the gods of your own campaign. ~~Ullr~~ is the god of winter, and ~~Loki~~ is the god of tricksters and liars.

If you choose to keep the Viking flavor of this adventure, you might want to consult the *Viking Campaign Sourcebook* before you run the adventure.

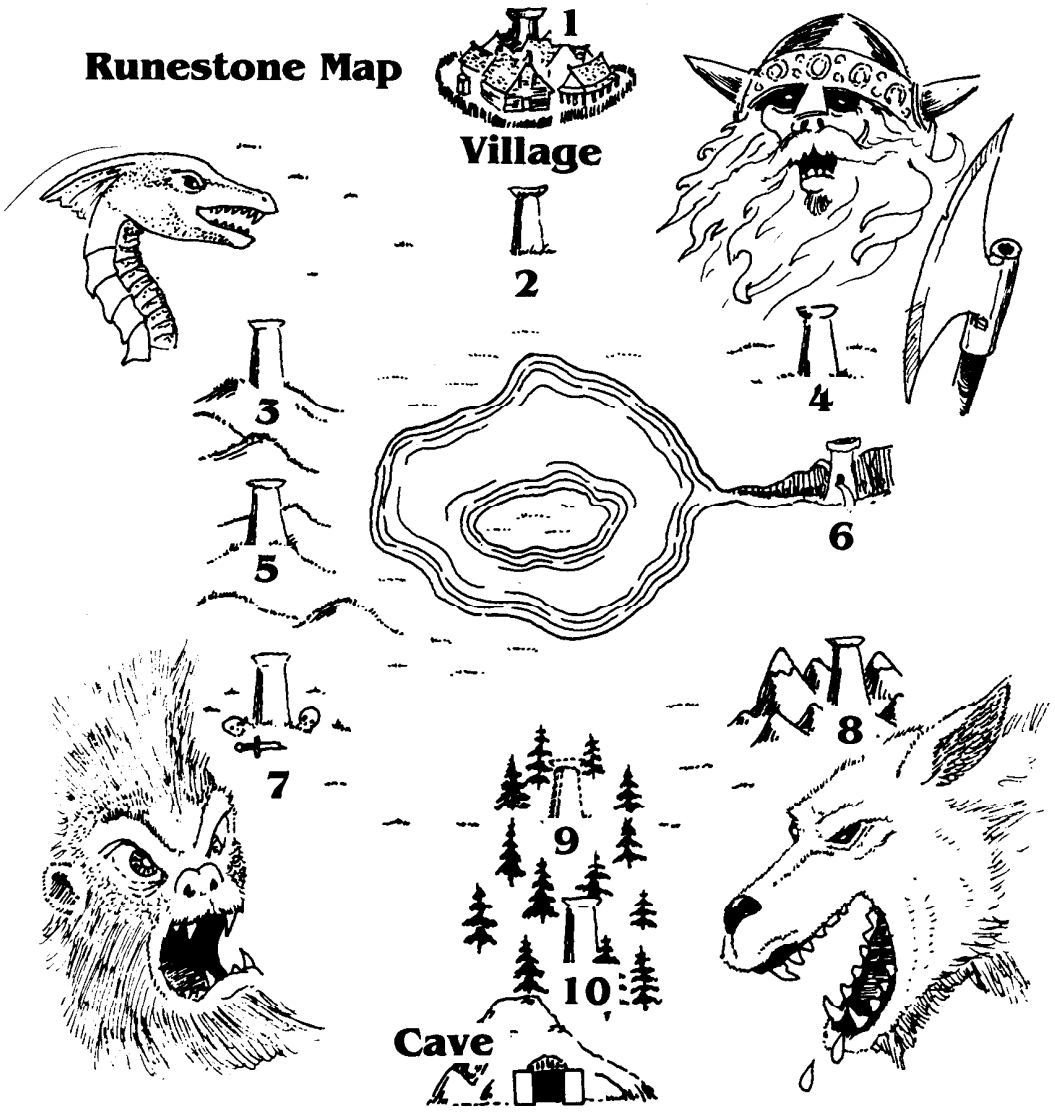
Adventure Synposis

Following a season of bountiful harvest and hunting, Ullr, god of winter and snow, sent forth one of the greatest winters ever. He expected the northern mortals to praise him for his might; instead they prayed for spring. Ullr grew angry.

The snowfall so far this winter has been four times that of last year. Hunting and travelling have all but ceased, and even survival is difficult. Because of the people's ingratitude, Ullr may never allow spring to come again.

Loki (taking a rare stand with Ullr) has personally placed guardians at the rune totems that surround and protect the Vikings' homeland. The PCs are asked to travel to the sacred rune totems and set them ablaze with magical fire. This must be done in a circular pattern. While doing this, they must also make their way to an old temple, where they must make an offering to gain the attention of the gods. They must do all this within a single span of daylight (a mere six hours). See the Runestone Map for the paths.

Each runestone is a 10-foot-tall granite obelisk with a saucer-shaped hollow on the top for lighting the ritual fires. Carved and inlaid into each of the obelisks are the magical runes of the Northmen. A magical metal alloy was poured into each of the runes before they were erected. The metal gathers the heat created from the fire at the top of runestone to the point that the surrounding stone still feels cold while the runes themselves begin to glow with intense heat.



Time and Travel Conditions

The day dawns cold (0° F) and overcast with low, blue-gray clouds. The falling snow is light to moderate, but swirling winds make it seem heavier. Visibility is normally limited to 100 yards. Clear identifications can be made at 100 feet.

Travel between each runestone location takes approximately 20 minutes by the paths shown. If the party is wise enough to use snowshoes or skis, travel between the runestonesalong a path takes only 15 minutes. Travel between runestones not along the path shown on the map (for example, going from a runestone on the left path to one on the right path) takes about 30 minutes with snowshoes or skis and one hour otherwise.

The party may decide to cross the lake in order to begin the other path of rune stones. If they do, there is a small chance (5–10%) that they may fall through a thin spot of ice into the waters of the lake. If any character falls into water, he will suffer damage from hypothermia. The soaked PC immediately suffers one hit point of damage and temporarily suffers a one-point loss each from his Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. For each round the character remains in the water, the damage and ability score loss continues. When the PC leaves the water, the hit point and ability scores still drop, but now at a rate of one point per turn.

The character must change into dry clothing and receive at least two turns of warmth to halt the cold damage (a fire, shared body heat, or magical sources of heat will all succeed). After the character has stopped suffering damage and reduced ability scores, continued warmth will restore the lowered attributes at a rate of one point each round.

Introduction

The characters, whether tribe members or from outside, have been trapped in this village by the harsh winter. The snowfall has already exceeded 60 feet so far this year and shows no signs of abating. Much of the surrounding landscape is flat, so the winds have blown the snow around so much that it is not so deep along the plains. In the hills nearby, however, there are places where the snow drifts are so deep that it would be easy to become trapped if the party is not careful. Hunting and travelling have all but ceased, and the people of the village are in danger of starving.

Eventually, the chief calls a meeting in the longhouse and everyone must attend, if they can. The immense building is packed this night. The rich smell of sweat mingles with the smoke that hangs throughout the room. The Jarl-of-Jarls, H'viij Whitebearslayer, stands on a raised platform at the end of the room. The bear-like jarl seems ready to kill the advisors that currently crowd him. He pushes them aside, steps up to a table, and slams his gigantic fist upon it. Wood splinters!

Quiet falls across the room. The Jarl's voice booms, "There is no more debate! We have discussed this enough! Trapped in this endless winter we will all perish! Food stores are empty. Already neighbor raids neighbor to keep children from starving. Enough! I have sought counsel, but not from these fools." He gestures to the crowd behind him, "And it turns out that it was as I had suspected! This winter remains for a reason! A divine reason! We have angered the gods!"

Everyone in the longhouse reacts in some way, most of them loudly.

"Quiet! Quiet!! My words are well chosen and true. The old seer Orast has come to speak of a powerful vision revealed to him. Speak, old man!"

A hunchedbacked old man arises from behind the Jarl. You did not see him standing there before. Two gnarled hands wrap around an old staff that bears his weight. The old man begins to speak.

"It was during the Great Feast of Graamn that the skald recited an epic poem foretelling the coming of spring. The hall was filled with revelers. Among them . . . Ullr, the great god of winter!"

"Ullr had come to Midgard to hear praise for the great winter season he had created. Instead he heard only cries for spring! He left this very hall vowing that spring would never come and that all would be punished for their disrespect!

"So have I seen in a true vision, and so too have warrior-priests from nearby villages reported truly that they no longer are granted spells for war or peace. Ullr has made the gods deaf to our prayers.

"But something can be done to save us: the sacred lighting of the runefires!"

"The runefire stones were created before your great father's father's fathers were born! They contain the old magic, the spirit of the land. They must be set alight to dispel this misfortune that has befallen us.

"Already a group of warriors were sent last moon to accomplish this task. My second sight tells me that they now lie dead, strong warriors that they were. But strength alone will not light the fires. Calm minds, quick reflexes, firm wills, and strong arms . . . these are what we need to rekindle the fires of the gods.

"Long into the night the Jarl and I discussed who should be sent, who should go to light the mystical fires . . .

At this point, if you are not using the characters provided, have the Jarl ask the PCs for their aid. If you are using the characters provided, read the following:

"Stand forward BIFROST HAENST STORVIRKSDOTTER! You are a person of exceptional skill, clear head, and knowledge in the ways of the jarl. Step to the front; you understand your duty.

"I call forward TAMOR BOLKII! You are one amongst us who has abilities beyond normal folk. We need you now!

"GRAY WOLFF TATTERED FUR! Let it be known that it is we who asked for your help. Reluctant as one of the wood may be to aid us, we welcome you with open arms!

"One among us needs no introduction! It is our great fortune that he was travelling through this village and is willing to risk his life in the name of honor. I speak of the MAGNIFICENT ARCANE LOREMASTER of NEVERSUN MOUNTAIN!

"IVAR TROLLBANE stand forward! You have pledged your life to protect this area. In the name of all those who have not the courage or the words, we thank you!

"HAUK VADURSON! To you I say that we are all in your debt. If not for your family's sharing of your stores, we would have all starved by now. Your family has more than earned a chance for battle, glory and honor!

"Let there be great rejoicing for the prophecy says these are the chosen!" The longhouse erupts in roars and shouts of encouragement!

Following much backslapping and rejoicing you are taken to stand before the great hall's fire. The Jarl stands quietly while the old seer speaks once again.

"This is what I know of your task: You must spark fire within the high cup of the ancient rune totems. Inlaid in each of the obelisks are the magical runes of our ancestors. When fired, the runestones glow brightly up toward the gods, imploring them to help us. The

more runestones you fire, the more likely the gods will notice us."

The Jarl then says, "You must set the fire holders ablaze as you make your way to and from the old temple beyond the haunted wood. Forget not to add a touch of magic runeweed to each fire. At the temple you must interpret the River Runes and make the correct offerings. This may help attract the notice of the gods. Lore says that you must depart at first light and return by dusk of the same day for the offering to be noticed. Dawn is fast approaching and you must not tarry!"

Give the PCs the map of the runestones. Neither the Jarl nor the seer knows any more. Neither will they say why they are called River Runes. The PCs are also given the following items:

- 4 one-gallon jugs of oil
- 6 torches
- 6 sets of flint and tinder
- A small bundle of sacred runeweed (a small amount must be burned in each runefire; it keeps sacred fires burning for hours)
- 2 regular lanterns
- Snowshoes or skis for each PC who requests them

Offerings include:

- a solid silver hammer
- a gem encrusted warrior's breastplate
- a gold inlaid woman's brush set
- a single fist-sized green emerald gemstone

Lighting the First Runefire (Location 1)

The Jarl and the old seer Orast quietly lead you from the roar of the longhouse out to an odd rock outcropping behind the village. You have seen the rune stones before but paid them no heed, since no one has ever done anything with them for as long as you can remember. The top bowl 10' above the ground is filled with snow. It must be cleaned out before a fire can be lit.

Unknown to the PCs all of the runestones are guarded or trapped. This one is no exception. As soon as a PC touches the runestone read the following to the group:

The world around you turns sideways and you fall into the snow. You are seized by vertigo. You cannot seem to determine which direction is up! Your stomach lurches and you feel nauseous. Many horrible misshapen creatures swoop suddenly down and attack you!

Until the PCs defeat the creatures, they suffer a -4 penalty to attacks and saving throws. In order to stand, a PC must roll under half his or her Constitution score. Alternately, a PC may elect to attack while prone, suffering an additional -2 penalty to attack and allowing the creature a +4 to attack.

The attacking creatures are mischiefs. They have already used their mirror image ability, so they seem to be 16 creatures attacking instead of five.

Mischief, snow (5): INT: Very; AL: CN; AC: 7; MV: 6, Fl 12; HD: 2+2; HP: 18, 16, 14, 13, 13; THAC0: 19; #AT: 4 (claw, claw, bite tail); DMG: 1d4/ 1d4/ 1d4/ 1d6; SA: cold touch, innate spells; SD: mirror image; SZ: S; ML: 13.

Snow mischiefs are small, winged creatures from the para–elemental plane of ice. Loki brought the mischiefs here and asked them to "have-fun" with the mortals. The creatures attack the PCs, the jarl and Orast. They fight with reckless abandon, for when they drop to zero hit points, they are sent back to the para–elemental plane of ice. They use their *vertigo* ability (described in the text above) to disorient the characters and *mirror image* to confuse them. Their cold touch drains one point of Constitution each time they hit with a claw attack. The effect lasts one turn per successful claw hit, assuming that measures are taken to warm the affected victim. If the victim's Constitution reaches zero, he falls unconscious for a turn and awakes weak and unable to move until his Constitution reaches half of its original score. At that point, the victim can begin to move around again.

The jarl tries to protect the seer and is able to kill a creature each round, but Orast's Constitution, not being very high in the first place, drops to zero and he falls unconscious. Each mischief will flee if injured.

Following the attack, the jarl urges the PCs to begin their quest.

"You must now hurry. Dawn has come and you must complete your quest by sundown! I will light this fire and take care of Orast. Go, and may the gods lend you speed!"

Frost Giants (Location 2)

A band of frost giants has been recruited by Ullr with the promise of an endless winter if they will keep all humans away from the runefires. As the party approaches they will see four large shapes through the blowing snow. These are four of the frost giants sent to guard this runestone, they are standing equally spaced around the stone but they have been here for awhile so that they appear to be nothing but snow drifts.

You continue trudging through the snow in search of the next runestone. You know it should be in this area. Ahead, through the blowing snow, you can make out what looks like five snow drifts. Perchance the runestone is beneath one of the drifts?

When the PCs approach to within 25' the giants will explode from the drifts, throw boulders at random PCs, and then charge. When each individual giant has taken half damage he will leave the battle and retreat to the snow bridge encounter (encounter 6), and if two giants are killed, the other two will immediately retreat. The giants are much faster than humans through the large snow drifts and should easily elude them in the blowing snow.

Frost Giants (4): INT: low to average; AL: CE; AC: 0; MV: 12; HD: 14 (+1-4 hp); HP: 65; THAC0: 7; #AT: 1; DMG: Great axes 2d8+9 or thrown boulder 2d10; Size: H (21'); Morale: 14.

The Right Path

Ice Trolling (Location 3)

The hard ground gives way to a crust of snow as it rises toward the icy peaks before you. Stands of pine and aspen dot the landscape. An especially dense clump of giant fir trees straddles the mountain pass ahead of you where, according to your map, the next runefire awaits.

Pushing aside a branch, you see a large, shadowy clearing. In the center stands an ancient pine, the boughs spreading in a canopy at least 20 feet wide. Its trunk has been cut off at a height of about 15 feet, and it looks like the runestone belongs there. You do not see the runestone, however.

A tribe of ice trolls has moved in to some caves nearby. When they arrived, they triggered the totem trap, summoning the monster—it was delicious. Considering the stone lucky, they carried it to their lair, which is just over the rise and about 30 feet down the mountain. No matter what the PCs contrive, they can't make a substitute. They will have to search for it.

Finding the trolls' cave does not take more than 30 minutes. Broken branches

and such indicate the passage of large creatures; there are no footprints. To reach the cave, the PCs have to climb down a steep icy slope.

The cavern inside is about 20 feet high. The ice troll tribe, led by the giant frost troll Grungg, is oversized and will probably split into two in the spring, but for now they are united behind their leader. All of these creatures are intelligent, so they will not blindly attack. The rune totem is in the back of the cave.

Knowing how dangerous humans and demi-humans can be, Grungg is trying to wean his tribe from their preferred diet. He is willing to parley with the characters if they do not initiate hostilities. If the PCs attack, the tribe will use coordinated tactics on the intruders. If more than five of the tribe members are slain, Grungg will go berserk and fight to the death.

A deep, massive voice calls from within the cave, "Who there? What want?"

If the characters don't attack immediately, Grungg will begin talking to them.

If the PCs respond, the voice tells them to come closer. As they approach the cave, what they thought were ice chunks against the cave walls turn beady black eyes toward them. Once he learns what they want, Grungg drives a hard bargain. He starts with demanding all of their weapons, treasure, food, and a promise of five cows to be delivered to them. He can be bargained down to all of their food and two cows to be delivered within one week. Once an agreement is reached, he will carry out the stone and put it on the island shore.

If you are using the characters provided, Grungg becomes smitten with Tamor Bolkii the instant he sees her. He tries to convince her to stay and be his mate. He talks about how strong he is, how powerful his tribe is, how much fish they have, and how they could have many strong children. He will plead for her to stay, but will reluctantly let her go, asking that she return to visit when the cows are brought.

Grungg, Giant Frost Troll: INT: Average; AL: CE; AC: 5; MV: 12; HD: 8 HP: 52; THAC0: 13; #AT: 1 or 2; DMG: 2d6+7 (club) or 1d8/1d8, or hurl rocks for 2-16; SA: none; SD: Hit only by magic weapon, regeneration in water, immune to all cold attacks, fire and acid attacks cause extra +1 per die damage; SZ: L; ML: 15. Giant frost trolls are a combination of ice troll and frost giant. Sample Dialogue for Grungg:

"No can have lucky rock, brings tastees."
"What give for lucky rock?"
"Want all food, goodies, and many cows."
"Very pretty. Me stuck in heart."

Ice Trolls (15): INT: Average; AL: CE; AC: 8; MV: 9; HD: 2; hp:14 each; THAC0: 19; #AT: 2; DMG: 1d8/1d8; SD: Hit only by magic weapon, regeneration in water, immune to all cold attacks, fire and acid attacks cause extra +1 per die damage; SZ: L; ML: 11.

Once the PCs recover the rune totem, they must take it back to the pine and place it atop the trunk before lighting the fire. It will not light up anywhere else. Once the totem is back in place, the fire is easily started. No monster will be summoned.

Rock Talk (Location 5)

The terrain becomes broken and strewn with rocks as you near the wide snow fields at the base of the mountains. The map indicates that the next runefire you seek sits upon a balancing rock at the top of the moraine you are now climbing. After traversing several large boulders and navigating a treacherous scree (rock slide) field, you finally arrive at the balancing rock. To your dismay the runefire brazier is nowhere to be seen! All that remains are the pieces of a huge, ancient statue. Its kneeling legs and hips still rest at the center of the stone.

When the PCs investigate behind the base, read them the following:

The torso and arms, broken into several chunks, lie prone behind the statue's base. The head lies on its side looking away at the far edge of the rock. Its nose and the horns of its graven helm have been broken off. A small owl shelters itself from the wind on the leeward side of the fallen head.

The owl is a talking owl but won't talk to the characters until he has determined their purpose and morals. If a the PCs walk around to the front of the idol's head, the idol will speak to them. The first thing he'll say is, "Will you set me upright?" If the party complies, he will ask them what they're doing here. As long as the party doesn't mistreat the idol or the owl, they will cooperate with the characters. If the characters ask him how he was broken up, he'll explain that a couple of mountain giants battered him into pieces last summer. He'll explain that the runefire vessel was stolen 20 days ago but that he couldn't see who took it. "Maybe my friend, Galen the owl, can help you find it," he says. At this point the owl will speak, "It is a worthy cause. Yes, I will help you." With that, he'll fly off. A turn later he'll return to the party.

The owl flies in and lands on (choose a character's name)'s shoulder. He says, "I think I may have found it. I smelled smoke over a crevice about a half mile to the east. The scent was reminiscent of roast rat," he says, licking his beak. "Intermingled with the aroma of meat was the unmistakable tinge of runeweed, a type of incense that is burned in the runefire brazier first to consecrate it."

The owl leads the party to a large crevasse which winds its way about one hundred yards, allowing only single file passage before opening up into a 30 x 20 feet clearing. On the right side of the clearing is a small cave opening. A misshapen creature wearing a crude shroud of furs half limps, half hops toward you. The rough cloak conceals his face and body. You see several others of varying shapes and sizes moving about in the shadows of the cave. A few chunks of snow fall upon you. Looking up you notice a hidden ledge, visible against the background now only because of the boulders being precariously balanced on its edge by unseen assailants. The cloaked figure murmurs several whines, grunts, and whistles before saying in badly broken Common, "Why have you come?"

If the party seems to be getting hostile or nervous, Galen will remind them that they are uninvited guests and they are at a tactical disadvantage. Furthermore, the creatures seem to be civilized and haven't behaved aggressively. For the characters to take the runefire by force, therefore, surely would be a sin against the gods. Certainly the characters can negotiate a peaceful settlement? Perhaps barter for the item in question?

The mongrelmen will not accept money nor gems for the vessel, since they don't have access to villages or towns where they might spend the money. Additionally, they realize that this item must be important to the party and will bargain shrewdly. They will accept either a useful, permanent magic item or several useful non-magical items in trade such as tools, weap-

ons, or household goods. The mongrelmen are currently using the runefire receptacle as a cooking pot, although they will not divulge this to the characters. If attacked, they will fight to the death.

Once the party secures the runefire brazier, they'll need to return it to the balancing rock and light it.

Talking Owl (1): INT: Exceptional; AL: LG; AC: 3; MV: 1, Fl 36 (C); HD: 2+2; HP: 11; THAC0: 19; #AT: 3; DMG: 1-4/1-4/1-2; SA: Swoop (+2 to hit from 50 feet or higher and claw damage is doubled (2-8/2-8), but no beak attack allowed); SD: Never surprised, detect good, Wis 21; MR: 20%; SZ: S (6 foot wingspan); ML: 15.

Stone Idol (1): INT: High; AL: LN; AC: 1, MV: 0; HD: 5 (head only); HP: 24; THAC0: Nil; #AT: Nil; DMG: Nil; SA: None; SD: None; SZ: L; ML: 15.

Mongrelman Leader (1): INT: Average; AL: LN; AC: 4; MV: 12; HD: 5; HP: 37; THAC0: 16; #AT: 1; DMG: 1d12; SA: Nil; SD: Camouflage, Mimicry; SZ: M; ML: 13.

Mongrelmen (25): INT: Average; AL: LN; AC: 5; MV: 9; HD: 3-4; HP: see below; THAC0: 17; #AT: 1; DMG: 1d10 ; SA: Nil; SD: Camouflage, mimicry; SZ: M; ML: 12. Half of the mongrelmen have 25 hit points each, the rest have only 12 each.

Mired in Evil (Location 7)
This section of forest closest to the lake lies partially submerged. A thin layer of algae-covered water covers a bed of thick, stinking mud that pulls and sucks at your feet with every step. The mud and water are warmer than the surrounding air, leading you to the conclusion that hot springs must be nearby. Your attention is drawn to the left by sounds of splashing and gasps. It appears that a small boy, covered by slime and algae, has fallen into a pond. The runefire that you seek rises out of the center of the pond atop an ancient stone pole. The boy grabs at the pole, but his hands slide off the slick surface.

After one round, those in the mud will be attacked by eight swamp skeletons. Any characters in the water will be targeted by the skuz that has taken the shape of a boy. During the first round, the boy (skuz, using his power of suggestion) will cry out "Swim to me! Save me!" Randomly select a PC to make a saving throw vs. spells to avoid the effect of the suggestion. After the characters have all had their actions, read the following:

The ground erupts next to you, spattering you with mud as a dripping skeleton pulls himself up and lurches toward you. Looking about, you see the horrified scene replayed as others rise from the mud, clawing at the flesh of your companions! In the pond, an equally frightening event unfolds. The boy's form stretches and expands into a slimy, tent-like creature with a vague, shapeless head gurgling weird laughter.

Also pay close attention to their rusting touch ability (see appendix for complete details). The skuz and the swamp skeletons will fight to the death.

Skuz (1): INT: Exceptional; AL: CE; AC: 0; MV: 1, Sw 15; HD: 11; HP: 67; THAC0: 9; #AT: 2; DMG: 2-12/2-12; SA: Energy drain, spells; SD: +2 or better weapon to hit; MR 25%; SZ: M; ML: 20.

Skuz can use the following spell-like abilities at will, twice per day: gaze reflection, suggestion, watery double, animate dead, and transmute dust to water. They are immune to all fire-based attacks and take half damage from magical edged weapons. Lower water causes 2d10 points of damage to a skuz, and raise dead instantly kills it.

Swamp Skeletons (9): INT: Non; AL: N; AC: 7; MV: 12; HD: 3+3; HP: 16 each; THAC0: 17; #AT: 1; DMG: 2-12; SA: Rusting touch like a rust monster; SZ: M; ML: 19.

The Left Path

Remorhaz Awakes (Location 4)
The next runestone should be around here somewhere, but it is very hard to see with all the wind and blowing snow. You are certain that you are close to where the map indicates it should be.

The PCs find the runestone without much difficulty here if they perform an organized search. It is half-buried in snow, but not tampered with. Loki's guardian for this one is a remorhaz, which is lying in wait under the snow. When the PCs are 20 feet away from the rune totem, it emits a heat pulse to attract the remorhaz.

You see a sudden red flash of light from the totem and feel a blast of heat. There is a soft hissing sound as the snow abruptly melts around and on the spire. As the spots clear from your eyes, you see that out to a distance of about five yards from the spire, only water and slush lies on the lake ice.

Suddenly you hear a soft hissing sound. Off to one side, a snow drift appears to be moving. In fact, it is moving fairly rapidly toward you.

The remorhaz has no trouble moving through the snow at its normal movement rate. The remorhaz will continue through the snow for two rounds toward any moving PCs, or toward the last moving PC. Ten feet from the PCs it will rear up through the snow to strike, fighting until it or the party is dead.

Remorhaz: INT: Animal; AL: N; AC: overall 0, head 2, underbelly 4; MV: 12; HD: 12; HP: 70; THAC0: 9; #AT: 1; DMG: 5d6 (bite); SA: Swallow whole, heat lash; SD: Melt metal hitting back; MR 75%; SZ: G; ML: 14.

Ice Bridge (Location 6)
This runestone is placed in the center of a large crevasse. Read the following;

"As you approach the next location dark shapes begin to loom out of the snow and a wide crevasse yawns before you"

If the party continues to approach, read the following;

"You look across an ice bridge to see the runestone in the center of the crevasse, but a group of giants has reached the bridge first and are even now threatening to destroy it with the huge boulders they hold above their heads."

This is a separate band of giants, unaware of Ullr's promise of an endless winter. Fortunately for the PCs, this group is willing to bargain.

If the PCs offer any reasonable gift of magical items that the giants would find useful (two or more), or if they offer friendship or at least non-agression, the giants will allow them to pass and light the runestone. However, the giants are impressed only by worthy travellers. If the PCs make a suitable gift offering, then they may pass and light the runestone. If they have make no suitable gifts, then the giants have a demand of the PCs.

"Bring us the body of the remorhaz which lives somewhere to the north. We would feast on its flesh, and we would thank the brave hunters who brought it to us."

If the PCs have killed the remhoraz already, the giants are suitably impressed with their prowess and allow them to pass in exchange for the remorhaz carcass. Otherwise, the giants will

allow the PCs to pass on the promise that they will return with remorhaz steaks—but they will not be allowed to light the runefire until then.

The giants will be good to their word, and the PCs can avoid at least this one fight if they bring back the remorhaz—or at least proof that they have killed it, along with a portion of its meat. The giants, impressed with the PCs good manners and bravery, will allow them to pass and to light the runefire.

If the PCs refuse to negotiate, then the giants will attempt to destroy the bridge, denying them passage. Half of the giants will hack away at the far side of the snow bridge, while the other half will throw boulders and huge ice chunks at the near side of the bridge in an effort to collapse the bridges and isolate the runestone. After suffering 100 points of damage, the bridges will collapse, leaving 40 foot gaps. The rock-and-ice-throwing giants hit the bridge automatically each round, causing 2d10 damage each. Once the PCs close with a giant, it turns to fight them. While fighting on the bridge, any giant's attack roll of 16 or higher forces the victim to roll 1d20 vs Dexterity or be knocked into the chasm and certain death (barring flight or similar magic). The giants will fight to the death or until the runefire is lighted—whichever comes first.

If the bridge has fewer than 20 points, it has been seriously weakened and will not support more than three party members (approximately 600 pounds) at one time. If more try to cross at once, the bridge will collapse, hurling the PCs into the chasm below unless they successfully roll below half of their Dexterity scores, in which case they are left hanging onto the side of the chasm. Any party member wise enough to ask the condition of the bridges will be able to tell if it is safe or unsafe (but not that exactly three persons may cross safely).

If one or both of the ice bridges are collapsed the party must devise a reasonable way across the 40' gaps or they must turn around and take another route, the chasm itself is impassable.

Frost Giants (9): INT: low to average; AL: CE AC: 0 MV: 12; HD: 14+(1-4); HP: 60; THAC0: 7, #AT: 1; DMG: Great axes 2d8+9 or thrown boulder 2d10, SZ: H (21'), ML: 13.

Frost Giant Lair (Location 8)
This runestone has been carved into the top of a small craggy ridge. A band of frost giants have taken up residence in a cave in the ridge.

Frost Giants (Jarl Dei, Menja Ulfwife): INT: Low; AL: CE; AC: -2, 0; MV: 12; HD: 14 + 1-4 hit points; HP: 82, 55; THAC0: 7 or 5; #AT: 1; DMG: 1-8, or by weapon (2d8+11, 2d8+9); SA: Hurling rocks for 2-10 (2d10); SD: Impervious to cold; SZ: H; ML: 16

Menja normally defends herself with two pet yeti which she keeps on chains like attack dogs.

Yeti (2): INT: Average; AL: N; AC: 6; MV: 15; HD: 4+4; HP: 24, 23; THAC0: 15; #AT: 2; DMG: 1-6/1-6; SA: Squeeze attack results from any hit roll of "20" and does 2d8 points of damage; SD: Immune to normal cold, invisible in snow and ice; SZ: L; ML: 13.

Fjalar the Witch Doctor (Priest/Wizard 5/3): INT: High; AL: CE; AC: 0; MV: 12; HD: 14+1d4; HP: 45; THAC0: 7; #AT: 1; DMG: 2d8+5 (axe) or 2d10 by thrown boulder; SA: spells; SD: nil; SZ: H; ML: 13.

Spells: *shocking grasp, ventriloquism, invisibility, cure light wounds (x4), faerie fire, command, resist fire, hold person, hold person, curse* (touched PC has Strength reduced to 3 for 5 turns).

Fjalar will be invisible at the beginning of the encounter and will use this to approach one of PC warriors from behind and apply the curse. He may use the ventriloquism spell to confuse the PC and remain invisible. He will still leave footprints in the snow but the PC must ask or look around at the right time.

Lodin and Verdandi, Immature Frost Giants: INT: Average; AL: CE; AC: 0; MV: 12; HD: 12; HP: 35, 40; THAC0: 7; #AT: 1 or 2; DMG: 2d6+7 axe or 2d8 thrown boulder; SA: nil; SD: nil; MR nil; SZ: L.

The frost giants will be arrayed at the top of the ridge and will attack as

the PC begin to climb. It will take the PCs three rounds to climb the ridge. Fjalar will make his curse attack during the second round and Menja will release her yeti on the 3rd. The yeti are invisible in the snow until within 10 yards. During this time Jarl Dei and his two sons Lodin and Verdandi will be hurling boulders at the PC from the top of the ridge.

As before, any giant which reaches half hit points will disengage and all will retreat if any two are slain. Menja will only fight directly if one of her sons is killed, otherwise she will attempt to keep her distance and hurl boulders. The giants have nothing of use to the PCs except Dei's axe.

These giants also believe that Ullr has promised an eternal winter. If the PCs think to trick the giants into believing that the only way Ullr can send the winter is if the runefires are lit, then they may escape without a fight. But their argument must be a convincing one.

Enter The Haunted Wood (Location 9)

The trip has been dangerous, but things are about to get worse. When the PCs approach the Haunted Wood, read the following:

Before you stands a dark thicket of primordial forest. A narrow path is barely visible in the weald. The snow is lighter on the ground here, as most of it hangs heavily in the thick canopy. The dark ceiling of snowy branches bars the light from the wood, perpetuating a twilight in the forest. An evil darkness lurks inside.

Some of the stories that the tribe tells of the Haunted Wood are below. Only if the PCs are from the tribe or have heard the stories would they know any of them.

Stories of the old wood:

1. Giant ravens inhabit the old wood and attack unwary travelers. (True)
2. A dragon resides in the woods. Its mate was killed by hunters three score years ago. It seeks revenge on all who pass by. (True & False. A dragon was killed in the wood 34 years ago, but it had no mate. No dragon currently resides in the Haunted Wood.)
3. Some trees are alive. They hate all living things, and kill innocent travellers with zest and zeal. (True—frost treants)
4. A witch lives in a cabin near the edge of the wood. She is crazy, acting sometimes good, sometimes evil. (False).
5. Thousands of undead haunt an ancient battlefield nearby but will not enter the Haunted Wood, for even they fear what lies within. (True & False. The undead cannot leave the battlefield. That is why they cannot enter the wood.)
6. Small fairy creatures inhabit the wood. Even if you die a valiant death fighting these creatures you cannot go to Valhalla since they are not considered worthy foes. (False)

The Haunted Wood is an old-growth forest which has lain undisturbed for centuries. Because of the thickness of the undergrowth (dead limbs, old vines, etc.), travel off of the path requires one turn of cutting and hacking to move 100 yards.

The path you are on weaves back and forth through the wood. Each curve is about 50 yards from the last, and you can never see more than 30 yards ahead at any time. The path is narrow and can only accommodate one of you at a time, so you must move in a single file.

After the PCs travel the path for half an hour, the following happens:

There is no doubt that something in the woods in watching you, following you. You can hear something . . . but you can see nothing in the darkness. As you turn another bend in the path, the way ahead appears blocked by a small copse of trees. They seem to be growing in the path. They will have to be cut down in order to pass.

If the PCs retreat, and ONLY if they do, read the following. It occurs 50 yards from the blocked path.

Strange as it may sound, the way behind you is blocked by a similar small group of trees.

The trees are frost treants, an evil variety of treant. If the PCs move to within 20 feet, take any hostile action, or leave the path, they attack. The group to the PCs' rear attack two rounds after the fight begins.

Frost Treants (15): INT: Average (10); AL: CE; AC: 0; MV: 12; HD: 7; HP: 38 each (seven in front group) 10 (eight in rear guard); THAC0: 13; #AT: 2; DMG: 2d8; SA: nil (these treants cannot animate the trees around them); SD: Never surprised; SZ: H; ML: 15.

Frost treants hate all living, breathing things, but they tend to attack sentient beings rather than animals. They will continue to attack until they or the PCs are dead. The runestone lies in a clearing further down the path past the frost treants. The treants will not enter the clearing, so if the party can win their way past the seven that were at the front of the party, they will be safe from further attacks by them.

The Old Man (Location 10)

Your progress through the haunted wood continues slowly. But you do see a clearing ahead. In the center of the clearing is the figure of an old man in a black and red cloak. He sits resting against the runestone. His back is turned to you and from his position he appears to be sleeping. Several black sheep also graze in the clearing.

The old man is in truth Loki, the god of deception. He really doesn't care whether they complete their quest, just so long as he is entertained. He has created the illusion of a runestone in this location; it does not really exist. When he disappears, so does the stone.

If the PCs sneak in to get a look at his face, tell them that he appears to be late in life and has an old wrinkled weather worn face and hands. When the PCs touch him or make a loud noise, the old man will awake with a sudden start.

"Oh, Oh don't hurt me, please! I am but a simple shepherd. Please I'll do anything you want. Please don't kill me!

When asked, the man will say that his name is Ikol (pronounced "Eye-kol" kol is as "cold" without the letter "d".) Ikol is, of course, Loki spelled backwards. He will explain that he wanders with his sheep (13 of them, should anyone count) looking for places for them to graze. He knows that the Haunted Wood is dangerous, but the snow is lighter here than elsewhere, and his sheep are hungry.

The old man acts harmless, asking the PCs what they are doing; and every time they do something he will ask why they are doing it.

When the PCs light the illusionary runefire, the entire rock will catch fire and burn. Nothing will put the fire out. In three rounds the illusionary stone will burn to nothing. A small black circle will remain where it once stood. Loki is controlling this illusion.

After this happens, the old man will look incredulous at the party and ask why they did this terrible thing. He will call them defilers and cowards, then challenge them to combat. The old man strikes a PC at random with his staff and does 2 points of damage (illusionary). He will continue the attack until

someone returns the attack. Any damage against the old man kills him. When that happens:

The old man crumples to the ground. His lifeless form is inert, and his blood spills onto the ground. A great sound as if horns blowing from afar can be heard, and the sky opens as women riders on flying horses swoop down. You stand transfixed at the sight! They are beside the old man in an instant and in the next moment they are gone back into the clouds. All is silent.

The whole scene is all an illusion. When the PCs start to leave, the next strange thing occurs:

The placid black sheep, which were once standing around quietly eating, all begin moving to the spot where the runestone stood. As they enter the spot they seem to fuse and become a single taller object, the figure of the old man. His features change as each sheep merges until as the last sheep enters he appears as the most handsome man you have ever seen. He speaks in a golden voice, "You will never get to Valhalla by killing old men." With that he vanishes in a burst of bright light!

If the PCs guess it was Loki, tell them that he did resemble rune carvings of the god that they have seen before. They are free to move to the next encounter.

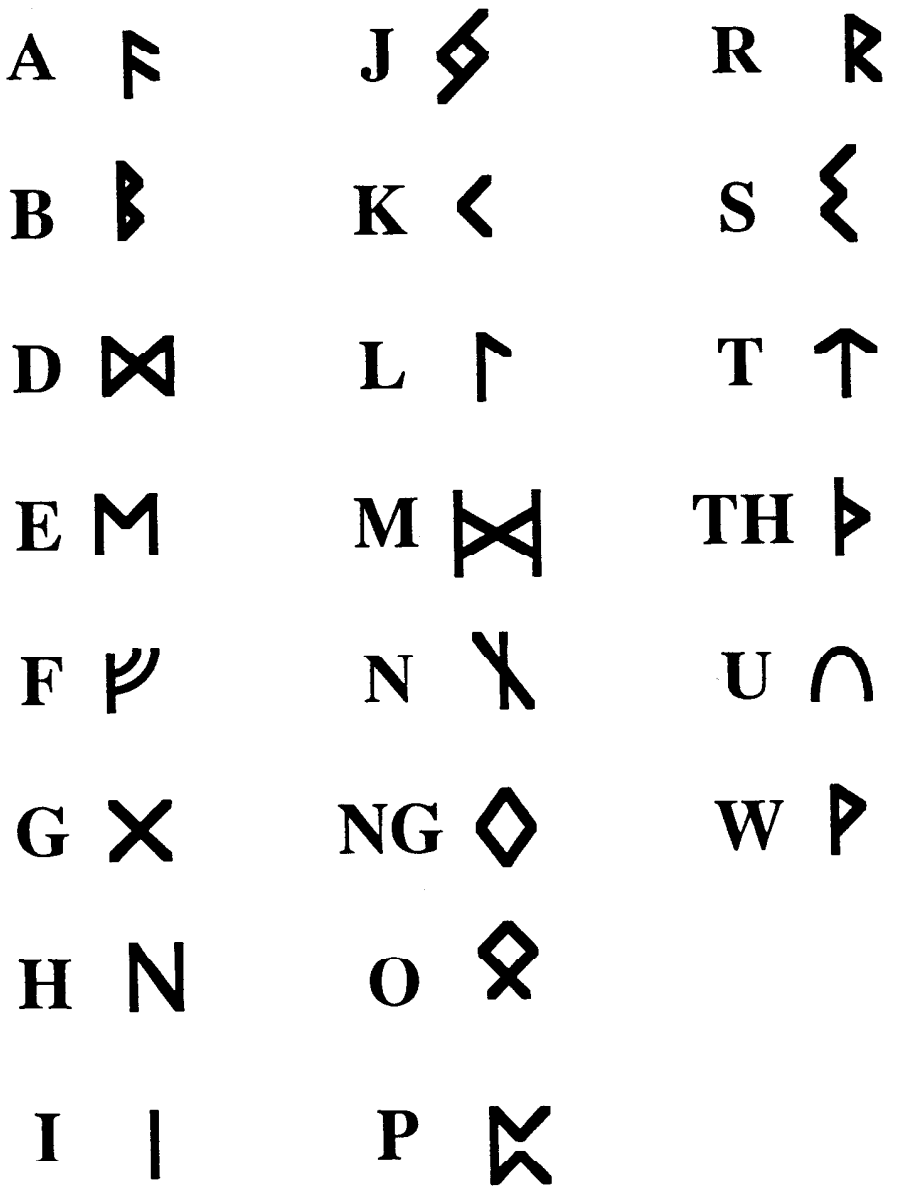
The Cave

Temple Guardian (Cave)
The PCs come across a second old man identical to the first. This is also Loki.

You continue on with your quest looking for the next runestone. Up ahead you see a clearing in the dark wood. In the center of the clearing, the figure of an old man in a black and red cloak sits resting against a runestone. His back is turned to you and from his position he appears to be sleeping. Several black wooled sheep also graze in the clearing.

The runestone in this location is real. If the PCs sneak in to get a look at his face, tell them that he appears to be the same wrinkled old man as the last encounter. When the PCs touch him or make a loud noise, the old man will awake with a sudden start. If asked his name, he will reply:

"I am Harson Svynng, but everyone just calls me



Viking / Northman Runes

'the old man.' Peace, what brings you to the haunted wood?"

The old man listens cautiously to the PCs, then tells them that he is the temple guardian. He was out today looking for a place for his sheep (13 of them, should anyone count) to graze. He acts cautious and wary of the PCs, even after they have explained their quest. He knows the location of the temple and how the runefires work. The PCs will have no problem lighting the fire at this location. The old man will offer to accompany the party to the temple, for it is guarded by magic.

If the old man is attacked, he "dies" when the first blow strikes him. Loki, of course, is not injured by any of this; but he will feign death as long as the PCs don't attempt to defile the "old man's" body. If they do, he will simply vanish.

The Temple (Cave)

Eventually you come to an old archway set in the mouth of a cave. The figures of two female warriors are carved on opposing sides of the cave mouth.

"The cave is guarded by the two stone warriors. It is a place of worship, any who attempt to enter with weapons are attacked," whispers the old man.

True and False. The cave is indeed guarded by the two statues. The statues are caryatid columns. They will animate and attack anyone who is not wearing a weapon, for they are not worthy of entering.

Caryatid Columns (2): INT: Non; AL: N; AC: 5; MV: 6; HD: 5; HP: 22 each; THAC0: 15; #AT: 1; DMG: 2-8; SA: nil; SD: see below; MR all saves at +4; SZ: M; ML: 13. Normal weapons inflict half damage; magical weapons inflict normal damage but without magical bonuses. When a weapon strikes the column, there is a 25% chance (not cumulative) that it will snap. Each "plus" of the magical weapon reduces that chance by 5%.

Loki, being a greater god, is not affected by the restrictions of the trap. In guise of the old man, he may approach the columns with his staff, have them animate, then retreat. He will then toss the staff away and walk inside unmolested.

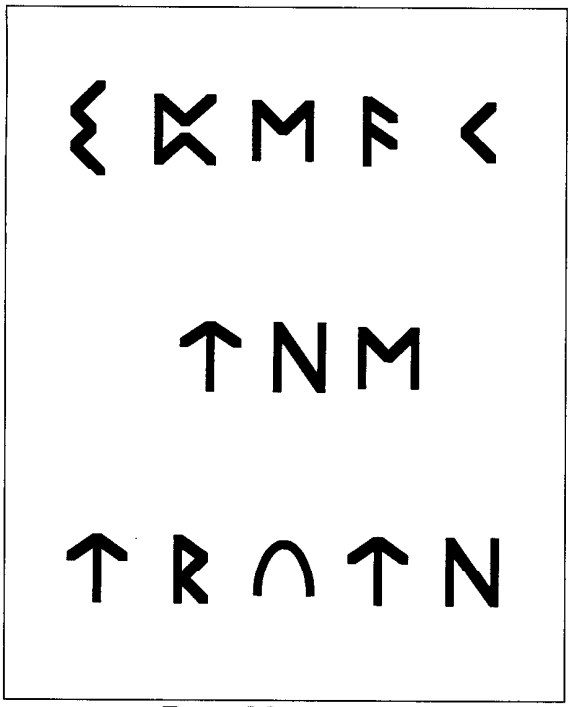
This is a trick to steal the PCs weapons, thus hindering them on their quest. If they surrender their weapons before attempting to enter the cave, the columns will attack. Then Loki reveals himself and escapes with their weapons and/or surrendered magical items, laughing all the while.

The Ritual of Runefire (Cave)

Once the PCs are inside the cave describe to them the following:

A great blue glow illuminates the back of this large cave. The source appears to be a beautiful shimmering waterfall. The magical water cascades slowly down the cavern wall. There is no visible source or exit for the water, yet it flows, shimmers, and sparkles with an unworldly blue light. Otherwise, the room is empty.

The water feels like stone, and it cannot be moved or disturbed. As the party approaches the magical waterfall, shapes begin to form within the falling water. Show the PCs *Rune Message #1*. The message revealed is "Speak the truth." This is a sign for them to say why they are here in the temple. If the PCs fail to explain their mission, repeat the message. After the



Rune Message #1

PCs have explained their plight, give them *Rune Message #2*. The message is "Make thy offering." The PCs must touch three magical items to the waterfall. The waterfall becomes slightly translucent as each item is placed against it. The waterfall drains the magic from the item permanently. The PC may not know that the item is affected. If a potion is used it merely becomes non-magical colored liquid. Once the three magical items have been offered, the waterfall's deep blue colors fade, and it soon grows completely transparent. The PCs can move effortlessly through the waterfall into the room revealed beyond it.

The smaller room is roughly circular. The walls and floor of this room seem to be the same as the waterfall. Are you actually standing on water? It would seem so, but it feels as solid as rock. Below you and in the walls greater and lesser creatures are . . . swimming? Just when you think the walls may come crashing down, three swans glide through the water wall into the room. They stop and look quizzically at you.

The swans are the Norns or "the fates" of Norse mythology. If the PCs do not speak, the swans eventually will.

"Greetings, those of our land. We await what is ours."

The norns already know of the gifts that the PCs have brought. If anything is withheld, the swans will merely stare at the individual who withholds the gift. Things given to the swans will simply sink under the water until out of sight. After all of the tithing has been offered, the swans will turn and swim back into the wall. This is all that happens. The gods like pomp and circumstance; the norns take their offering and go on their way. They already knew the outcome of the quest, and they have no reason to engage in small talk about it.

The water in the room will gradually start closing in on the PCs one turn after the norns depart. It will force the PCs back into the main room. Once everyone is out of the smaller room the waterfall slowly disappears, leaving nothing but an empty cave.

Concluding the Adventure

When the PCs return to the village, the Jarl greets them. He already knows whether they have succeeded or failed, because a sign appeared in the camp after the offering was made. In fact, the Jarl knew whether the PCs would be successful before they did. If they were successful, the Jarl throws a huge feast for them (with most of the last of the food stores), and proclaims them heroes of the tribe. If they failed, he thanks them for their efforts. How the PCs and the tribe survive should depend on what fits into your campaign. For example, the PCs could redeem themselves by helping the tribe find a new home further south, where it is not snowing so much. Or, they could go on a hunt and bring back enough food to see the tribe through another few months.

Spell List

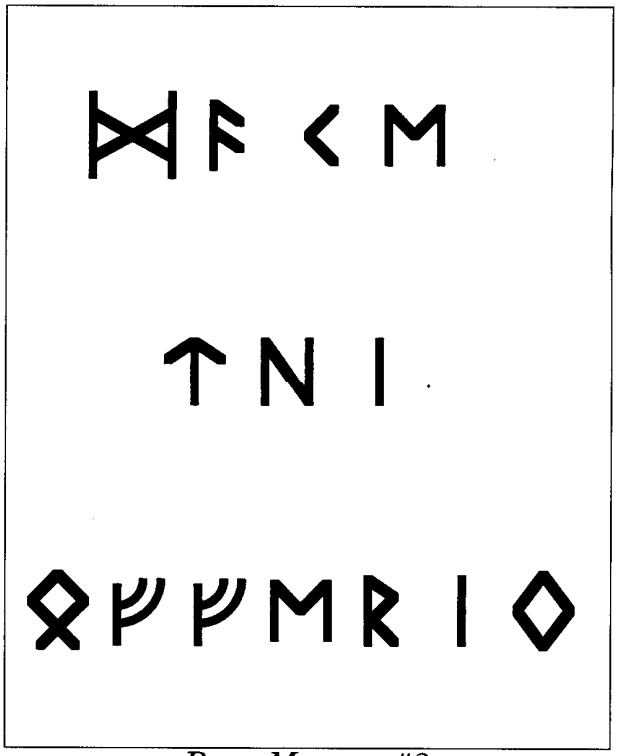
One of the characters provided is a rogue with magical runes that he casts as spells. He does not know what all of them do. He has identified these:

Blur
Burning hands
Dancing lights
Darkness 15' radius
Feather fall
Mirror image
Shield
Taunt
Web

These runes are yet to be completely identified. A colored cloth is attached to each one. He does know how to speak the rune to cause the spell to go off, but he doesn't know what the spell will do.

RED	*Shout*
BLUE	*Slow*
GREEN	*Polymorph other*
YELLOW	*Fireball*
ORANGE	*Delayed blast fireball*
BLACK	*Wall of force*
WHITE	*Monster summoning II*
BROWN	*Clairaudience*
PURPLE	*Wizard eye*

❑



Rune Message #2

Bifrost Haenst Storvirksdotter
9th level Female Human Fighter

STR	15
DEX	17
CON	16
INT	14
WIS	15
CHA	17

Age: 26
Height: 5'9"
Weight: 137 pounds
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Blue
Alignment: Lawful Neutral

AC normal: 0
AC rear: 4
Armor type: Chain/+1 shield
Hit points: 72
THAC0: 12
 # Attacks: 2/1

Weapon Proficiencies: dagger*, short sword*, long bow* (*denotes weapon specialization)

Nonweapon Proficiencies: artistic ability (15), etiquette (17), fire building (14), heraldry (14), musical instrument - harp (16), swimming (15)

Possessions: *short sword of quickness +2*, *cloak of the polar bear* (allows possessor to shapechange into a polar bear once per day, one hour max.), *chainmail +1*, *shield +1*, 2 daggers, long bow, quiver w/20 arrows, hair brushes, sharping stone, whittling tool

You also have clothing once worn by your father when he was Jarl. You wear them now and hope that the outfit still commands respect. The items are a pair of sealskin boots (you had them refitted to your size), a great polar bear cloak, a polar bear fetish (non-magical carving), and a polar bear tooth necklace.

Special Note: Women adventurers in the norse culture were rare. They were looked on with awe (for the valkyrie were women) and scorn (a woman's place is in the home). Please pay close attention to the details of your character background.

Background
Your father was the village Jarl for as long as anyone could remember. He died sixteen seasons ago following a long and protracted illness. It was not a glorious death, but you worked to make him as comfortable as possible until the end. The village held a great feast, and the funeral pyre was the largest anyone could remember. After spending your entire life as the "Jarldotter," the old Jarl is dead.

Four years ago, life was simple. Now it is an endless list of questions to be answered. You wish your father would return, but you know better than to live in the past. Having no brothers, and with mother dead these many years, you are now a freewoman. You have inherited your house and all of its belongings from your father. You have enough to live comfortably. You know how to hunt, fish and gather wild vegetables in the summer. If you marry—and you have had many suitors—all of the property goes to your husband, as do you. You are not ready for this to happen quite yet.

So you live life taking each day and its problems one at a time. You trust yourself to make good decisions and always keep your promises. The elders were uncomfortable about talking to you concerning the new Jarl, but you put their fears to rest by telling them that you are not interested in becoming Jarl. There is too much responsibility in being Jarl, and you prefer exploring the great and wondrous world. You have returned, as you always have, to the village of your birth for the winter. Regardless of your outside adventures, you are always welcome here.

Hauk Vadurson
9th Level Human Male Fighter

STR	16
DEX	16
CON	16
INT	12
WIS	15
CHA	14

Age: 25
Height: 6'0"
Weight: 189 pounds
Hair/Eyes: Red/Green
Alignment: Lawful Neutral

AC Normal: 2
AC Rear: 4
Armor type: chain mail +1
Hit points: 75
THAC0: 12
 # Attacks: 3 per round with hand axe, 3/2 with other weapons

Weapon Proficiencies: hand axe*, 2 weapon fighting style, ambidexterity, battle axe, crossbow, dagger (*denotes weapon specialization, +1 to hit, +2 damage)

Nonweapon Proficiencies: blind fighting (n/a), direction sense (16), endurance (16), heraldry (12)

Possessions: *axe of hurling +2*, *amulet of powerful strike* (allows possessor to add +5 to hit and damage three times per day, use of amulet must be declared before rolling die), *potion of extra healing*, hand axe, battle axe, light crossbow w/20 quarrels, winged helm, and matching armor

Background
The Vadurson name is a proud one with a long tradition of brave and noble warriors. You are no exception. And yet you are. You have the heart, reflexes and weapon skill of a true champion, yet you lack stature. Your brothers are all at least a foot taller than you—even your mother is taller. You just don't understand it.

All your life you have been mocked because you are small. This has only caused you to work harder. You studied and practiced hard, and you were a quick learner. Eventually you began to beat your taller, stronger brothers in weapons training. Brute strength isn't everything in combat. Reflexes, the ability to out think your opponent, and skill and practice: these are the things that you learned that have made you a respected representative of the Vadurson family.

Likewise you have always cheered for the underdog, the downtrodden and the oppressed. You convinced your family to release their slaves and hire them as contract laborers. The cost was about the same, but the freed family worked harder than ever.

You have under risk of your life (from the winter environment) brought food to this village. You would rather die than have these people starve. Now that you are here you are trapped. Could it be that you will starve to death here also?

The MAGNIFICENT ARCANE LOREMASTER of NEVERSUN MOUNTAIN
"You may address me as Loremaster Fran-mar"
20th Level Male Wizard

STR 15
DEX 17
CON 12
INT 16
WIS 13
CHA 16

Age: 30
Height: 6'0"
Weight: 179 pounds
Hair/Eyes: White/Gray
Alignment: Neutral

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 6
Armor type: *Bracers of defense AC 6*
Hit points: 45
THAC0: 15
 # Attacks: 1 per round

Weapon Proficiencies: knife, dagger, dart, sling

Nonweapon Proficiencies: ancient history (15), disguise (15), direction sense (14), gaming (16), read lips (14), rope use (17)

Possessions: *bracers of defense AC 6, horn blade (scimitar) +2, potion of healing*, rune sticks, dagger, sling, bag of marbles

Special Note: Please read this carefully and DO NOT discuss what you have read with any other player! Your character's life depends on it! You are not a wizard, but a rogue.

Background
Granted, it's fun pretending to be a great mage, but you had no idea you would be stranded in one place all winter. Especially one as small as this village. You can't make a living in a small village, everybody knows everyone else's business; and if something comes up missing there are too few people who are suspects. But back to your story . . .

You are Svart Snall, a 12th Level Human Male Rogue of Neutral alignment. In your latest travels you found the remains of a body that had been ravaged by winter wolves. The individual must have put up a great fight, as five of the pack had been killed. The unfortunate traveller's pack was completely intact. It appeared to you as though he were guarding it at the time of his death. When you inspected the contents you found out why. The traveller, gods rest his soul, had been a mage, possibly of great power. Inside the bag were clothes, books, and magical rune carvings (possibly worth a small fortune!). You have been studying the carvings (see attached listing) and have learned what some of the carvings will do when cast. They seem to be fairly simple magical spells. You therefore conclude that the others must be more difficult magic. You can cast them all, but not knowing the effect can be dangerous—or lethal.

You had planned to spend a week in the village impressing the kids with simple slight-of-hand tricks and enjoying the villagers hospitality (wizards are greatly respected). But the continual blizzard has trapped you here. You have been recruited for the quest. You don't want to go, but if they find out that you are not a wizard they will kill you. If you stay in the village you will starve to death. Not much of a choice. Who knows, maybe some of the spells could actually help.

You do have a complete set of thieves picks and tools safely hidden away in your robe—just in case.

The following runes you have identified as mage spells engraved in magical runes on enchanted bone: *burning hands, dancing lights, darkness 15' radius, feather fall, mirror image, shield, taunt, web.* You know enough of the runes to be able to properly cast the spell ranged or personal.

These runes are yet to be completely identified. You have attached colored cloth to each one. You do know how to speak the rune to cause the spell to go off, but you do not know what the spell will do: RED (not really sure—wind maybe?), BLUE (no idea whatsoever), GREEN (has the strangest carvings of any of the pieces), YELLOW (one of the elementals but ...), ORANGE (looks like the yellow, but runes are smaller), BLACK (runes are backward on this one), WHITE (this one has runes in groups), BROWN (something to do with sound?), PURPLE (nasty runes look like intestines? Maybe ropes?)

Tanor Bolkii
9th Level Female Trollborn Fighter

STR 18/80
DEX 8
CON 20
INT 12
WIS 11
CHA 7

Age: 26
Height: 6'4"
Weight: 270 pounds
Hair/Eyes: Green/Black
Alignment: Neutral (chaotic tendencies)

AC Normal: 5
AC Rear: 5
Armor type: Hide
Hit points: 98
THAC0: 12
 # Attacks: 3/2 per round

Weapon Proficiencies: club, 2-handed maul, javelin, scourge, sling, spear, warhammer

Nonweapon Proficiencies: brewing (12), cobbling (8), cooking (12), fishing (10), leatherworking (12), weaving (11)

Possessions: *2-handed maul +2, potion of diminution, oil of slipperiness*, scourge, sling w/20 sling stones, warhammer, 6 iron spikes, 50' rope, bag of leather straps, small ball of wax

Background
To be trollborne is to be different. Father human, mother troll. You were found by a raiding party many years ago and brought to this settlement to be raised. People think you are strong but stupid. They are half right. Your cleverness has always gotten you into trouble. Being an outcast in some groups has given you new and wonderful perspectives. You think of ways to solve problems that others do not. "The simplest solution is always best" you will say. Sometimes they believe you, sometimes not.

You have always had to control your anger. You are stronger than those who do not have trollblood. You are not the prettiest woman in the village but you think that you are still a fine catch. All they have to do is notice your keen mind and surely they will be attracted to you.

You never uses contractions or abbreviations when you speak.

Gray Wolff Tattered Fur
10th Level Human Male Druid

STR 14
DEX 16
CON 16
INT 14
WIS 16
CHA 15

Age: 40
Height: 6' 3"
Weight: 225 pounds
Hair/Eyes: Grey/Blue
Alignment: Neutral

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 6
Armor type: Hide
Hit points: 70
THAC0: 16
 # Attacks: 1 per round

Weapon Proficiencies: dagger, scimitar, staff, spear

Nonweapon Proficiencies: agriculture (14), animal handling (15), direction sense (17), herbalism (12), religion (16), weather sense (16)

Possessions: *ring of the ram* (9 charges), *spear of lightning* (as javelin), *dagger +2*, *scroll —(faerie fire, cure light wounds, dust devil, spike growth*, and *trip)*, golden sickle, wooden bowl, tin cup

Redfur Winterwind (Wolf): INT: Average (10); AL: N; AC: 7; MV: 18; HD: 2+2; HP: 16; THAC0: 19; #AT: 1; DMG: 2-5 (bite); SA: nil; SD: nil; SZ: S; ML: 14.

At the moment, you have only the following spells in your memory. To change and/or add spells, you must have eight hours of rest.

Major Spheres: All, Animal, Elemental, Healing, Plant, and Weather
Minor Spheres: Divination

First Level Spells: *invisibility to animals, detect snares and pits, cure light wounds, cure light wounds, cure light wounds, faerie fire;*
Second Level Spells: *speak with animals, obscurement, flame blade, flame blade, heat metal, produce flame;*
Third Level Spells: *hold animal, stone shape, water walk;*
Fourth Level Spells: *cure serious wounds, cure serious wounds, control temperature, 10' radius;*
Fifth Level Spells: *animal growth, cure critical wounds.*

Background
You and Redfur have travelled many a mile across this great glacial plain. You do not mind helping these people as long as they do not put restrictions on you. Many do not understand the bond between you and Redfur. She is your steadfast companion, loyal and true.

Redfur was somewhat frightened when she learned that you had human form and ran away from you when she found out. She has since become accustomed to it, however, and the two of you have become steadfast friends.

Special Note: Redfur will not remain in the village to await your return. She wants to be by your side and will not leave you even if you are killed. Likewise, if she dies, you must roll a saving throw versus death magic. Failure means you "berserk" against her killers. A successful save means that you can withhold your grief, but will carry her lifeless body for the rest of the adventure. You will be considered completely encumbered.

Ivar Trollbane
9th Level Human Male Ranger

STR 18/45
DEX 15
CON 16
INT 14
WIS 16
CHA 13

Age: 43
Height: 6'5"
Weight: 257 pounds
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Brown
Alignment: Neutral Good

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 5
Armor type: Hide/Shield
Hit points: 84
THAC0: 12
 # Attacks: 3/2 per round

Weapon Proficiencies: club, dagger, hand axe, long sword, long bow, spear, whip

Nonweapon Proficiencies: endurance (16), fire-building (15), hunting (15), mountaineering (n/a), set snares (14)

Species Enemy: +4 to hit versus trolls

Ranger Skills:
Hide in Shadows: 56%
Move Silently 75%
Tracking: 19 (out of 20)
Animal Rapport: animal saves vs rods at -3

Spells Known: *invisibility to animals, pass without a trace*

Possessions: *spear +2, potion of fire breath, arrow of direction, ring of warmth*, long sword, long bow, quiver w/ 20 arrows, hand axe, dagger, whip, pipe and tobacco, extra bow strings, small ball of wax, tin cup

Background
Trolls! By the gods, how you hate trolls! It wasn't always like that. You were seventeen or eighteen when you and your brother Svenn were surprised by a hunting party of trolls! You put up a good fight, killed one, but were ultimately captured and taken back to their lair. How they tormented you while you were trapped in that little cage! They ate your brother slowly; it was agony watching him die.

Then your turn came. But the evening before you were to be supper, a troll female came to your cage and offered you a deal. She would help you escape if you would become her mate! Seeing no other options you agreed. She released the lock on your cage and the two of you sneaked off into the dark. You had hoped to lose her immediately, but she had other plans. She secreted you to a hidden cave deep within the same mountain area and kept you prisoner. You were trapped in the smaller cave for weeks. Every other day she would come and visit you bringing food and water and trying her horrid best to force her "affections" on you. One night she drank herself into a stupor, and you sneaked away to make your way back to civilization.

You do not sleep well. Every night you are plagued by nightmares of the horrid weeks you spent in captivity. You awake in the middle of the night bathed in sweat, shaking from the cold (even on warm nights). You feel that you can never integrate into society following that incident, so you keep moving. With no family, and after your wretched ordeal, what woman would ever want you? So you just keep patrolling this glacial plain and the small villages. Your life's duty is to keep them safe from trolls. No one should endure the horrors you have known.

A Wish for Temptation

"Is this her fault or mine?
The tempter or the tempted, who sins the most?"
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

By Glen R. Goodwin
Characters by Robert Wiese

DM Outline

This adventure takes place in the midst of a war between Ravens Bluff and unknown forces under the Warlord Myrkyssa Jelan.

The city's commanders have been informed that enemy forces plan to attack an ally to the north, the small township of Mossbridges. The elders of that town are in quite a tizzy, but Ravens Bluff has pledged it's aid and has placed Commander Nioga of the army in charge.

The PCs are ordered to ride north to Mossbridges in advance of the army, which will follow under General Obespieri. Upon arrival, the PCs meet with Commander Nioga. He sends the party to rest at a nearby inn and promises to send for them shortly.

At the inn, the PCs can relax to the delightful sounds of a bard named Golatian. Once the PCs go to sleep they are awakened by an intruder, Golatian, who delivers a secret message warning the party of impending evil.

The next morning Nioga sends the party to deliver a message. Unsuccessful in their mission, the party returns to Mossbridges only to be set upon by Nioga's own men. The PCs discover that Nioga is working for Warlord Jelan, and has been feeding false information to Ravens Bluff.They also learn that Nioga has fled the town. The PCs report to General Obespieri upon arrival, and are ordered back to Ravens Bluff to warn the city and help prepare its defense.

The PCs return to Ravens Bluff where they discover that Commander Nioga has arrived ahead of them and is on his way to speak with the Commander of the City's Defense Forces, General Therogeon. The PCs rush to the General's office only to discover they are too late—Nioga has assassinated the general and fled the city.

While defending the city in a minor skirmish the PCs spot Golatian who is in need of their aid.

The PCs learn from Golatian that Nioga has transported a mirror of mental prowess into the city and intends to use it as transportation to place the enemy forces inside the city for an attack. Golatian requires the PCs to help him stop the enemy and grab the magic mirror. If the PCs capture the mirror, Golatian can use it in conjunction with the military's High Sorcerer to transport the Ravens Bluff army into the Enemy camp.

The PCs are then expected to help Golatian, capture the enemy and the mirror, and save the city.

Player Intro

War means change. Nowhere is this more present than in Ravens Bluff. Once a bustling metropolis of culture, commerce, and knowledge, the city has become something completely different. The once-joyous sounds have shifted. Gone are the hawkers' cries, the children playing, and the songs of bards. Now all one can hear is a hushed, nervous whispers and the clacking of practice weapons as soldiers repeat weapon drills in the street.

Even your own lives have been turned upside down. In the months since the war broke out you have been pushed around, organized, taxed, conscripted, enlisted, and drilled. Your lives, and the lives of everyone in Ravens Bluff, have become so involved with the military that you wonder if you remember what peacetime was like. An enthusiastic military has reduced the lives of the citizens to "Yes sir!" and "No Sir!", "Get to work Soldier!" and "Did I ask you to think?!"

In fact, that's what you're doing now: following orders. You've been ordered to General Obespieri's office. The general is in charge of Ravens Bluff's external forces, and there is rumor that the army may be headed north for the largest battle to date.

Encounter One: General Obespieri

You arrive at the general's quarters as the sun reaches its apex and are quickly ushered inside. The general, an incredibly muscular man with dark hair, looks up from his papers as you enter. He flips you a quick salute and leans back in his chair. His piercing black eyes scrutinize you and you begin to feel uncomfortable under his icy stare.

Loremaster Di-Thil Sturn
6th Level Male Human
Specialty Priest of Oghma

STR:	13	Ht: 6' 0"
DEX:	11	Wt: 170 lbs
CON:	12	Age: 36
INT:	16	Hair/Eyes: Blo/Br
WIS:	17	Skin: Fair
CHR:	12	Alignment: N

AC Normal: 4 Rear: 4
THAC0: 18 Hit Points: 37

Weapon Proficiencies: Wrestling Specialization, Morning Star, Staff

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Ancient History (15), Ancient Languages of the Vast (16), Heraldry (16), Herbalism (14), Local History (12), Read/Write Common (17), Religion (17), Singing (12), Spellcraft (14)
Languages: Common

Specialty Priest Powers:
1) Turn Undead. Turn outer planes Special Undead at +4 levels
2) Cast one Identify spell per day in shrine of Oghma
3) +2 to Hit on Wrestling Attacks

Magic Items: Bag of Holding (70 cu foot capacity); Scroll–Tongues, Dispel Evil, Speak with Animals; Scroll–Speak with Dead, Slow Poison

Equipment: Ceremonial Vestment of Oghma (white shirt and trousers, black vest with gold brocade), holy symbol, scrolls in scroll cases detailing histories and legends (filling your Bag of Holding), banded armor, morning star, staff, normal clothing, boots, belt, backpack, bedroll, 3 vials holy water, magnifying glass, candle, flint and steel, quills, ink, 10 sheets parchment, 38 gp, 28 sp

Priest Spell Spheres:
Major: All, Astral, Charm, Combat, Divination, Elemental, Healing, Protection, Summoning
Minor: Guardian, Necromantic, Sun

Role-Playing Notes:
Your name is pronounced di-THEEL stern. Most people call you Dithil, which annoys you. Why your parents gave you such an odd name is a mystery. In fact, the only brilliance you credit them with is sending you to the temple when you were 8.

You spent the first years at the temple working in the kitchen and singing in the choir,

but eventually you studied the ancient mysteries of Oghma, the god of knowledge. This was when you shone, rapidly learning all the under-priests could teach. The high priest himself tutored you for the last 2 years of your stay. By the time you left, not only had you dedicated your life to Oghma, the god of knowledge, but you knew almost everything. You are a vast storehouse of history and events.

Soon after leaving the temple you met Raspathir "the General" Endoc and helped him defeat some orcs. You have stayed with him since, adventuring for 10 years. You enjoy it more than at first you thought you would. Making history is especially fun, and you write down the party's adventures and accomplishments for posterity. Oghma must look on you fondly for this.

You refer to the group as the "Warriors of Oghma" though others call it by different names or simply "the group." You have settled into the role of advisor, and offer your advice and knowledge freely. A well-informed group is a successful group.

Catherine of Agnost–a master swordswoman, obviously impressed with your knowledge. She's not very serious, often engaging in flashy displays. You like her though, faults and all. You talk religion with her, as she has siblings in the clergy.
Palithar of Erenbora–This one has a variety of skills, and great knowledge obtained throughout his long life. He often seems to have several activities going at once, but he handles it well.
Raspathir Endoc–The General has a mind for strategy, but relies on your counsel and knowledge, as he should. You've have been together for 10 years now; similar interests have forged an unlikely friendship.
T'zzarr't ("Zar")–Nothing in your training prepared you to work with a half-drow. That he's a thief doesn't help either... At first you were suspicious, but the four years you have known him have taught you tolerance.
Bormark Rothjansen–Always asking about the history of this or that, usually getting the group involved in strange adventures. In addition to being a ranger, he's probably a Harper (a secret society of nosy do-gooders).

The General will continue to study the party until he feels it time to speak. If the PCs speak first, the general will chastise them with an extremely loud and strong *"DID I ASK YOU TO SPEAK, SOLDIER?!"* The general treats most PCs as enlisted men. The only exceptions are knights, whom he will ask to do things rather than order. Eventually the General will speak again.

"I have heard good things about you people, but quite honestly I don't see it. You are lazy, self-absorbed, and poorly motivated. You're obsessed with personal gain, magic, and trivialities. These are poor motivations for anyone who would consider himself sentient."

"But, I do have need of a group for a special mission and it will have to be you. Here's the situation:

"Commander Nioga, a personal friend of mine, has recently discovered the intentions of the enemy force. It would seem that the enemy has amassed itself to the east of Mossbridges, our ally to the north. Their intention is to take Mossbridges and use that city as a launching point for a full-scale invasion of Ravens Bluff. This cannot be allowed to happen. The army will leave at first light tomorrow morning and march straight to Mossbridges in hope of arriving before the siege begins.

"Since you have somehow been recommended to me as trustworthy and faithful , you shall take this letter ahead of the army to Commander Nioga in Mossbridges and place yourselves in his service. You are to leave immediately; good mounts are waiting for you outside.

"I expect you to place this letter in Nioga's hands by dusk tonight. Don't let me down. You are dismissed."

With that the General pushes a sealed scroll tube across the desk to the party and looks back down into his paperwork. If the PCs attempt to speak with him he will simply repeat the word *"DISMISSED."*

The PCs find six riding horses awaiting them outside. Each horse is equipped with bit, bridle, blanket, oats, a sleeping blanket, and one day's rations. The horses are rested and capable of making the journey.

It is a 12-hour march for the army from Ravens Bluff to Mossbridges. The PCs can make this journey by horse in less than five hours. It is currently just past noontime. The PCs do not have any time to return home for possessions or mounts.

Encounter Two: Mossbridges

You ride through the afternoon and come within sight of Mossbridges as the sun sets. Mossbridges is feeling the effects of the siege. Many battles have been fought nearby; as a result, the town has been raided many times. Ravens Bluff has committed to the town's defense, and the banner of the Company of the Bloody Hatchets flies from the smooth stone wall that surrounds the town. This was constructed using wall of stone spells, but there is also evidence of construction of real walls. One gate, in the south part of the wall, faces Ravens Bluff.

When approaching the gate, the party will be hailed by members of the Bloody Hatchets, a cocky bunch of soldiers.

"Friend or foe?" shouts someone from behind the wall at the gate.

The party must convince the defenders that they are allies to get into town. This should not be difficult; presenting the scroll from Obspieri will do.

The guards let the party in through a small door in the wall next to the gate. It is concealed from obvious view. They direct the PCs to the Military Post next to the Blushing Gynosphynx tavern, where Nioga has set up his headqaurters.

The guards on duty are disinclined to spend time talking with the PCs. Nioga has ordered that anyone coming from Ravens Bluff be sent to him immediately, and they follow Nioga's orders completely.

The town itself has a somber demeanor; most of the people here are not used to wartime living and feel cooped up. Supplies are low, though more are expected

with the army. Passerbys ask the PCs if they are with the army, when the supples will come, and if the army will arrive before the town is destroyed.

Encounter Three: Commander Nioga

Arriving at the Military Post you are quickly ushered inside to Commander Nioga, a tall, imposing man with red hair and beard. He has a very large frame, and his strength is renowned. Nioga is well known for the fanatic loyalty that his troops show him. Many a new recruit to the Ravens Bluff military hopes to become part of Nioga's famed Company of the Bloody Hatchets.

Nioga wastes no time. He quickly reads the letter and smiles at its contents before handing it to his aide.

"You have done well despite what General Ogrebane thinks of you! And I am desperate for men and have need of you. However, I can see that you are tired. Present yourself at the Blushing Gynosphynx Inn, where they have a room waiting. Eat, sleep, and allow yourselves to refresh. Tomorrow morning I will have great need of your services. Dismissed."

Nioga wears both a ring of resistance to divination spells, and a ring of mind shielding. Any attempt to fathom his alignment, mood, or intentions will have no result.

Nioga's statistics are included at the end of this adventure in the section "A Mighty Ally".

Encounter Four: Golatian the Bard

When the PCs enter the Blushing Gynosphynx, the innkeeper will greet them.

The inn looks more like a barracks than a place for making merry; tired townspeople sit on trestle benches at tables along the walls, and tables of supplies face the kitchens. Straw mats stacked in a corner attest to the fact that the injured are brought here during attacks. The innkeeper, now the village quartermaster, a ruddy-cheeked man, eyes you warily. You can see that a couple of people are doing just that in a corner, but they bear the look of Ravens Bluff soldiery. A bard plays quietly by the bar.

There are nine villagers at the tables eating. They are part of the wall defense force, and with the recent arrival of the Bloody Hatchets they have a chance to work reguar shifts and even eat. They think the Hatchets are wonderful, though a arrogant and bossy. The innkeeper, Ferred Ganross, is serving these people.

The two soldiers are Bloody Hatchet members, sent by Nioga to keep watch on the party. They will exchange small talk with the PCs for a short period, but do not spend a lot of time talking to them. Nioga has told them that he suspects there are spies among the army, and the PCs look like spies to these two.

If asked about the imminent attack, just about anyone can tell the PCs that a large enemy army is camped to the west. The Bloody Hatchets think that the attack will come in a couple of days; they refer to recent scout reports of supplies arriving at the enemy camp as the reason for postponement.

The bard is Golatian, a traveler taking refuge here for the night. He was on his way to Ravens Bluff, or so he says, and will probably turn back for Tantras in the morning. He had no idea the fighting was this bad. In actuality, Golatian is a ranking member of the Ravens Bluff army who has come to keep an eye on things in Mossbridges. He never admits this. His disguise is the work of mundane means and *alter self* spells.

A Message

During the night, a mysterious person will slip something under one of the PCs' doors and then vanish. If a PC is on watch in the hallway, then the person (Golatian) will

Catherine of Agnost
6th Level Human Female Swashbuckler (Fighter)

STR:	16	Ht: 5' 4"
DEX:	16	Wt: 120 lbs
CON:	15	Age: 26
INT:	13	Hair/Eyes: Aub/Gr
WIS:	12	Skin: Fair
CHR:	13	Alignment: NG

AC Normal: 2 AC Rear: 6
THAC0: 15 Hit Points: 53

Weapon Proficiencies: Fencing Blades Group (rapier, sabre, stiletto, dagger, main gauche), Sabre Specialization, Stiletto Specialization, Rapier Specialization, Punching Specialization, Two-Weapon Style Specialization, Short Bow

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Blind-Fighting, Dancing (16), Endurance (15), Etiquette (13), Gaming (13), Juggling (15), Riding–Horse (15), Tumbling (16)
Languages: Common

Tricks:	to hit Penalty
1) Cutting Off Buttons	-3
2) Disarm Opponent	-3
3) Stapling Clothes to Wall (thrown stiletto called shot)	-2

Magic Items: Cloak of Protection +2; Sabre +2; Stiletto +1

Possessions: leather armor, short bow, quiver with 20 arrows, 6 stilettos in belt sheaths, non-magical sabre, practice rapier (not usable in combat), several colorful and well-coordinated suits of clothing with matching belts and gloves and hats, some simple jewelry (10 gp total value) to wear, fashionable warm cloak, backpack, bedroll, whetstone, hooded lantern, 3 flasks lamp oil, 1 flask greek fire, 92 gp

Role-Playing Notes:
You wanted to be noticed and admired since you were a baby. Maybe it came from having an older sister in the priesthood of Tymora and a younger brother in the priesthood of Llira. Your ambition during childhood was to become a bard, but you soon discovered that you couldn't sing. Your memory isn't that great either. However, you always had a natural talent with swords. When you were 16, you ran away with a carnival to become a sword performer.

Blessed with superior skill with light weapons, above average looks, and a keen fashion sense, you soon were a star.

You enjoyed the life, but left it when you received a summons for help from your brother, Tom. While helping him, you met and joined this group. In the three years you have adventured with these people you have come to see that being admired for doing worthwhile things is much more satisfying than simply being admired as a performer.

You usually dress in the flashiest, most stylish clothes, always in the forefront of fashion. Your favorite weapon, your sabre, always rests at your side. You are fond of gaming, but would rather engage in bouts of skill than in games of chance. You do not believe in disguise, and although you see the merit of sneaking in to the villains' lair, you are sure to claim the credit (for the group) afterward for defeating them. You enjoy single combat with worthy foes.

Loremaster Di-Thil Sturn–Priests of Oghma must be an arrogant lot. Despite his superior attitude, you are still impressed with how much information he knows.

Palithar of Erenbora–His multitude of talents fit in well, and he is your closest friend in the group. His songbird exemplifies his elven light touch. He sometimes trains with you.

Raspathir Endoc–The General. He sure is interested in fighting, though he leaves it all to you. You've filled in holes in his plans occasionally. He doesn't seem to have strong feelings for people. You respect him as a leader.

T'zzarr't ("Zar")–This half-drow thief is too mercenary. He comes on to you infrequently, and you have no interest of that kind in him. You try not to offend him, and let him practice fighting drills with you.

Bormark Rothjansen–You had a brief but passionate love for this ranger when you joined, but it passed before you told him about it. You still cherish fond feelings for him. He is the group's second-in-command, and a good leader.

bring the packet and claim that he saw one of the PCs drop it, or maybe it was one of the suspicious-looking soldiers downstairs. In any case, he arranges to leave it and then quietly disappears.

The packet consists of a note folded around a silver coin. Closer examination of the coin reveals the stamp of Ravens Bluff on one side, and the sigil of a Hawk on the other.

The note itself reads:

My fellow brothers,

You must proceed with much caution. There is something in Mossbridges that is not right. Do what Commander Nioga asks of you, but be prepared for treachery around every corner. Nothing is safe. Every single thing you do in the next two days will influence the rest of your lives. You must trust me as the hawk trusts the air.

Once read, the note and coin suddenly burst into flame, and are quickly consumed.

Encounter Five: A Mission

The PCs will be woken in the morning by a knock on the door. A soldier will "request" that the PCs report to Nioga immediately.

You spot Nioga almost as soon as you arrive at the field command center. He speaks quietly with one of his lieutenants. They continue for several minutes more before Nioga turns to you.

"Ahhh! Good morrow to you all. I hope you rested well.

"The enemy commander has demanded our surrender. I have chosen you to convey my reply to the enemy host approximately six hours east of Mossbridges. Here is the message and a map. I am also sending some of my best men to act as your escort. You are simply to take the message, deliver it, and return. Do not wait for an answer; do not cause trouble. You are acting diplomats for Ravens Bluff and Mossbridges. Good luck my friends."

Handing you the message and the map, Nioga exits the tent. An aide, the lieutenant with whom Nioga spoke, motions you after him. Following, you find your mounts amidst a company of twelve men. There are ten enlisted men, two sergeants, and, of course, the lieutenant.

The message simply says *"Go to the Abyss!,"* but the PCs should receive it sealed and not read it. If they do choose to open and read it, tell them what it says and then have the lieutenant berate them for being treasonous and impudent.

The Lieutenant will wait for the party to mount before signalling the advance. Quiet, confident, veteran enlisted men will form up around the party. All of the men wear the emblem of the Company of the Bloodied Hatchets.

Of all the men, only the lieutenant will speak with the PCs. His name is Lieutenant Sorackie. His men will not speak with the PCs as they consider this escort beneath their abilities, and have been ordered not to by Nioga.

The Lieutenant knows a bit about the military situation of Mossbridges and appears to know exactly where he is going. The enemy force is located just south of the Chemaline forest, which lies six hours ride outside of Mossbridges. The enemy is expected to begin moving at dusk tonight towards the west and will arrive tomorrow morning. This will give them several hours of rest before they can begin their attack.

A *detect evil intent* or other such spell will reveal that the Lieutenant feels animosity towards the PCs.

Unexpected Emptiness

After several hours' hard ride you arrive on the hillside which overlooks the Chemaline forest and its neighboring plain. As you take in the surrounding countryside, your confusion grows. Before you is the plain, looking like any other completely deserted plain you would expect to see. Both the plain and the forest look uninhabited.

The party may look about for clues. There is no trace of any army anywhere, nor has there been one here for at least a tenday. Lieutenant Sorackie appears just as bewildered as the PCs. A detect lie or such will reveal that Sorackie is not bewildered as much as he appears to be.

Unexpected Enemies

When the PCs turn to head back to Mossbridges, or turn on Sorackie, Sorackie will signal the platoon and the entire unit will attack the PCs (as Nioga so ordered).

Enlisted Men (9), human F3: Int Average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; hp 26; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (Short Sword); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (6'); ML 17.

Possessions: leather armor, short sword, 10 gold each

Sergeant #1, hm F5: Int Average; AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (Long Sword); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (6'); ML 17.

chain mail, long sword, 25 gold

Sergeant #2, hem F5/W6: Int Average; AL LE; AC 3 (armor spell, Dex); MV 12; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (Long Sword); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SDex 17; Z M (6'); ML 17.

Possessions: long sword, 25 gold

Spells: 1st level– burning hands, color spray, armor (precast), sleep; 2nd level– invisibility, mirror image; 3rd level– haste (on self and comrades as battle starts), hold person.

Magical item: wand of magic missiles with 10 charges.

He uses his wand to disrupt spellcasting by holding his action until a spell is started, then firing. He can fire two missiles per round, both must go at once (though they could be at different targets).

Lieutenant, hm F8: Int High; AL LE; AC 2; MV 12; hp 62; THAC0 10; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4+5 (Bastard Sword + Strength); SA specialized in bastard sword; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (6'); ML 17.

Possessions: bastard sword +1, 50 gold

Unexpected Information

The men know the following pieces of information. However, getting it is the problem. They won't talk unless they are dead (treat them as hostile for purposes of speak with dead spells), charmed, or tortured. If the PCs need to get access to a speak with dead spell, they can haul a body back to Mossbridges; there is a priest there (5th level) who can cast the spell for them.

If the PCs have to resort to torture, well,... it should be an interesting moral dilemma for them.

They have no papers of any kind; Nioga's orders to kill the PCs were verbal.

If the PCs successfully interrogate the soldiers they can learn:

- Nioga has gone over to the enemy and is working with them. His troops, being fanatical followers, have done so as well. Nioga has promised them great rewards.
- There never was an enemy force outside of Mossbridges. The story was a ruse to trick the army out of Ravens Bluff so that the enemy force could invade without hindrance.
- Nioga has been given the position of General in the enemy force in exchange for his help.
- The enemy intends to attack Ravens Bluff at sunrise the next morning.
- It is rumored that Nioga has a Noble Genie who will give a wish to any man who helps Nioga. None of these guys have gotten wishes.

If the party goes back to Mossbridges, go to Encounter Six. If they decide instead to go straight back to Ravens Bluff, go to Encounter Seven.

Encounter Six: Return to Mossbridges

You've ridden back as quickly as possible to Mossbridges, but still the light has started to fade as you reach the outskirts of the town. As you crest a small hill outside the town you notice the army of Ravens Bluff has just arrived and begun to settle into position. Riding into town you are met by General Obespieri, who is frantically arguing with the City Elders.

"...mean Nioga is gone?"

"He had orders from you to..."

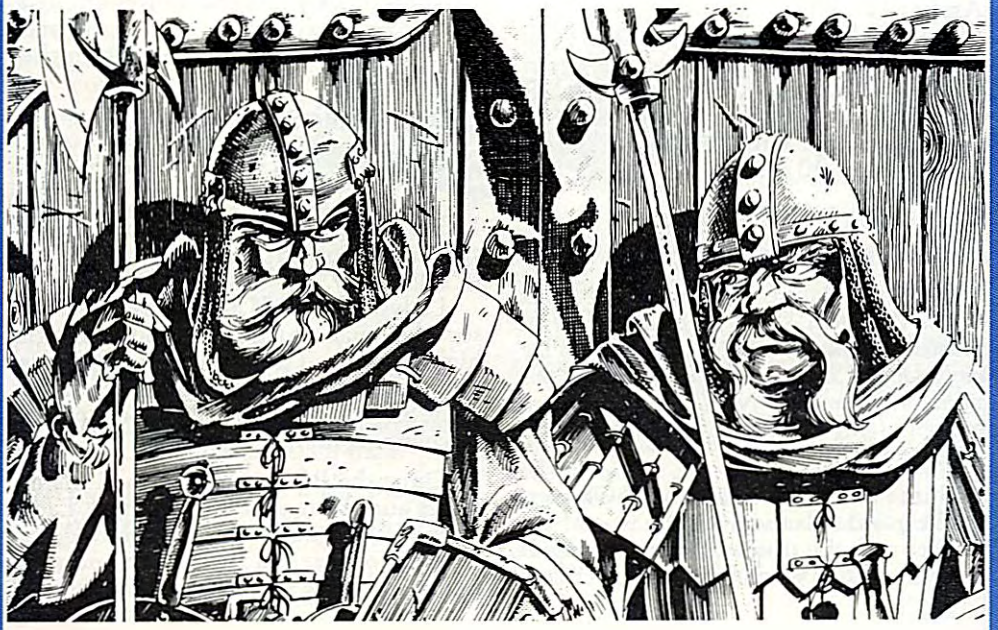
"What orders? I never sent any orders? Someone find Nioga!"

The party should approach and reveal all to the general. At first the general will be upset at the PCs for speaking out of turn, but as more information comes out he will quickly see that they have done him a great service. As Nioga's betrayal is revealed, Obespieri will become furious. He screams:

"That good for nothing, impudent boy! That's what comes from hiring your in-laws! I will personally reward the man or woman responsible for Nioga's capture!"

After fuming General Obespieri will calm down enough to lay out a plan.

"Ravens Bluff is due to be attacked tomor-



Palithar of Erenbora
Elven Male 4th Fighter/4th Mage/5th Thief

STR:	14	Ht: 4' 6"
DEX:	17	Wt: 81 lbs
CON:	10	Age: 247
INT:	15	Hair/Eyes: Bro/Gr
WIS:	10	Skin: Pale Fair
CHR:	15	Alignment: CG

AC Normal: 1 Rear: 4
THAC0: 17 Hit Points: 22

Weapon Proficiencies: Long Sword, Composite Short Bow, Single Weapon Style Spec., Dagger

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Animal Lore (15), Appraising (15), Direction Sense (11), Hunting (9), Pottery (15), Read/Write Elven (16), Read/Write Common (16)

Languages: Common, Elvish

Thief Skills

PP 40% (-20)	HS 45% (-10)
OL 37% (-5)	HN 40% (-5)
FT 33% (-5)	CW 85% (-20)
MS 45% (-10)	RL 20%

Backstab (+4 to Hit, x3 Damage)
Note: Penalties in parentheses should be applied when wearing elven chain mail

Magic Items: Longsword +1; Elven Chain Mail +1; Potion of Stone Giant Strength

Possessions: composite short bow, 8 daggers in bandolier sheath, quiver with 17 arrows, bedroll, 30 feet of rope, 3 climbing spikes, small hammer, hat, silver symbol of Erevan Ilesere, wineskin, warm cloak, boots, leather gloves, thieves tools, a white songbird, a cage, spell components, 53 gp, 2 gems worth 100 gp each

Role-Playing Notes:

You've always been interested in doing several things at once. Sometimes you don't finish projects, but those were usually the uninteresting ones. When something really grabs your interest you stay until the end. You became triple-classed this way, exploring fighting, magic, and thieving at one time.

Six years ago you were sent to assist adventurers in defeating some trolls that threatened your woods. Afterwards, you decided to stay with the group.

You've found the human world to be even more specialized and disciplined than your own elven home. The people are very good at what they do, but

they are too focused and seem to miss a lot of life's pleasures by not being open to possibilities. You try and show them the variety and experience they're missing when you can. For example when the group is investigating, you find details that show other sides of the situation or persons involved.

You still dress in the elven colors of your homeland, browns, greens, and grays. Another reminder of your home that you carry is your songbird Lily. She is very precious to you and goes on all your adventures (in a cage), though she stays in camp during dangerous parts. You can get her to stop singing by covering her cage with a dark cloth, but you rarely do this.

You have noticed that humans and other non-human races expect elves to act happy and carefree. You try and live up to this. You don't usually let strangers see sadness or troubles. You work hard at understanding humans, especially the people you work with.

Loremaster Di-Thil Sturn–This priest of Oghma knows a lot of stuff, but he's boring. You ask questions and add details to liven it up. He doesn't seem to understand that history is living, not a dry account. He acts better than everyone in the group.

Catherine of Agnost–One of your best human friends. Her skills seem more talent than discipline, though she does practice. Sometimes you join her. She's saved you a few times.

Raspathir Endoc–The General is a bit intimidating. He's unlike other mages you've met. He can be both imperative and friendly. He allows discussion, but once he decides, he expects to be obeyed. His plans work, though.

T'zzarr't ("Zar")–After years of adventuring you are still suspicious of Zar. He seems callous sometimes, and hatred for drow is hard to bypass. He is a good thief with unusual perceptions, including superior infravision and the ability to sense underground like a dwarf.

Bormark Rothjansen–There was a time when you had to supply woodland skills and knowledge for the group, but you're glad Bormark does it now. You've never been interested in tracking. You like his gung-ho attitude and curiosity.

row morning. First, we must warn Therogeon of this impending strike. You six, who have served me well, you are to ride immediately to Ravens Bluff, find General Therogeon, and tell him all I tell you, plus all you have told me. Tell him that I cannot march the troops back without first resting them. At the earliest we can get the troops back by tomorrow afternoon. I shall endeavor to do my best. What are you waiting for? GO!!"

As the PCs ride for Ravens Bluff they encounter a dozen enemy scouts who are watching for the Ravens Bluff Army. The PCs notice the scouts first and may attempt to go around them (see below: "The Way Around"), or they may drive through them risking attack and injury (see below: "Into the Wind").

The Way Around

The PCs avoid the scouts, but make them describe how, the precautions they take, and ask them each to roll d20. If anyone rolls 20, then they are spotted and the enemy gets a couple shots with arrows.

Use the appropriate archer stats from below, with a -5 to hit because they are firing at long range. Keep firing a shot or two until the PCs flee. The scouts do not pursue.

If the PCs turn back to attack, use the next section.

Into the Wind

If the PCs choose to attack, they run into the following enemy troops, who will take the party for an Ravens Bluff patrol.

Scout (6), human F3: Int Average; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d6+2 (Short Sword); SA specialization in short sword; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (6'); ML 13.

Possessions: leather armor, short sword, 10 gold each

Archer (6), human F5: Int Average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; hp 40; THAC0 14 or 16; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d6 (flight arrows or short swords); SA nil; SD nil; Dex 17; MR nil; SZ M (6'); ML 13.

Possessions: long bow, short sword, leather armor, 10 gold each

Encounter Seven: The Loss of a Hero

You arrive in Ravens Bluff in the wee hours before the dawn. The guard, after several moments of questioning, allows you into the city adding, "Strange tiding must abound this night for Commander Nioga just rode through himself asking where he could find General Therogeon."

If the PCs ask where General Obspieri is, the guard tells them that he is at Mossbridges with the troops (*"Where else should he be?"*). If the PCs go back to Mossbridges instead of pursuing Nioga, go back to Encounter Six, which will send them back here.

The gate guard can direct the PCs to Therogeon's location inside the city at Castle Ironguard, the City Defense Headquarters.

If the PCs delayed by making an extra trip to Mossbridges (coming directly from the section titled "Unexpected Enemies" to Ravens Bluff, then back to Mossbridges, then back to Ravens Bluff), Nioga is no longer here. General Therogeon is still dead, however. Adjust the following description accordingly.

Bursting into the General's quarters you see Nioga standing over General Therogeon, who is slumped forward across his desk. The desk is covered in a rapidly expanding pool of blood and Nioga holds a curved dagger in his hands.

The PCs may attempt to halt Nioga with spells or attacks. He will take damage, but will make all of his saving throws and (for the first round) will not be affected by any charm or hold spells that the PCs use. Nioga's first action will be to reach out and touch an imperceptible spot in space. This is the scrying spot from a mirror of mental prowess, and by Nioga's action, he travels back to the mirror's point of origin. He escapes at the end of the first round.

A Lady Knight

As you stare at the vapor left by Nioga and the lifeless form of General Therogeon, a woman dressed in finely wrought chainmail enters the room. You immediately recognize her as the famous Lady Caroline Skyhawk, Commander of the Griffon Ride.

"By all that is holy," she shouts rushing to the dead man, "What have you done to him?"

The party better do some quick explaining and deliver their message to Skyhawk or they will quickly find themselves arrested for murder. However, she is intelligent and perceptive; she will soon ascertain the truth.

Lady Caroline Skyhawk, Knight of the Griffon, Commander of the Griffon Ride, hf F8: AL NG; AC 2 (chain mail +3); MV 12; hp 75; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+5 (long sword +3); SA long sword specialization; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (5'2"); ML 19.

Lady Caroline is a wealthy and very social woman, a true lady, imbued with high morals and dedication to her duties that make her a valued commander in the army. She can make snap decisions and yet be charming in their execution.

Once the PCs have explained themselves and the reason they are here, Lady Skyhawk will take charge. Skyhawk was Therogeon's second-in-command and assumes her new role with quick authority.

Although she does not desire the General's position, it is painfully aware to her that she must forget her own personal feelings for the good of the city.

Upon hearing your news Skyhawk wastes no time. She immediately yells towards the door where a tenuous office lad stands nervously. "Tremai! Quickly, rouse the commanders, the runners and the entire staff! We are under attack! Sound the warning bells, prepare the gates! And Tremai, get the High Sorcerer in here, in his small clothes if necessary!"

The boy turns from the door and begins screaming. Throughout the complex the cries of "Attack!" and "Awaken!" can be heard in seconds. After a moment of thought Lady Skyhawk turns to you.

"I know you have ridden hard, and the night has no doubt sorely pressed you, but if what you tell me is true, the enemy will be hard upon us by dawn. However, there is still the problem of Nioga and his men, and for that you may be useful. Please get some rest and report here tomorrow at dawn. Dismissed."

As Lady Skyhawk's orders sink in, she turns her back on you and begins to study a map of the city spread across Therogeon's desk. Turning to leave the office, you cannot help but notice the large blood stain, Therogeon's blood, which is smeared across the center of Ravens Bluff.

If the PCs bring up the concept of raising Therogeon from the dead, Lady Caroline states that there will be time for that after the current crisis, though she thanks the PCs for their consideration (and any offers they make towards having this done).

Encounter Eight: A Secret Entrance

The following morning, the PCs report to Castle Ironguard as ordered, as they are still in the army.

If they do report, they find Lady Skyhawk and Golatian waiting for them.

As you enter the offices where you found General Therogeon yesterday, you find Lady Caroline Skyhawk and another man whom you recognize as Golatian, the bard from Mossbridges. Commader Skyhawk speaks: "It seems that your band has attracted quite some notice. Might I present to you Commander Jathan, Knight of the Hawk, chief of the Brotherhood, and fourth—make that third—in command of the Army."

The PCs may react to this news anyway they wish. Any speech however, will be cut off as the bard Golatian (actually Jathan) speaks:

"I do not have time to waste with trivialites or explanations. I have need of your services, as I aided you not long ago. Come with me," he says, walking past you and out the door.

You follow Commander Jathan through the city to a small private home, then around the corner of a building and into another small private home. From the outside the house looks almost abandoned. Inside, the building is bustling with activity as a large company of Knights of the Hawk move about. Jathan leads you up a set of stairs to an observation room. For a moment he speaks with an aide before moving to a small covered window and peering through a spy hole. He indicates for each of you to do likewise.

The spy hole looks out onto the street and directly at another private home. This one, unlike the one you are in now, appears to be much more lavish. It is a two story structure with white and red trimming. The entire property is fenced by an eight foot high stone wall. Two finely wrought steel gates are closed.

"The house you are looking at is where the attack will come from. It is also the hideout of the former Commander Nioga. Nioga's plan was simple: distract the army, magically convey the enemy force inside the city, and overrun it from the inside. Thanks to your actions though, things have gotten harder for him.

"However, Nioga still can pull this off. The army is still too far away, and Nioga still has his magical mirror. You see, with this magical mirror one can scrye any location. Furthermore, if one knows how, one can use the mirror to travel. With his mirror Nioga can transport troops inside the city.

"We know that the mirror is inside the

Raspathir "the General" Endoc
6th Level Half-Elf Male
Conjuror (Wizard Specialist)

STR:	10	Ht: 6' 2"
DEX:	12	Wt: 184 lbs
CON:	15	Age: 32
INT:	17	Hair/Eyes: Bla/Br
WIS:	13	Skin: Fair
CHR:	16	Alignment: LG

AC Normal: 5 Rear: 5
THAC0: 19 Hit Points: 27

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Staff

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Engineering (14), Etiquette (16), Gaming (13–Chess Specialization 16), Military History (16), Read/Write Common (18), Spellcraft (15), Weather Sense (12)

Languages: Common, Elvish

Magic Items: Bracers of Defense AC 5; Ring of Spell Storing–*summon swarm, illusionary wall, summon shadow, ventriloquism*

Possessions: Spell Books, Staff, 2 daggers, backpack, bedroll, pillow, 5 sheets parchment, writing ink and 2 quills, 2 scrolls showing tactical diagrams of famous battles, spell components, spyglass, magnifying glass, soap, clothes, boots, belt, sash, silk jacket, cloak, 70 gp, 36 sp, 30 gp necklace

Role-Playing Notes:

You love the concept of war, pitting your army and strategy against a foe's. You grew up on the stories of your father, a veteran soldier in the Cormyr army. However, you have no taste for actual fighting. You don't even like training with weapons. Needless to say, your parents despaired of you.

Instead you became a conjuror. You took to magic, and now command respect as one who can summon untold allies to serve you. While training you continued to study military history and tactical analysis, and played a lot of chess.

After your training, you heard of some orcs that needed defeating, and set about finding some troops to lead against them. In this way you formed the adventuring company you've led ever since. There has been a turnover of members in the 10 years that the group has adventured together, but Loremaster Di-Thil has stayed with you from the start. Palithar joined the

group 6 years ago, Zar joined 4 years ago, and both Bormark and Catherine joined 3 years ago. The group does not have an official name, but you tend to call them "the troops." This is subconscious on your part, and if asked not to you will do so again in a couple of hours.

You are a good tactician and have a strong personality. You naturally feel that conjuration magic is the best, and you tend to rely on your magic a great deal. For example, you do not own a horse. You rely on *phantom steed* or in emergencies *mount* to provide your transport. You still hate fighting, and will always find others to do the actual combat for you. However you honestly care for your fellow adventurers, and will not engage in risky strategies without their total support.

Loremaster Di-Thil Sturn–He knows many useful things about places and people, and you're used to his interrupting you with advice. He seems to believe that his knowledge is the essential element of the group's success. You know that strategy wins battles. There's a warm feeling of camaraderie between the two of you, having known each other for 10 years.

Catherine of Agnost–An excellent fighter and the mainstay of your battle plans. The only thing you worry about is her tendency to engage in single combat with enemies instead of following the plan. You work around this.

Palithar of Erenbora–Palithar's wide base of skills make him useful in seconding others or in allowing for flexibility. He adds depth to investigations by unearthing interesting details. He usually has a good opinions.

T'zzarr't ("Zar")–The half-drow turned out to be a good addition to your army. His skills at getting into places and superior infravision have been the success of several operations. He questions your orders, but you hear him out and then explain the reasons why your plan is best.

Bormark Rothjansen–Also a good fighter, his tracking and woodland skills are invaluable. He is forever trying to interfere in other peoples' business. He shows promise of good leadership abilities and as your second-in-command, you train him to lead the group in the future.

house. But, if we simply overran the house, Nioga would flee with the Mirror and attack from a different position. So unless we can destroy, or better yet, capture the mirror, Nioga will win.

"That's where you come in. General Obespiere, Lady Skyhawk, and I have been very impressed with your skills. If you sneak into the house and steal the mirror, we could use it to send the Ravens Bluff forces directly into the heart of the enemy camp.

"That's what I need you for. Quite frankly, Nioga and his men know most of my men, while you are relatively unknown and have already proven your ability to thwart his plans. Yet don't let your pride get the better of you; this is the most critical mission you've ever been on. One in which you risk life and limb. I can't make you do it, I only ask for volunteers."

The PCs are expected (but not required) to volunteer.

Encounter Nine: The Manse of Nioga

Show the PCs the map of Nioga's house. This map details the grounds and what the Brotherhood has been able to ascertain regarding the guards. The PCs are left to plan how to get into the house and capture the mirror.

Jathan will give the PCs one potion of teleportation. The person who imbibes this potion may proceed to envision the room the PCs are planning from and they will be teleported there. It is Jathan's hope that the potion can be used to get the mirror (and one PC) out of enemy hands. He will want it back if it is not used.

Jathan does not know the command word for the Mirror. He does not have any further recommendation on getting into the house. The PCs are required to determine this on their own. If the PCs spend more than 10 minutes (real time) attempting to plan, Jathan will remind them that time is short. After 15 minutes (real time) he tells them they must leave IMMEDIATELY.

The party may invade the house any way they wish. Whatever plan the PCs come up with should be relatively successful, unless they act foolishly. However, keep the PCs on their toes while they search the house. Make up other necessary details common to any house.

Where there are guards positioned in the house, the PCs need to act fast to prevent them from sounding the alarm. The PCs always have surprise and always win initiative over these guards. The guards are all 0-level humans and are described below.

Guards: Int Average; AL LE; AC 8 (leather) or 5 (chain); MV 12; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 12.

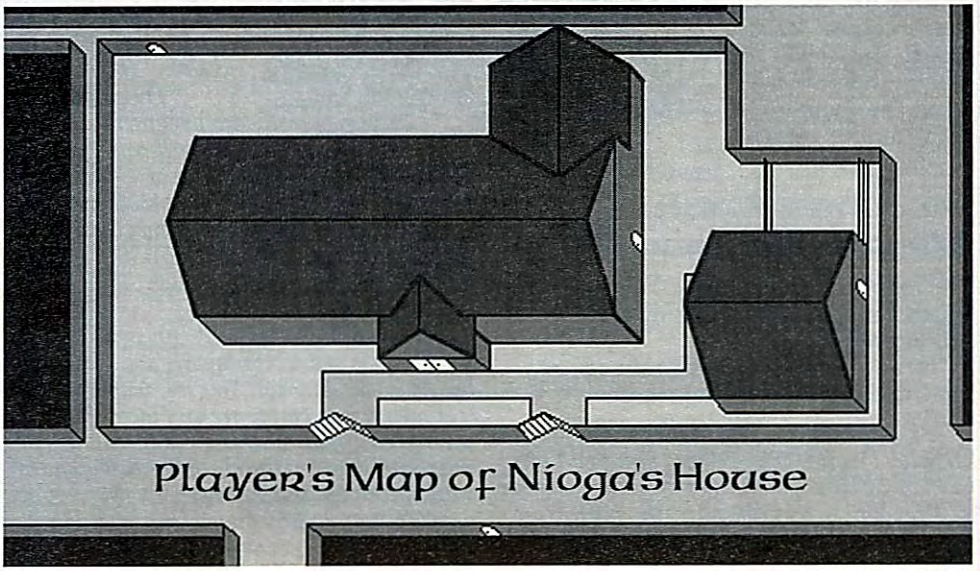
Remember, the invasion of the house is dramatic. Play upon the party's fear by having a guard see them and getting off a half shout (as he dies), or by having the PC step on a creaky board (making a loud creak and possibly alerting the enemy of their presence). Stealth and speed are the friends of the enemy; play upon these without unduly hampering the party.

Use the maps to follow the PCs through the house. If the PCs for some reason get through the house without a single encounter, this is fine. In fact, it is best for them.

When the PCs come upon the mirror room, proceed to Encounter Ten.

Nioga's House

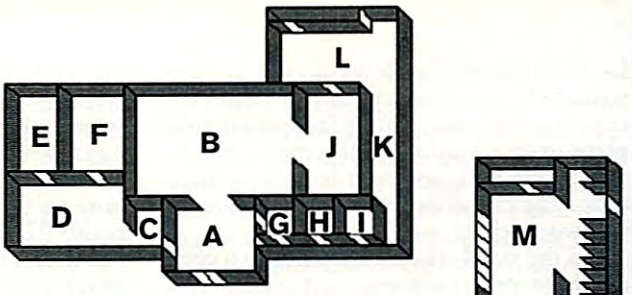
This grand building, known as Amethyst Estate, is the home of Commander Nioga. Formerly, it was considered one of the most lovely of homes in all of the Vast. Recently, however, Nioga has turned the beautiful house into a military complex and allowed the building to become slightly run down.



Player's Map of Nioga's House

OUTSIDE

All windows have been boarded up and will not allow any exit or entrance. There are two entrances to the house: the front doors (double doors made of carved oak and adamantine bands, decorated with a platinum and amethyst handles, hinges and knockers), and a smaller side door near the carriage house.



Ground Floor

CARRIAGE HOUSE (M)

The carriage house is a smaller, but no less beautiful building to the right of the main house. It contains a series of sliding doors upon its front, a large carriage staging area, several horse stalls, a tack and harness room, and a small outside horse pen. An additional door gives access to the back of the building where miscellaneous landscaping equipment can be found.

Outside of the carriage house, four horses are in the horse pen. Inside the carriage house, all of the horse stalls are filled. There are two carriages at ready. Inside the tack room are a number of sets of tack, most of it virtually worthless.

Two stable boys are here, sleeping in the tack room. A guard is also sleeping inside one of the carriages.

ENTRY/GROUND FLOOR

A—FOYER: The foyer is a large room which opens up into a magnificent ballroom (B). The floor is tiled with marble with polished gold borders. There is a single door to the left, two doors on the right. Two guards stand at attention in this room.

B—BALLROOM: The foyer opens directly into this ballroom,considered one of the most beautiful sights in Ravens Bluff. The marble floor continues from the foyer, through this room and into the adjoining dining hall. However unlike the rest of the house, the ballroom ceiling extends beyond the second floor and is covered in gold leaf. Hanging from the ceiling is a stunning, enchanted chandelier which is made of silver and amethyst, and is rumored to be more valuable than the entire house. Whenever anyone enters the room, or is in the room, the chandelier springs to life and fills the entire ballroom with bright light.

Also spaced about the walls are silver and amethyst sconces which emulate the chandelier when anyone enters. Removing the sconces will negate their magic.

The sconces are separated by a series of plush reddish curtains which hang over the walls for decoration.

C—STAIRS: The circular stairwell, a wide, polished adamantine affair, twists from the first floor up to the attic. The first floor portion of the stairwell overlooks (and is visible from) the sitting room (D).

D—SITTING ROOM: This room is decorated with a large soft rug, a number of comfortable sofas, chairs, and tables. One wall contains a tapestry which depicts the legendary undersea city of the Sea Elves. Another wall contains a fully stocked bar (with crystal decanters), a suit of armor (non-magical), a large fireplace (unlit), and Commander Nioga's family crest. Over the fireplace, a set of (magical) rapiers are crossed over a portrait of Commander Nioga.

Four guards sit chatting idly in this room. They are on call should they be needed. These are the guards who would be sent to investigate any noise the PCs might make.

E—LIBRARY: This room is a large dusty library. Since Nioga is not a man of books there are only about 20 books in this entire room. The shelves and four chairs in this room have been covered with sheets to prevent dust from settling.

F—STUDY: This is a large oaken room with a sturdy carpet. In the middle of the room, a large desk sits covered by a giant map of Ravens Bluff and its surrounding countryside. There are no markings on the map, and nothing in this room contains anything of relevance. There is one guard in this room who is asleep.

G—CLOAKROOM: This is a large, empty room. A number of unused cloak hooks line the walls.

H—PRIVY: This is quite obviously a privy, despite the plush sofa in the middle, the large marble water basin, and the gold trimmed mirror hanging on one wall.

I—PRIVY: This room is identical (though smaller) to the privy detailed above.

J—DINING HALL: This room opens off of the Ballroom (B) and is decorated in a similar manner, with similar wall sconces. The center of the room is taken up with an immense 40 foot long, 10 foot wide cedar dining table. Comfortable cedar and velvet chairs circle the table, and a number of smaller tables line the walls. Along the walls a series of portraits hang, each with placard identifying the former lords and ladies of Amethyst Estate.

K—PANTRY HALL: This is a long, wide hall lined with shelves. The shelves are stocked with a number of rations, and foodstuffs.

T'zzarr't ("ZAR")
7th Level Half-Drow Male Thief

STR:	11	Ht: 4' 5"
DEX:	18	Wt: 86 lbs
CON:	16	Age: 187
INT:	11	Hair/Eyes: Wht/Bl
WIS:	9	Skin: Gray-Brown
CHR:	14	Alignment: CG

AC Normal: 3 Rear: 7
THAC0: 17 Hit Points: 48

Weapon Proficiencies: Short Sword, Dagger, Dart

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Alertness (10), Animal Handling– Giant Lizard (8), Appraising (11), Gaming (14), Tumbling (18)

Languages: Common, Drow

Thief Skills

PP 42%	HS 60%
OL 58%	HN 57%
FT 52%	CW 91%
MS 65%	RL 0%

Backstab (+4 to Hit, x3 Damage)

Magic Items: Short Sword +1; Ring of Fire Resistance; Potion of Growth; Ring of Protection +1

Special Item: 2 vials thick greenish contact poison in opaque sealed vials (type O paralytic poison)

Possessions: Leather Armor, 8 daggers in sheaths all over your body, 20 darts, bedroll, dark colored silk clothing, 50 feet silk rope, padded grapple hook, small hourglass, cloak, leather gloves, boots, large sack, flint and steel, flask of lubricating oil for locks, thieves' tools, wineskin, pouch trail mix, chalk, 32 gp, 12 sp, gem worth 50 gp

Role-Playing Notes:

You were born in the drow city of Menzobarranzan. For years you were a slave, working with the giant pack lizards. Your life changed when your caravan was attacked by adventurers. They slew all the drow masters and set you free on the surface.

You knew you were different from other drow in the way you looked and the abilities which you lacked. This was readily apparent when you emerged on the surface. You heard legends for many years of how awful the surface world was, how the burning sun was deadly. When you first came into the sunlight it was indeed painful. The pain soon passed, though. With time you found that the surface world wasn't that bad. There were

even some good things, like the variety of food, and the wines.

Unfortunately, these things cost money, and you didn't have any. In fact, the only things you were able to bring out of the Drow homeland were 2 vials of a very rare contact poison, which you save for emergencies. You resorted to skills learned while a slave and began stealing. Eventually you joined a thieves' guild and received training in these skills. You stayed with the guild for a while, but eventually you decided to move on.

You joined this adventuring group four years ago. It took you some time, but you came to like and trust these people.

From your life among the drow you have acquired a callousness about life, and a lack of sympathy that some of your friends don't understand. The group has on occasion taken on missions for which no pay was offered, and while you join in on such missions, you would rather be paid. No one ever did anything out of goodwill in the drow homeland. It is hard getting used to the concept of charity and "helping out."

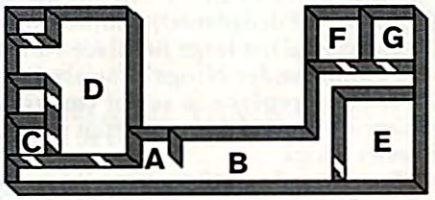
Loremaster Di-Thil Sturn–Different than other priests you've known. He doesn't lord it over you, but instead constantly shows off. You respect him, but cannot feel close. The concept of male priests is difficult, too.
Catherine of Agnost–Definitely a pretty lady, and an amazing fighter. You respect her skills and train with her on occasion. You would also like to get to know her more intimately, but she becomes frosty when you make such suggestions.
Palithar of Erenbora–After initial suspicions on both sides (you had heard how corrupt surface elves were), you finally warmed up to this one. He is humorous and easy to like.
Raspathir Endoc–This half-elf wizard reminds you of priestesses of Lolth, always snapping out orders. But at least he listens if you disagree, and modifies his plans if you have good ideas. You call him General.
Bormark Rothjansen–His skills and interests are opposite yours; he personifies the surface wilderness. This interests you; you observe him and try to imitate a little. Each of you respects the other's expertise.

L—KITCHEN: This is an elegant kitchen with cedar cabinets, marble counters, a copper water pump, and a large stone fireplace/oven. One door in this room leads to the dining hall, one door leads to a small attic, and one door leads to the basement and wine cellar.

In the small attic off the kitchen a cook and his apprentice sleep.

SECOND FLOOR:

A—STAIRS: The circular stairwell, a wide, polished adamantine affair, twists from the first floor up to the attic. There is a landing upon the second floor which opens out to a small sitting area (B).



Second Floor

B—SITTING AREA: A small sitting area is here with two guards asleep on sofas. On the external wall of this room (one wall borders the ballroom, while the other is the side of the house) is a secret door. This door leads to a small crawl space, which is empty.

C—SITTING ROOM: This is a small sitting room off of the master bedroom. It contains several chairs, a porcelain tea set (which has been used but not removed), and a small desk. The desk contains writing implements, paper, and the personal seal of Commander Nioga, and his family.

D—MASTER BEDROOM: This is a large master bedroom with a immense cedar bed set. The room is sparsely decorated. A Small privy and slightly large closet are off of this room, as well as the private sitting room.

E—BEDROOM: This is a smaller bedroom. There are ten soldiers sleeping on the floor of this room.

F—BEDROOM: Another bedroom. There are four soldiers sleeping in this room.

G—BEDROOM: Yet another bedroom. There are two soldiers sleeping in this room.

ATTIC:

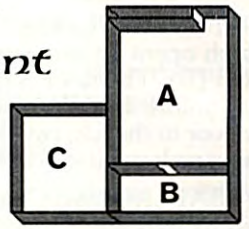
The attic is filled with a number of boxes, most which contain the various furnishings of the house, clothing, and such items normally found in an attic. To the left of the stairs a large pile of weapons sorted by type sits. There are 12 pole arms, 17 short swords, 4 long bows, 200 flight arrows, 6 hand axes, and 3 maces. None are magical.

When the PCs move into the attic, note to them that "the floor creaks ominously." If the PCs continue to move about the attic, one PC (in the center of the attic) will suddenly fall through the floor. If the PC makes a successful Dexterity Roll, he will be able to prevent himself from falling to the ballroom floor. If he fails, he will plummet the 40 plus feet to the marble floor below suffering 4d6 points of damage.

BASEMENT:

A—STORAGE: This is a dark, dank storage room complete with dirt floor. The walls are made of piled stone with mortar between the gaps. A single door leads to the Wine Cellar. A pile of rags is in one corner (nothing of importance). The lower left corner is the home of a number of broken furnishings (chairs, tables, etc). Behind this large pile is a secret door that swings inward. This door leads to the Secret Room (C).

B—WINE CELLAR: This room leads off of the basement storage room. Its walls are lined with wine shelving, with most spots empty. However, a few bottles remain (average quality).



Basement

C—SECRET ROOM: Formerly a treasury room, this room has two entrances: One from the basement storage room, another from a tile in the ceiling which may be pushed up. The second exits to the middle of the ballroom. This is the Mirror Room; proceed to Encounter Ten.

Encounter Ten: As You Wish

As the secret door slides open you spot the mirror immediately. It is a 6' high by 6' wide affair with a gold frame. As you step into the room, the mirror glows violently and Commander Nioga steps through it. Coming through behind him are four other soldiers, a girl about 7 years in age, and a tall man with bluish skin that appears to be one of the fabled Djinn.

"You?" stammers Nioga as you step into the light of the room. With a quick motion Nioga grabs the child next to him and puts a knife to her throat. "Keep coming if you want to see her dead."

The girl is Killian Lara Blacktree, cousin of Lord Charles Blacktree. She is easily recognized as a member of the Blacktree family, and Nioga will announce her identity if they do not stop.

If the PCs stop, read the following. If any PC moves to attack or approach Nioga even after knowing who the girl is, jump to "A Mighty Ally."

"Better. Now, are you sure this is what you want? After all, I can make you very rich... yes, very rich indeed. Imagine having as much money as you desired... now imagine more. Or better yet, imagine a weapon of such craftsmanship as to be the envy of all living creatures... or what of power? What if you were the most powerful mage in all of the world?"

"That's what I offer you... your dreams incarnate. All I have mentioned and more can be yours. Imagine that... money, power, magic, all for you...can't you see it? Feel it? All yours! And you need do nothing. I shall give it to you for NO WORK WHATSOEVER! All you need do is nothing."

"Here's my offer... Tell me what it is you most desire in all of this world, and I shall grant it. And once I have granted your wish, you only have stand aside and allow me and my army through.... A simple deal. Do you accept?"

Only one wish is allowed. ANY PC who speaks up may make the wish, regardless of the party. The wish cannot in any way affect Nioga's plans; Nioga will alter the wording of a wish so that the PC gets what he or she wants and the consequences don't stop him from conquering the city. Be inventive.

The Genie is unable to grant a wish which kills or resurrects any creature.

As Nioga hears the wish, he will turn to the Djinni, restate the wish as necessary, and add: "while removing my enemies from my path." Once the wish has been stated to the Djinni, jump to "Failure" below.

If the PCs do not accept the wish, continue with "A Mighty Ally."

A Mighty Ally

"Have it your way," screams Nioga. With that, he shoves the girl at you and turns to the Djinni: "Genie, grant me a wish. I wish that a mighty creature would appear to fight at my side."

"As you wish," the Djinni says and suddenly vanishes.

Almost as soon as the Djinni has vanished the floor beneath you begins to shake wildly. You watch in horror as the dirt beneath you sinks and falls away in chunks. With a final violent upheaval the rest of the floor lets go and you plummet into nothingness.

Your fall is quickly interrupted as you plunge into crisp cool water and then hit soft sand. You break the surface to find yourself in a large cavern. Overhead you see the remains of the room from which you just fell. The cavern is filled by a strange green light the appears to glow from the lake in which you stand.

Yet, these things are not that upsetting. Not when you consider the strange purplish, multiheaded beast which regards you. There is no doubt to you what is going through the creature's thoughts. Each set of eyes reveals everything. Dinner has just fallen from the sky.

The PCs have all fallen in water (4' deep) in front of the cryohydra. The cryohydra is on the beach. Behind the cryohydra the PCs can see the mirror which has landed safely in the sand. Nioga and four elite soldiers are in the water to the right of the PCs. Nioga is the farthest away from the PCs and the four guards separate him from the PCs.

The cryohydra will fight the PCs and ignore Nioga and the guards. However, the cryohydra will not protect the soldiers either, nor take orders from Nioga.

Elite Soldier (4), human F5: Int Average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d6+2 (Short Sword); SA specialized in short sword; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (6'); ML 17.

Possesions: leather armor, short sword

Commander Nioga, elf W10/F10: Int High; AL LE; AC 1; MV 12; HD 8; hp 64; THAC0 10; #AT 2; Dmg D8+4; SA nil; SD see magic items; MR nil; SZ M (6'); ML 17.

Magical items: Rapier +2, elven chainmail, ring of resistance to divination, ring of mind shielding.

Spells (4/4/3/2/2): sleep, magic missile (x2), spook, glitterdust, invisibility, web, scare, dispel magic, fireball, lightning bolt, Evard's black tentacles, enervation, cone of cold, chaos.

Cryohydra: Int Average; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 10; hp 90 (8 per head, 10 in body; THAC0 10; #AT 10; Dmg 1d8 (bite); SA nil; SD see below; MR nil; SZ GM (30' long); ML 17.

Attacks on body have no effect unless damage is greater than 45 points. Up to 4

Bormark Rothjansen
6th Level Human Male Ranger

STR:	17	Ht: 5' 10"
DEX:	13	Wt: 165 lbs
CON:	14	Age: 27
INT:	13	Hair/Eyes: Br/Bl
WIS:	16	Skin: Tanned
CHR:	11	Alignment: CG

AC Normal: 5 AC Rear: 5
THAC0: 15 Hit Points: 56

Weapon Proficiencies: Long Sword, Hand/Throwing Axe, Long Bow, Lasso, Knife, Single Weapon Style Specialization

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Animal Lore (13), Herbalism (11), Mountaineering, Read/Write Common (14), Riding–Horse (19), Rope Use (13), Set Snares (12), Tracking (18)

Languages: Common

Magical Items: Long Bow +1; Studded Leather +2; Potion of Extra-Healing; matching pair of Hand Axes +1

Possessions: long sword, 50' rope, quiver with 20 arrows, 2 throwing axes, knife, 4 sets of clothing for adventuring, 1 new fancy set of clothing, boots, leather gloves, belt, 2 belt pouches, small sack, 5 spikes, 10 pitons, 4 crampons, flint and steel, whetstone, silver symbol of Mielikki, waterskin, hooded lantern, 4 flasks lamp oil, pipe (which you cannot play), warm cloak, backpack, bedroll, iron pot for cooking, 4 flasks acid carefully packed (for trolls), 28 gp, 31 sp

Role-Playing Notes:

Your mother died of an illness just after you were born. You were raised by her older sister. This aunt had no other children and was happy to raise you as her own son. During this happy childhood your desire to help others showed itself in your defending friends against bullies, in rescuing small animals from traps, etc. Your aunt was a ranger and taught you all she knew. When you exceeded her knowledge, you were sent to a ranger friend of hers in the nearby Dales (a region across the Dragon Reach from Ravens Bluff) to complete your training.

This ranger was a Harper, and encouraged your desire to help those less fortunate while instilling Harper doctrine in you. At age 18, you craved adventure, so your mentor sent you to

Shadowdale to contact some Harpers. Thus you embarked on an adventuring career. Three years ago you fell in with this group. They were attempting to thwart the plans of some Red Wizards and their troll allies, and your timely arrival and woodland skills brought success. You have traveled with them since. Your species enemy is troll.

As a Harper, you constantly try to figure out what everyone is doing. Curious by nature, you are particularly adept at eavesdropping. Since you are impulsive and determined, as soon as you overhear of an evil plot you try to persuade your friends to do something about it. You are generally cheerful and have a talent for command.

Loremaster Di-Thil Sturn–The priesthood of Oghma suits him. Since Oghma is the god of knowledge and bards you know Di-Thil will support your Harper goals. The man has an annoying habit of offering advice when not asked, though it's usually worth hearing.

Catherine of Agnost–She is amazing with her swords. She's the best fighter you've ever encountered. She is quite pretty; you have a crush on her. She doesn't talk to you as much as she used to, and doesn't know that you feel anything for her.

Palithar of Erenbora–Basically a harmless kid, or middle aged elf actually, but he still acts like a kid. You worry that he will stumble on some trouble that he can't handle.

Raspathir Endoc–A good leader, magician, and strategist; your best friend in the group. He is usually amenable to suggestion and treats you like a second-in-command. You wondered why he wasn't a fighter until you saw him practice.

T'zzarr't ("Zar")–He notices a lot, and is a good thief. You must convince him that non-paying missions are worthwhile. The cause of good does not always yield material rewards.

heads may attack a single opponent at a time. Each head is able to breath a 10' wide by 20' long stream of frost that inflicts 8 points of damage, save versus breath weapon for half damage.

Outcomes

There are several possible outcomes to this battle: If Nioga is reduced by more than half his hit points, he will attempt to flee into the mirror. If he succeeds, he escapes (but does not take the mirror with him). If the mirror has already been recovered by the party, Nioga will surrender.

The cryohydra fights as long as Nioga is present and alive. It disappears once he escapes or dies. A *dispel magic* spell would have to best 18th level magic to send the creature away (it was summoned with a *wish*). The men fight or surrender depending on whether Nioga surrenders or not (if he does, they do).

Once the battle is over, jump to the appropriate section below: "Escape" or "Surrender." If a PC chooses to destroy the mirror, immediately jump to "Destroyed."

Destroyed

As the mirror is shattered, all of its magic is released in an immense explosion. The PC who destroyed the mirror suffers 3d10 magical damage (no save). Everyone else suffers 4d4 damage(save for half).

If the mirror is destroyed, Nioga will surrender immediately. Go to "Surrender," and adjust appropriately.

Outcome One: Failure

The Genie looks at you, winks, and the world goes black. When you wake up you find the wish has indeed been granted. Things are definitely different. You also realize that you are back in Mossbridges, lying in the street. Around you people scamper about. A news boy down the street can be heard calling out the day's report: "Ravens Bluff falls! Ravens Bluff falls! Traitors sought by town elders!"

Regardless of who asked for the wish, any PC ***who benefitted in any way*** from the wish is now an enemy of Ravens Bluff.

The End

Outcome Two: Escape

The last attacker finally falls and you take a moment to look around. The four soldiers lie where they died. The cryohydra's heads are strewn across the beach, and the body shivers slightly with the last pangs of death. Nioga is nowhere to be seen, but the mirror is. You have succeeded, partially. Nioga escaped, and the invasion has been delayed... for now.

The End

Outcome Three: Surrender

Nioga begs and pleads for his freedom, but you remain undeterred and bind him securely. Eventually you manage to depart the cavern and Nioga's home. You are greeted by cheers from the Knights of the Hawk as they flood the street and take Nioga away. Jathan strides up to you with a immense smile upon his face.

"You have fought well today! The mirror will be been given to General Obespieri and our forces will soon overrun the enemy camp. By morning there shall be almost nothing left of the enemy! You are truly heroes of the city. But even a hero deserves a rest now and then. Go home, go dry off... you have done your duty."

Each PC Knight of the Hawk will receive a Feather of Honor from the Knights of the Hawk. All of Nioga's equipment will be turned over to the PCs for their services. This includes his *rapier +2*, his *elven chainmail +2*, and two rings (*ring of mind shielding, ring of resistance to divination*).

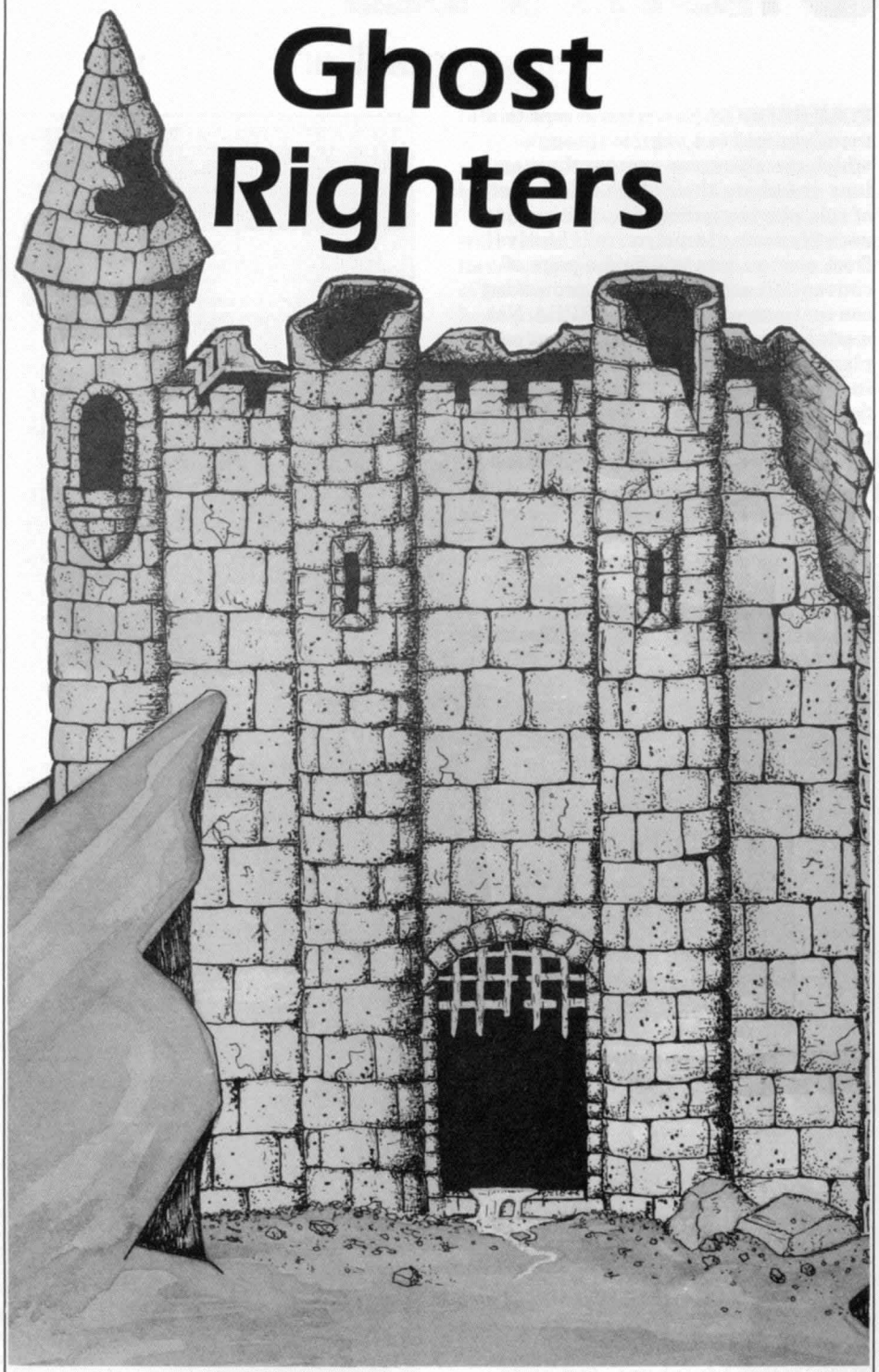
Epilogue

The capture or death of Nioga brings the reward promised by General Obspieri: 1,000 gp per PC involved and a commission in the army at the rank of private, for any PC who wants it. Knights are not eligible, as they already have positions in the army which rank above private.

The rescue of Lord Blacktree's cousin, Killian Lara Blacktree, earns a reward of one potion of healing each from Lord Blacktree, from his personal stores.

The End

Ghost Righters



An AD&D® game adventure for 4-6 characters levels 6-9

Illustration by David Zens

by Jean Rabe

Players' Introduction

"There is no challenge too great, no task too dangerous, and no house too haunted that it cannot be overcome by the Gallant Heroes Opposing Supernatural Threats (G.H.O.S.T., Inc.)" So reads the sign above the front door of your business in the town of Deleeven.

For about a year now the six of you have specialized in eliminating troublesome undead menaces from nearby cemeteries, crypts, farm houses, and old manors. You have easily handled skeletons, zombies, ghouls, and an occasional ghast. You're still looking for the really tough undead contracts such as wights, ghosts, and vampires that could finally prove a challenge to your cleric and improve everyone's resumes.

Yes, this is the life and a far more profitable line of work than what you used to do—adventuring into deep, dark, dungeons where all manner of unknown evil beasts lurk. At least this way you know what you're up against. And you're specially equipped to deal with foul creatures that need to be put back into the earth.

Valthyweshia Valliantheart, the brave and noble fighter, has a *sun blade* that helps her make short work of undead.

Tracylrathomore Oatsmorovich of the Great Reedwoods, the skillful ranger, has three *arrows of slaying undead* which he has been saving for just the right occasion.

Jonzeralokite Pikerinizallo III, the most-competent thief, and Geanerlene Moonwillowither, the fearless druid, each have *amulets of life protection* which make them the force to pit against ghosts.

D'Aveeventhro Coenoentethropiza, the even-tempered cleric, has a mace that can make short work of any undead.

And Ralph, the dashing mage and self-appointed leader of the group, has a much-valued, fully-charged *scarab of protection* to keep him safe against life-draining threats.

The six of you have a nice arrangement. You get paid for eliminating undead creatures, and you get the creatures' treasure, too.

Your customers have included rich widows, who believed they were being haunted by the spirits of their dead husbands; cemetery caretakers who have had a few problems with zombies; and adventuring parties that couldn't quite handle the dangers of ancient burial grounds. Of course, there was also the time Sally Sukorski, the owner of Deleeven's leather shop, had trouble dealing with her uncle Frank. Frank, it seemed, had created a zombie monster in the basement. And there was the shining moment when you saved city hall from the small army of skeletons that an evil cleric had unleashed. The cleric, you discovered, didn't agree with the mayor's politics. You tend not to like his politics, either. But he pays well.

Besides, that job netted you the town's undying respect. They began to call you the Ghost Righters because you right the wrongs caused by undead. The citizens started asking for your autographs, bought you drinks, and gave you presents.

Unfortunately, the six of you have become so well known in this part of the country that most intelligent undead have left the area, and evil clerics have selected other locations to attack. So business has been pretty grave lately, and the bills are piling up.

You were discussing opening a branch office in another city in an attempt to drum up new business when the large sack of coins entered your establishment carried by a gray-cloaked dwarf.

"I have need of your services," said the short figure topped with a broad-brimmed gray hat. "I understand you are handy with undead. And I have a little undead problem at my castle, Castle Dworgon. I think you can handle it for me. Will this be enough for a retainer?"

The figure emptied the sack, which was filled with 500 platinum coins. "There'll be five times that much more when you're finished. Money means nothing to me. But that castle is everything."

Ralph, who was always concerned about paying bills on time, was quick to accept the job. And the small man, who introduced himself as Dworgon Axewielder, gave Ralph a crude map which showed directions to an ancient castle.

"It should take you about three days to get there, more if you don't ride horses," Dworgon said. "Now, if you can thoroughly clear out the castle by the end of next week I'll throw in a bonus. I know I'm paying above G.H.O.S.T.'s normal rates anyway, but, as I said, money is no big deal. If you don't damage the castle in any ensuing fights, I can probably throw in a dozen or so gems, too. I have quite a collection of emeralds. Well, enough of idle chatter. I need to be going. Any questions?"

Dworgon prefers not to talk to the party long, as he does not want his nature to become known to them, and he does not want them to find out so much about the castle and his problems with the current occupant that they would want to change their minds. He will want to be on his way as soon as possible. However, if the PCs ask Dworgon, he will reveal the following information:

The castle was hewn into the face of a rocky hillside, and because of the terrain there are no inhabitants within at least two or three miles of the castle.

There are likely a variety of undead in the castle, but he does not believe any are free-willed undead. He will tell the party he doesn't know what, if anything, is controlling the undead, but if something is controlling them it must be a cleric. (He does not know that Synevil also acquired illusionist skills.)

The castle has no secret doors or passageways that he is aware of, and he is very familiar with the building.

There are two main entrances: the large front gates and an iron gate where the river flows through the mountain (a lot of time has passed and it's now a small stream). The castle's windows have been bricked up (because Synevil doesn't want any light coming in).

The party will pass through a small community and over farmland before reaching the hilly area around the castle. The people in the community are friendly and will probably provide lodging.

Bidding Dworgon Axewielder goodbye, your intrepid band of Ghost Righters heads in the direction of Castle Dworgon, the promise of gems and platinum pieces urging you on.

The Client

Dworgon Axewielder

10th Level Male Dwarven Shade Fighter

	Light Condition					
	Brt.	Ave.	Twil.	Shad.	Drk.	C.Drk.
STR:	16	17	18/00	20	19	18/00
INT:	8	9	10	12	11	10
WIS:	8	9	10	12	11	10
DEX:	14	15	16	18	17	16
CON:	14	15	16	18	17	16
CHA:	8	9	10	12	11	10
COM:	7	8	9	11	10	9

	Light Condition					
	Brt.	Ave.	Twil.	Shad.	Drk.	C.Drk.
AC Normal:	1	0	-1	-3	-2	-1
AC Rear:	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hit Points:	70	80	90	100	90	90
SA:	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
MR (%):	–	50	50	50	50	–

A shade's statistics vary according to light conditions. Please note carefully the shade abilities in *Monster Manual II,* page 108, which also vary according to light conditions.

Alignment: Neutral (Evil tendencies)

Magic Items: *Bracers of Defense AC 1, Long Sword +2, Boots of Elvenkind*

Wealth Carried: 2,000 gp in small gems (Dworgon has much more wealth on the Plane of Shadow.)

A century ago Dworgon was a member of a small adventuring band which explored this area of the continent and got rich from the numerous treasures uncovered. The band eventually made its home in an old, abandoned castle, which it had cleared of monsters.

It was a good home and a good life for Dworgon and his friends until a beautiful human woman joined the group. The others in the band, who were humans, accepted the cleric. However, Dworgon didn't like her. He didn't like her at all. If only the others had listened to him. But they didn't. So the woman, Synevil Synders, grew in power and became the group's leader, a position Dworgon wanted desperately. Sensing competition, Synevil tried to kill the dwarf, but ended up killing the other adventurers in the ensuing fight. Dworgon escaped, but vowed revenge.

Illustration by Ray VanTilburg

Dworgon began traveling the continent waiting for Synevil to die of old age so he could regain his castle. However, he learned through well-paid informers that Synevil was employing potions and other magic items to extend her life. Frustrated, Dworgon began to search for a means to gain power and extend his own life. Eventually, he met a dark mage who practiced an arcane and nearly-forgotten force that turned Dworgon into a shade. This was not quite the "power" he had wanted, but he was confident it would allow him to outlive Synevil, thereby regaining his castle. Dworgon roamed the Plane of Shadow for the next several decades waiting for the woman to die. His existence made him miserable, and he tortured himself with thoughts of revenge against Synevil. Finally, his revenge becoming an all-consuming thing, Dworgon left the Plane of Shadow to return to his old castle. There he found Synevil, who also had found a way to become a shade. Synevil, using her clerical abilities, had drawn undead around her to help protect the castle. The two fought a battle neither could win because of their shadely-matched abilities, but Dworgon was repulsed—he had always hated fighting undead when he was an adventurer.

During his subsequent travels, Dworgon learned of G.H.O.S.T., Inc., and decided to hire them to deal with Synevil.

The Adversary

Synevil Synders

Female Human Shade Cleric/Illusionist (10/13)

	Light Condition					
	Brt.	Ave.	Twil.	Shad.	Drk.	C.Drk.
STR:	8	9	10	12	11	10
INT:	16	17	18	18	18	18
WIS:	16	17	18	18	18	18
DEX:	14	15	16	18	17	16
CON:	9	10	11	13	12	11
CHA:	14	15	16	18	17	16
COM:	15	16	17	19	18	17

	Light Condition					
	Brt.	Ave.	Twil.	Shad.	Drk.	C.Drk.
AC Normal:	2	1	0	-2	-1	0
AC Rear:	2	2	2	2	2	2
Hit Points:	33	46	59	85	85	59
SA:	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
MR (%):	–	60	60	60	60	–

Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Magic Items: *Bracers of Defense AC 2,* 3 clerical scrolls *(animate dead monsters), Crystal Ball, Mace +2, Staff +2, Ring of Shadows* (allows the shade wearing the ring to *shadow walk* in any light condition)
Wealth Carried: None

Spells Carried:

Clerical Spells: *Detect good, detect magic, cause light wounds* (x2), *command* (x2) *hold person* (x2), *silence 15' radius, enthrall, know alignment, dust devil, animate dead, dispel magic* (x2), *curse, cause serious wounds, cure serious wounds, spell immunity (fireball), giant insect, cure critical wounds, flame strike*

Illusionist Spells: *Audible glamer, change self* (x2), *dancing lights, chromatic orb, misdirection, blur, ventriloquism, whispering wind, mirror image, hallucinatory terrain* (x2), *spectral force* (x2), *vacancy, solid fog, emotion, projected image, maze, permanent illusion, programmed illusion*

Synevil had a chaotic neutral alignment when she joined Dworgon's band of adventurers nearly a century ago. However, as the years went by she grew corrupt and evil, and sought to kill Dworgon because he opposed her bid for party leadership. She failed to kill Dworgon, but slew the rest of the band, which had finally taken Dworgon's side. Dworgon fled, and Synevil became consumed with outliving him and finding a way to defeat him. She used *potions of longevity* to extend her life. And in her search for power she stopped training in her clerical skills and began to study with an illusionist. She later discovered (after killing her instructor) a *crystal ball,* which she used to watch Dworgon. In one of her viewings she witnessed Dworgon becoming a shade, and shortly thereafter she located the same dark magic-user and became a shade, also. Since she now believed she could not defeat him, she would do the next best thing, get revenge. She stayed firmly rooted in the castle he believed was his and populated it with undead—creatures he had hated during his life.

Synevil has been bored lately, having had no trouble defeating the few adventurers who have stumbled upon the castle. She would return to the Plane of Shadow, but that would leave the castle available to Dworgon, something she just can't allow.

So she has continued watching Dworgon via her *crystal ball.* She knows he has visited G.H.O.S.T., Inc., and she has become excited. These adventurers might put up a reasonable fight. She intends to toy with them a little before they reach the castle. Using her illusions and her undead minions, she will provide a great game. When she's done with them, she will gloat to Dworgon. Maybe then she'll return to the Plane of Shadow victorious over the "little shade."

Encounter 1— A Grave Situation

The Ghost Righters will reach the small town of Elkheart early in the evening.

Through her *crystal ball,* Synevil learned weeks ago that Dworgon planned to seek out the Ghost Righters. She has been monitoring the group's progress and decided to test them. She unleashed most of her undead in this area to terrify the locals and find out if the Ghost Righters can handle the threat. She is hopeful they can, as she has been bored lately and welcomes the prospect of challenging visitors. She has staged a scene of terror using her undead and her illusions. The total number of undead in town is listed first, followed by the staging techniques which will help build terror.

> The small town of Elkheart lies ahead, its streets nearly deserted. Although there are only a few people walking about, all of the town's business' lanterns seem to be lit.

The people are all indoors, and the windows and doors locked. When the undead came for a visit a few of the town's braver souls tried to fight them, but that proved futile and deadly. Now the town residents are hoping the undead will leave when the sun rises. There are six zombies on the street who have orders only to harm people who stand their ground or make other shows of force. Synevil knew such people would be the Ghost Righters or foolish residents who should be eliminated anyway. More undead inhabit the general store.

The New Residents

Zombies (36): AC 8; MV 6″; HD 2; hp 12 each; AT 1; D 1-8; SD always strike last in melee; AL N; Size M; THAC0 16.

Skeletons (45): AC 7; MV 12″; HD 1; hp 5 each; AT 1; D 1-6; AL N; Size M; SD edged weapons do half damage; THAC0 19.

Ghouls (20): AC 6; MV 9″ HD 2; hp 11 each; AT 3; D 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation by touch, elves are immune; Al CE; Size M; THAC0 16.

Ghasts (4): AC MV 15″; HD 4; hp 21 each; AT 3; D 1-4/1-4/1-8; SA paralyzation by touch, elves not immune, characters coming within 10′ must save vs. poison or become nauseated and attack at -2 "to hit"; AL CE; Size M; THAC0 15.

Staging

1. When the characters enter town they will see six "people" wandering about the alleys and back streets. The people look like they perhaps have had a little too much to drink. These are zombies and can easily and quickly be dealt with. The zombies' first tactic, as ordained by Synevil, is to move forward, acting menacing. If the targets flee, the zombies will go back to the alleys. If the targets fight, so will the zombies.

2. Synevil is in the general store waiting and watching for the Ghost Righters. When she sees them fighting her six zombies she will begin screaming, "Help! Save me from the undead!" If the PCs run to the general store, she will go to the basement, where she has more undead stashed, and continue to call for help. She has cast a few *programmed illusions* in the basement which show 60 skeletons erupting from the earth and filling the basement. The illusions begin when a PC walks off the bottom step and touches the basement floor. The illusions are like waves, with 15 skeletons erupting from the floor each round for four rounds. These skeletons cannot be turned, as they are illusions. However, there also are 20 real skeletons in this basement and 10 zombies. Synevil will step into the Plane of Shadow via her ring when the PCs begin their descent into the basement. The illusory skeletons act *en masse* moving and striking in unison, doing 1d6 damage per successful hit as long as the PCs really believe they are being attacked by skeletons. An illusory skeleton "dies" when struck a solid blow by a PC. There will be no evidence of a girl anywhere in the general store who might have been calling for help.

3. When the PCs leave the general store, either because they defeated the illusory army or because they fled from it, they run right into the next wave of undead coming toward the general store: 20 real zombies and 25 real skeletons. These undead will do everything possible to back the PCs into the dead end alley next to the general store. If the undead can accomplish this, the PCs will notice a rope being lowered to them by a man on the roof. Dworgon has been watching the PCs and became alerted to the undead in town (but the PCs will not recognize him). He is up on the roof of a building next to the general store. The rope will be securely fastened to the roof, so the PCs can use it to escape the undead. They will not be able to find the man who rescued them. However, from their roof-top vantage point they will be able to more easily deal with the undead in the alley. Once the PCs reach the roof, the skeletons begin to climb the wooden buildings using their boney fingers.

4. When (and if) the PCs return to the city streets they see an undead creature holding a very well-dressed man outside the stable. The undead drag the man inside the stable. In front of the stable is a ditch used as a watering trough for horses. Synevil has cast *hallucinatory terrain* over the ditch, which is now filled to the brim with undead. When the PCs come to the stable, the undead will erupt from the trench, seeming to erupt from the very earth. This force consists of the 20 ghouls. Next, the four ghasts come out of the stable to join the fray. When the battle is finished the PCs will find the well-dressed man inside, severely shaken, but unharmed. He will introduce himself as the mayor. In reality, this is Synevil using a *change self* spell.

When Elkheart's residents realize the undead threat is ended, they will come out of their homes and businesses and express their gratitude. Many of the people in town have heard of the Ghost Righters and have seen sketches of them. They will ask for their autographs, a few of the ladies will swoon over Ralph, and the "mayor" will invite them to stay at his house for the evening. Synevil will take no further actions against them in this town.

Elkheart never had a major undead problem before—just a few skeletons and a couple of zombies that the town

residents were able to dispatch. The people have no idea what caused the undead to come to town; they are just thankful the Ghost Righters happened to be around. The townspeople will even offer to provide the PCs with office space if they want to open a branch office here. If asked about the area, the townspeople and mayor will reply it is occupied by a few farmers who own large areas of land. Some of the citizens will be concerned about the farmers, wondering if they, too, were attacked by the undead army. If asked about Castle Dworgon, the people will say there is an old, ruined castle east of here. No one goes there because they are certain the castle has been stripped of all valuables through the years. It is said to be a dangerous place—it looks like it is falling apart. And, besides, the few townspeople who "adventured" there never returned. The mayor says he knows no additional information, but will be happy to present them with a key to the city in a formal ceremony one week from tomorrow.

The PCs can easily spot the undead's tracks and follow the tracks out of town to the old farmhouse and the castle beyond. Do not volunteer the information about the tracks. The players must ask.

Encounter 2—Undead Livestock

> You have walked for a few hours across well-tended and fertile farmland when you come to a stretch of ground where weeds grow abundantly among the crops. Barely visible above the tallest crops and weeds are three scarecrows, whose rotted pumpkin heads seem to have done little to keep away crows.

The scarecrows were created by Synevil and placed on the far edge of Farmer Johnson's property. Farmer Johnson does not know they are here. Synevil, who is aware of the farmer's undead ruse (detailed below), wants to make the PCs so jumpy they might attack the farmer and his livestock. The scarecrows have been instructed to stop the PCs.

Scarecrows (3): AC 6; MV 6″; HD 5; hp 30 each; AT 1; D 1-6 plus special; SA gaze causes save vs. magic or become *charmed,* successful hits have the same effect; *charmed* targets stand and gape as if under a *hold person* spell. Victims recover when the scarecrow is killed; AL CE; Size M; THAC0 15.

Farmer Johnson, who lives about a day's travel from Elkheart, was visited by the undead before they moved on to the town. Furthermore, he has encountered an occasional skeleton or zombie that Synevil discarded because the undead were too weak. He was able to dispatch these undead, but the undead that visited him two days ago were something he just couldn't handle. The undead killed some of his prize cattle, including his most valuable bull (it wouldn't get out of the the way).

The farmer, who escaped injury by hiding in the barn, decided he wasn't leaving his property just because some dead people were terrorizing the area. So he hit upon the idea of making his farm animals look undead in the (foolish) hope that whatever undead were around wouldn't bother them again. "Gosh, everybody knows dead people don't want nothing to do with other dead things. They only go after what's living." He has made himself up to look a little bit like a zombie, and he has put wooden fangs on his few remaining cows (vampiric cows). He has plucked a lot of the feathers out of his chickens to make them look undead also, and he has haphazardly sheered the sheep and put blotches of green paint on them (zombie chickens and ghoulish sheep). In addition, he has let weeds grow up among the vegetables nearest the road, and he has let a few vegetables rot on the vine as an added touch. He is enjoying his ruse, as in his undead disguise he is able to easily frighten away trespassers and the kids who used to steal his eggs. He will be very, very angry if the Ghost Righters kill his animals.

The PCs will reach the farmhouse in the early evening, just as the sun is setting.

> The road you have been following continues on through a pasture and near a run-down farmhouse. The fences are in disrepair, and the house is badly in need of painting. The animals look unhealthy. The chickens you see wandering in the yard have few feathers. The sheep in a pen only have wool in splotches, and their skin is green. The animals look positively ghoulish. Even the cows look grim. The cows have fangs.

> Suddenly, the door to the farmhouse is thrown open and a tattered-looking man with ragged clothes and deep-set eyes emerges. He is making moaning noises, and he waves a pitchfork in a threatening manner.

Farmer Johnson: AC 10; MV 12″; F1; hp 6; AT 1; D 1-6 (pitchfork); AL NG; Size M; THAC0 20.

If the PCs move on, nothing will happen. Farmer Johnson will go out and tend his animals. If the PCs make any move to attack Farmer Johnson, he will throw up his arms in surrender and yell, "Hey, I didn't mean anything. I was just protecting my property." If the PCs kill Farmer Johnson, they will discover a run-down, but very lived-in farmhouse. On examination they will discover the animals are all very much alive—just made up to look undead. Johnson kept a journal detailing the arrival of the undead and his attempts to keep them away. The journal is kept in the house with 120 gp and a half dozen books on undead and the supernatural.

If the PCs talk to Farmer Johnson he will explain about the few wandering undead he has managed to dispatch and the army of undead that came by two days ago. The undead were headed in the direction of Elkheart. He will want to know if the PCs were in Elkheart and if they saw any of the undead there. He doesn't know what is causing the undead problem, and he really doesn't care. He is a stubborn, cranky, old farmer, and he isn't going to leave his land for anybody—living or dead. He will invite the players in for the evening. If they accept he will proudly explain how he made all of his livestock look dead to frighten away trespassers and keep the real undead away. If the characters explain who they are, Farmer Johnson will ask their advice on how to better keep away the undead and how to make some of his farm animals look like wights and mummies. He has heard of the Ghost Righters and respects their expertise. He will even ask how he can improve his own makeup. He would like to learn how to disguise himself as a lich.

Encounter 3—The Crumbling Castle Dworgon

After leaving the farm, it will take the PCs two days to reach this castle. The PCs will notice the castle from many hundred yards away. From a distance, it looks impressive. However, when the PCs move closer they will see how old and abandoned it really is. If they check for tracks, they will see boney footprints leading to and from the castle.

> A hundred years or more ago the castle might have looked impressive. But now it only looks depressing. The spires are crumbled to gravel, and the outer walls are in ruins. Weeds grow in abundance throughout the castle grounds, and vines thickly cover portions of the walls. The castle is old, and all of its windows have been sealed shut with stone and mortar.

There are only two entrances to the castle, over the rotting drawbridge and in the front door, or through a sewer grating by a stream that runs to the south. The front door will take characters to the front of the castle, while the sewer will lead them to the kitchen. Taking the sewer grating will be a tight fit. Make it clear to the characters that the sewer pipe smells terrible. Any character entering it will smell terrible, also, and must roll under his Constitution on a d20, or must turn back. Most of the rooms within the castle are empty, the furnishings long since rotted away. However, Synevil is a master of illusion and has created permanent illusions throughout the building. The descriptions of each of the castle's rooms detail the illusion she has created. She has created the facade because she enjoys fine things and wants this place to look like a palace inside. Each "room" is different, but opulent. However, there is one constant. In each room hangs an illusory portrait of Dworgon dying in various fashions. In addition, since she knew the PCs were coming she has cast a few *programmed illusions* to keep them busy.

Illusions: Synevil's illusions are very complex and detailed, as she has had a very long time to perfect them. Because of this, any PC attempting to disbelieve something within the castle must save vs. magic at -3. The DM should make this roll secretly. If any characters successfully disbelieve an illusion—and try to convince the other characters that what they see is an illusion—those other characters can attempt to disbelieve again without being effected by the -3 penalty.

The two illusory monsters in the castle will actually damage the PCs unless the PCs have successfully disbelieved the creatures. The damage is real and must be healed through cure spells and resting.

Having prepared a welcome for the PCs, Synevil sits back, drifting in and out of the Plane of Shadow, watching the drama unfold and artfully sculpting her illusions. At the right moment she will enter the scene and attempt to draw the curtain on the PCs' lives. When and if Synevil confronts the PCs, remember that her hit points, magic resistance, and special abilities vary with the light conditions (usually *shadowy* within the castle).

Inside the Castle

A. Drawbridge to Death

> The drawbridge is very worn, but there is evidence it has recently supported traffic, as many skeleton footprints lead from it. The wood smells of age and death, and beyond the drawbridge is the dark gaping maw of a doorway. The drawbridge leads over a dried-out moat. Little lizards scamper among the deep cracks in the dried mud below, and ugly weeds grow out of the cracks in places.

The drawbridge is relatively sturdy to walk across, as is the dried-up moat floor 15 feet below it. However, if the characters elect to go over the drawbridge, make them nervous by describing the creaking sounds and the bowing of the wood under their weight. To heighten the tension, have the Dave character fall through the bridge. He will be able to hang on by his fingers, but will immediately notice an arm reaching out to him. If he takes this arm, it will come loose in his grasp. The arm is the boney remains of an adventurer caught in the drawbridge. Falling into the dried-up moat inflicts 1d6 points of damage.

B. Elegant Entrance

When the characters reach the entry room, they will see two very large suits of armor, one on each side of the entrance. If the PCs touch the armor, the suits will fall forward, then roll over on their backs and stop moving. If the PCs further inspect the armor, the armored figures (zombies) will attack. The four other zombies, hidden in the shadows, will join the battle.

If the characters do nothing with the armor, and merely stroll through the entrance, the armored zombies and the four others in the shadows will attack.

Monster Zombies (6): AC 6 (except the 2 in plate which are AC 3); MV 9″; HD 6; hp 2 @ 36 (in the armor), 4 @ 34; AT 1; D 4-16; SA These zombies are animated corpses of bugbears. They will always strike last in melee, and they are turned as ghasts. Blunt weapons do half damage. They are immune to charm, cold, death magic, hold, and sleep; AL N; Size L; THAC0 13.

> The condition of the castle's entry room starkly contrasts with the building's exterior. Deep violet walls sport elegant sconces. To your right and left hang matching pictures of your client, Dworgon. The picture to the right shows him being run through by a bugbear holding a spear. To the left he is shown being trampled by an army of skeletons. A red carpet unrolls before you and a gong sounds.

No matter where the characters walk in this room, the red carpet will roll out ahead of them. The carpet is one of Synevil's illusions.

C. Audienceless Chamber

> This room surely rivals any king's audience chamber. No wonder the castle means so much to Dworgon. Three chandeliers hang from a ceiling covered with an elaborate mural of deer and other wild animals. A roaring murmur fills the room, but the audience making the sound cannot be seen. The walls are painted in a vibrant dark green and are accented by the sconces that hold carved, ivory-colored candles.

Any PC entering this room disappears.

The floor is pressure sensitive. Stepping on each one-foot by one-foot section releases a minute amount of *dust of disappearance* stored above the ceiling, which is riddled with tiny holes. Once there are several *invisible* PCs in the room they will start bumping into each other. The DM should continue to comment on the murmuring, which is part of the illusion, and tell a few of the PCs they feel something bump into them. If the PCs swing at what bumped them, describe to another PC that they see one of their friends materialize for a moment (the ultra-light coating of dust is shaken off), swing a weapon, and disappear. The disappearing act continues to happen because the PCs continue to step on the floor, which releases more dust. For example: the DM tells Jon he feels something bump into him. Jon says he swings at the object. Tracy, who did the accidental bumping, will be told by the DM he sees Jon materialize, swing at him, and disappear. It is very possible for the PCs to damage each other. If they search the floor they will be able to recover two uses of *dust of disappearance.* If the PCs inspect this room they will find four large paintings which mar the elegance of the surroundings. The first painting depicts Dworgon having his head cut off in a guillotine. In the second, Dworgon is drowning in a whirlpool. In the third, he is being torn apart by dogs as dark as midnight. And in the fourth he is falling to his knees amid a burst of blinding light.

D. Don't Tip The Waiter

This dining area is immense. A dozen long tables, each covered with linen cloths, fill the room. Each table is adorned with silver candlesticks fitted with fine, carved and unburned tapers. A few sconces on the wall are lit, producing some light, but not enough to take away all the shadows. The smell of rare roast beef wafts at you from the head table, behind which is a painting of Dworgon being eaten by a red dragon. Looking at the head table you see a veritable banquet spread out before you. And more—food is being carried in by invisible waiters. Plate after plate of fruits and vegetables and meat drift past. A murmuring can be heard, possibly coming from the unseen guests who lift forks of food to their mouths.

As you attempt to take in the scene more closely, a ghostly image rises from behind the head table and moves toward you.

The effects in this room are created by several *permanent illusion* and *programmed illusion* spells. The floor is coated with grease. PCs entering the room must make a Dexterity check or fall. As part of the *programmed illusion,* invisible waiters with napkins will come to help them, blinding them with napkins in a distorted attempt to wipe off their faces. The ghostly image in this room is not an illusion, it is Harold the Haunt.

Harold the Haunt: AC 0/victim's AC; MV 6″/as possessed victim; HD 5/ victim's hit dice; AT 1/1, as 5 HD monster; D -2 to victim's DEX score with each successful hit; SA The haunt attacks a victim with the intent of possessing him (see description of haunt, pg 74 MMII). When the victim's DEX is reduced to 0 the haunt can possess him; AL NG; THAC0 14.

Harold the half-orc was one of Dworgon's best friends. Unfortunately, he spurned Dworgon's friendship for Synevil's curves. In the end, Harold realized the error of his ways and fought against Synevil. Synevil, of course, killed him. However, his desire to see her dead was so strong that he became a haunt. He cannot leave this room in which he died. He will try to take over one of the party members so he can have a solid form in which to search for her. He thinks she is some kind of a ghost, as she was human, and humans do not live centuries. If he is able to possess a body, the party can communicate with him. He will be adamant about his need to do in Synevil. He will expound upon how he has remained in this hall for years waiting to fulfill his mission. He will tell the PCs he is so filled with remorse because he let his best buddy Dworgon down. Although his hatred for Synevil, "the pretty human-now-ghost who fooled our adventuring band," is all-consuming, he does respect her. She is able to change the color of paint in this room at least once a week and merely with the wave of her hand.

E. E Stands For Elevator—Going Down

This room, though still richly appointed, is not as fancy as others you have seen. The paint is a drab olive-green, and there is little decoration on the walls. Chairs line the walls, and in the center of the room is a tiger skin rug. A painting, showing Dworgon hanging from an old tree, is clearly visible.

Slightly off to the right of the rug is a large hole. The floor caved in about a hundred years ago. However, an illusion will keep the PCs from seeing the hole. If characters walk over the hole, they will fall into the crawlspace beneath, which is the lair of Snyevil's shadow mastiffs. Because of the special lighting in this room (courtesy of Synevil), the fight between any PCs and shadow mastiffs in the crawl space will be shown in shadows on the wall in the room above. Characters looking on will see their comrades disappear into the floor, but the illusion of an intact floor will remain.

Shadow Mastiffs (6): AC 6; MV 18″ (9″ in bright light); HD 4 (-1 hp per die in bright light; hp 3 @ 20, 4 @ 23, 1 @ 30; AT 1; D 2-8; SA baying causes panic unless a save vs. spells is made; SD hide in shadows; AL N(E); Size M; THAC0 15.

F. Step Into The Parlor

This dark, shadow-filled room is evidently a parlor. Musical instruments lay on chairs at one end of the room. Sheet music is strewn about the floor, and blood covers some of the sheet music. At the center of this room is a large fountain, with water flowing from an ornamental horn on top. To the right of the fountain is a painting showing Dworgon being strangled in the strings of a harp. As your eyes adjust to the room's lighting, you see a man in the shadows bent over a beautiful, young woman. The man looks up at you and smiles. Blood drips from his fangs. The odor of death wafts heavily in this place. "Welcome, Ghost Righters," the vampire says as he floats toward you.

Illusory Vampire: AC 1; MV 12″/18″; HD n/a; hp n/a; AT 1; D 5-10, plus energy drain; Size M; THAC0 11.

The PCs must hit AC 1 to strike the illusion, since they believe they are fighting something that would actually be that difficult to hit. The illusion will dissipate three rounds after Synevil stops concentrating on it or when all the PCs successfully disbelieve it. PCs struck by the vampire will believe they are becoming weaker due to energy drain. However, their levels will return after they are healed. The female victim is Synevil.

The vampire is Synevil's attempt at fun. She used a *spectral force* spell to create the vampire, a very realistic and horrible-smelling creature. Synevil, playing the part of the victim to the hilt, will swoon, leaving the PCs to deal with her vampire. She will continue to concentrate on the *spectral force* so her vampire can appropriately react to the PCs' actions.

Synevil is hoping the Ghost Righters will give her a chance to heighten the terror by putting a stake through the vampire's heart or putting it under the running water in the fountain. If the former tactic is used, Synevil will have the vampire appear to die, then open its eyes and rip the stake out of its body. If the latter tactic is used, she will have the vampire emerge from the fountain, smiling twistedly. The vampire will make one last attack, turn to mist, and disappear through the floor. In any event, she will not let the melee go longer than ten rounds—she wants to keep the illusion believable. Before the vampire departs, Synevil will cast a *change self* upon herself and *silence 15' radius* on the party, preferably on one of the spell caster's clothes. Then she will rise from the floor looking like a second vampire.

She will follow up this action with a *sapphire chromatic orb* on the person she perceives as the lead fighter, and then will cast *mirror image* on herself. Further tactics include casting *giant insect* and any other appropriate spells. She also will step into the Plane of Shadow via her ring, move closer to one of the more threatening members of the party, and cast *cause critical wounds* on him or her. Synevil will melee only as a last resort. And she will avoid fighting to the death, opting to retreat to the Plane of Shadow at any time the battle is going against her.

G. Last Stand in the Sitting Room

An illusion keeps this door from being seen until the PCs have entered at least five other rooms. Synevil will attempt to cure herself before coming here, casting *dispel magic* on the illusion, and preparing her final assault. Once she is ready, Synevil will attempt to lure the PCs here by appearing in the hall and running here if she has to, slipping into the Plane of Shadow if necessary to remain safe. She will use whatever tactics she deems appropriate to get them to this room. She has already cast a *programmed illusion,* which will go off when the PCs get half-way into the room. Synevil has been watching the PCs for some time now, and is aware of the cleric's fear. Because of this, the programmed illusion is directed at him.

> This sitting room basks in shadows which cloak the fine, velvet-cushioned chairs and the small marble-topped tables. As you step into the room, you notice a woman hovering in the shadows at the far end of the room. Immediately to your right is another picture of Dworgon. The painting shows him striking a heroic pose, however, the canvas has been slashed.

When the PCs reach the room's center, the *programmed illusion* starts.

> As you advance on the woman, a booming voice reverberates throughout the room. "Choose the method of your destruction Ghost Righters. Reach inside yourself and choose.... Think of the method. Ah, a fine choice has been made."

The *programmed illusion* shows a large ghost forming through the floor. The ghost is tall and menacing. It bears Dave's face. The ghost will first move to attack Dave, and next to attack any characters protecting him. Weapons will appear to harmlessly pass through the ghost. After four rounds of combat the ghost's shape shifts, expanding to nearly fill the room. During the fifth round of combat, the ghost will be destroyed, exploding into bits of ectoplasm that cover everything. However, in the seventh round the ghost reforms, its ectoplasmic parts being sucked together. This ghost will appear malformed, the head on incorrectly, an arm where a leg should be, etc. In addition, a *spectral force* spell cast by Synevil during the fifth round (when the "ghost" exploded) will make the characters look and feel "slimed," which should add to their terror. During the ninth round Synevil will begin her personal assault. While the PCs continue to deal with the ghost, Synevil, from the shadows, will cast *dust devil, emotion* (hopelessness), and attack with any remaining spells. She will enter melee if it looks like she has a chance to slay the PCs.

Illusory Ghost: AC 0; MV 9″; HD n/a; hp n/a; AT 1; D age 10-40 years; Size M; THAC0 10.

Characters viewing this illusion (and not disbelieving) will believe it is a ghost and must save vs. magic or flee for 2d6 turns. Dave, the PC cleric, is immune to this effect because of his level. Of course, this character might opt to flee anyway. Geanerlene is +2 on her save because of her level. Characters affected by the ghost will believe they have aged until they rest and thoroughly assess their situation. The illusory ghost cannot be turned.

If it appears the PCs will not be able to deal with Synevil, they will notice their client, Dworgon, step out of the shadows and begin to fight at their side. If Synevil is defeated, or at the very least chased back into the Plane of Shadow, Dworgon will be elated.

The castle will be revealed for what it really is—a skeleton of its former greatness. Dworgon will despair, as he wanted the building as it was ages ago. Still, he will pay the PCs and explain a little about his and Synevil's conditions—if they haven't figured it out yet. "We're just shades of our former selves trying to regain lost glories," he will explain. Dworgon then leaves. The PCs will find Synevil's treasure behind a crumbling stone in the sitting room. The treasure is 5,000 gp and a dozen rubies each worth between 100 gp and 600 gp.

H. Empty Treasures

The door to this room is locked. Synevil wanted to create the impression that this was her treasure room. Actually, her "treasure" inside is zombies. She found a band of firbolg giants within a few miles of the castle. Killing them, she used a *scroll of animate dead monsters* to make them her servants. Because she carefully chose only the biggest of the dead giants, the monster zombies all have maximum hit points.

The treasure is made up of *permanent illusions.* A *programmed illusion* is responsible for the corpses' wailing.

> Treasure covers the floor of this room, sparkling gems and thousands of gold pieces everywhere. Marring the scene, however, are the partial corpses of giants begging to be put out of their misery.

The zombies are whole. The lower half of their bodies are hidden by the illusory treasure. If the PCs come within reach, the monsters will begin attacking, using only their arms. During the third round of combat they will erupt from the treasure. The only real items in this room are three pictures of Dworgon. The first shows Dworgon being caught in a rock slide, the second shows him being stoned by a medusa, and the third shows him nearly covered with green slime.

Monster Zombies (6): AC 6; MV 9″; HD 6; hp 48 each; AT 1; D 4-16; SA The zombies will always strike last in melee, and they are turned as ghasts. Blunt weapons do half damage. They are immune to charm, cold, death magic, hold, and sleep; AL N; Size L; THAC0 13.

I. Stay Out Of The Kitchen

> This room obviously served as the castle's kitchen. Row upon row of cabinets hold fine china and goblets. Large cooking pits occupy the left half of the room. In the center of the room a glass bottle teeters on the edge of a small cutting table, the foaming liquid sloshing back and forth. On the wall above the kitchen table is a painting of Dworgon being submersed in a pot of boiling liquid.

Nearly the entire floor of this room is a pit trap. An illusion keeps the PCs from seeing the room's true condition. A *programmed illusion* is responsible for the bottle. If the PCs rush forward to prevent the bottle from falling, the bottle will fall, hit the floor with a reasonably loud crash, and cause smoke to billow throughout the room. All PCs who attempted to stop the bottle will fall into the pit, their exit covered by the illusory smoke. When the smoke clears there will be no sign of the PCs. The pit beneath is filled with sewage.

Characters who fall into the pit will be up to their necks in sewage. Each time they try to call for help the foul water will fill their mouths. It will be difficult for the PCs to stay afloat in this muck. It also will be difficult for the PCs above to find them unless they carefully probe the floor and locate the pit. All those who fall into the pit will suffer 1d6 damage.

The PCs also will likely fall into this pit if they entered this room via the sewer tile. In the hollowed out area beneath, the PCs will only find sewage and the bones of several humans (not-so-lucky adventurers). On the far end of the kitchen is a tile sewer pipe. If the PCs came in through the stream and sewer grating, this is where they would emerge.

J. Mirror, Mirror

> This richly-furnished bedroom smells of lilacs. Deep purple drapes and cushions are accented by gold and purple-flecked paint. Two large decorative mirrors sit on each side of a large chest. Next to the right mirror is a rack with fine clothes. A table with brushes and vials sits next to the left mirror. The bed is covered by a thick purple quilt. Purple rugs of various tones cover the floor. Above hangs an ornate chandelier filled with violet candles. Above the chest is a painting of Dworgon. In this painting he appears to be quickly losing a fight with a dozen giants.

The chest and mirrors are not part of Synevil's illusion. The chest is locked, trapped with a poisoned needle, and empty.

Right Mirror: This specially-enchanted mirror makes the person looking into it appear to have a comeliness of four points higher than his or her actual score.

Left Mirror: This is a *mirror of opposition.* When characters look into this mirror, there will be a big puff of smoke; duplicates of the PCs will appear sprawled out on the floor. The characters on the floor will rise and begin fighting. The duplicates have all the capabilities and equipment of the originals. The duplicates and all their items will disappear when the duplicates are defeated.

K. Nothing Special

> This fancy playroom is filled with all sorts of children's toys. Balls, stuffed animals, and small knicknacks are stacked on dozens of shelves. A large painting on the far wall shows Dworgon being strangled by a stuffed bear.

Several *programmed illusions* are in effect in this room. The *programed illusions* go off in a series when a PC causes even the slightest disturbance in this room. When this happens, the PCs will see a small ball roll off a shelf of toys and bounce into a tower of blocks. The blocks will topple onto a small wagon, causing the wagon to roll into another shelf filled with stuffed animals. A stuffed bear will tip off the shelf, striking an army of painted wooden soldiers. The soldiers will topple like dominoes and will hit the ball that started the mess. The ball will roll into a large book shelf, and the shelf will begin to teeter precariously. It will be obvious this shelf is going to fall on the PCs. If the PCs back away from the shelf they will stumble over a pile of rocks masked by the *permanent illusion.* It will look like they are falling over a pile of stuffed animals. Each stumbling PC will suffer 1-4 points of damage.

L. Interior Decorations

> This room is filled with overstuffed chairs and plush couches. Dried flowers fill the many vases lining the walls. A portrait of Dworgon's headless body hangs on the wall to your right.

One chair in particular in this room looks very expensive, its cushions covered with thick velvet. In reality, this is a mimic.

Mimic: MV 3″; HD 8; hp 32; AT 1; D 3-12; SA glue; Size L; THAC0 12.

M. Forgeries

There is a "living painting" in this room. The painting is Synevil, her head emerging from the Plane of Shadow. Only one of the PCs will ever see this painting move. The eyes will follow this PC, the painting will stick its tongue out and make funny faces. ❑

Ralph

8th Level Male Half-Elf Magic-user

STR: 14
INT: 17
WIS: 10
DEX: 10
CON: 11
CHA: 18
COM: 19

AC Normal: 4
AC Rear: 4
Hit Points: 21
THAC0: 19
Alignment: Neutral Good
Height: 5′ 10″
Weight: 150 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Green
Age: 58
Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, dagger
Non Weapon Proficiencies: Direction sense, slow respiration, swimming, sound analysis, riding (land)
Languages: Common, Elvish, Gnome, Halfling, Goblin, Hobgoblin, Orcish, Gnoll, Dryad, Slyph
Spells/day: 4 3 3 2

Magic Items: Dusty rose *Ioun Stone* (protection +1), *Bracers of Defense AC 7, Cloak of Protection +1, Ring of Protection +1, Ring of Regeneration, Staff +3, Belt Pouch of Holding* (30 cubic feet capacity), *Scarab of Protection* (12 charges)

Other Equipment: 2 vials of holy water, bedroll, dried fruit and beef, 2 skins of excellent wine, 2 skins of water, 4 empty vials, 3 empty scroll cases, fine silvered dagger, shaving kit, small mirror, cologne, 2 crystal goblets, linen tablecloth, 2 silver candlesticks, 2 pastel blue hand carved tapers, 7 cakes of soap, 3 changes of good clothes

Wealth Carried: 20 gp, 10 pp, 50 gp pearl

Spell Books:

Level 1 Spells

Burning Hands
Comprehend Languages
Feather Fall
Precipitation
Unseen Servant
Charm Person
Melt
Detect Magic
Magic Missile
Read Magic
Write

Jonzeralokite Pikerinizallo III

8th Level Male Human Thief

STR: 16
INT: 12
WIS: 12
DEX: 18
CON: 13
CHA: 12
COM: 14

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 7
Hit Points: 28
THAC0: 19
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Height: 5′ 10″
Weight: 175 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown
Age: 28
Weapon Proficiencies: Short bow, sling, dagger, short sword
Non Weapon Proficiencies: Tracking, plant lore, foraging, animal noise, fire building
Languages: Common, Elvish, Centaur, Treant, Brownie, Thieves' Cant

Magic Items: *Bracers of Defense AC 7, Short Sword of Quickness +2, Keoghtom's Ointment* (3 applications), 4 *Arrows +1,* 4 *Arrows +2, Potion of Clairaudience, Bag of Holding* (70 cubic feet capacity), *Boots of Free Action, Amulet of Life Protection*

Other Equipment: 5 silver daggers, garlic, wolvesbane, three sharply-pointed stakes, four outfits (black, gray, brown, and green to help blend in with natural surroundings) 50′ of rope, lantern, 3 flasks of oil, book on how to identify ferns (titled Ferns Are Our Friends), short bow, 12 arrows

Wealth Carried: two 150 gp pearls, 450 gp emerald, 15 pp, 10, gp, 10 sp

Thief Skills:

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	HN	CW	RL
75	72	60	72	59	25	96	40

Life has not been overly kind to you. It has presented you with the body of a thief and the heart, mind, and soul of a ranger.

Valthyweshia Valliantheart

7th Level Female Human Fighter

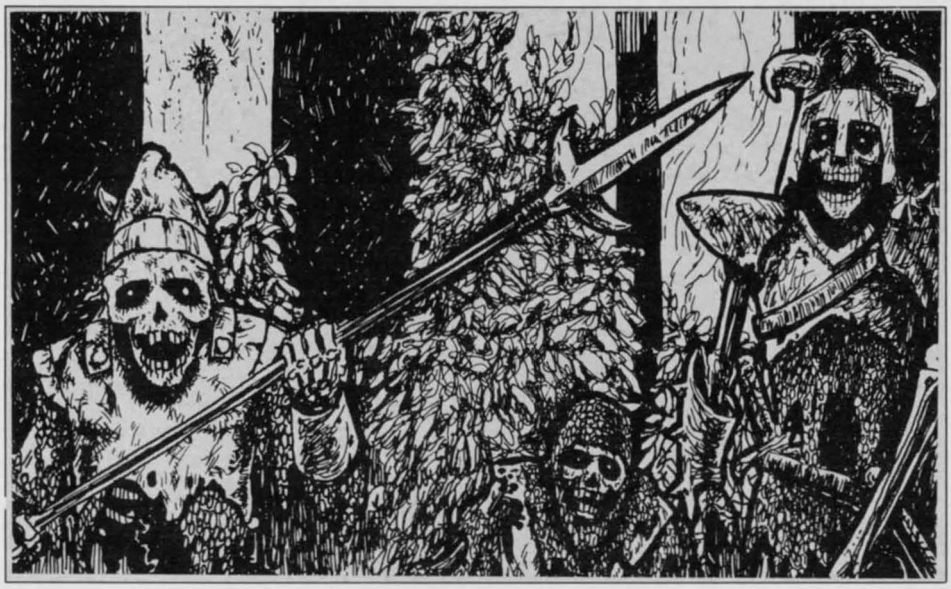
STR: 17
INT: 16
WIS: 10
DEX: 10
CON: 18
CHA: 13
COM: 15

AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 63
THAC0: 14
Alignment: Neutral Good
Height: 5′ 5″
Weight: 120 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Red/Blue
Age: 25
Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, broad sword, bastard sword, short sword, two-handed sword, dagger
Non Weapon Proficiencies: Endurance, healing
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Ogre, Gnoll, Goblin

Magic Items: *Bastard Sword, Sun Blade* (+2/+4 vs. evil creatures), *Shield +3, Potion of Clairvoyance, Elixer of Health*

Other Equipment: Chain mail, backpack, tinder, flint and steel, lantern, cologne, ivory comb and brush, silver neck chain (300 gp), silver and pearl ring (200 gp), ruby earrings (820 gp), silver bracelet (80 gp), silver and amethyst armband (310 gp), 2 water skins, parchment, quill, vial of brown ink.

This is the life! As a member of G.H.O.S.T., Inc. you are a hero. People look up to you, respect you. You are an example to the women in this society, so you strive to look your best and practice good manners. You are also evidence that people aren't born to certain functions or certain layers of society. Your parents were peasants, and still you managed to climb out of poverty and become a high-classed warrior. You wear jewelry, which you enjoy collecting, to show off your station.



You love battle and the rigors of adventuring, and being with G.H.O.S.T., Inc. has allowed you to pursue a warrior's lifestyle. The treasure has been pretty good, too, except lately the number of undead in the immediate area has declined. And that situation is a little disheartening because you are itching for a good fight. Ah, to have your *sun blade* in your right hand swinging through the air and cleaving the foe.

You are courageous and nearly fearless, but you are not foolish and do not rush blindly into danger. Exercising your intelligence can be as important as exercising your sword arm.

You are aggressive and assertive. But you are not the kind of woman who considers herself superior to men. You consider yourself equal to any man, and you believe male and female adventurers should cooperate rather than try to prove themselves superior over each other. When you encounter male chauvinists you simply make it clear that you are independent and that you are fully capable of taking care of yourself.

Although you like most members of the group, you are especially fond of Ralph, and you carefully try to get his attention and occasionally flirt with him. However, you don't want Geanerlene Moonwillowither, the other woman in the party, to notice this weakness of yours and your silly behavior. That wouldn't be setting the proper example for her.

Your father was a thief, and his father was a thief. Your brothers are all thieves and are members of your uncle's thieves guild. You were a member, too, for a while. But you just didn't fit in so you told the family you were setting off for greater pickings in a bigger city. Actually, you went to live in the woods. After a few years you learned to speak Centaur and the languages of other woodland beings. You always have been at peace when surrounded by nature. You learned plant lore, how to track, build fires, and forage for food. You acquired the ability to duplicate the sounds many animals make. You have many of the necessary skills to pursue your life's ambition of becoming a ranger. Now all you have to do is build up your body. You are working hard at it every day by exercising and eating only the healthiest of foods.

Level 2 Spells

Detect Invisibility	*ESP*
Knock	*Invisibility*
Strength	*Melf's Acid Arrow*
Web	*Whip*

Level 3 Spells

Dispel Magic	*Fireball*
Hold Person	*Lightning Bolt*
Melf's Minute Meteors	*Slow*
Water Breathing	*Protection From Normal Missiles*

Level 4 Spells

Dig	*Ice Storm*
Otiluke's Resilient Sphere	*Rary's Mnemonic Enhancer*

You are reasonably strong, very intelligent, incredibly charismatic, and unbelievably good looking. You were born to a wealthy half-elven family on a large estate several hundred miles from here. You are evidence that aristocrats are born, not made.

Forming G.H.O.S.T., Inc. was your idea. And a splendid idea it was. It makes much more sense to specialize in one type of monster—undead—rather than to adventure into unknown areas to fight creatures ranging from giant animals to powerful demons. Oh yes, putting up the initial capital to get the group established was a splendid idea. Until now the returns have been well worth it.

However, business has slumped recently. Your group has taken care of most of the undead menaces in this area, and there doesn't seem to be much left. You're going to have to do something, perhaps open a branch office somewhere.

You lead an expensive lifestyle. You wear the best clothes, drink the best wine, and you spend money on the ladies.

Even though you are concerned about your well being, you frequently volunteer to help others. Fighting to defend the poor and helpless, especially the ladies, comes naturally to men of your breeding. You fight with flare and flashy spells. This is only fitting, as you are a heroic figure who the bards will sing about and the historians will write about.

Geanerlene Moonwillowither

9th Level Female Half-Elf Druid

STR:	12
INT:	8
WIS:	17
DEX:	15
CON:	16
CHA:	17
COM:	14

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 4
Hit Points: 53
THAC0: 16
Alignment: Neutral
Height: 5′ 1″
Weight: 110 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Blue
Age: 41
Weapon Proficiencies: Spear, scimitar, dagger
Non Weapon Proficiencies: Weather sense, cold survival, heat survival, riding (land)
Languages: Common, Green Dragon, Gnome, Nixie, Pixie, Sprite, Treant, Dryad
Spells/day: 7 6 4 2 1

Magic Items: *Bracers of Defense AC 4, Murlynd's Spoon, Amulet of Life Protection, Boots of Elvenkind*

Other Equipment: Heavy cloth backpack, blanket, small ceramic water jug and ceramic cup, metal comb, small silver mirror

Wealth Carried: 25 pp, 15 gp, 10 sp, 100 gp pearl

You are not yet comfortable living among humans, although being associated with the Ghost Righters has helped.

You were raised by a family of wolves which lived in the hills many, many miles north of here. You still carry many of your wolf-traits, such as baying at the moon and running through spring grass. The wolves raised you as one of their own, and you learned their manners. They told you they found you as a cub wrapped in a blanket and laying under a tree.

As you grew, you learned to respect nature's animals and had a difficult time accepting the wolves' carnivorous ways. You swam with the otters, learned wisdom from the owls and the

D'Aveeventhro Coenoentethropiza

7th Level Male Human Cleric

STR:	14
INT:	12
WIS:	18
DEX:	16
CON:	13
CHA:	12
COM:	14

AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 35
THAC0: 16
Alignment: Lawful Good
Height: 6′
Weight: 180 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Black/Gray
Age: 33
Weapon Proficiencies: Mace, hammer, staff
Non Weapon Proficiencies: weaver, potter, riding (land)
Languages: Common, Elvish
Spells/day: 5 5 3 2 4

Magic Items: *Bracers of Defense AC 3, Footman's Mace +2* (+4 vs. undead), *Ring of Water Walking,* 3 *Potions of Sweet Water, Bag of Holding* (70 cubic feet capacity)

Other Equipment: Bedroll, dried beef, 2 lbs. of cheese, 3 water skins, wine skin, 1 lb. of wolvesbane, 100 sprigs of belladona, 3 lbs. of garlic, 2 gallons of holy water, 5 empty vials, small silver mirror, 4 books titled: *How To Identify Vampire Bats, Undead I Have Known, Ghost Stories,* and *Tips on Turning.*

Wealth Carried: 10 pp, 20 gp, 100 sp

Once, you were a 12th level cleric who commanded respect in the temple of Athena. That was before you adventured into a nest of vampires. After the battle you were a 3rd level cleric.

In shame, you left the temple to travel and rediscover your lost courage. It took many adventures, but you were able to gain back four of the levels you lost. Now, at 7th level, you are a respected member of G.H.O.S.T., Inc. If only you could respect yourself. You are truly terrified of undead, and you would rather do almost anything than fight them. You're not real pleased about being in the dark, either. That's where most

Tracylrathomore Oatsmorovich of the Great Reedwoods

7th Level Male Human Ranger

STR:	15
INT:	15
WIS:	15
DEX:	14
CON:	15
CHA:	10
COM:	15

AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 4
Hit Points: 21
THAC0: 47
Alignment: Neutral Good
Height: 6′ 2″
Weight: 190 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Blue
Age: 25
Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, dagger, long bow, staff, falchion
Non Weapon Proficiencies: Slow respiration, boating, rope use, mountaineering
Languages: Common, Gnoll, Orc, Lizardman

Magic Items: *Long sword +3, Leather Armor +4, Shield +3,* 3 *Arrows of Slaying Undead*

Other Equipment: Leather backpack, bedroll, bullseye lantern, tinder, flint and steel, three flasks of oil, 20′ of rope, two skins of water, dried meat

Wealth Carried: 50 gp pearl, 100 gp quartz egg, 10 pp, 20 gp

Leaving your home in the woods and joining the Ghost Righters was difficult. But at least the group journeys through the wilderness frequently on the way to fight whatever undead menace is plaguing a client. And at least there is pretty company—Geanerlene Moonwillowither and Valthyweshia Valliantheart. As a matter of fact, all the Ghost Righters are better-than-average looking. Maybe that's why it was so easy for the lot of you to become town heroes. You really enjoy your popularity and the attention the townsfolk give you.

You'll admit that some of this attention has gone to your head. It is fun to bask in the admiration others bestow on you. You even learned how to write so you could give autographs. And you have no trouble taking time to pose for

sketches with pretty young women in town. You must give Ralph credit for starting this little band. If this popularity keeps going you might be able to run for public office. You're a born leader. Unfortunately you can't lead the party when Ralph's around. Everyone seems to follow Ralph's decisions.

Eventually you hope to save up enough money so you can move to another town many, many miles away and start your own chapter of the Ghost Righters. This is a natural line of work for you, as you despise undead above all else. Undead killed your family when you were a small child. You swore vengeance on all that walked which did not breathe. And you will never turn down an opportunity to aid someone plagued by undead. Undead have never drained you (of course, you have never met the really tough undead), and you have never run from them. You will not rest or retire until all the undead have been wiped off the face of this continent.

You are an adventurous sort who does not fear the unknown. You are quick to jump into any fray or any opportunity for adventure. Others might consider you reckless. You just like to have fun. You enjoy new challenges and exploring places you have not been before. The older and less explored the dungeon, the better.

undead hide. That is why you are with G.H.O.S.T. You need to overcome those fears. You need to be able to face the dark and the undead.

So, you bolster what little courage you have every time G.H.O.S.T. goes on a mission. You usually are able to deal with skeletons and zombies with little problem. It is the tougher stuff, or greater numbers of the lesser stuff, that worries you. Oh well, you try to hide your fears and act brave in the company of your fellow Ghost Righters. Unfortunately, sometimes that fear becomes obvious. You must act brave! You're the only one in the group capable of turning undead. And if you can't turn them, at least you can maneuver away quickly (and invent a reason why you departed). Your magic bracers don't slow you down. You wore plate mail when you fought the vampires. You won't wear encumbering armor again.

You are a very proper man, and you do not like to be called Dave. Your full name is D'Aveeventhro Coenoentethropiza. It's one of the few things you are proud of. You favor ceremony, politeness, and good behavior. You like to see everyone get along, and you disdain arguments and confrontations among friends. And above all else, you favor the cause of good. You value friendship and would do almost anything to protect your fellows.

Being a Ghost Righter has helped you accumulate some wealth, which you have put in a savings institution. You plan to build a temple when you are finally able to conquer your fears. It's going to take a lot of gold, but you're patient.

You lack some of the adventuring skills the other Ghost Righters have. Instead of hunting and tracking, you know how to weave and make pottery. Well, there's nothing wrong with peaceful pursuits. Aggressive behavior isn't always necessary. Sometimes it's nice to stop and smell the flowers.

eagles, frolicked with the badgers and the beavers, and ran with the deer. You enjoy hopping with the big-eyed frogs on occasion, playing tag with squirrels, and bathing in a cool pond with the robins. You still even wash the food from your *Murlynd's Spoon* in water, like your friends the raccoons taught you. You sometimes need to stretch out in the sun—just like your friends the snakes. And sometimes there's nothing better after a long day adventuring than scratching your back against a big old tree, just like the bears do.

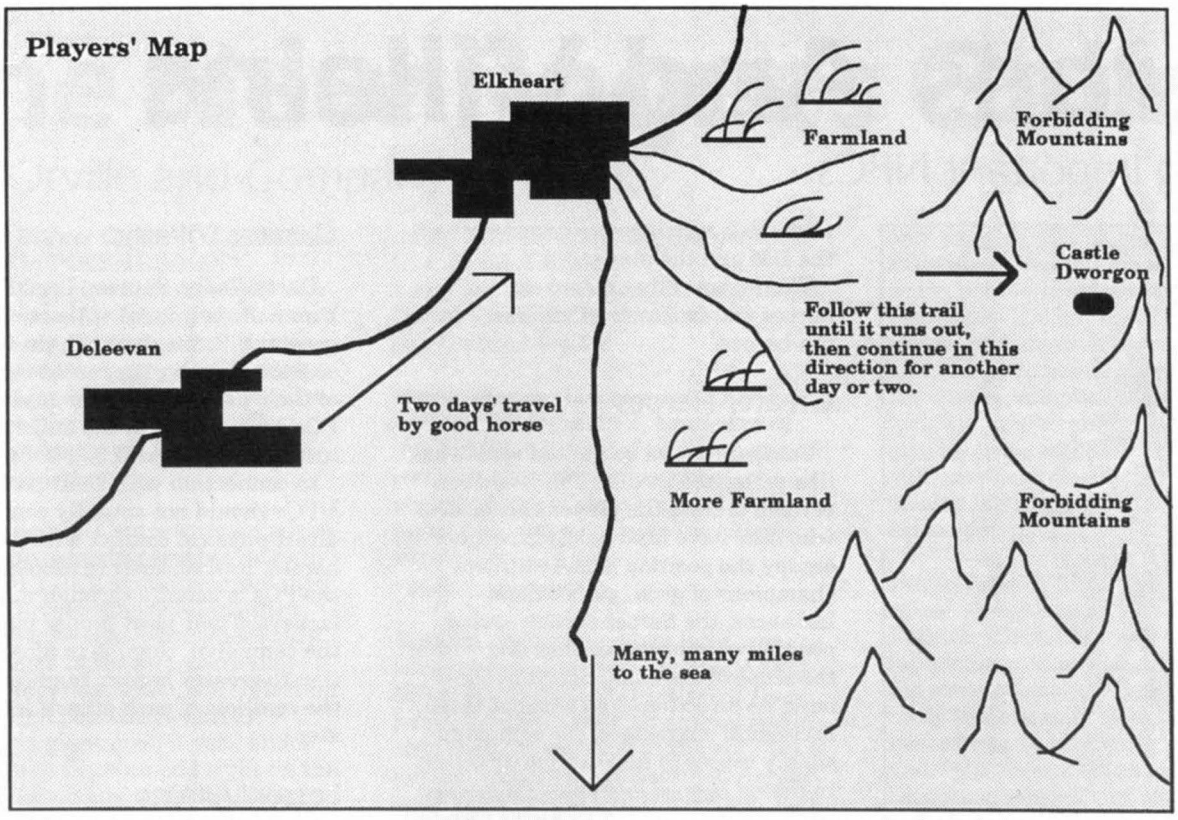
One day, when you were very young and still with the wolves, a bear, who was also a man (you later learned he was a werebear ranger), visited your family and persuaded the wolves to let you travel with him. It was a great adventure. You traveled far with this man, who taught you much about humans' society. He even taught you the Common speech. Eventually you left him, opting to live with a druid community for a while.

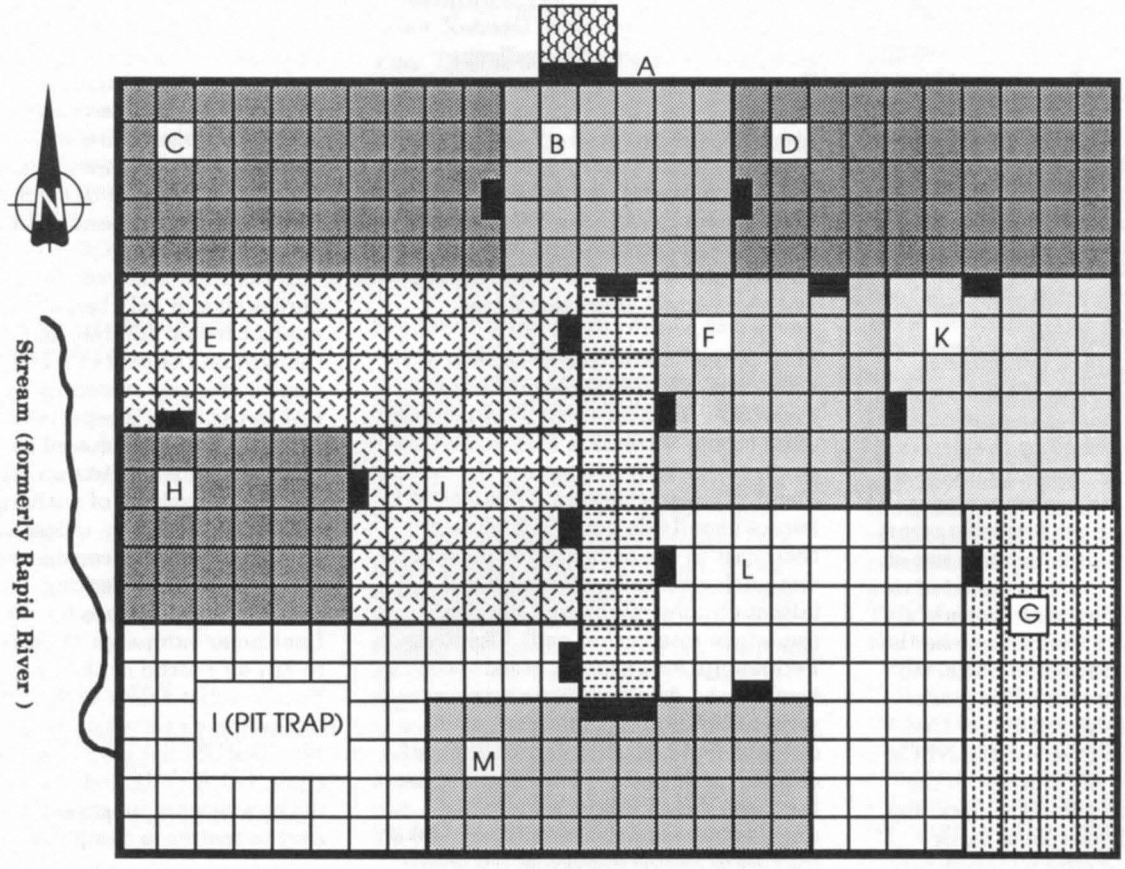
On one of your adventures you acquired a *Murlynd's Spoon,* a perfect item. Now you no longer have to kill plants or animals to survive. This item sustains you. You refuse to wear animal skins or leather armor. Your *bracers* serve a better purpose.

You are the self-proclaimed protector of nature and make sure your companions do nothing to harm plants or animals. You know they have to eat, but you do not let them kill for sport. And you try to show them all the good that is found in the wilderness. Maybe they can teach you what is good about civilization, because so far you haven't found anything you really like about it—except Ralph.

Sometimes you are naive about human culture and have problems grasping everything that is going on. But so many things are new to you, and you want to learn about everything. So you ask questions. Lots of questions. That's why you came to Deleevan. You were curious what people found so attractive in a place that has few trees and little grass.

You still haven't quite figured people out. It's a good thing you met Ralph. He introduced you to the rest of the Ghost Righters and encouraged you to join them. It is because of him that you stay with the group.


Players' Map
Elkheart
Farmland
Forbidding Mountains
Castle Dworgon
Follow this trail until it runs out, then continue in this direction for another day or two.
Deleevan
Two days' travel by good horse
More Farmland
Forbidding Mountains
Many, many miles to the sea


A
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I (PIT TRAP)
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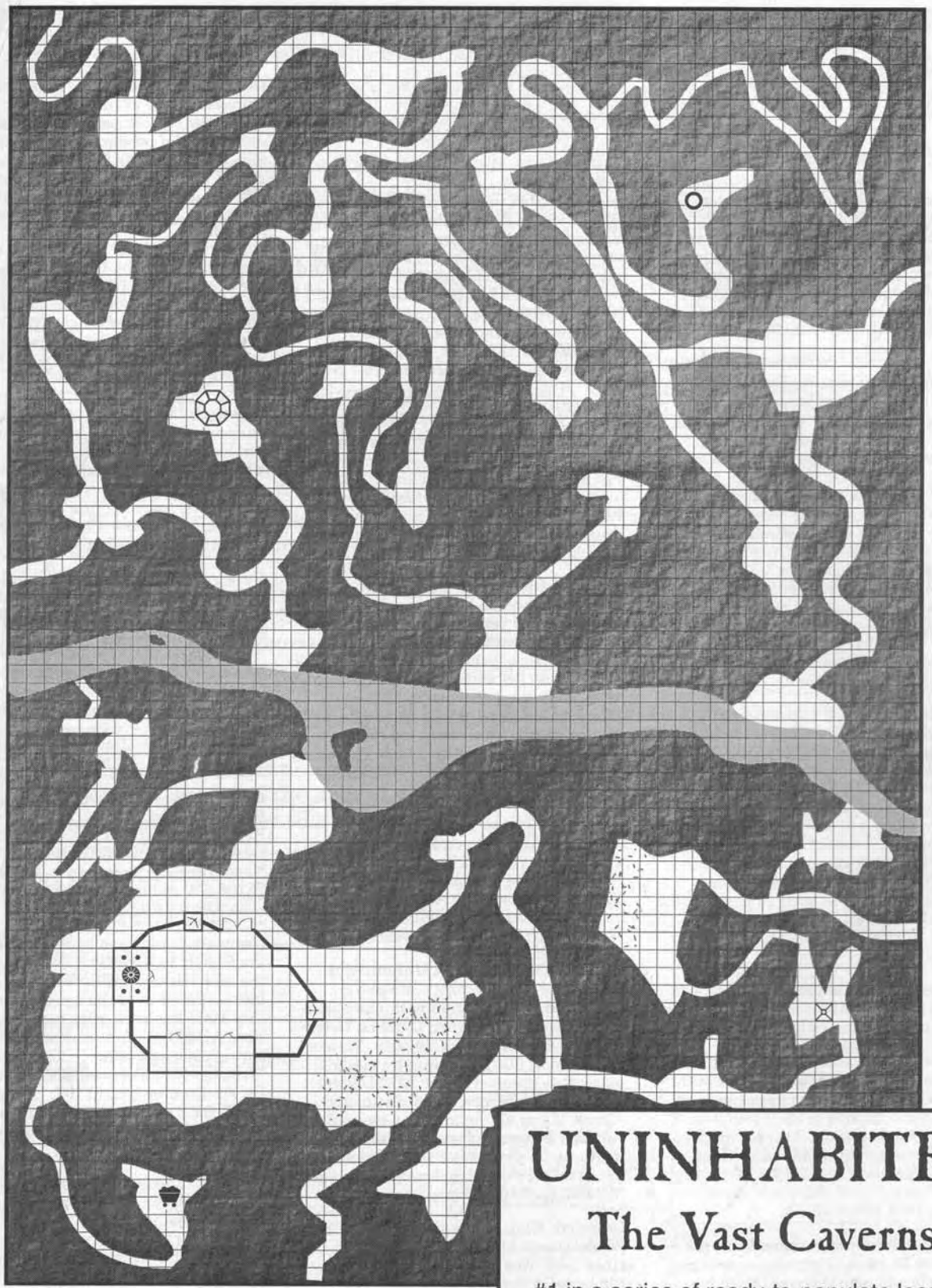
Stream (formerly Rapid River)



UNINHABITED

The Vast Caverns

#1 in a series of ready-to-populate locations
for use in your campaign

AARAKOCRA, MALATRAN

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical/Mountains and plains
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	D
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral good

NO. APPEARING:	1-10
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	6, Fl 36 (C)
HIT DICE:	1+2
THAC0:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-3/1-3 (beak) or 2-8 (weapon)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Dive +2
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (20' wing span)
MORALE:	Steady (11)
XP VALUE:	65

art by Jeff Menges

The aarakocra are a race of intelligent bird-men. They stand about five feet tall and have a wing span of 20 feet. About halfway along the edge of each wing is a hand with three human-sized fingers and an opposable thumb. An elongated fourth finger extends the length of the wing and locks in place for flying. Though the wing-hands cannot grasp or cast spells during flight, they are nearly as useful as human hands when an aarakocra is on the ground with wings folded back. The wing muscles anchor in a bony chest plate that provides extra protection. Powerful legs end in four sharp talons that fold back to reveal another pair of functional hands, with three human-sized fingers and an opposable thumb. The hand bones, like the rest of an aarakocra's skeleton, are hollow and fragile.

Aarakocra faces resemble a cross between parrots and eagles. They have gray-black beaks, and front-set black eyes that provide keen binocular vision. Plumage color varies among tribes, but generally males are red, orange, and yellow, while females are brown and gray.

Aarakocra speak their own language, and on occasion, a common Nubari tongue (10% chance).

Combat: Aarakocra fight with either talons or a heavy fletched javelin clutched in their lower hands. An aarakocra typically carries a half dozen javelins strapped to his chest in individual sheaths. He throws or stabs with them for 2d4 points of damage. Owing to the aarakocra's skill at throwing javelins in the air, he incurs no attack penalties for aerial missile fire. Aarakocra always save their last javelin for melee. A favorite attack is to dive at a victim (from at least 200 feet) with a javelin in each hand, pull out of the dive just as he reaches his target, and strike with a blood-curdling shriek. This attack gains a +2 bonus to hit and causes double damage.

An aarakocra avoids grappling or ground combat, since its fragile bones are easily broken. They prefer speed and maneuverability over armor.

Flying in Malatra: Aarakocra have two means for becoming airborne. The preferred method is to launch from at least 20 feet off the ground. They may also take flight with a running start of at least 30 feet in open terrain.

Jungle take-offs, flight, and landing are difficult. Each attempt requires a Dexterity check, including each round of flight in medium or dense jungle (–4 and –6 modifiers respectively). Failing a check while flying in the jungle indicates collision. A second Dexterity check avoids falling damage. Landing failure indicates a "controlled crash" of 1d2 points of damage.

Habitat/Society: Aarakocra live in high mountains in tribes of about 11-30 (1d20+10) members. Each tribe has a hunting territory of about 10,000 square miles with banners marking the boundaries. Due to overcrowding, Malatran aarakocra have begun to move into the savanna where they nest in singular large trees found scattered throughout the plains.. Aarakocra are affected by the antipathy magic of the domes, so they cannot spread to the edge of the plateau.

Each tribe lives in a communal nest made of woven vines with a soft lining of dried grass. The eldest male serves as leader. In tribes of more than 20 members, the second oldest male serves as shaman. Males spend most of their time hunting for food and shiny treasure. Females spend eight months of the year incubating eggs, passing the time by making javelins and tools from wood and stone. Resting on their backs, aarakocra females can use all four hands to weave boundary pennants, javelins sheaths, and other objects from vines and feathers. Aarakocra breed slowly and therefore make great efforts to preserve and protect their race.

Aarakocra are claustrophobic and will not willingly enter a cave, building, or other enclosed area. Hero aarakocra suffer a –1 to all initiative, to hit, and damage rolls in such settings.

Ecology: Aarakocra have had little contact with other races, and most remain aloof. The mountain aarakocra are more solitary than plains dwellers. Aarakocra hero characters are generally concerned with protecting their tribe's hunting grounds, and seeking knowledge or honor among other tribes. They want others to realize that the aarakocra are people of honor and not "large bird things" to be shot for sport.

Air Fish

by Tim Beach

	Shark	Piranha	Ray, sting	Catfish	Trout	Goldfish	Neon
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Humid tropical	Humid tropical	Humid tropical	Humid tropical/ temperate	Humid tropical	Humid tropical	Humid
FREQUENCY:	Rare	Rare	Rare	Rare	Rare	Rare	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Pack	Shoal	Group	Group	School	School	School
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any	Day	Day	Night	Night	Day	Any
DIET:	Carnivore	Carnivore	Carnivore	Carnivore	Carnivore	Omnivore	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Non- (0)	Non- (0)	Non- (0)	Non- (0)	Non- (0)	Non- (0)	Non- (0)
TREASURE:	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2-8	5-30	1-3	1-3	2-20	1-20	6-120
ARMOR CLASS:	6	8	7	9	9	8	7
MOVEMENT:	Fl 24 MC: C	Fl 6 MC: C	Fl 9 MC: D	Fl 6 MC: C	Fl 6 MC: C	Fl 6 MC: B	Fl 3 MC: A
HIT DICE:	5-6	1/2	1	1-1	1-1	1/2	1 hp
THAC0:	15	20	20	20	20	20	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1	1	1	1	1	1	Nil
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-8	1-2	1-3	1-2	1-2	1	Nil
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil	Swarm	Paralyzation	Nil	Nil	Nil	Obscurement
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil	Nil	Camouflage	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	M 4'-5'	T 8"-10"	S 5'	T 16"-20"	T 12"-16"	T 6"-8"	T 2"
MORALE:	Fearless (19)	Unsteady (6)	Unsteady (5)	Unsteady (6)	Unsteady (7)	Unsteady (5)	Unreliable (4)
XP VALUE:	5 HD: 270 6 HD: 420	15	175	35	35	15	15

Magically altered for decoration or guard duty, air fish are creatures which can breathe air and fly. They have a natural ability to levitate, and they "swim" through the air by moving their tails and fins.

Habitat/Society: Though air-fish can survive in any damp environment, they prefer forests or other congested areas which offer places to hide. They are comfortable only in humid air, which they need to keep their skins moist. In dry air, they suffer one hit point of damage per hour until dead.

Air sharks, air piranha, and air stingrays make good, if not loyal, guards if captured and confined. Air goldfish and air neons have decorative and pest-killing functions.

Ecology: Air sharks and air piranha are aggressive predators and exist near the top of the food chain, having few natural predators. Other air fish are both predator and prey, although air goldfish and air neons have an impact only on insect populations, cutting down especially on mosquitoes and gnats. Most air fish are edible, though air sharks, air catfish, and air trout are the best tasting.

Air fish reproduce by laying eggs or egg sacs. Most lay their eggs on the ground or on plants, though air trout use their tails to dig holes for their thousands of eggs, and air catfish carry their eggs in their mouths, eating nothing for the two-month incubation period.

Air shark: These killing machines are just as dangerous in their new environment as their cousins are in water. Attracted by movement and noise, they swim toward any clamor, attacking moving or wounded creatures. They are also attracted by blood, which they can smell at a distance of 100 yards. If they smell blood, or if they wound their prey, they go into a berserk frenzy, attacking anything that resembles food. Air sharks are large and strong enough to be used as mounts by tiny humanoids, but must be trained from birth.

Air piranha: Merciless and aggressive, these black fish inflict a painful bite with their large teeth. There is a 75% chance that at least one of them will attack any creature that moves nearby. Air piranha can smell fresh blood at a distance of 30 feet, and will move rapidly toward any wounded creature. The smell of blood drives them berserk, and they attack twice per melee round (double their normal attack rate).

Air stingray: These creatures stay within three feet of the ground, blending in with the foliage and giving attackers a −2 on surprise rolls. If any creature steps on an air-stingray, it lashes out with its tail spine, inflicting 1-3 points of damage; any creature struck must also save versus poison or be paralyzed for 5-20 turns, suffering points of damage equal to the number of turns of paralysis.

Air catfish: These aggressive air fish possess sharp hearing and a well-developed sense of smell. They prefer to eat other air fish, but have tremendous appetites and will also attack other creatures. Air catfish are territorial.

Air trout: These also prefer to eat other air fish, but will attack other small and tiny creatures. If meat is scarce, air trout eat insects and larvae.

Air goldfish: These pretty creatures are brown when hatched, but when they reach adulthood, they turn red, black, white, orange, or some combination of these colors. They will eat almost anything, but avoid pursuing creatures larger than themselves.

Air neon: The beautiful air neons, with iridescent blue stripes along their red-orange bodies, were created for decoration. They have no effective attack on creatures larger than themselves. They eat insects and seeds. Air neons are skittish, fleeing from loud noises or quick movements, but are not threatened by potential predators which remain still. They may fly about characters, looking for food or fleeing from predators, and may obscure an individual's vision. Individuals whose vision is obscured by air neons have a −1 penalty on attack rolls. ❑

Armor Boar

by Gregory W. Detwiler

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Arctic to temperate
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Family
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2-12 (2d6)
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	7
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	3-24 (3d8)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6′ tall at shoulder)
MORALE:	Average (10)
XP VALUE:	650

The armor boar is a giant-sized animal and is readily identified by its peculiar armor. The armor is actually hair, thick and stiff and similar to the horns of a rhinoceros. From a distance, the creatures appear to be simply large, shaggy boars with hair that sticks out in all directions. Closer, the hair looks like a spiny shell.

The boar is also noted for its elephant-sized tusks that nearly touch the ground. Most boars are 6′ high at the shoulder and 10′ long. However, some larger specimens have been sighted.

Combat: This ill-tempered and aggressive brute attacks quickly and with no planning. It will charge at creatures wandering through its territories. And when the boar itself is wandering, it will attack creatures it perceives as a threat or as competition for food.

It has one attack—a goring thrust made with its long tusks. In addition, the boar's armor also can inflict damage. Any creature striking, biting, or leaping upon the boar suffers 3-12 (3d4) points of damage because of the boar's penetrating hair-spines.

The boar does not back down from combat, fighting to the death.

Habitat/Society: Armor boars live in small family groups. A boar mates only once every two years, and it is more prolific than other giant boars, having up to 1d10 offspring per litter. If the maximum number of boars are encountered, the family will likely have one boar, one sow, and 10 young. The adult boars are very protective of the young and will fight to the death to defend them.

Armor boars often make their homes in caves or in densely overgrown wooded areas. They can be found in hills, mountains, forests, broken terrain, and occasionally on plains.

Ecology: A voracious omnivore, the armor boar will attempt to eat anything within reach and will go out of its way to catch plump rodents. Although it is fond of flesh, it usually ends up eating more vegetable matter than other boars do because its size does not allow it to chase prey into hollow logs and other hiding spots. A boar which develops a taste for vegetables is quite capable of destroying a garden all by itself. Families of armor boars have been known to destroy entire fields. Thus, armor boars are considered a major nuisance in settled regions—a nuisance typically ill-armed peasants and farmers cannot deal with on their own.

While the armor boar has few natural predators, they are sometimes sought by butchers, as the meat is rich and sweet. However, an armor boar is difficult to butcher because of its hard, spiny shell. Butchers who have developed a technique for removing the armor increase their profits by selling the carapace to armorers who make it into shields and breastplates.

Armor made from the carapace is the equivalent protection of banded mail, plus it has a special property. Creatures striking the armor or shield with their hands or other body parts suffer 1-8 pounds of damage because of the remaining spiny ruffs. The armor is also prized because it will not rust.

Craftsmen value the tusks and lard of armor boar, which they make into art objects and soap, respectively.

Blade Golem

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by Nicholas Impey

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Low
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	11 (66 hit points)
THAC0:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d10/2d10
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (8′ tall)
MORAL:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	6,000

The blade golem is an artificial being animated by the infusion of an elemental spirit. No magical manuals to ease the construction of such a golem are known to exist. Unlike most other magically animated creatures, this golem is not only used as a guard, but as a relentless assassin—one that will tirelessly track down and kill its master's enemies.

Blade golems are humanoid in form, appearing to be men made of thousands of highly-polished steel triangles with razor sharp edges and jagged points. Though the golem's head has the expected contours, it has no distinct ears or mouth.

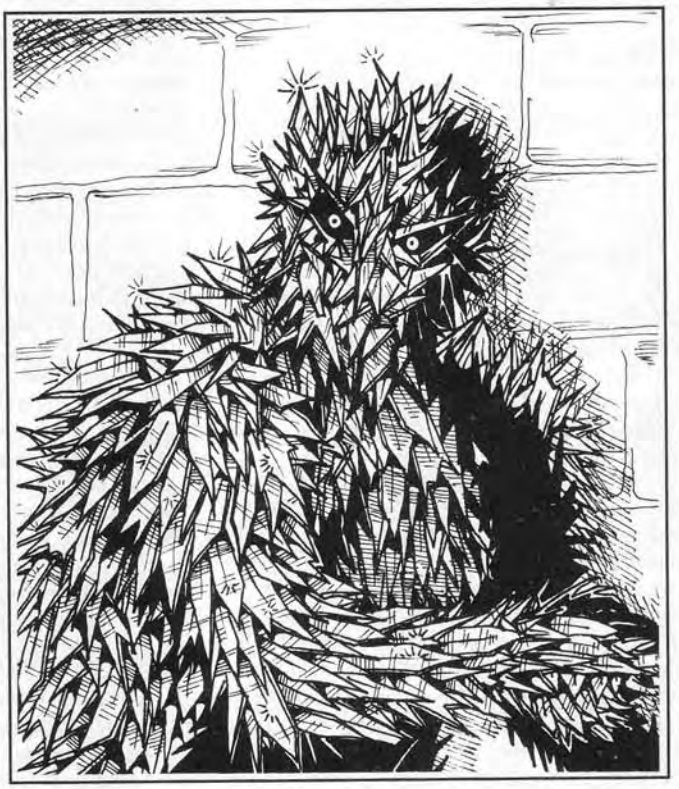
Unlike other golems, this variety is sentient. It possesses a predatory cunning, is single-minded and cannot be bargained with.

Combat: A blade golem makes no noise. This inhuman silence gives opponents a −3 to their surprise rolls. And because the blade golem's senses are so acute, it gets a +3 bonus to avoid being surprised.

When in combat, the golem lashes out with its swordlike hands in an attempt to cut its target to ribbons. Anyone foolish enough to attack the golem with bare hands, or worse, to grapple it, automatically suffers 1d12 points of damage per contact from the creature's razor skin.

The blade golem's most feared assault is its "whirling death" attack. Once a day the golem can expel a portion of its outer skin, an attack which looks like a miniature cyclone of steel blades. Anyone within 10 feet of the golem suffers 4-40 points of damage, save vs. paralyzation for half damage.

Only weapons enchanted to +2 or better can harm a blade golem. Further, these golems are immune to all spells or psionic attacks that affect the mind or life force. For example, spells such as *sleep, slay living, suggestion, confusion, charm monster* and others that affect creatures' minds, are ignored. Spells based on cold, ice, lightning or electricity are also ineffective. Attacks based on fire, acid and heat, including *heat metal*, cause half damage. Spells that have power over metal, such as *crystalbrittle,* have full effects. A *wall of iron* cast on the golem cures it of all damage.



Blade golems have infravision to 120′ and are excellent trackers, as if they had a score of 18 in that proficiency. In addition, if a golem draws blood from an opponent, the golem will be able to automatically track that opponent for the next 2d6 days.

Habitat/Society: The blade golem is an automaton, artificially created and under the control of its creator. Since this construct is treated as a greater golem, there is no risk of the creator losing control.

Ecology: Blade golems are not natural creatures, and therefore play no part in the ecology of a world. The golems do not sleep and do not have the ability to ingest food or liquids.

The creation of a blade golem is a lengthy process, requiring a wizard of at least 18th level. The wizard must begin with a lump of the finest quality steel, weighing at least a ton. The steel is melted down in a forge—along with a *sword of dancing*. The wizard casts *polymorph any object, wish,* and *geas* on the liquid metal, which is cast into the statue of a man. Finally, the wizard casts *shatter* on the golem, which gives the creature its distinctive jagged appearance and brings the thing to life.

GMed) in the same fashion. That's enough praise for the moment; I wouldn't want to swell your heads with an endless tirade of exaltations.

In the last issue of the Newszine an interesting point was made concerning GM prizes. I believe that the issue was effectively "put to rest" in the Editorial response, but it did bring to life another topic that has been troubling me as of late. Players' scores for the GM are open to scrutinization by everyone except fellow players. This is a fact witnessed by myself and others who have attended several conventions in the New England area.

To achieve a completely honest appraisal of the GM's performance, a degree of anonymity must be achieved. In many instances I have witnessed the GM going through his own evaluations or being told by another official, whose job it is to tally these scores, what a specific person's (name and all) response was to his GMing. Although feedback is a necessary and integral component of improving one's abilities as a GM, the "critics" (after all, that is what a player becomes when the game ends and the scoring begins) should not themselves be persecuted for their opinions.

I personally have no qualms with any RPGA Network sanctioned event and GM, but in many instances I found myself deliberating what I would do if I was placed in that unfortunate circumstance. Now maybe I am not giving enough credit to the GM's ability to overcome this bruising to their egos, but nonetheless, I feel that certain measures must be taken to improve the veracity of the GM's score.

My recommendations for allowing a greater degree of anonymity in the voting are simple. Instead of being given one sheet to vote on the players and the GM alike, each player is given separate sheets. The one with the player scores and evaluations are given directly to the GM for him to total and determine those who finished first through third. The other sheets are all given to a player, designated at the start of play, who will then place them in an envelope, seal it, and personally deliver it to another RPGA Network member whose job it is to tally these scores. Each GM score sheet will be devoid of any player's names, and the envelope will bear no particular markings, other than the GM's name and Network number, to identify the voting group. Then possibly a summary of the scoring for the entire convention could be given to the GM, along with comments (both negative and positive) made by his/her players, to perpetuate the feedback system and allow the GM avenues for improvement.

I believe that the implementation of the above recommendations would greatly increase the sincerity of the GM's scores and thus be an overall improvement for all those concerned from the GMs to their players.

John Bentas
Manchester, NH

You bring up some interesting points, John. We agree that sometimes players feel uncomfortable about criticizing the DMs, knowing that those DMs will be reading the comments. On the other hand, some players want the DMs to read those comments so that the DMs can improve. At conventions as large as the GEN CON® Game Fair, DMs must check the players' score sheets to make sure they are filled out properly—otherwise the players won't get credit for the tournament. And you might be surprised, John, just how many players DMs catch at not putting their names on the score sheets! Adding a second set of sheets for judge comments (that is sealed so the judge doesn't see it) might work at smaller conventions, but the mass of paperwork would quickly overwhelm people at large conventions.

We'd like to hear more feedback on our voting system. You know that we make changes based on members' requests. For example, we've changed our scoring sheets effective this Game Fair so that you cannot vote for yourself. A great many members requested this change. We listen, and we'd like to know what you think.

I received issue #70 of the Newszine along with issue #69. Here are my comments on the two issues:

The Living City. I enjoy your articles on the Living City, and I've inserted some of the shops into my own campaign, with some modifications, as I run a D&D® game campaign. I notice that the RPGA™ Network is to get an area to develop in Gamma World as well. As a D&D game player I think it is a pity that the RPGA Network does not have an area on Mystara to develop, either on the outer world, or in the HOLLOW WORLD® campaign.

The Well of Dreams by Daniel Day. A good idea, and well thought out. However, I cannot imagine my group using it more than once, especially if some of them suffer detrimental effects.

The well is likely to be condemned by Lawful temples as being a creation of Chaos, and they would sponsor attempts to destroy the well. Chaotic temples would perhaps try to protect the well.

In issue #70 I like Lawrence Hurley's suggestion, and I would certainly contribute to such a column. It would certainly be interesting to read varying reviews of the same product, especially if one is very complimentary, and the other is very critical.

I like Elminster's pipe; it is different. As the only reader of the POLYHEDRON® Newszine in my group, I enjoy seeing new magical items introduced in your pages. If I introduce a new item from DRAGON® Magazine, I find that many of the players have read about it.

Roger Smith
Lincoln, United Kingdom

Thanks for your comments, Roger. We base the Newszine's content on what our readers want. You'll be seeing more about our piece of the GAMMA WORLD® game in the next issue. We're excited about it. You mention wanting a piece of the D&D game world to develop. Unfortunately, we do not get enough D&D game submissions to warrant a project like that. However, we'd love to receive D&D game submissions, Roger (hint, hint).

❑

Lamps And Logic Answers

	Name	Metal	Turban	Gem	Food
Lamp 1	Diyab	Copper	Red	Diamonds	Dates
Lamp 2	Ahmad	Gold	White	Sapphires	Eggs
Lamp 3	Karim	Electrum	Green	Pearls	Figs
Lamp 4	Nabil	Silver	Blue	Emeralds	Olives
Lamp 5	Yezeed	Platinum	Black	Rubies	Raisin

Bloodstone Zombie by David Ballenger

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Average
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	3+3
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-7/2-7 or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Death grip, disease
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Silver or +1 or better weapon to hit, immunity to illusion/ phantasm spells
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6')
MORALE:	20 (fearless)
XP VALUE:	420

Bloodstone zombies are initially difficult to recognize as undead. They appear to be beautiful humans and demihumans with smooth skin, sparkling eyes, and white teeth. These creatures are often able to approach their victims casually, not revealing their undead nature until they close to melee. Then their intended victims can see the Bloodstone zombies' clawlike fingers and smell the stench of the grave.

This type of undead was created decades ago by an insane necromancer. The necromancer considered undead beautiful creatures, and he devoted his life to creating zombies that were as handsome as stately princes and as comely as the most shapely dancing girl. He succeeded by concocting a disease that killed its victims and brought them back to life as undead. The process also gave them a near-perfect appearance—good looks they did not have while they breathed. Unfortunately for the necromancer, he died at the claws of his lovely minions, realizing, by becoming one of their kind, that the disease he created could be passed on.

Bloodstone zombies hate all life and attack whenever they deem the odds in their favor. They avoid fights with superior numbers or with fighters in heavy armor; the zombies have no desire to return to their graves.

Combat: Bloodstone zombies are very strong, with an effective Strength of 18/50. However, because their movements are not as fluid as living fighters, they cannot fully utilize their strength, hence delivering only 2-7 points of damage per claw attack. When using weapons they receive only a +2 damage bonus.

Because Bloodstone zombies are more intelligent than other zombies, they set traps for their foes. Comely Bloodstone zombies have been known to lure unsuspecting victims into dark alleys. And handsome Bloodstone zombies, sprinkled with colognes to hide their stench, have escorted lone women to their dooms. Of course, the zombies also take the simple approach of a straightforward melee. Unlike other zombies, Bloodstone Zombies do not automatically lose initiative.

In melee, a Bloodstone zombie strikes with its claws. If both claw attacks hit, the zombie has successfully grabbed its victim in a "death grip" and can inflict its special attack. Victims are held for 1d6+1 rounds; they can break free earlier with a successful bend bars/lift gates roll. For every round a victim is held, he or she must make a saving throw versus death magic. Failure means the victim has contracted a disease carried by the Bloodstone zombie. The disease causes the victim to lose 2 points of Strength and Constitution per hour. When the victim's Strength and Constitution scores reach zero, he or she dies and will rise as a Bloodstone zombie one hour later.

Any personal items left on the victim will be carried by the newly-risen Bloodstone zombie and will be used to help hide its undead nature. Thus, treasure carried by Bloodstone zombies could range from a few coins to magical weapons.

Victims who are struck by the claws of a Bloodstone zombie, but who are not held in the death grip, also have a chance of contracting the disease, dying and returning as a zombie. These victims also must make a saving throw vs. death magic, but they receive a +4 bonus to their roll.

Burning a victim who dies of the zombie disease will prevent him or her from becoming undead.

Bloodstone zombies are aware that normal weapons will not harm them. Although they are capable of using the weapons they wielded in life, they prefer to attack with their claws.

Bloodstone zombies turn as wights on the priest undead turning table.

Habitat/Society: Bloodstone zombies do not have a social order, nor do they recognize any form of government among their kind. With few exceptions, they are free-willed undead.

Ecology: Their capability to spread the Bloodstone zombie disease is their only means of continuing their species. The ease at which this disease is transmitted seems to insure the survival of their kind.

Evil clerics reportedly seek the zombies to add to their stable of undead.

BUTU

by Wellson Clark

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Hilly/Mountainous terrain
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low to Average (6-8)
TREASURE:	M, N, O, Q
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	6-60 (6d10)
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	6 (jungles/plains), 15 (mountains)
HIT DICE:	1-1
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4 or 1-6 (by weapon)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	head-butt
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	quivering huddle
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S (3' 6" tall)
MORALE:	Average (9-10)
XP VALUE:	15
Leaders/guards	30

art by Jeff Menges

Legend has it that the Butu arrived in Malatra as the pets of the Ancients, though in fact they came from an original kobold-like servant race of the Ancients. These kobolds mated with the resident bakemono to produce the modern butu. Long thought to be extinct, butu have been recently spotted among several remote rocky crags.

Butu physically resemble a cross between the Kara-Turan bakemono and the Faerûnian kobold. Their lower body is like that of a bakemono, with hairy legs with hoofed feet similar to that of mountain goats. Their upper body strongly resembles a kobold, though with two medium sized goat-like horns atop their heads. Their unique ability to run along the face of rocky cliffs like mountain sheep most likely accounts for their ability to survive the many Malatran predators.

Butu have their own language and communicate in shrill, yapping barks. Some can learn other languages, such as the common tongue of the Nubari (50% chance).

Combat: While they tend to avoid combat, if trapped Butu will fight to defend the clan and create a pathway to safety. The butu approach to combat centers around ambush, maneuver, sneakiness, and overwhelming numbers. In planning an attack they will use the terrain to the best advantage for ranged weapons and concealment. Like kobolds, they often hurl crude javelins and spears, not closing to melee until they see that their enemies have been weakened. Once melee starts, however, they can become impulsive (caught up in the heat of the moment); in this state they forgo any attempt at cunning or organized tactics.

When they do close for melee with their enemies, they rush to the attack with weapons swinging. A preferred means of attack is to charge in mass, head-butting their opponents and then engaging with hand-held weapons. A swarm of butu can often knock down even the largest opponents. Opponents on rocky slopes and cliff faces find it difficult to maintain balance after receiving a head-butt charge. A failed Dexterity check by such a recipient indicates a loss of balance, and possibly a fall down a rocky slope. Butu use horns, clubs, short bows, and stone knives. They greatly prize obsidian for this purpose. Their AC stems from the hodgepodge collection of armor, skins, and rags randomly strapped to their bodies.

The butu have limited infravision capability of 30', but do not incur any attack penalties when fighting in bright light. A special defense of the butu is to huddle down into a small quivering form and hide. Enemies who fail an Intelligence check bypass that particular butu, thinking it harmless, and attack the nearest standing butu or other foe. Unfortunately, this special defense causes all "hungry" enemies to immediately attack the small, helpless-looking morsel.

Habitat/Society: The butu live a nomadic lifestyle among the rocky crags of Malatra. Their movements and habits remind one of mountain goat herds. They like the safety of rocky ledges and slopes that predators find hard to scale.

A typical clan consists of 4-24 (4d6) males, an equal number of females, and a number of young equal to the total number of adults. There is no size difference among adults. For every 10 adult males there will be a leader or guard of larger size (HD 2, AC 5/6, THAC0 19, Dmg 1-8). The leaders/guards generally have larger weapons and pieces of tougher armor.

Clan possessions are those things only able to be carried by the butu. A butu clan will rarely have non-butu companions, as they move around the rocky cliffs very quickly and most often non-butu eventually slip and fall to their deaths.

Butu live along the rocky cliffs of mountains, co-existing peacefully with bighorn sheep and mountain goats. The heightened sense of the sheep and goats provide the butu with early warning of approaching strangers. The butu constantly roam the mountainside looking for areas that provide both safety and plentiful small game.

Ecology: Butu eat nuts, roots, small game, and anything else they can acquire without getting killed in the process. They stay in rocky areas primarily for safety. Their slow speed on flatlands makes them easy prey for most predators.

Chakchak

by Roger E. Moore

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any non-arctic
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Military unit
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	5-20
ARMOR CLASS:	4 (10)
MOVEMENT:	9 (18 if *hasted)*
HIT DICE:	3+3
THAC0:	16 (with +1 strength bonus)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 (4 if *hasted)*
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	3-10/3-10
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	*Hasted* attacks
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (7' tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17-18)
XP VALUE:	420

The chakchak is a nearly extinct form of hobgoblin, a remnant of the Unhuman Wars, that is taller and more muscular than the common variety. The chakchak is the product of a magical ritual that has converted it into a powerful "hack-and-slash" combatant: Both of the chakchak's forearms have been magically strengthened and end in bony axeheads that are parts of the creature's own skeleton. Chakchaks have ash gray skin, with dull black freckles covering their backs and faces. When met, these humanoids are nearly always wearing armor. Chakchaks speak only the hobgoblin tongue.

Combat: A chakchak's axe-arms are the equivalent of battle axes, each with a reach of about four feet. The bones of its arms and the bone axeheads themselves have been rendered as strong as steel, though they are not truly made of metal.

The chakchak can strike twice per round, once with each arm-axe, in normal combat. As a result of its training, it can *haste* itself for the first 3-12 rounds of combat if allowed to work itself into a berserk fury for one round beforehand, during which time it cannot perform any other action. When *hasted,* the chakchak can strike four times per round and move at double-normal speed (18). Once this *hasted* movement ceases, the chakchak fights normally thereafter. A chakchak can *haste* itself up to three times per day, but requires an hour's rest at some point between each use of its berserking talent.

Additionally, chakchaks are quite strong, each having a strength equal to 18 (nonpercentile), granting them +1 on attack rolls and +2 on damage. Nearly all chakchaks wear the same sort of armor, a form of banded mail, as per religious law; their strength allows them to move swiftly and with ease despite the burden, as if they wore no armor at all.

Habitat/Society: Fragments of humanoid lore and legend have been assembled by elven sages to give a picture of the chakchaks' origins. Pregnant hobgoblin females were selected by local shamans and witch doctors to have their unborn changed into chakchaks in a ceremony that invoked the names of humanoid gods now unknown. Following the ceremony, the females were separated from normal society until their children were born, after which the females were slain (apparently with their approval, if the legends are to be believed). The young chakchaks were raised by soldiers who gave them intense combat training, food, shelter, armor, and little else. As a result, the chakchaks usually matured into individuals with no emotional feelings except a too-easily triggered rage, as likely to erupt at hobgoblins and other chakchaks as at any enemy. Chakchaks were often controlled by witch doctors using the spell *charm person* on a daily basis. Having no hands, a chakchak was totally dependent upon other hobgoblin soldiers to be fed, dressed, and otherwise cared for; many were kept in prisonlike barracks to separate them from the public. Though feared for their fighting prowess, chakchaks appear to have been given the worst of treatment —worse, said one sage, than even the hobgoblins' prisoners.

The few individuals now found survived the Unhuman War only by being trapped by certain magical spells (e.g., *imprisonment, temporal stasis, trap the soul, wish*). These creatures are sometimes found within ancient dwarven citadels, where they were enspelled during raids, or in similar subterranean or deep-space locations. Some appear to have been hidden underground on certain worlds near the end of the Unhuman War; these "Doomsday warriors" (as one elven admiral christened them) were to be released by later generations of humanoids and used against their foes, but they were instead forgotten. Now they are merely hazards to those who explore ancient dungeons. Even if victorious in the short run, chakchaks invariably starve to death soon after they are set free upon the world again.

A chakchak is sexless (though masculine in general appearance) and is universally referred to as "it"; the creature's brutality and lack of finer feeling, marked even for a humanoid, encourage other races to treat it as genderless in conversation.

Ecology: Chakchaks never existed in great numbers, and they were created only for purposes of close combat. They held a very limited niche in their armies as assault troops and bodyguards; they were unable to utilize any long-range weaponry or magic, and their combat training was not flexible. Chakchaks were often slaughtered en masse by area-effect spells, pit and fire traps, and common archers. They also became the targets of adventurers who sought pride in defeating the best that the humanoid nations could offer. No known communities of hobgoblins have chakchaks among them. Only old elves and a few adventurers have any real knowledge of them now.

In their prime, chakchaks were greatly feared for their unusual ferocity. But as an experiment in developing an ultimate humanoid warrior, they must be counted as failures, as they could never live on their own without the extensive help of a larger social system. Created to destroy, their very limitations finally destroyed them as a race.

❑

Claptrap by Robert Crichton

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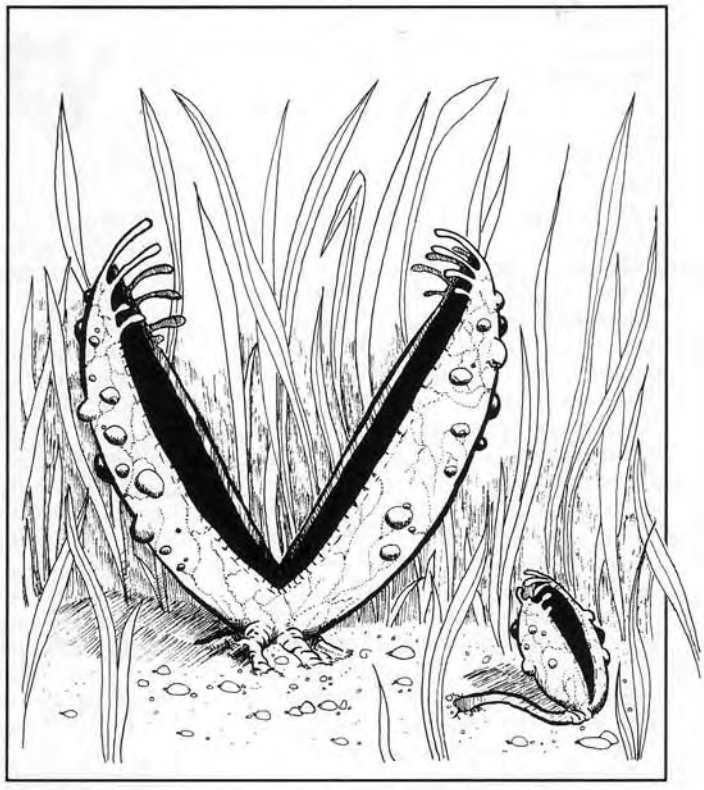
Number:	1d6
Percept:	5
Stealth/R.U.:	+4
AC:	12
MD:	8
Health:	10
Speed:	0
Level:	1
Hit Dice:	4 (15)
THAC:	+4
Attacks:	1
Bite:	1d10 +4 per round
Int:	Nonintelligent
Morale:	10
Size:	S (.5 m)
XP Value:	35
Frequency:	Uncommon
Organization:	Solitary
Activity Cycle:	Day
Diet:	Carnivore
Tech Level:	0
Artifacts:	None
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate plains and hills
Physical Mutations:	Carnivorous Jaws (18)
Mental Mutations:	None
Special Powers:	None



Description: This primitive mutated vegetation is effectively nothing more than an enormous mouth ringed with powerful jaws. It has a voracious appetite and is rarely sated.

The plant digs itself into soft ground when it is looking for food, which is most of the time, and it is rarely spotted until it is too late. While hunting, only the jaws of the plant are visible at ground level, and sometimes these are camouflaged with dirt. The concave jaws look like a depression in the soil. Veteran travelers and claptrap survivors stay clear of such depressions.

When sated, the plant rises from the ground to bask in the sunshine while it digests its meal. The jaws range in color from black to mud brown to glistening green. The claptrap's roots, often partially exposed about the main stalk's base, range from a dark green to a gray-black in color and are covered with thousands of short wire-fine hairs. The primary stalk, which is at once supple and dense, can easily fold itself to hide beneath the open mouth. The stalk ranges in hue from light to dark green, often matching the shades of the foliage nearby.

Whether the plant can actually change its color to fit in with its neighboring flora is in question. However, scholars suspect the plant is able to blend in with its surroundings to some degree, much like ancient chameleons were rumored to change their colors to match their surroundings.

Although the plant is able to move its main stalk and its jaws, its roots anchor it to one spot. Thus, a claptrap can never move from the spot it grows—unless someone were to dig up the claptrap and replant it elsewhere. There have been reports of property owners handsomely rewarding those who have captured claptraps. These claptraps are (very carefully) planted about the owners' land to discourage trespassers.

The plant's only sense appears to be touch. And its nervous system is no more complicated than that of a simple venus flytrap plant.

The claptrap most frequently grows in areas of tall grass, where the depression in the ground made by its open mouth is difficult to spot.

Combat: The claptrap has only one attack—a brutal bite assault. It can make only one such attack an hour, as it takes an hour for the creature to open its mouth wide again. Any creature unwary enough to step inside the jaws of the claptrap is fair game for the bite attack, which causes 1d10 points of damage. The claptrap avoids eating metal, so creatures with metal coverings on their feet are usually left alone.

Characters' DX modifiers affect their chances of being hit by a claptrap. Once a character has been caught by the jaws, the victim remains trapped, suffering an additional 4 points of damage per round until the jaws are pried open or the plant is killed. A character must make a successful PS roll at a −2 penalty to pry open the jaws.

Those who are struck by the vise-like jaws must make two Health rolls. Characters who fail both rolls suffer broken limbs as a result of the vicious bite. Failure of only one roll means they suffer a painful sprain and severe bruising that results in a −3 penalty to Speed for 1d4 days. Characters with broken limbs have their Speed cut to one-third, one-half for quadrupeds, until the limb has healed. Natural healing of a such a claptrap wound takes splinting and 1d6 + 1 weeks.

Society: The claptrap reproduces by sending its roots underground up to 2d20 meters away from its main stalk. The distant roots detach themselves and begin a new plant. It takes 4-12 weeks for a new plant to reach maturity. Generally, the warmer the climate, the less time it takes for a claptrap to grow.

The roots of adult claptraps are used for making strong ropes. These roots remain supple and sturdy for many months after the plant's death. Travelers have learned that the main stalk of a claptrap is edible—and quite delicious. When boiled and seasoned, the stalks are considered a delicacy that few can refuse.

Conashellae by Katherine York

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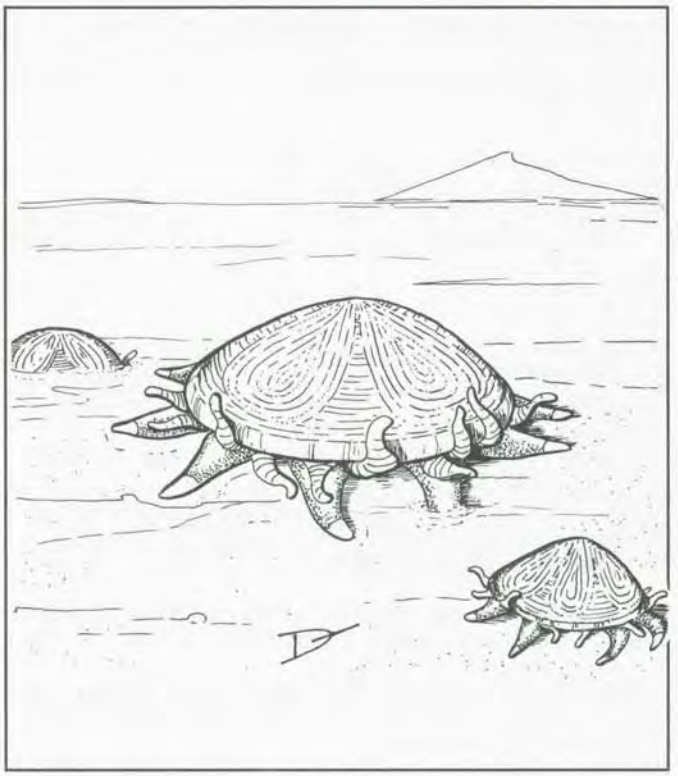
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Sand or silt wastes
FREQUENCY:	Common
ORGANIZATION:	Family (schools)
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Plants/minerals
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	None
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2-24
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	2, Br 12
HIT DICE:	1
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-2/1-2/1-2/1-6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Secretion
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T (less than 2')
MORALE:	Unreliable (2)
XP VALUE:	10



Conashellae, or shell-diggers as they are frequently called, are an especially hardy strain of shellfish usually found in the sandy wastes and silt seas of Athas. They range in size from 3″ to 15″ in length, and all have the same seashell carapace covering their bodies. Only their undersides have vulnerable, exposed flesh, similar to turtles and other shelled creatures.

The only other visible feature on the conashellae are two rows of pseudopods on the creature's front. The top row are soft and highly dexterous; these serve as sensory organs. The lower row have the same soft appearance, but they are pointed and bone-hard. These are used to burrow through the sand and silt and generally to provide locomotion.

Combat: Conashellae are timid creatures, preferring to flee rather than fight. They will do their best to avoid or escape any threat, but if they are cornered, they can defend themselves. The lower row of pseudopods are capable of grasping and pinching, like a crab's claws, each pod inflicting 1d2 points of damage per round it remains attached to the victim. The ends of the pseudopods come to a point, and also can be used to strike at probing hands, doing 1d2 points of damage per hit. Treat the pseudopods as AC 7 because they are muscular and difficult to grasp.

The manner in which the conashellae break down their food also may be used as a defense. A sac, located at the base of the pseudopods secretes a substance that has a high content of salt and is mildly corrosive. The liquid is normally used to break down the plants and minerals into a pulpy mass so they can be consumed. However, the liquid causes 1d6 points of damage to exposed skin—double damage if the liquid comes into contact with broken skin.

Habitat/Society: Conashellae are burrowing creatures, protected from the harsh environment by never going above the surface of the land. Their diet consists primarily of plankton, salt, and water. They feed by burrowing into and around a source of minerals or plants, secreting their digestive juices, then absorbing the pulpy mass slowly through pores in their undersides.

Like other varieties of shellfish, the conashellae can be found in small groups or schools, burrowing continuously. During the daylight hours, they are never seen closer than 8″ to 12″ below the surface in sand, and never closer than 6″ from the surface in silt. At night, however, the conashellae rest just below the surface, about 1″ to 2″ deep.

Conashellae spawn in spring and late fall, each female producing between one and three dozen eggs. The eggs are buried in the soil of their hunting grounds, about 5″ deep. It is not known why the eggs are never accidentally eaten during feeding hours. However, the rancid odor they produce when uncovered prior to hatching may be part of the reason.

Hatchlings appear three weeks after the eggs are laid, and the young begin feeding immediately. The growth rate of the creatures is unknown, but the fact that mature conashellae vary in size suggests they grow in proportion to the amount of minerals and plants they consume.

Ecology: Conashellae do not deplete the sand and silt of minerals. Their digestive process breaks minerals into base components, expelling the leftovers. This by-product is a liquid concentrate that doubles the mineral content in its wake.

The conashellae is a viable food source. Its flesh can be boiled and eaten, and the juices inside the creature can be used as a water substitute. The juice from one conashellae represents one-third of the normal water requirement for humans and demi-humans; one-eighth the water requirement for half-giants. The juices and flesh also abate some of the effects of dehydration, replenishing the body minerals lost through sweat and exertion.

The carapace of the conashellae are prized by some tribes, such as the feral halflings. The shells are used as ornaments, household items, and tools. Some of the renegade slave tribes have utilized the shells as weapons, honing the whorls and edges to a slicing sharpness. When thrown, these shell weapons do similar damage to the thri-kreen's chatkcha. If used as a hand-held weapon, the shell strikes like an obsidian dagger.

Dawnspirit

by Saku Mantere

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Any Good
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	Fl 15 (A)
HIT DICE:	10
THAC0:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6/1-6/2-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Holy Word, fear, quest
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Brightness, hit only by +1 or better magical weapons, immune to all forms of mental control, immune to poison
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See Below
SIZE:	M (6′ tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	3,000

Dawnspirits are energy beings from the upper outer planes. Each dawnspirit's alignment matches the alignment associated with its home plane (for example, a dawnspirit from the Seven Heavens would be Lawful Good). The origins of these creatures are a mystery, but one theory is that they are the spirits of truly great heroes and other champions of good who died fighting evil on the outer planes.

A dawn spirit cannot leave its home plane unless sent forth by the plane's ruler or summoned by a good creature employing a *gate, wish,* or *limited wish* spell. The caster's alignment and motives must be pure for a dawnspirit to heed a summons. Once summoned, a dawn spirit may wander the new plane for a few days or weeks before returning home. A dawnspirit can communicate telepathically.

On their home plane, a dawnspirit's form is a ball of brilliant sunlight, much like a will-o-wisp, only brighter. When summoned to another plane, a dawnspirit acquires an aesthetically beautiful, but androgynous, form which glows with a pure, white light.

Combat: Dawnspirits attack with two fists and a powerful kick. They can divide the attacks as they see fit.

The pure light radiating from a dawnspirit causes fear in evil creatures who see the dawnspirit. Creatures of less than three hit dice automatically flee at their fastest movement rate until they are out of sight and for 1d3 rounds thereafter. Creatures of three or more hit dice save vs. spells or are paralyzed with fear for 1d4 + 1 rounds. Undead who make the saving throw still suffer a −2 "to hit" penalty when within 40 feet of the dawnspirit.

Once per day, a dawnspirit can utter a powerful *holy word.* This ability sometimes is called "the voice of the gods." Extra-planar evil creatures within 60 feet are automatically forced back to their home plane if not already on it. (This effect works even if the dawnspirit is not on its own home plane.) All other evil creatures within 60 feet are affected as if struck by a normal *holy word.* In addition, good creatures within 30 feet gain a +2 "to hit" and damage bonus for 1d4 + 1 rounds.

A dawnspirit's alien mind is completely immune to magical control of any kind, and, since its body is made up of pure energy, it cannot be drugged or poisoned.

Habitat/Society: Dawnspirits have no real society and, as beings of pure energy, they can live anywhere. Most deities dwelling on the upper outer planes are attended by a staff of dawnspirits who act as messengers and intermediaries. Some sages believe that dawnspirits might be involved in the granting of priest spells.

Though mortals can summon them, dawnspirits serve only at their own discretion and never will knowingly commit an evil act or assist an unworthy being. If asked to do something selfish or evil, a dawnspirit immediately returns to its home plane. When summoned by any means, a dawnspirit instinctively knows the summoner's general character and intentions, and bases its decision whether to appear on the merits of the situation.

The DM must decide what a summoned dawnspirit will do, but here are some guidelines: Summoner has followed his alignment strictly and is beset by extra-planar creatures he cannot otherwise combat—100% chance to appear. Summoner endangered by extra-planar creatures—75% chance to appear, but dawnspirit demands that the summoner complete a *quest* of the dawnspirit's choosing in return for its aid. If the summoner agrees, he is automatically subject to the *quest,* no saving throw. Summoner's alignment performance has been exemplary, but summoner or beings dependent on the summoner not in great danger—50% chance to appear, demands *quest.* Summoner's alignment performance has been unsatisfactory or summoner facing encounter he probably can complete on his own without risking death or injury—25% chance to appear, demands *quest.*

Ecology: Dawnspirits have no need to eat, sleep, or breathe. They can survive in the vacuum of space, in the depths of the ocean, or anywhere else in the universe, except the Negative Material plane, which they cannot enter. They have no enemies except evil creatures who hate them for their goodness.

Deathmirror Beetle

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CLIMATE:	Any (usually subterranean)
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Non-(0)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1 (rarely 2)
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	1
HIT DICE:	1 hp
THAC0:	special (20)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Special
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T (1″ diameter)
MORALE:	Average (8)
XP VALUE:	35

Deathmirror beetles are small black beetles with bright yellow blotches. These tiny insects have a unique form of magical defense, probably developed through experimentation by some mad wizard, enabling them to magically link creatures in pain via their venomous bites.

Combat: Deathmirror beetles will avoid combat unless handled by bare flesh. If touched by naked flesh, a deathmirror beetle will immediately attempt to bite its handler.

Deathmirror beetles are hard to catch. Anyone attempting to grab a deathmirror beetle must make a successful Dexterity check and also a successful attack against AC 4 (without strength bonus).

The bite of a deathmirror beetle injects a potent venom, requiring a save versus poison with a −6 penalty to avoid its effects. The beetle's sting creates a magical link between the insect's two most recent victims. The mirror image of any physical damage suffered by either of the linked victims is also suffered by the other. This magical link lasts until a new victim is bitten by the beetle or one of the two most recent victims is slain. If one victim fails a saving throw and suffers damage as a result, the other victim still gets a separate saving throw, but at a −4 penalty.

Each time a deathmirror beetle successfully bites a victim, there is a 5% cumulative chance that the beetle will die.

Anyone casting a *raise dead* or *resurrection* on a dead deathmirror beetle must save versus spell at −10 or die instantly and irrevocably. The beetle will not be brought back to life.

Habitat/Society: Deathmirror beetles are often found in forests and are usually solitary, breeding only once in their lifetimes. Males die immediately after breeding, and females live only long enough to give birth to 10-100 young two weeks later.

Ecology: Deathmirror beetles are magically constructed variants of common beetles and occupy a similar niche in the food chain. Natural predators of beetles soon learn to avoid this species due to their indirectly deadly venom.

Source: "King's Tear," by Mark Anthony, in the *Realms of Valor* anthology.

Death Ox

by Gregory W. Detwiler

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any temperate
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Group
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2-4
ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	6
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Death gaze
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to death magic
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (8′ tall at shoulder)
MORALE:	Average (8)
XP VALUE:	975

The death ox is a less aggressive relative of the gorgon that lives in small family groups. A rich mahogany in color, a death ox resembles a huge, scaly bull. The scales are not metal, like the gorgon's, but they are just as hard and are made out of a natural carapace. All death oxen have a patch of heavy black hair over their eyes. People who have seen the color of a death ox's eyes have not lived to reveal that information.

Combat: The death ox has one physical attack—a charge ending with a massive goring attack with both horns. More fearsome, however, is the death ox's gaze, which acts as a death ray to any who view the creature (range 50′).

The death ox uses its gaze attack at will. The creature is not malicious, and typically uses the gaze in self-defense or when it is hunting for food. Because of its affinity to death magic, it is naturally immune to *death* spells, *power word kill*, and all other types of death magic.

If a death ox surprises a party, there is a 1 in 6 chance that at least once character met the creature's gaze. There is no saving throw versus the death ray. However, anyone in gaze range who closes or averts his eyes gets a saving throw versus death magic. Those who save were able to look away in time. Those who fight the death ox must make such a saving throw each round to avoid the gaze unless they have protective eye covering.

Habitat/Society: The death ox has no lair, simply living by moving from place to place in search of food and water. A death ox family typically consists of one male, three females, and calves. The calves are raised by all the females in the group until they are old enough to fend for themselves. The young oxen which leave their family quickly find others of their kind to join with.

It is rare to find a single death ox. Such an encounter is almost certainly with a male, a young bull in search of females. When more than one bull is in a group of death ox, there will be battles for dominance over the group. The losing bull either leaves or becomes subservient to the dominant bull.

Ecology: The death ox usually eats plants, supplementing its diet with flesh when animals or hapless individuals wander into its gaze. The ox can sometimes be spotted grazing with other herd animals. When grazing with others, the ox keeps its head low and hair over its eyes so it does not randomly kill the other grazers. Those grazers are usually only in jeopardy in times of drought.

Man is the death ox's only known predator. It is sometimes hunted for its skin. The hide of a death ox is often sought by armorers, as it has the thickness of scale mail, yet the protection of banded or plate depending on how it is cured. The ox's blood is used as a component in *death* spells.

Doppleganger, Uran

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any Urban
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	E
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	3-12
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	6
THACO:	14
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Surprise
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See Below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M
MORALE:	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	2000

The uran doppleganger is physically indistinguishable from the common doppleganger.

Combat: The principle power that separates the uran doppleganger from the common variety is its superior form of mimicry. Urans can actually imitate some of the abilities of their victims.

The uran doppleganger has a limited *shapechanging* ability. When an uran assumes a form, it gains all the abilities of its new form except for those abilities dependent upon intelligence, innate magical abilities, or magical resistance. Intelligence here is interpreted to mean the character's mind and personality, not just the attribute Intelligence.

Further, an uran doppleganger retains its own hit points and hit dice, including any current wounds. It suffers any natural penalties or vulnerabilities of its new form (e.g. a goblin's penalties in sunlight). However, like its common cousin, it always keeps its own saving throws and does not get those of its mimicked form. The uran doppleganger is limited to assuming living, humanoid forms between 4' and 8' tall. It can't become a spectre or a wolf.

Specifically, an uran that assumes the form of a player character gets that PC's THAC0 *bonuses* for Strength, number of attacks per round (for natural attacks only), damage and damage bonuses, AC, and attribute scores excluding Intelligence. The uran does not get any of the intelligence-dependent character class abilities, since those are based upon the experience of the character and not his physical form. Abilities dependent upon intelligence include spell casting and many other character class abilities.

For example, the uran doppleganger would not get the fighter's THAC0, nor his number of attacks per round. Unlike an animal's number of attacks per round, the fighter earns his as a result of his fighting experience. The doppleganger never gains experience points from adventuring with a party. In contrast, if the uran were to imitate the form of an annis hag, it would get that creature's three attacks per round, since those are a natural attack form of the monster.

The uran doppleganger must touch a person to imitate his abilities. Otherwise, it is only able to imitate the outer form, just like the common doppleganger. This touch usually happens when the doppleganger kills his victim.

An uran can remember the form of anyone it has previously duplicated, and recall that duplicate form at will. To gain the abilities, it must imitate clothing and equipment the character was wearing at the time of the touch. For example, it could not become a duplicate of Slivkin the Thief wearing the plate mail of Raxas the Ranger. Of course, once the doppleganger has transformed, there is nothing to prevent him from changing his clothes or equipment manually.

A further extension of the uran doppleganger's superior mimicry is what it can do with clothing and equipment. The common doppleganger is restricted to changing like material into like material. Not so with the uran specie. They can change any material into any other material. Like common dopplegangers, the objects only maintain their form so long as they are within five feet of the uran. A typical defensive strategy for many uran dopplegangers is to change into the form of a warrior in plate mail.

Habitat/Society: Among the doppleganger society at large, urans are held in great esteem. They are more powerful and cunning than the common doppleganger. The urans are considered to be closer to the revered form of the ultimate shapechanger.

Ecology: The ecology of the uran doppleganger is no different from that of the common doppleganger. They are a parasitical life form that steals men's lives. Like common dopplegangers, urans prefer the comfortable existence of urban life.

All dopplegangers are genderless. They reproduce by mating with other humanoids of any race or gender. Their young remain in the humanoid form until puberty. At that time they manifest the powers of their true heritage.

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Dorvesh

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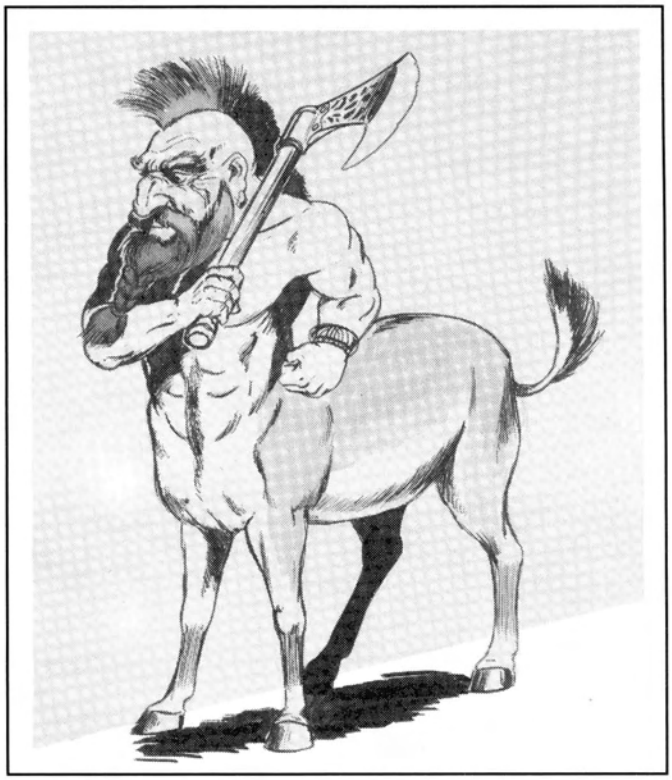
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate hills or mountains
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	M, Q (B)
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2-12
ARMOR CLASS:	4 (7)
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	4
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 or 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6/1-6 or by weapon type
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+4 saving throw vs. spells and poison
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (5′ and taller)
MORALE:	Champion (15-16)
XP VALUE:	Normal: 420 Chief: 650



Dorvesh have the upper body of a dwarf and the lower body of a donkey. Their donkey hindquarters are covered with coarse hair which varies from light brown to black. The dwarven upper half is usually well-muscled and earthy brown. Dorvesh retain the full beards of their dwarven cousins.

Dorvesh clans are distrustful of outsiders, but they are not overly aggressive. They will fight only to defend themselves or their homesteads.

When not expecting combat, dorvesh wear simple tunics of tough leather or hide; otherwise, they wear chain mail vests and carry shields. They wear their hair long and braided to keep it out of the way when they work in the mines.

Combat: Dorvesh do not use magic of any kind, and only rarely do they use magical items. Dorvesh have an inherited resistance to spells and poison, and they gain a +4 bonus to saving throws vs. spells and poison.

Dorvesh delight in mining minerals and metals but do not have the same affinity with earth as dwarves, for their mines do not delve deeply into the earth, and they can detect the slope of a passageway (1-3 on 1d6) and new tunnel construction (1-4 on 1d6). They have infravision to a range of 30′.

Although not warlike, dorvesh are well organized and disciplined when forced to fight. They are intuitive strategists. They wear chain mail vests and tough leather barding, and they carry shields.

Dorvesh wield a variety of weapons: hammers (35%), swords and light crossbows (25%), axes (25%), or axes and heavy crossbows (15%). If unarmed, dorvesh attack with their front hooves, inflicting 1d6 damage with each.

In a group of more than eight dorvesh, there is a 60% chance that the clan chief will be with the group. The chief has 5 HD and is AC 4.

Habitat/Society: An average dorvesh clan numbers 80-120, 20% of them children and 20% females. Dorvesh females are skilled fighters who always fight beside the males if the homestead is attacked.

Dorvesh live in towns constructed around their mine entrances. Since dorvesh do not construct deep mines, they sometimes have to move to a new site. Though their settlements are well constructed, they are not permanent. Abandoned dorvesh settlements may occasionally be found in remote valleys, often inhabited by goblins or kobolds.

Dorvesh produce all their own metalwork. These items are sturdy and reliable, but they are less likely to be engraved or decorated than similar dwarven items. Dorvesh prefer the classic lines of an undecorated hammer, chisel, or axe. Dorvesh hoard precious metals and gems, gold being particularly prized.

Dorvesh are a stubborn and tenacious people, often considered deliberately obtuse by outsiders. Unlike their dwarven counterparts, dorvesh do not wage war against orcs, goblins, giants, or drow, preferring to remain detached from the other races.

Since dorvesh avoid contact with other races as much as possible, they speak only their own dialect of Dwarvish. Anyone who speaks Dwarvish has a 75% chance to understand the dorvesh dialect.

Ecology: though dorvesh are skilled miners and metalworkers, they rarely sell the goods they produce. Thus limited in commerce, they hunt for their own food and cultivate mushrooms and tubers to supplement their diets.

Dorvesh usually live from 150-200 years.

Dragite

by Joseph O'Neil

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any dragon lair
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low to average (5-9)
TREASURE:	incidental (see below)
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	40-160
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	6 (12)
HIT DICE:	1-2 hp
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-2
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T (1′ tall)
MORALE:	Unsteady (5-7)
XP VALUE:	5

Dragites are tiny, vaguely mole-like humanoids. Sometimes called "dragon mites," they make their homes in the lairs of any dragons who will tolerate them. A dragite's torso is covered with coarse brown fur. Most dragites, however, dye their fur to match the color of their dragon host. The skin on a dragite's face, hands, and arms is rough, scaly, and light gray. Dragites have large, protruding ears and long snouts, giving them keen senses of hearing and smell. Although must dragites are nearsighted, they can see well in darkness and have infravision to 30 feet.

Most dragites speak only their own language, However, about 10% of them (those with average intelligence) also speak their host dragon's tongue.

Combat: Dragites are shy, peaceful, and usually inoffensive. They bear no malice toward any particular race or species. When possible, they flee from any potentially dangerous encounter, seeking safety in small tunnels (which they dig themselves) or in any other cramped space they can fit into. The only time a dragite will fight willingly is to defend its mate or offspring.

Habitat/Society: Dragites are fair miners, and live in small tunnels they dig in the walls and floor of the dragon lair where they live. They avoid any locale where they cannot make their homes by tunneling through rock.

The entire life of a tribe of dragites revolves around their dragon host—the dragon is both provider and protector. Dragites eat by scavenging the leavings of a dragon's meals (which helps keep the dragon's lair clean). They supplement their diet with whatever food they can gather on their own.

The dragites care for the host dragon, keeping it clean and tending its wounds. A dragon who allows dragites into its lair is generally healthier than one that does not. A wounded dragon sleeping in its lair regains six hit points a day if tended by dragites.

Dragites can be hard to locate when they don't want to be seen, as they can hide behind almost any small object. This makes them excellent scouts. They normally range as much as a mile from the lair, willingly bringing back news to their host dragons. They even have been known to wake sleeping dragons when hostile creatures come too close. Some dragons use their dragites as spies, allowing the dragon to survey the countryside without revealing its own presence.

Though dragites have no interest in wealth, they love shiny objects, particularly brightly colored gems and jewelry. They frequently filch these items from the dragon's hoard, along with the occasional gold or platinum coin or small magic item. If this thievery goes unchecked, a tribe of dragites can remove up to 10% of a dragon's hoard and hide it away in their minuscule tunnels, where the dragon cannot reach. For this reason, only about 20% of all dragons will have dragites in their lairs. Very patient and kind dragons can, occasionally, persuade their dragites to return an important item—particularly if they have access to *charm* magics.

Most dragite tribes have equal numbers of male and female adults, plus young of both sexes equal to 20% of the adult population. Venerable or great wyrm host dragons often have dragite tribes two or three times normal size.

Most tribes also will have a dozen or so leaders of average intelligence, these leaders can speak the host's tongue and are the only dragites that communicate directly with the dragon. Nevertheless, all orders and tasks the dragon assigns are shared, and there is no single, dominant chieftain. The tribe's only lord is the host dragon. Each dragite reveres the dragon and will do almost anything the dragon commands, short of charging directly into combat. However, dragites are aggressive enough to set traps for unwary invaders, steal from them, or harry them.

Ecology: Dragites are timid scavengers that are easy prey for other creatures. Kobolds, goblins, and orcs are fond of killing or enslaving them. Without their dragon protectors, dragites soon would be extinct. Sometimes a host dragon will trade a few of its dragites to another dragon of the same species in exchange for a bit of treasure.

Dragites reproduce the same way humans do, and an adult female can give birth once every three years. Young dragites mature in two years and most live to be about 40. A tribe of dragites leaves a dragon's lair only when driven out.

Dragon, Bahamut

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CLIMATE/TERAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary or with gold dragon court
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Godlike (22)
TREASURE:	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, S, T, U (all × 10)
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Good
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	−15
MOVEMENT:	18, Fl 40 (C), Sw 24, Jp 18, Br 18
HIT DICE:	70 (490 hit points)
THAC0:	2
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 + special
DAMMAGE/ATTACKS:	6-60/6-60(6d10)/10-100(10d10)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells, breath weapon
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+3 or better weapon to hit, spells
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	90%
SIZE:	G (420′ long)
MORALE:	Fearless (19-20)
XP VALUE:	72,000

Bahamut, the platinum dragon, is the king of all goodly-aligned dragons. The ancient, wingless serpent is considered a deity among dragons and dragonkind.

Although Bahamut's immense form seems threatening, his benevolent expression displays his kindness and hints at his great wisdom. He is quick to aid the causes of good creatures—usually by assigning other dragons to the tasks. If he feels the threat is great, he will assume a different guise and tend to the matter himself.

The most handsome of all dragons, Bahamut's platinum scales glow with a faint blue sheen. The scales are huge, thick, and virtually indestructable. Only the most magical of weapons can penetrate them. The scales shimmer as the great one walks, creating a mirror-like glare that is difficult to look directly upon. His boulder-size eyes are a pale lavender, in sharp contrast to his glistening, spiral ebony horns. Only a few living beings have ever seen this magnificent form. Bahamut chooses to wear the guises of humans, demi-humans, and common creatures so he does not frighten lesser beings.

In Bahamut's lifetime, he has visited every known world and plane at least once. His insatiable curiousity has taken him to many peoples, and he has consequently learned to communicate with nearly every known race. The platinum dragon is aided in this linguistic task by his ever-present receptive form of *telepathy.* However, due to changes in local dialects, Bahamut may have to cast a spell to aid him so he can better converse in up-to-date terminology.

Combat: Bahamut rarely involves himself in struggles, relying on other goodly-aligned dragons and creatures to deal with the situations. However, if a situation is especially threatening or if Bahamut's curiousity is piqued enough to cause his involvement, the platinum dragon and his gold dragon court will enter the fray. When the foes are obviously evil, the platinum dragon strikes first with his concussive blast, using this breath each round as often as necessary. If the nature of the foes is uncertain, Bahamut uses his vapor breath, which puts affected creatures into a gaseous form. The dragon and his court gather up any weapons and armor, wait for their foes to materialize, and then question them—or finish them off if the targets are unwilling to talk. The platinum dragon prefers to use his spells and spell-like abilities to aid worthy causes rather than in combat. However, if pressed, he will use these spells to fight. Bahamut uses his physical attacks as a last resort, as the great one dislikes dirtying his claws and teeth with the blood of evil creatures.

Bahamut's gold dragon court first rely on their breath weapons in combat, followed by spells. Like the platinum dragon, they prefer not to fight physically. However, they will do so if the platinum dragon seems threatened.

Breath weapon/special abilities: Bahamut has three breath weapons. The most visible breath weapon is a frosty white cone of cold 10′ wide at his mouth, 250′ long, and 80′ wide at the base. All those within the cone suffer 20d20 + 12 hit points of damage, save vs. breath weapons for half. Any creature caught within the cone has a 50% chance to drop anything held in its hands (saving throw not withstanding), as the objects have become too cold to handle. Further, for the next four rounds those creatures suffer half movement rate and are −4 on all attack rolls and Armor Class ratings because of their bodies' uncontrolable shivering. The second breath is a whispy blue cloud of magical vapor that is 120′ long, 60′ wide, and 60′ deep. All those caught within the cloud are reduced to half their current hit points. Those who save are reduced by one-quarter. Further, all creatures which do not save turn gaseous for 3d4 turns. All equipment and items worn do not turn gaseous, but fall to the ground. The third breath is a concussive blast of air which is 10′ wide at

Dragon, Bahamut

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Bahamut's mouth, 150′ long, and 50′ wide at the base. This horrible assault kills all creatures within its range which have 60 hit points or less. There is no saving throw. Creatures possessing more than 60 hit points suffer 60 points of damage, no saving throw. Bahamut can use one breath per round as many times a day as desired. Creatures struck by a breath weapon save at −4 because of Bahamut's awesome power.

Bahamut is able to cast at will any first through seventh level priest spell and first through ninth level wizard spell. Bahamut can cast 100 spell levels per day. For example, Bahamut can cast 20 fifth level spells or any other combination thereof to equal 100.

In addition, he has the permanent abilities of *receptive telepathy* and *shapechange*. He can become astral or ethereal at will, and he is immune to Cold and gaseous attacks.

Bahamut casts spells and uses his abilities at 20th level.

Habitat/Society: While Bahamut has been known to inhabit virtually any clime in the guise of a human or demi-human, he most often resides in an immense crystal palace behind the East Wind. Sages speculate this palace is either on the elemental plane of air or in the Seven Heavens or Tri-Paradises. The wisest of sages believe the palace occupies a pocket dimension between the plane of air and the Seven Heavens and that Bahamut and his gold dragon court are the dimension's only occupants. Legends say the crystal palace is covered with *glyphs* and *wards* and protected by spells humankind has yet to discover.

The platinum dragon journeys to human and demi-human lands out of curiosity. Bahamut has a fondness for the creatures and occassionally travels among them to learn about trends in their cultures, current politics, and new magical or clerical discoveries. During these forays, he is almost always accompanied by the seven gold dragons of his court—who also assume an acceptable guise.

Sages say the platinum dragon is most fond of the form of an elderly man followed by seven yellow canaries. Other recorded forms have included a straggly-appearing urchin and his seven rag-tag friends, a prince and his carriage drawn by seven horses, and a beggar surrounded by yelping dogs. The sages are certain he has other guises, though nothing else has been documented.

Although Bahamut's court is comprised of gold dragons, he enjoys the company of all good dragons, delighting in their differences and varied personalities.

Bahamut's treasure is stored deep inside his crystal palace. Despite the immensity of the piles of gems, gold, and magical items, he considers the wealth inconsequential in the overall scheme of things. However, he uses bits of his treasure—passing out coins and gems to those down on their luck and using magic items to his own advantage.

Ecology: Bahamut is capable of eating nearly anything. He only requires sustenance while outside the crystal palace. His favorite meals include the early-morning frost on blades of grass, honey, and daisy petals. His nemesis is Tiamat, the chromatic dragon.

Gold Dragon Court: Bahamut's loyal court is comprised of seven great wyrm gold dragons. Each of these dragons has maximum hit points, is well-versed in the most effective of spells, and is intensely loyal to Bahamut. There is only a 10 percent chance Bahamut will be encountered without his court. When in his presence they appear in a form that complements his own—in their true bodies when he appears as a dragon, as canaries when he is an elderly man, and in other shapes as the situation warrants.

Sitting on Bahamut's gold dragon court is a position of unmatched prestige. Once appointed to the court, a great wyrm gold dragon serves until his or her death or until he or she is too infirm to aid Bahamut. When a replacement gold dragon is needed, Bahamut observes all gold wyrms and great wyrms, secretly testing them. These tests are elaborate, dangerous, and challenges the mettle of the greatest of dragons. Only the most noble and courageous dragons have a chance to be named to the court.

Some sages speculate that Bahamut only chooses gold dragons for his court because a hundred centuries ago the platinum dragon was gold. Sages say Bahamut's great goodness caused him to transcend his golden form and become a unique breed of dragon—the most powerful dragon ever. ❑

Dragon, Tiamat

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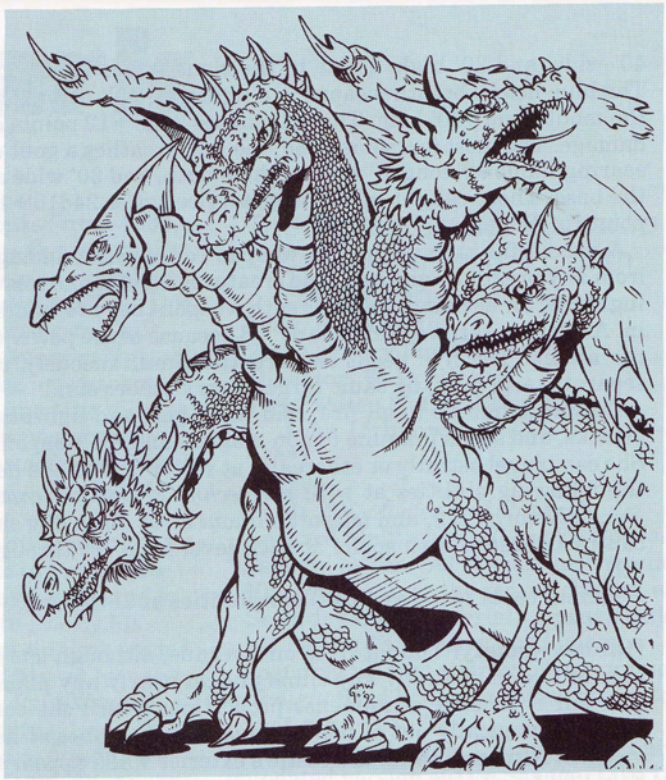
CLIMATE/TERAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Godlike (21)
TREASURE:	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, S, T, U (all × 15)
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	-15
MOVEMENT:	9, Fl 30 (C), Sw 12, Jp 12
HIT DICE:	60 (420 hit points)
THAC0:	2
NO. OF ATTACKS:	Up to 7 + special
DAMAGE/ATTACKS/	
CLAWS/TAIL:	3-30 + 12/3-30 + 12
RED DRAGON	
BITE/BREATH:	3-30 + 12/24d10 + 12
GREEN DRAGON	
BITE/BREATH:	2-20 + 12/24d6 + 12
BLUE DRAGON	
BITE/BREATH:	3-24 + 12/24d8 + 12
BLACK DRAGON	
BITE/BREATH:	3-18 + 12/24d4 + 12
WHITE DRAGON	
BITE/BREATH:	2-16 + 12/12d6 + 12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells, breath weapon
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+2 or better weapon to hit, spells
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	80%
SIZE:	G (360′ long)
MORALE:	Fearless (19-20)
XP VALUE:	68,000



Tiamat, called the "Queen of Evil Dragons" or the "Bane of Bahamut," is the most powerful and malicious of the chromatic dragons. Sages say no act is too evil for Tiamat—if it nets her more wealth, influence, and causes harm to the forces of good.

The great dragon looks like a nightmare creation, sporting the necks and heads of white, black, green, blue, and red great wyrms. While the mass of huge heads seem to move independently like a group of writhing snakes, they are directed by one intelligence lodged deeply inside the dragon's massive body. Tiamat's five necks join just above massive, muscular shoulders. The colors of the necks and heads blend at the base in a swirl of colors that quickly turns jet black just below the shoulders. The black scales are small for a dragon of this size, about the size of a man's fist, and gleam like ebony pearls. The great dragon's belly is blue tinged with black, and her long, razor sharp talons are ruby red. Tiamat's great tail—nearly twice as long as her body from chest to haunches—seems to shift in hue as it twitches from emerald green to midnight black to sapphire blue. The queen's legs are as thick as great trees, and her wings—black on the exterior and red as blood on the underside—are huge. Still, they are not powerful enough to lift her great bulk with ease; Tiamat flies magically. The wings simply aid in her maneuverability.

Tiamat's teeth in her five heads are an opal white, sharp and long. And when the queen opens her mouths, the air seems to smell of brimstone and sulphur.

The centuries-old evil dragon has visited many lands in her many guises, becoming fluent in the languages of all evil creatures and all of dragonkind. She is also able to communicate in the languages of most men and demi-humans—although she is loathe to lower herself to their level and do so.

Combat: Tiamat prefers to have her battles fought by troops of evil creatures loyal to her and by adult and older chromatic dragons. Despite her great power, she is fearful that direct combat with good creatures could cause her injury or death. So she prefers to orchestrate conflicts from the background. Such fights have escalated into full-scale wars between humans and evil creatures, with the humans never knowing who was ultimately behind the struggle.

When Tiamat is forced to fight, she begins her assault using all five breath weapons directed at the strongest targets. As of yet, she has found no mortal creature to survive beyond that first attack. Tiamat uses her spells to discern targets' weaknesses and motivations. She has been known to *charm* potential victims to learn of treasure hordes, then kill them quickly and horribly after the treasure is attained.

In her lair, Tiamat's court of five great wyrm dragons fight for her. The court is comprised of one dragon from each basic chromatic color, and each has maximum hit points.

If Tiamat suffers more than 150 hit points of damage in a combat she will automatically *teleport without error* to Avernus.

Breath weapons/special abilities: Tiamat's white great wyrm head breathes a cone of cold 70′ long, 5′ wide at the mouth, and 25′ wide at the base. Creatures caught within the cone suffer 12d6 + 12 points of damage. The black head breathes a stream of acid 5′ wide and 60′ long. Those in the stream suffer 24d4 + 12 points of damage. The green head breathes a cloud of poisonous chlorine gas that is 50′ long,

Dragon, Tiamat

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40′ wide, and 30′ high. Those in the cloud suffer 24d6 + 12. The blue head's breath weapon is a lightning bolt 5′ wide at the mouth and 100′ long. The bolt causes 24d8 + 12 points of damage. The most fearsome head, the red, breathes a gout of searing flame 90′ long, 5′ wide at the mouth, and 30′ wide at the base. Those caught by the magical fire suffer 24d10 + 12 points of damage.

A successful save vs. breath weapon reduces the damage from any breath by one half, and creatures must make a saving throw for each individual breath weapon they are caught in. All saving throws are made at −3 because of the power of the attack. The five heads can breathe simultaneously, on separate targets or the same target, every other round.

Tiamat is immue to all fire, cold, acid, gas, and lightning attacks, and she is immune to non-magical and +1 weapons. She can travel astrally or ethereally at will. Further, she has the following abilities at will: *pyrotechnics, tongues, cause fear, polymorph self,* and *teleport without error.* Each day she can cast three wizard spells at each level from 1st through 7th.

Tiamat casts spells and uses her abilities at 18th level.

Habitat/society: Tiamat lives on Avernus, although she is able to live in virtually any clime and on nearly any plane. Her lair is a castle of immense proportions which she constructed magically out of molten lava and the bones of her victims. Although solid, the castle's exterior walls appear to flow like lava and cause most creatures to avoid the place.

Tiamat's court dwells in the castle. Sages believe the place is also populated by other guards, such as elementals, fiends, and unnamed creatures. The castle is an extension of the queen's personality—its spires are twisted and grotesque, there are no windows, and the walls are studded with bits of sharp material and jagged bones which can injure all but the most wary. The macabre, yet impressive, structure is avoided by nearly all the inhabitants of Avernus.

The great evil dragon knows what is transpiring within every square inch of her castle and within many square miles beyond. Because of this, it is impossible to surprise her in her lair. Her treasure is vast and litters the castle, in some places it is so thick she has shaped it into walls and uses it to cover the floor. Tiamat has a precise inventory of her wealth—down to each insignificant copper—and she has spent decades mentally cataloging it so she knows what all the magical items can do. She uses some of the items to further her malign gains.

The queen of evil dragons spends nearly all her time within the castle. She remains knowledgable about what is transpiring on other worlds and planes through magical items, spies, and cults of humans and demi-humans she has bent to her will. On rare occasions when something has sparked her interest enough for personal investigation, she dons a human or demi-human guise and takes one member of her court, also disguised, with her. These instances have included skirmishes between various races, newly-unearthed treasure finds, and political struggles. Tiamat's favorite guises include a comely young elven woman and her escort, a young girl accompanied by her father, and an elderly sage with her grandson in tow. Sages believe she has also assumed the form of goblins, gnolls, lizardmen, and other creatures when attempting to rally others for battle. Some sages speculate that she has acted as various groups' leaders and kings, ordering the subjects to do her bidding.

Ecology: Tiamat is capable of eating anything. On Avernus she requires no sustenance, drawing her energy from the plane itself. However, when she travels to other worlds and planes she feasts upon creatures she defeats, molten objects, and the very ground. Her favorite sustenance, however, is helpless creatures; she feeds upon their abject terror before swallowing them.

Tiamat's enemies are numerous and include Bahamut and all good dragons. However, only Bahamut has been able to stand up to her might—and recorded conflicts with the king of good dragons have ended in stalemates.

Sages speculate Tiamat was born many hundred years ago during a war between evil dragons. The gods threw the combatants together into one body. And this new form demanded that the evil dragons no longer fight amongst themselves.

Tiamat's Court: The queen's court is comprised of five dragons—male great wyrms of red, black, white, green, and blue. The court is handpicked by the queen based on their loyalty and the amount of gifts and service they have provided. When a member of her court becomes too infirm, she takes the dragon to another plane, personally slays him, and immediately selects a replacement. Members of the court store their treasure within Tiamat's castle, in separate chambers which are considered their own territories.

Geran by Dick Smalley

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Deserts
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional
TREASURE:	A
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	40-160
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	4+1
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 or 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	by weapon or 1-8/1-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	+3 To Hit with Geran Impaler
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Invisibility, +2 bonus on all saves
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	10%
SIZE:	M (6′)
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
X.P. Value:	420
Precept	420
Thane	650
Jarl	975
Chieftain	1,400

Psionics Summary:

Level	Dis/Sci/Dev	Attack/Defense	Score	PSPs
5	2/4/10	EW,II/IF,M-,MB,TW	15	95

Psychokinesis: Sciences—*telekinesis, detonate*; Devotions—*ballistic attack, inertial barrier, molecular agitation, molecular manipulation*
Telepathy: Sciences—*mind link, tower of iron will*; Devotions—*ego whip, contact, id insinuation, intellect fortress, mind bar, mind blank*

Geran are found primarily in the rocky badlands of Athas. Most are hardworking, peaceful beings who strive to overcome the harsh climate of their homeland. Their communities are orderly and law-abiding. Outsiders are viewed with suspicion.

Because of the intense heat, geran wear little clothing, usually just a loin cloth, and upon rare occasions, ornamental jewelry. When preparing for battle, a geran also adorns himself with a belt decorated with the skulls of those he has killed. The skulls are intended to warn away opponents.

Geran speak their own tongue in addition to the language of the Gith and Belgoi. There is a 10% chance a geran will be able to speak the local Common dialect.

Combat: Geran prefer to use their psionic talents to frighten intruders from their domain. However, if the enemy cannot be scared, the geran resort to a harmful exhibition of their psionic powers.

When forced into melee, geran typically attack with a weapon called an impaler. This is a polearm that looks like a javelin on one end; the other end is capped with a large, curved, razor-sharp blade. The blade is used to sever victims' heads to be added to the geran's collection.

If a geran is disarmed, he can attack twice a round with clawed hands. Each attack delivers 1-8 points of damage. The geran view such battle tactics as barbaric, resorting to them only in extreme situations.

While in their home terrain geran blend in with their surroundings so that they are effectively *invisible.*

Habitat/Society: Geran live in hillside abodes carved out of the badlands rock. The homes are simple and usually house one family consisting of 1-2 adult males, 1-3 adult females, and 2-8 young.

For every 20 geran encountered, there will be a thane of 5+2 HD and 100 PSPs. The thane acts as the leader of the geran war units.

If 50 or more geran are encountered, they will be led by a jarl of 6+3 HD, 120 PSPs, and a psionic score of 16, plus one additional psionic discipline. The jarl is held in high esteem in geran society and is always guarded by a force of five geran and one thane.

When 120 or more geran are encountered, they will be led by a high chieftain. The high chieftain has 8+2 HD, has 150 PSPs, and is psionic level 8. He has a base score of 17 for all psionic checks. In addition to the normal psionic powers held by the gerans, the high chieftain also has the sciences of *disintegrate* and *project force* and the devotions of *animate object* and *soften.* The high chieftain is guarded by a jarl, three thanes, and 15 other gerans. The high chieftain is also assisted by a precept that is treated as a normal geran with the additional psionic talent of *cell adjustment.* The precept serves as the tribal healer and advisor to the chieftain.

Ecology: Geran are miners and hunters relying on themselves for survival.

Geran mines usually are well guarded operations that seldom delve below 50′ into the ground. Geran are especially successful in mining various forms of gems. Gerans are frequently sought by traders and treasure hunters.

Gnoat

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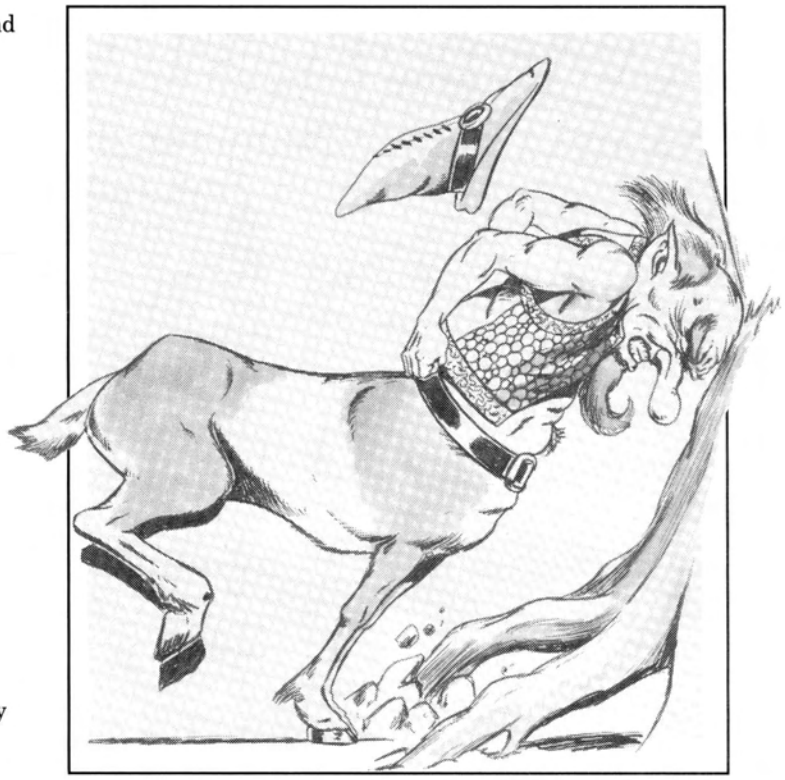
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate or tropical hills and mountains
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Clan
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	M, Q (I)
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	4-12
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	4+1
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6 or by weapon type
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	+4 save vs. spells and poison
SIZE:	L (5′ + tall)′)
MORALE:	Steady (12)
XP VALUE:	Normal: 420 Chief: 650 Illusionist: 650



Gnoats have the upper body of a gnome and the lower body of a large mountain goat.

Gnoats usually have brown skin, varying in shade from tan to a deep chestnut. The shaggy coat on their goat hindquarters also varies in color, being brown, black, or gray with a white or cream underside. Hair is the same color as the coat and is usually worn short by both males and females. Hooves are usually black or very dark brown.

Male gnoats have beards which match the coloration of their goat hindquarters. Beards are kept fairly short and often are trimmed to form elaborate designs. Most gnoats have blue eyes, ranging from light, cool shades to deep cobalt blue, but a few individuals have brown or green eyes.

Clothing usually consists of shirts and jackets of cotton or leather, and hats of various design. Gnoats tend to avoid very bright colors, but they do wear clothes of many differing shades. A favorite garment among gnoats is a patchwork jacket, with swatches of many different colors and materials. These jackets are very strongly constructed and act as padded armor. Jewelry, when worn, consists of carved wooden pendants and bracelets.

Combat: On the whole, gnoats are peaceful, although they are wary of strangers until they prove themselves worthy. Gnoats will defend themselves if attacked, and the majority of males are proficient with weapons. Females rarely fight unless directly threatened.

Gnoats are usually armed with spears or clubs, and at least half of any group carries short bows. If unarmed, gnoats will kick with their rear hooves. This single attack causes 1-6 points of damage.

Any group encountered may be the entourage of the clan chief and a 3rd-level illusionist (15% chance). If so, 2-8 additional gnoats accompany the group. The chief wears an elaborately decorated matching jacket and hat, and he carries a shield bearing the clan emblem. Typical emblems are horns, mountains, trees, or tools. The clan illusionist normally wears a plain black tunic and black leather skull cap.

Like gnomes, gnoats are resistant to spells and poison, receiving a +4 bonus to their saving throws.

Habitat/Society: For most of the year, gnoat clans inhabit cave systems in the lower foothills of high mountain ranges. They spend their time hunting and farming in order to produce enough food for the winter. During the winter months, gnoats usually keep to caverns deep within the mountains, where they have stockpiles of grain, cured meat, and honey.

Gnoat clans have 100-300 members, of which 40% are females and 10% children. Each clan is led by a chief (5+1 HD, AC 5, THAC0 15) and advised by 1-4 illusionists of levels 1-3.

Gnoats speak Gnomish and Common. Many gnoats can communicate with burrowing mammals, but a few clans have lost this ability.

Ecology: Gnoats are excellent wood-carvers and sculptors of stone. During the winter months, they develop their arts and produce many wonderful pieces ranging from delicately carved wooden animals and fruits small enough to fit in the palm of one's hand, to bold stone statues larger than a full-sized gnoat.

Gnoats leave their warm caverns in spring and attempt to trade some of their sculptures for pottery, metalwork, and fabrics. They do not stray far from their homesteads but wait for traveling merchants to cross the passes in their mountain homes. The gnoats approach merchants cautiously at first, but gradually build firm friendships. Some traders keep the gnoats' whereabouts secret in return for a ready supply of beautiful carvings each spring.

Golem, Mechanical (Ahmi Vanjuko) by Bill Connors

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate Forests
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	-2
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	13 (75 hp)
THAC0:	7
NO. ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	4-40 (4d10)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	Man-sized (7′ tall)
MORALE:	Steady (11-12)
XP VALUE:	15,000

Of all the tragic and misshapen creatures to survive the nightmare experiments of fiends like the wizard Hazlik or the mad butcher Markov, none is more dreadful than Ahmi Vanjuko. Once a ranger and great explorer, Vanjuko has been imprisoned in a metal body powered by the sinister magic of Easan, the deranged lord of Vechor.

Prior to his transformation, Vanjuko was a strong ranger who stood just over five a half feet tall. His hair was a dark, earthy brown and his eyes were the cool green of fresh mint leaves. His skin was a rich sienna, worn rough by his years exploring the wilds of countless worlds. His smile, it is said, could charm man and beast alike, and his charisma earned him the love of innumerable maidens in countless kingdoms.

All that changed when Vanjuko was drawn into Ravenloft. Under the careful attention of the dark wizard Easan, his spirit was implanted in a mechanical golem.

Vanjuko's new body stands a little more than seven feet tall and looks vaguely human. It is slender, with long legs that might be likened to a bird's. The arms are gangly and apelike. The hands are three-fingered gripping devices with extendable razors in place of fingernails. A head shaped like a human skull rests atop the machine's cylindrical body. The golem's metallic shell is stronger than any known alloy.

Vanjuko is unable to speak, although the construct might be able to communicate with others if magical or psionic means are used. If spoken to, Vanjuko seems to understand the Common tongue spoken by the men of Oerth. During his travels in Ravenloft, he also learned the languages spoken in Barovia and Vechor, and a sprinkling of the Vistani tongue.

Combat: Vanjuko shuns humanity and has no natural enemies in the wilds of Vechor. As such, he is seldom called upon to defend himself. When he does fight, however, he is a deadly nemesis. The mad Easan intended that his creation be a killing machine.

Like all of the mechanical golems created in Ravenloft, Vanjuko is immune to attack by weapons with less than +2 enchantment. Similarly, he is immune to all but a few magical spells. Because he has a living mind, he can be *charmed* as a normal human and *charm person, charm monster* and *mass charm* spells are effective against him. He also can be *beguiled.* His unnatural nervous system makes *hold* spells, *suggestions,* and other Enchantment/Charm magics ineffective. He is immune to all poisons and diseases. Vanjuko is vulnerable to *dispel magic,* which stuns him for a number of turns equal to the caster's level. During this time, he appears dead; however, a *detect magic* or similar spell reveals a magical aura lingering about the golem which grows stronger as he begins to recharge himself.

Vanjuko's primary attack is made with his finger razors. Each round, he is able to strike with these weapons, inflicting 4d10 points of damage with each successful hit. On an attack roll of 20 a powerful electrical current is discharged into the victim's body. When this happens, the victim must save vs. spells. If the save succeeds, the victim suffers 3d6 points of additional damage. If the save fails, the victim suffers 6d6 points of additional damage, and the victim's items must save versus lightning or be destroyed. Further, the victim must save vs. paralysis or be incapacitated for 2d4 rounds due to muscle spasms triggered by the electrical discharge.

If an opponent using a metal melee weapon hits Vanjuko with an attack roll of a natural 20, the golem can channel an electrical current through the weapon. The attacker suffers damage and risks incapacitation just as if he had been hit with the electrical attack described above. The electrical discharge does not reduce the damage the golem suffers from the weapon.

Once every three rounds, Vanjuko can trigger a *lightning aura* that surrounds his mechanical body. This *aura* is a deadly electrical field that lasts one round. Any creature coming within 20 feet of Vanjuko is struck with numerous filaments of lightning, which cause 3d6 points of damage. A save vs. breath weapon is allowed for half-damage (no incapacitation check need be made).

As a ranger, Vanjuko had many useful powers and special abilities. In his new mechanical form, however, most of these have been lost. He retains the ability to cast some clerical spells, but only those he had memorized at the time of his transformation. Thus, he can use the following spells once per day: *entangle, pass without trace,* and *warp wood.* He casts these spells as if he were a 3rd level cleric.

Animals will have nothing to do with this unnatural construct. No creature will come within 50 feet of Vanjuko unless held or calmed. All animals—even the most devoted dogs and warhorses—refuse to come within 20 feet of the golem. If forced to do so, the animals become violent and do whatever they must to free themselves and leave the abomination's presence.

Habitat/History: Ahmi Vanjuko was born in the wondrous City of Greyhawk. He quickly learned that the urban life of men was not for him. Before he had reached the age of 10, he vanished into the wilds and started a new life among the animals of the green forest.

In time, he came to know every creature that shared his wilderness home with him. He learned to hunt and stalk like the wolf, to sing and play like the bird, and to lurk and pounce like the cougar. By the time he reached adolescence, the forest was very much a part of him.

One day, a strange figure came to the lands he called his own and began to build—something. Although he resented this intrusion, Vanjuko took no action against this intruder. In time, the construction took the shape of an elegant manor house surrounded by a virtual wall of tangling vines laced

Golem, Mechanical (Ahmi Vanjuko)

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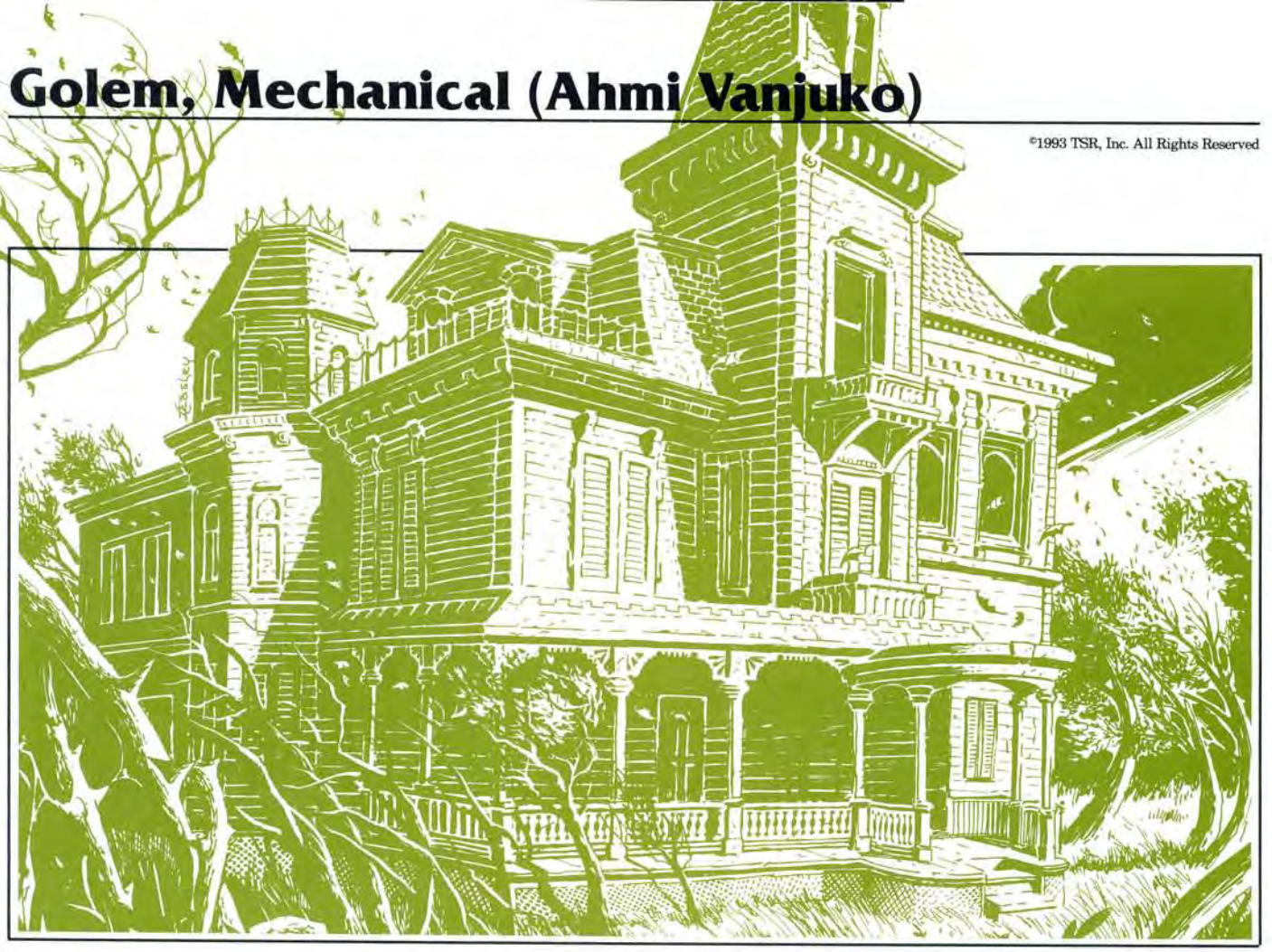

with poisonous thorns. To any other man, these thorns might have been a barrier. To Vanjuko, who knew the ways of the wild, they were nothing more than an annoyance.

Determined to see what was going on behind this living fence, Vanjuko made his way through the thorns and into the lands beyond. To his horror, he found that the splendor of the forest had been obliterated near the manor. Pools of deadly poisons littered the landscape, the plants were withering away in toxic soil, and discarded trash lay everywhere. The animals caught inside the thorns were sick, dying, or dead, and the air carried an unnatural stench.

Vanjuko vowed to see to it that the monster who had done these terrible things left the forest before he could do any more harm. Filled with righteous fury, he moved quickly to the manor's entrance and burst inside. He saw no immediate sign of the place's builder and began to search the house. At every turn, however, he was confronted with mechanisms designed to kill unwanted intruders. In the end, these proved too deadly for him, and Vanjuko was forced to leave the building.

To his surprise, however, he found that the grounds outside had been engulfed in a rolling, macabre fog. Before he had travelled half the distance to the thorn barrier, Vanjuko was utterly lost and all but blinded by the blanket of mist. He settled down to wait for the visibility to improve. When it cleared an hour later, he found that he was no longer in his forest. Instead, he was in the domain of Katakass.

Vanjuko began to explore the strange new land in which he found himself, hoping to uncover a way back to his native land and the forest he loved. From the domain of Harkon Lucas, he traveled north into Gundarak and then east into Strahd's own Barovia. For a time, he lived among the rustic folk of that mountainous domain, enjoying their simple way of life and learning their language.

While in Barovia, he met a young woman named Tanya, and the two fell deeply in love. She was a gypsy girl who lived a nomadic life traveling from city to city where she would entertain with her family. One night, Tanya came to him and said that her people were leaving just before dawn. She kissed the ranger gently and bid him farewell, weeping at the thought that they might never meet again. Vanjuko pleaded with her to remain with him in Barovia and become his wife. She smiled, clearly tempted by the idea, but refused. Hers was the wanderer's life, she explained, and her people were the Vistani.

Despite the warnings of his newfound friends, Vanjuko decided that he would not lose the woman he loved. Shortly before sunrise, he went to the clearing where Tanya's family had camped, only to find that they had already left. He dashed off in pursuit, following their trail to the east. He caught sight of their wagons as they rolled into a bank of fog. Without pause, he spurred his horse to greater speed and dashed into the mists after them.

Emerging from the rippling vapors, Vanjuko found no trace of Tanya or her clan. Instead, he discovered that he had been again transported by the whims of Ravenloft's mists. This time, he was in the domain of Vechor. Attempting to get his bearings and learn what was going on, Vanjuko made his way to Abduk on the shores of the Nostru River. In the distance, high atop the Cliffs of Vesanis, he saw the elegant manor house where, he was told, the madman Easan lived. To his horror, Vanjuko realized that this was the same house he had seen in the wilderness of his native Oerth.

Blaming Easan for his original abduction by the mists of Ravenloft, the ranger began to plan revenge against the

Golem, Mechanical (Ahmi Vanjuko)

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mad wizard. When he learned that he could not rally the people of Vechor to overthrow their foul lord, he left them and returned to his life among the plants and animals of the forest.

In Vechor's wilds, he found all manner of pathetic creatures which were unknown to him. The majority of these things, he learned, were the result of Easan's horrible experiments. He also learned that the mad wizard's research did not end with animals. The ranger found countless species of plants, many evil and deadly, which were the result Easan's tinkering.

By far the most dreadful of the creatures the ranger encountered were the twisted men and women who had survived Easan's experiments. Most were contorted and broken, tragic things known as *broken ones.* A few, however, emerged from the caverns at the base of the Cliffs of Vesanis with mechanical parts grafted onto their bodies. Most of these, thankfully, didn't live long. Those that did, Vanjuko mercifully destroyed to end their pain and suffering.

Vowing to end this madman's butchery once and for all, Vanjuko entered the labyrinth of caves and began to make his way upward to the manor house. The trek took him nearly two days, during which he fought countless creatures more terrible than any he had seen in the forests. By the time he neared the underground entrance to Easan's laboratories, he was nauseous.

Steeling himself to face whatever foul things might lurk beyond, Vanjuko entered. As before, he found the place to be a maze of traps designed to keep intruders out—or perhaps to keep prisoners in. Try as he might, the ranger was no match for the terrible mechanisms and deadly spells that Easan had set up. Shortly after he began to explore the house, Vanjuko accidentally triggered the release of a gas cloud. Expecting nothing but death, he closed his eyes and collapsed.

Much to his surprise, Vanjuko awoke. He found himself strapped to a metal table in the center of a room that looked like a cross between a wizard's laboratory and a torture chamber. For a long time he feigned unconsciousness as he stole glaces at his surroundings. He had hoped to devise a way to escape from the dreadful place, but instead he found himself speculating as to what many of the terrible devices around him might be used for. It wasn't long before he had his answer.

High overhead, two great metal spheres descended on slender poles. Without warning, a great surge of actinic blue light flooded the room as a steady stream of lightning began to flow between the mysterious globes. As Vanjuko watched in horror, the globes descended until they were suspended only a few feet above him. The electrical flow above his body felt like stinging ants crawling over his skin.

Then, as if from nowhere, Easan appeared. He was a short man, almost gnomish with his little features. His beady eyes reminded Vanjuko of the predatory eyes of a ferret. With a cruel smile, the wizard began to examine the ranger. After a few minutes, Easan bent low over the ranger's face. His breath smelled like rotting fish, but Vanjuko's bonds were far too tight for him to turn away.

"Hello my young man," he hissed. His voice was slippery and hushed, barely audible above the cacophony of the lightning machine. "I'm so glad that you came to visit me."

Vanjuko tried to spit in the mad man's face, but found that his mouth had gone dry. Easan found the gesture amusing and chuckled softly to himself. Turning away from his captive, he continued to talk while working with several arcane devices.

"For a long while, I have been planning to complete a great experiment. Time after time, I have attempted to explore the soul and its ultimate origins—only to have the subject die before my work was completed. Indeed, I began to despair of ever finding someone who might have the stamina to help me draw this grand investigation to a close. Imagine my delight when I found an intruder in my own home who could survive one of my most deadly procedures. If you don't survive this experiment, I dare say that no one will."

With that, the shriveled man waddled to a large winch and began to turn it. Slowly, a panel in the floor beside Vanjuko slid open and a second table rose. Whatever was on the table was covered with a white sheet.

With a flourish, Easan swept aside the cloth and revealed a metal body that, although roughly humanoid, was a mechanical nightmare. The wizard laughed when he saw the fear fall across Vanjuko's face.

"I shouldn't worry yourself," he snickered. "When we are finished here today, I shall have transported your soul into this metal body. You will be the father of a new race! I trust you appreciate the honor that I'm granting you. Ah well, let's begin, shall we?"

As Easan chuckled his weasel's laugh, the metal balls began to descend again. The lightning engulfed Vanjuko and the mechanical corpse beside him. The ranger cried out in agony as he felt the arcane energies ripping his body apart. The pain was incredible. He tried to succumb to it, hoping to lose consciousness or even die rather than endure the seemingly endless torment. As blackness engulfed him, the echoing laughter of Easan rang above the roar of the lightning.

And then it was over. Vanjuko was exhausted. The pain was gone, but so was his strength. Unconsciousness claimed him.

Vanjuko had no idea how long he swam in the blissful darkness of oblivion. Finally, he awoke, confused to discover that he was on a metal table. He attempted to sit up, and found that he was strapped down. Then, slowly, the memory of what had happened returned to him.

Praying that this might be some dreadful nightmare, he turned his head and looked along the length of his arm. When he saw the mechanical limb that lay there, he tried to scream. But no sound issued from the mute metal giant that was now Ahmi Vanjuko.

Enraged, he fought to free himself from the shackles, only to find them stronger than he. As he thrashed about, Easan returned. He was smiling, and paid little attention to Vanjuko's struggles.

"Ahhhhh," he hissed, sounding almost cheerful, "is it not as I told you?" Vanjuko tried to lunge at the wizard, but was held in check by the chains on his limbs. Easan seemed genuinely surprised by his behavior. "Don't you understand?" he asked. "I have made you immortal. More than that, I have freed you of the burdens of life. You'll never grow sick or old. You should thank me for the gift that I have given you!"

That was more than Vanjuko could bear. He tried again to break free, and this time the chains could not restrain him. Metal fragments showered around the chamber and Easan sprang back. Vanjuko lunged forward, his metal body moving smoothly and flawlessly in response to his thoughts. With a great whirring of gears, he threw himself at Easan, determined to destroy the wizard. When he reached the spot where the great wizard stood, however, there was nothing but smoke. Through some magic, Easan had fled.

Golem, Mechanical (Ahmi Vanjuko)

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Vanjuko tore the laboratory apart, vowing that he would destroy the beast's lair if he could not have the beast itself. Leaving the building a burning ruin, he fled back into the tunnels and made his way to the forest.

Ecology: Easan has since rebuilt his home. Vanjuko has returned to living in the forest, but he no longer draws the happiness from it he once did. All around him are vibrant living things, animals that now flee from him in terror and flowers that he can no longer smell.

As a mechanical creature, Vanjuko has no hunger or thirst and never sleeps. He lives in a cave hidden away beneath the cascade where the river Nostru tumbles off of the Cliffs of Vesanis.

Each day, he moves about the forests in a search for more products of Easan's twisted work with the black arts. He destroys them when he finds them, ending their suffering as quickly and mercifully as he can.

As mentioned in the **combat** section of this entry, animals cannot bear the presence of Vanjuko. They recognize that he is not a natural thing and abhor him. This is perhaps the most tragic aspect of Vanjuko's life, for the love of animals meant as much to him as the embrace of his beloved Tanya.

Adventure Ideas: Vanjuko is a tragic figure. While he retains a good heart, he is bitter and angry about what has happened to him. He loathes his existence, feeling alone and alien in the world. If it were not for the fact that he feels a compulsion to destroy Easan and all his works, Vanjuko would certainly have taken measures to end his life long ago.

It is this very deep commitment to his task that can lead to matchless adventures. The people of Vechor have seen the mechanical golem moving through the woods from time to time. Not knowing its history or origins, they assume it to be evil.

Any heroes who come into the domain are likely to hear of the creature as well. With the villagers speaking of it as a deadly enemy, the player characters are likely to attempt to hunt down and destroy Vanjuko. When they discover the true nature of their supposed enemy, they might proceed along one of two lines.

First, they could join Vanjuko and attempt to destroy Easan. Although a powerful ally in combat, Vanjuko's hulking form will make it difficult for the PCs to approach the dark lord's manor house without being seen. Vanjuko's knowledge of Easan's methods might be helpful, however. Further, the golem can act as a guide in the exploration of the tunnels that run from the forest to the plateau on which Easan's manor stands.

Alternately, the PCs might begin a search for some technique that could return Vanjuko to a living body. One obvious solution might be the use of *the apparatus,* a terrible artifact originally described in the *Ravenloft II* module and most recently seen in the AD&D® 2nd Edition game adventure *Thoughts of Darkness* and the *Book of Artifacts.* With the help of this contraption, the player characters might be able to arrange for Vanjuko's personality to be implanted in another body. Of course, locating and recovering the artifact (which is the size of a house) will not be an easy task. Finding a suitable body and deciding what to do with the life force that currently inhabits it might pose problems, too.

Grave Watcher by Cheryl McNally-Frech

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tombs, crypts, graveyards, burial grounds
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Unknown
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional
TREASURE:	None
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	-2
MOVEMENT:	18
HIT DICE:	5-16
THAC0:	15 (5-6 HD) 13 (7-8 HD) 11 (9-10 HD) 9 (11-12 HD) 7 (13-14 HD) 5 (15-16 HD)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	Varies
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-8 per attack
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Special
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Regeneration, immune to electrical attacks, edged weapons cause half damage
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Immune to mind-effecting spells
SIZE:	M (5′-6′)
MORALE:	Fearless (19-20)
XP VALUE:	1,400 (5 HD) 2,000 (6-7 HD) 4,000 (8 HD) 5,000 (9 HD) 6,000 (10-11 HD) 7,000 (12-13 HD) 8,000 (14-15 HD)

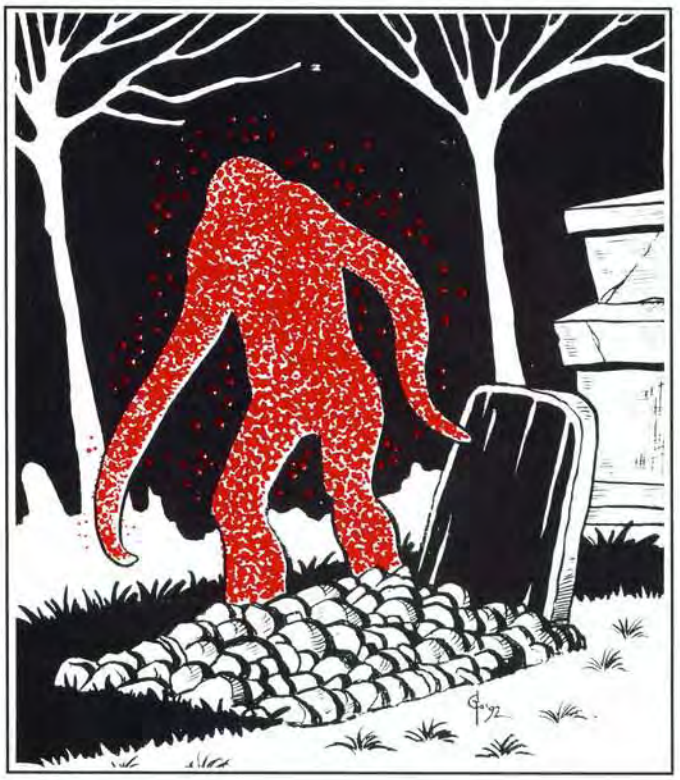
A grave watcher looks like hundreds of tiny, pulsating lights—a ballet of fireflies hovering over a grave or about a tomb. At any given time the lights are all the same color. However, the colors do vary from creature to creature, from white to rose to emerald green and shades in between.

The lights are not a part of the creature, but are residual bursts of energy that it constantly gives off. Some sages believe that the colors of the lights correspond to the creature's moods or strength. The lights effectively mask the creature, which is a black, vaguely man-shaped form with tentacles. The lights can also be distracting. Any characters viewing a grave watcher for the first time easily can become mesmerized by the light display. Such characters must make a saving throw vs. petrification at a −2 penalty or stand transfixed by the lights for 2d4 rounds.

The body of a grave watcher is made of thousands of small particles from the negative material plane that are held together by electrical energy. A grave watcher's hit dice determines the number of tentacles it has: HD − 4 = # of tentacles. For example, a 5 HD grave watcher has one tentacle, a 6 HD, two; a 7 HD, three; and a 15 HD, 11.

Further, grave watchers have maximum hit points. This means a 5 HD grave watcher has 40 hit points, and a 15 HD grave watcher has 120.

Combat: A grave watcher only attacks if someone or something trespasses over a grave it has chosen to watch. A grave watcher has as many attacks as it has appendages. Each successful strike causes 1d8 points of electrical damage. In addition, if a struck victim is wearing or carrying more than 20 pounds of metal, the electricity has a scatter effect. All those standing within 10 feet of him suffer 1d8 points of damage from the electricity bouncing off of him (save vs. breath weapon for half). Please note that most metal armor weighs more than 20 pounds, and treasure often has a lot of metal in it.



For every 8 hit points of damage the grave watcher suffers, it loses one tentacle, and therefore one attack. Tentacles reform and reattach to the main body after four rounds (regenerating 2 hp a round); however, if a grave watcher's hit points ever fall below zero, the creature is slain.

Because a grave watcher is composed of small particles, edged weapons cause only half damage, as they pass between some of the particles. Bludgeoning weapons cause full damage, however. Magical attacks which are mind-effecting, such as *charm person, charm monster, suggestion,* etc. have no effect on a grave watcher. Electrical attacks harmlessly pass through the creature's body.

Grave watchers which have 10 or more hit dice can split themselves in two. For example, a 10 HD grave watcher can become two 5 HD grave watchers. This process takes four rounds.

Habitat/Society: Each grave watcher guards a specific area and will not allow intruders to disturb the dead or their possessions. It is not known how a grave watcher chooses a home, but it is rumored that one can be summoned to act as a guardian.

Only one grave watcher has been noted at any one time. Sages theorize that when multiple grave watchers come in contact with each other they fuse to form a larger creature.

Ecology: Grave watchers perform a useful task by guarding the resting places of those departed from this world.

Groundling

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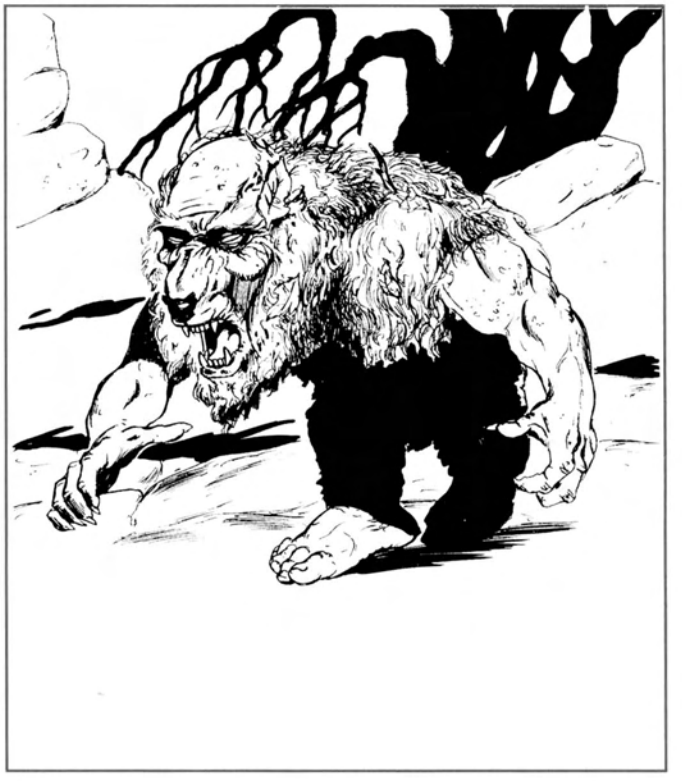
CLIMATE:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Packs
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any (prefer nocturnal)
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	K,M
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Evil
NO. APPEARING:	2-8
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	6, Br 12
HIT DICE:	3+6
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4/1-4/1-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Tracking
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+4 saving throw vs spell, wand, stave, rod, and poison
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (4' and taller)
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	175



Groundlings are a magically altered race of Zhentarim assassins created from dwarves who have been hideously transformed to resemble a cross between dwarves and giant badgers.

Groundlings are typically short and stocky, and they easily can be mistaken for dwarves at a distance. Stunted ears are buried in wild fur, and the eyes reduced to narrow slits. A long, bristled snout replaces the dwarven nose, and large fangs protrude from the extended mouth. A groundling's hands end in powerful talons sharper than swords. Groundlings generally stink of spoiled meat.

Groundlings are not very intelligent, but they are extremely cunning. They serve their Zhentarim masters by tracking down and destroying their enemies.

Groundlings have the magically enhanced ability to track any creature by scent alone, once provided with an object the creature has handled. Groundlings are able to sniff out any clothing previously worn by the intended target—and handled by no one else for more than a few moments.

Balancing the keen sense of smell of a groundling is its weak eyesight. Groundlings dislike daylight and are typically encountered only at night.

Groundlings rarely leave their tunnels, and they are capable of burrowing at astounding speeds.

Groundlings are bound by highly structured guild rules and will avoid killing creatures other than their intended targets. If ordered to return their target alive, groundlings will attempt to subdue their victim. Otherwise they will kill and devour the unfortunate creature.

Combat: In combat, groundlings will burrow below their victims and explode upward in a shower of rock and dirt. Any creature attacked by a burrowing groundling receives a −3 adjustment to surprise. Such burrowing attacks are made at +2 to hit.

In combat, a groundling will grab its victim with powerful claws and sharp fangs, then attempt to drag it below the surface. If a groundling successfully hits with any two attacks in one round, it will drag the victim into its burrow at the end of the round. Creatures dragged into a groundling burrow warren can attack only with small or natural weapons, and those at a −2 penalty. Groundlings attack at +2 to hit and damage while within their tunnels.

Once in the tunnels, a creature can be pulled out only with a combined strength of 23 or greater, counting both the victim and any assistants.

Habitat/Society: Groundlings have no true society, created as they are by the Zhentarim to serve as assassins. Most resent their enslavement, but all follow the orders of their guild except in extreme circumstances.

When not based in the dungeons of the Darkhold, groundlings are almost always found just below the surface of the earth, where they form small warrens in which to rest.

Ecology: Groundlings have voracious appetites; they are willing to eat almost anything, although they prefer meat. Groundlings have an extremely high metabolic rate, so they need tremendous amounts of sustenance to fuel their magically enhanced burrowing.

Source: "The Family Business," by James Lowder, in the *Realms of Valor* anthology.

Ha'pony

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any temperate
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Community
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	M, (I)
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral good
NO. APPEARING:	2-8
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	2+2
THAC0:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	+3 with bows and slings
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (4 1/2-5′)
MORALE:	Steady (11-12)
XP VALUE:	Normal: 120 Mayor: 175

Ha'ponies have the upper body of a halfling combined with the lower body of a pony.

They have a weather-beaten complexion, with hair varying from sandy to dark brown. Their pony hindquarters are varying shades of brown and chestnut, with some grays. In most tribes, the mayor has a piebald coat.

Ha'ponies wear brightly colored shirts and tunics, and the majority braid their hair and tails with many-colored ribbons.

Combat: Ha'ponies are peace-loving creatures but will fight ferociously in defense of their homes and families. Like halflings, they are very skilled with both the sling and the bow, receiving a +3 bonus to attack rolls. Ha'ponies gain a +2 bonus on their saving throws vs. spells and poison due to the natural resistance shared with their halfling cousins.

Ha'ponies do not normally wear armor, but each village usually has a militia with 20-30 members who wear studded leather armor (jerkins and barding). In their villages, ha'ponies do not normally carry weapons, except for the militia. These stalwarts are usually armed with short swords and slings, or short swords and bows.

When outside the village, ha'ponies are usually armed with short swords or spears. In addition, 50% of the group is armed with slings or short bows. There is a 30% chance that a group outside a village will be militia on patrol.

The mayor very rarely (5%) leaves the village, but if so he or she will wear a chain mail vest and carry a short sword and short bow. The mayor has 3+2 HD, AC 5, and THAC0 17.

Ha'ponies possess infravision with a range of 30′.

Habitat/Society: Ha'pony villages usually number between 80 and 150 individuals. Of this number, 15% are children and 30% females. Ha'pony females do not normally fight, but if the village is threatened they will defend their homes and children with slings and daggers.

The village has a mayor, but most important decisions are made by a council of elders known as "The Circle of Oak." In extreme cases, the Circle can remove a mayor from office and exile the unfortunate.

Ha'ponies are a cheerful people who are briefly wary of outsiders. They take pleasure in simple crafts and in nature, but they do not have the great love of food which characterizes their halfling cousins.

Ha'ponies speak Halfling and Common.

Ecology: The main fare of a ha'pony is fruit, supplemented by cereals. They make up to 20 different varieties of bread, each village having its own specialty. Ha'ponies occasionally hunt game birds such as pheasant and partridge.

Ha'ponies have a life span of approximately 120 years. They live in small family clusters within the village community. They don't breed often, but once a child is born it is lovingly cared for and spoiled by all its relatives.

Hearth Fiend

by William Connors

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any open fire
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	See below
HIT DICE:	Varies
THAC0:	Varies
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Varies
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Firebolt
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Hit only by magic weapons
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	Varies
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	Varies

Since the dawn of time, mankind has looked upon fire as a mixed blessing. It drives away the night and holds back the cold. Wild animals will not approach it, and much of civilization depends upon it. Still, there are times when the flames that have nurtured mankind from the stone age into an era of steel and magic turn upon him. Fires escape the confines of lanterns, and houses are burned to the ground. Someone reaching into a warm hearth stumbles and scorches his hand on the dancing flames within it. Often, this is just chance. Sometimes, however, a more sinister force is at work.

The hearth fiend is an evil creature from the elemental plane of fire. Similar in many ways to the water weird, it is brought into Ravenloft as an accidental side effect of certain magical spells. As soon as they arrive in the demiplane of dread, hearth fiends begin to do evil. Hearth fiends have been encountered on other planes of existence, usually unwittingly carried by adventurers escaping from Ravenloft.

A hearth fiend is found only in a source of open fire: the guttering flame of a candle, the stout radiance of a torch, the warming blaze of a campfire, and so on. Here, it is visible occasionally (5% chance if closely examined) as a malevolent face that flickers menacingly in the fire. If the creature wishes to, it can make its features obvious to all who look upon it, otherwise it can be seen only with a *detect magic, detect invisibility,* or similar spell.

Hearth fiends communicate with others of their kind through the flickering of their flames and the pops and crackles they emit. When they wish to, which is seldom, they can speak to those near them in the Common tongue of men. In such cases, their voices are sharp and crackling with hissing whispery overtones. There is a 75% chance that those who hear the voice of the hearth fiend will not recognize it as speech unless they are aware of the creature's presence.

Those who hear the whisperings of the fire and recognize that it is speaking to them can be charmed by the creature, and it is in this way that the creature begins to spread its evil. Those who are aware that the fire is magical or know of its true nature are immune to the enchanting effects of the whispers. Thus, as soon as a party of adventurers learns that a given flame is actually controlled by a hearth fiend, they become immune to its charm ability. The hearth fiend can charm only one individual at a time, so the usefulness of this power is limited.

Combat: Hearth fiends attack by releasing powerful bolts of flame from their bodies. One bolt can be fired per combat round, and the amount of damage it inflicts is based upon the size of the fire that hosts the creature (see ecology). The bolts have a range of 15 feet. A normal attack roll is made by the fiery monster when it employs this assault. Anyone struck by the flames must make a saving throw versus breath weapons. Success indicates only half damage from the attack. Failure indicates that the creature takes full damage and that some or all possessions must make saving throws versus magical fire or be destroyed. Items stored within other items need not save unless the item holding them is destroyed.

Those wishing to harm the hearth fiend by direct assault must employ magical weapons. Any non-magical item employed against the creature inflicts no damage and must save versus magical fire or be destroyed.

Magical attacks based on lightning, electricity, heat, or flames inflict no damage upon the creature. Spells that rely upon cold or ice to inflict injury cause half damage to the hearth fiend. Those spells that create water in large quantities can be used to smother the hearth fiend, inflicting 1d4 points of damage per gallon of magically created water thrown upon the creature. Non-magical water, including holy water, has no effect on the hearth fiend and may actually be burned and consumed by the creature just like any other material object that it comes into contact with.

Spells like *resist fire* and *flame walk* can be used to protect oneself from the ravages of a hearth fiend, although the creature is assumed to be composed magical fire. Spells that drive creatures back to their native planes or limit their actions (*dismiss fire elemental* or *protection from evil,* for example) affect the hearth fiend normally.

Hearth Fiend

Habitat/Society: Hearth fiends are solitary creatures that delight in causing mischief and evil. Once the monster takes up residence in a given fire, that flame cannot be extinguished by normal means. It continues to burn so long as there is fuel available. Because the magical fires of this creature can consume stone and water as easily as wood or coal, it almost always has something to consume. Hearth fiends have a taste for living flesh as a fuel source, however, and enjoy nothing more than the consumption of thrashing, screaming victims caught in their fiery embrace.

Thrice per day, the hearth fiend can release 2-12 (2d6) ember eyes. These appear as innocent embers, still smoldering from the heat of the fire, that drift out into the air. The eyes remain hot and glowing for 1d6 rounds, during which time they drift about at the speed of a walking man. The hearth fiend is able to see and hear all that comes to pass near the eyes, so it uses them to gather information about its surroundings. Ember eyes can be smothered by anything that would quench normal fire (a cup of water, etc.) or anything that robs them of their enchantment (like *dispel magic*).

In addition to their use as sensory organs, the ember eyes can ignite anything they are directed to land upon. The object in question must make a saving throw versus normal fires or begin to burn. If they land on a person, that individual must make a saving throw versus breath weapons or suffer one point of damage.

Once the embers have ignited a fire, the hearth fiend can instantly transfer itself to these new flames. This takes but one round, during which time attacks on either the new or old location can affect the creature. As a rule, a hearth fiend will be reluctant to jump from a larger fire to a smaller one, for this diminishes its power. This is, however, the only way that a hearth fiend can move about on the Prime Material Plane, so it is often forced to leap into smaller fires to escape destruction at the hands of adventurers.

As soon as a hearth fiend enters a new flame, it is fully healed of damage it might have suffered, and its hit points are rerolled based on its new size. Further, the old fire is no longer considered to be magical fire and can be extinguished normally, while the new fire now becomes enchanted.

Typically, the hearth fiend will wait for several days after entering a new fire before taking any actions that might reveal its presence to those around it. When it begins its evil doings, it typically does so by whispering to those who are not likely to guess at its origins: a young child, a bar maid, or a dim-witted bully.

It begins to promise things to this person in exchange for their help in spreading its evil. At first, the promises are innocent and even helpful *"I will keep your inn warm and brightly lit..."* and the demands minimal *"...if only you will bring me some tasty yew to feed upon."*

As time goes on, and the creature begins to acquire the trust and friendship of the fire's tender, the promises become more insidious and the demands greater. It might promise never to burn the evening meal, or even the family children, in exchange for a small animal being tossed into it once per month. Further, because the fire can see many things with its ember eyes that the tender cannot, it will begin to offer disturbing news. The intent of its efforts is to goad the person it speaks to into helping the hearth fire do more evil deeds. It might reveal to a housewife whose fireplace it inhabits that her husband has been having an affair with the serving girl. Of course, the fire will be only too happy to burn the girl's face, scaring her for life, the next time she comes near it. Because of the cruel nature of the fire, there may not have been any actual romance between the master of the house and his servant, but the wife may never learn that.

Eventually, the hearth fiend will demand great sacrifices from its host—perhaps intelligent beings lured near to it so that it can lash out at them with its firebolts or the transportation of its ember eyes to places where they will ignite and allow the creature potential refuge. Often, it will cloak these requests in terms that will make them pleasing to the person it has charmed. For example, it might ask to have one of its embers transported to the hearth of a neighbor who has offended its tender. Once there, it vows to destroy the house, driving the inhabitants out and forcing them to seek a new home elsewhere. In actuality, of course, the creature will see to it that the neighbors are unable to escape the flames that engulf their home so that it may delight in the taste of their seared flesh.

Ecology: Whenever a wizard or priest employs a fire-based spell in Ravenloft, there is a 1% chance per level of the spell that the spell will cause a hearth fiend to appear. The creature will instantly be drawn into the nearest source of nonmagical fire, which it will enter. The power of the creature is based wholly upon the size of the fire that it inhabits, as indicated on the following chart:

Fire	HD	THAC0	Firebolt	XP Value
Candle or lamp	1	19	1d4	120
Torch or cooking fire	3	17	2d4	270
Campfire or fireplace	5	15	3d4	650
Large hearth	7	13	4d4	1,400
Bonfire	9	11	5d4	3,000
Burning house	11	9	6d4	5,000
Burning mansion	13	7	7d4	7,000
Burning fort	15	5	8d4	9,000
Forest fire	17	3	9d4	11,000

On their native plane, hearth fiends are lesser creatures. They drift about, always at the mercy of even the most minor inhabitants of the elemental plane of fire. They only thing that makes them unique and potent in any way is their ability to sense the use of magic that draws upon the elemental fire of their home dimension. Whenever a hearth fiend senses such a spell, it will latch on to the enchantment and leave behind the elemental plane of fire.

Once on the prime material plane, a hearth fiend is more powerful. Its fiery nature makes it dangerous and its intelligence makes it cunning enough to survive. Thus, hearth fiends are greatly reluctant to return to their plane of origin. If confronted with the possibility of banishment from the prime material plane, they will be more than willing to bargain and haggle for a chance to remain. Of course, they will lie and deceive those they must deal with in any way possible, planning all the while to destroy them at the earliest opportunity.

Just as the hearth fiend is drawn into the prime material plane by magic, so, too, can it be used to foster magic. It is known that Azalin of Darkon once harnessed the power of several of these creatures in a forge that is said to have burned hotter than any known before. Of course, in order to fuel the forge he was forced to cast living people, usually criminals from his dungeons and foolhardy adventurers, into it. However, this effort was rewarded with a device that proved unusually suited to the creation of magical items. There are those who say that each and every one of his dreaded Kargat vampires is armed with a weapon forged in the flames of this evil device. The means by which Azalin built this forge and contained the elemental creatures are unknown, but it is certain that the darkest of dark magics was involved.

Horl Ep (Arrow tree)

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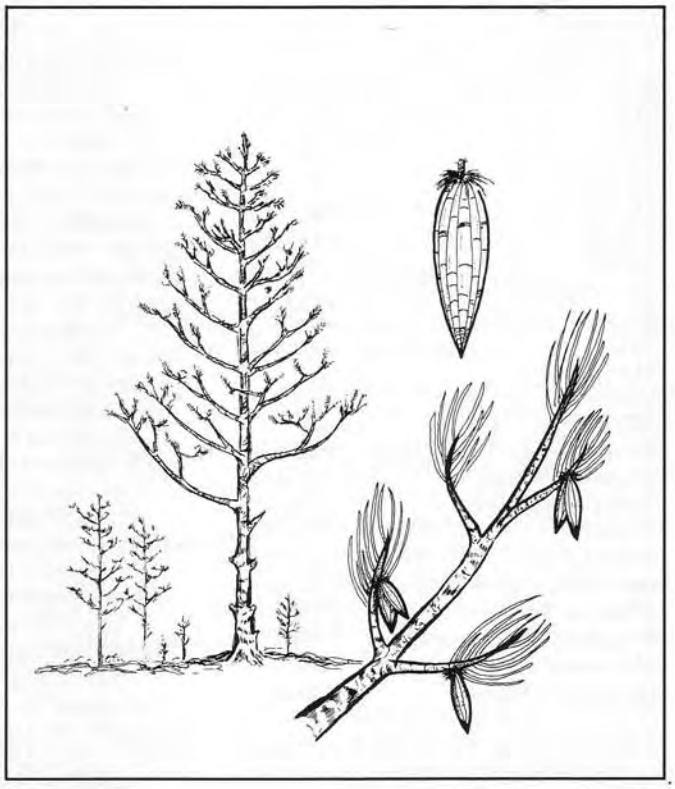
Number:	1d4
Percept:	14
Stealth/R.U.:	+3
AC:	14
MD:	10
Health:	12
Speed:	0
Level:	3
Hit Dice:	12 (42)
THAC:	+3
Attacks:	2
Seed (2):	2d8
Int:	Animal
Morale:	13
Size:	L (4 m)
XP Value:	175
Frequency:	Uncommon
Organization:	Solitary
Activity Cycle:	Day
Diet:	Carnivore
Tech Level:	0
Artifacts:	A
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate or subarctic forests
Physical Mutations:	Infravision, Rocket seeds (16) Antibiotic fruit (10)
Mental Mutations:	None
Special Powers:	None



Description: From a distance, the horl ep appears no different than a pine tree. However, the closer one gets to the tree, the more "perfect" it seems.

Horl eps have various-sized hollow sections at the base of their trunks; these serve as the plants' mouths. Knots along the trees' trunks serve as eyes. It is difficult to distinguish a horl ep from other pine trees if there are many of the latter trees around.

Those who know that horl eps inhabit certain northern woods stay clear of those areas during the summer and fall. The horl eps are far from the most timid of mutated plants.

Combat: A horl ep, or arrow tree, attacks by firing barbed seeds—each burst contains 10 seeds and causes 2d8 points of damage. The tree can fire two such bursts per round until all of its seeds are expended. Each horl ep grows from 1,000 to 10,000 seeds (1d10X100) per year, enough for 50 to 500 combat rounds. New seeds become mature enough to fire during late summer and early fall. At other times, the plant must depend on carefully hoarded seeds.

A horl ep generally will attack any warm-blooded man-sized or larger creature that comes within 20 meters of its trunk. When such a victim is within range, the tree begins its assault by shooting bursts of seeds. If more than one creature is present, the horl ep will continually switch targets every two combat rounds until the victims have fled or died. Horl eps try to reserve at least 500 seeds for defense; rarely will the plant expend all of its seeds during one melee. During the late fall through mid summer, the plant will have even fewer seeds, generally 50-200.

The wounds caused by horl ep seeds are painful, but not serious. Characters struck by the seeds heal the damage in half the normal time. Further, there is a 40% chance that a character struck by the seeds will have a healing sap injected into his system, causing the damage to heal in one-quarter the normal time. However, characters who enjoy this one-quarter healing time should be wary. The healing sap will cause the seeds imbedded in the character to grow. Germination does not begin for two weeks, and after that time the character daily suffers 1d4 points of damage and a −1 to CN until he dies or the seed is cut out. If a character reaches 0 HP or 0 CN, he collapses and a sapling sprouts from his body.

Society: A horl ep is immobile, being rooted to the spot from which it sprouted. However, its roots are flexible and can rise from the earth to drag dead bodies to the horl ep's hollowed-out spot in the trunk, where they can be devoured.

The mutated trees are not able to communicate with each other, which has prevented their social organization from evolving beyond a copse of carnivorous trees. There have been several recorded attempts to cultivate horl eps and use them as defenses against trespassers and predators. However, these attempts usually resulted in the property owners' demise, as horl eps tend to attack anything that moves. Efforts to plant the mutated trees in warmer areas have failed; the horl eps did not live longer than a year.

Horl eps multiply primarily through their victims. Creatures who have seeds embedded in them, and who die when a young horl ep springs from them, help to guarantee that the mutated trees will survive. Further, each fall when the horl eps must loose their remaining barbed seeds, there is a 20% chance (for each horl ep in a forest) that a seed will take root and start to grow. It takes 4d4 years before a new mutated tree is large enough to attack unwary travelers.

Those who know about the horl ep's healing sap hunt the trees in the spring and early summer when the threat from the barbed seeds is the lowest. These individuals have learned to tap the tree, much like trees are tapped for maple syrup, and gather a viscous mixture that can be used to treat wounds. The pulpy fruit is effectively an antibiotic and is useful in treating wounds and various diseases.

KATANGA, OSTRICH

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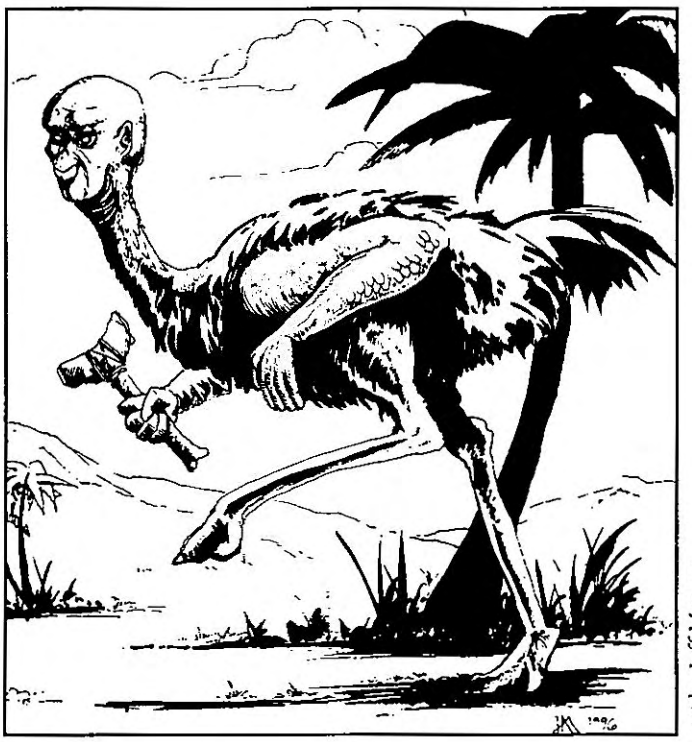
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical/Plains
FREQUENCY:	Uncomon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Herbivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low to Genius
TREASURE:	Individual
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral good
NO. APPEARING:	1-10
ARMOR CLASS:	9/7
MOVEMENT:	12/18
HIT DICE:	Varies
THAC0:	Varies
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1–8 (kick)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	none
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	none
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M
MORALE:	Unsteady (5-7)
XP VALUE:	150/hit die



art by Jeff Menges

Katanga are a race of intelligent shape-changing animals. Their ability to shapeshift is natural—not a form of lycanthropy. Katanga appear as normal animals to spellcasters who detect for illusions or use *true seeing*.

Katanga can shapeshift between three different forms: animal, biped, and human. Each form has its own advantages and disadvantages.

In human form, the ostrich katanga retain a slightly elongated neck, beaky nose, and bald head. In all other respects they have the same abilities as a normal human and may employ weapons, nonweapon proficiencies, and class-based skills.

In biped form, ostrich katanga have an ostrich body and legs with a human head and prehensile hands (pictured above). They may still use a limited form of their natural attacks. In this form they can converse both with people and animals of their same type.

In animal form, ostrich katanga are indistinguishable from normal ostriches. They can use full natural attacks and employ their animal movement. They cannot cast spells, use weapons, wear armor, or use nonweapon proficiencies which require a human form. They can communicate only with other katanga or animals of their type, though they understand any language they know.

Each day a katanga can shapechange a number of times equal to its level (including changing back) measured by the rising of the sun. For instance, a 1st level katanga can change from human to biped. It must then remain in that form until after the following dawn. Changing form requires one complete roundof concentration, during which the katanga can take no other action. Armor and other equipment does not change, but simply falls to the ground.

Only physical shape and capacity change when a katanga changes form. Total hit points and intelligence do not vary between forms. Regardless of form, ostrich katanga always cast a shadow in the shape of an ostrich.

Combat: All values divided by a slash indicate biped/animal forms. In human form, katanga have human Size, Armor Class, and Movement rates, and inflict damage by weapon type. Strength bonuses do not apply to natural attacks, only to weapon attacks made in human or biped form.

In ostrich form, ostrich katanga can kick with their powerful legs for 1-8 points of damage. If a fight is going badly, they can also flee quickly.

In biped form, katanga gain 120-foot infravision.

Habitat/Society: Ostrich katanga generally live solitary lives, gathering in small flocks only to trade or mate; such gatherings take place at the beginning of spring and fall. They have little use for material possession, never accumulating more equipment than they can carry, trading precious items for practical ones like weapons, tools, or food.

They are generally on good terms with the Nubari and other savanna humanoids, with no . Ostrich katanga see themselves as the dominant birdlife on the savanna, and they protect their homelands fiercely. However, they feel uncomfortable in the jungle; the enclosed space makes them claustrophobic and hinders their running ability which they rely on heavily.

Ecology: A katanga's diet depends on its animal form. An ostrich katanga eats mostly plants, althoughthey will also eat lizards and turtles if they can find them. In addition, they eat sand and gravel to aid digestion. Ostrich katanga can go for long periods without water as long as they eat plenty of leafy green plants.

Mating is polygamous, with a hen laying as many as 10 eggs appoximately once a year. Males sit on the eggs at night, while both males and females take care of the eggs duringthe day.

Ostrich katanga can live up to 80 years, and their hide makes an excellent leather. Most ostrich katanga will attack anyone wearing ostrich hide on sight.

LIZARDMAN, MALATRAN

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	Lizard Man	Lizard King
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical/Swamp, forest	Tropical/Swamp, forest
FREQUENCY:	Rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any	Any
DIET:	Special	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7) to Average (8-10)	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	D	E
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	8-15 (1d8+7)	1
ARMOR CLASS:	5	3
MOVEMENT:	6, Sw 12	9, Sw 15
HIT DICE:	2+1	8
THAC0:	19	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 or 1	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-2/1-2/1-6 or by weapon	5-20 (3d6+2)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	M (7' tall)	L (8' tall)
MORALE:	14	16
XP VALUE:	65	975

art by Jeff Menges

Lizard men are semi-aquatic, reptilian humanoids that live through scavenging, raiding, fishing, and gathering.

Adult lizard men stand 6 to 7 feet tall, weighing 200 to 250 pounds. Skin tones range from dark green to gray to brown, and their scales give them a flecked appearance. Their tails average 3 to 4 feet long and are not prehensile. Males are nearly impossible to distinguish from females without close inspection. Lizard man garb is limited to strings of bones and other ornamentation, and occasionally loincloths among the more advanced lizard men. Lizard men speak their own language; lizard man heroes must use proficiency slots to learn the common tongue of the Nubari or other lanugaues.

Combat: In combat, normal lizard men fight as unorganized individuals. If they have equality or an advantage over their opponents, they tend toward frontal assaults and massed rushes. When outnumbered, overmatched, or on their home ground, however, they become wily and ferocious opponents. Snares, ambushes, and spoiling raids are favored tactics then. While individually savage in melee, these lizard men can be distracted by food or simple treasures. They occasionally take prisoners as slaves or to sacrifice in obscure tribal rites.

Advanced lizard men, those evolved to a higher state, hurl barbed darts (30 yard range, 1-4 points damage) or javelins (1-6 points damage) before closing with the enemy. These lizard men use clubs (treat as morning stars, 2-8 points damage), and the leaders may use captured swords or other weaponry.

For every 10 lizard men encountered, there will be one patrol leader with maximum hit points (17 hp) and a 50% chance for a shaman with 3 Hit Dice and the abilities of a 3rd-level priest. If one or more tribes are encountered, each tribe will also have a war leader of 6 Hit Dice, two subleaders with 4 Hit Dice, and a shaman of either 4 or 5 Hit Dice (50% chance of each). Any group of two or more tribes has a 50% chance for an additional shaman of 7 Hit Dice. Furthermore, each such group has a cumulative 10% chance per tribe to be led by a lizard king. A lizard king is a lizard man of above average height and intelligence, leading one or more loosely organized tribes of lizard men. If a lizard king is present, a shaman of 7 Hit Dice will always be present, and all patrol leaders from each tribe (i.e., 10% of the male warriors) will be combined into a single fanatical bodyguard for the lizard king.

Habitat/Society: Lizard men are typically found in swamps, marshes, and similar places, sometimes dwelling totally underwater in air-filled caves. In Malatra, tribes can also be found in the jungle near swampy regions; these tend to be the more advanced lizard men. A tribe rarely numbers more than 150 individuals, including females and hatchlings. It is not uncommon for several tribes in an area to forge an informal alliance against outsiders, including other lizard man tribes.

About one tribe in 10 has evolved to a higher state. *All lizard man heroes are among these advanced lizard men.* They dwell in huts and have more advanced aspects to their culture; in many ways they imitate the Nubari tribes around them.

Lizard men are omnivorous, but prefer flesh to other foods.

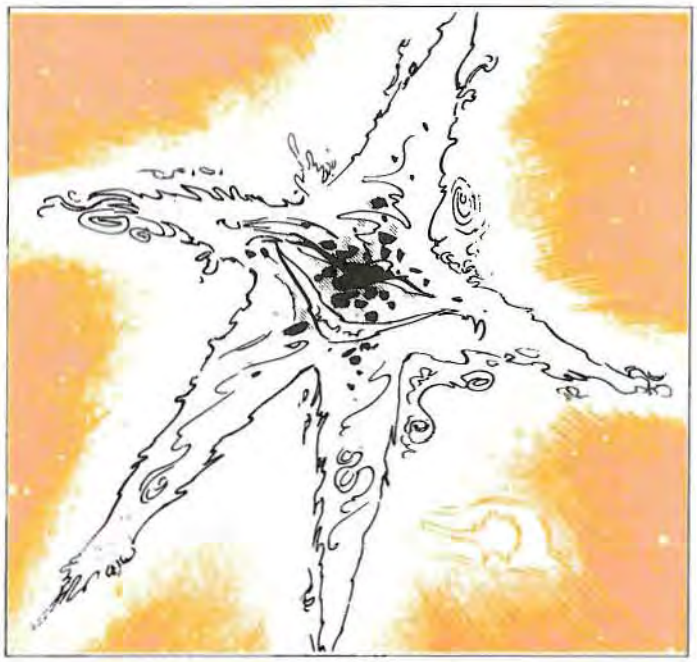
Ecology: Lizard men have few natural enemies. They prey on human, demihuman, or humanoid settlements if these are nearby. Lizard man eggs are bitter and inedible, as is their flesh, but their skin is sometimes worked as scale armor (Armor Class 6). If a lizard man sees a human or humanoid wearing armor made of lizard man hide, he becomes enraged and seeks to slay the wearer at the first good opportunity.

As amphibians, lizard men cannot breathe underwater; they can however, hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to 2/3 of their Consitution score before making a check for drowning. Lizard men can suffer from dehydration when adventuring outside of very moist/swampy areas. They must wet themselves twice a day or lose two Constitution points per missed bath. Lost Constitution points are regained at the rate of two points per bath. A waterskin provides enough water for a single wetting.

MagiStar

by Dale A. Donovan

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Interior of Crystal Sphere surface
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	See below
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (18)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	Irrelevant
MOVEMENT:	Nil
HIT DICE:	8+8
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By spell
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to physical attacks
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	100% to own school, nil for others
SIZE:	G (size varies)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	6,000



MagiStars are extremely rare residents on the interior of *crystal spheres* which have "stars" present on them. Not every star is a MagiStar. As a rule, there are only eight (one of each school) on any sphere that has MagiStars.

MagiStars are intelligent collections of pure magical energy of any one of the eight schools of magery. They appear as brightly colored fire-bodies with an unusual degree of activity. Flares, swirls, and even small energy whirlpools are not uncommon near them. Care should be taken by all on-deck persons to avoid being caught by one of these magical outbursts.

Most of the time, the greatest danger of being caught in a MagiStar's flare is the possibility of being knocked off the ship. The flares possess a degree of physical force, and this fact can be to the MagiStar's advantage if unwanted guests approach too closely (see "Combat").

Another troublesome aspect of too closely approaching MagiStars is the occurrence of bizarre random magical effects (pertinent to that MagiStar's school) that are noticed by the crew of a passing ship (see below).

The most important fact about MagiStars is that they are also "living gates" through the Sphere to the Phlogiston. Since they are immobile, spacefarers needn't hunt for a gate. Convincing a MagiStar to allow your ship to pass through the gate is another matter entirely.

Combat: When engaged in combat, a MagiStar can use any one spell of its school, at a rate of one per round, once a day. Unharmed by all physical attacks, including magic weapons, only magic spells can harm them. Spells from schools other than its own (and Priest spells) will affect a MagiStar normally, with appropriate saves. MagiStars save as 10th-level wizards. Spells from their own school are simply absorbed by the MagiStar, and this allows the MagiStar one extra use of any such spell per day.

As mentioned above, MagiStars' flares possess a degree of physical force, similar to a strong wind on a planet. A MagiStar can produce one flare a melee round, but cannot cast a spell on the same round it uses a flare. Under normal circumstances, the effect of a flare is identical to a *gust of wind* spell, although, technically, it is not that spell. When a MagiStar wishes to prevent a ship from approaching too closely, it can, once every 10 rounds, amplify this effect to be equal to a *wind wall* spell. Both of these effects act as if the MagiStar were a 10th-level wizard. Both types of flares have a range of 1,500 yards (three tactical hexes).

In addition to these conscious attacks, any spelljamming ship's approach to a MagiStar can cause unpredictable magical effects to take place on board. Some possible effects include: all magic items onboard that are related to the MagiStar's school begin to glow, and continue to do so until the ship moves away; a sudden drop to tactical speed, or a jump to "normal" speed, via the helm; sudden fainting spells (save vs. spells to avoid) for specialist mages of schools opposing the MagiStar's; or a +1 level to any specialist mages of the MagiStar's school for the duration of the mage's stay within the MagiStar's area of effect. Any of these effects can take place when a ship passes within three tactical hexes (1,500 yards) of a MagiStar. All of these random effects should be relatively harmless, serving more as nuisances than as harmful incidents. The DM may choose from the above examples, or may create his own, original, random effects, keeping in mind the idea that these

effects should annoy the PCs, not annihilate them.

Only two spells affect all MagiStars equally: *dispel magic* and *anti-magic shell*. *Dispel magic* will, if the MagiStar fails a save vs. spells, disrupt the MagiStar for 1d4 rounds. A disrupted MagiStar can cast no spells, but any random effects and flares continue. A disrupted MagiStar cannot be used as a gate. To cause all effects of being near a MagiStar to cease, an *anti-magic shell* must be cast about the ship, or between the ship and the MagiStar, allowing the ship to leave the area, and it causes all random magical effects and flares to no longer affect that ship.

Whenever a MagiStar is brought to 0 hp, it is incapacitated for 1d6 hours, during which time the gate will function. Otherwise, a MagiStar can prevent a ship from using its gate, by using its flares. Also, MagiStars serve only as one-way gates. Since none exist on the exterior of the Spheres, it is impossible to use a MagiStar to pass from the Phlogiston into a Sphere.

Some wizards, of various races, have on occasion tried to *magic jar* a MagiStar. This is normally fatal, since the sheer amount of magical energy that composes a MagiStar simply burns out the mage's mind and body.

It should be stated that even when a MagiStar is brought to 0 hit points, it is not killed (how can you kill raw magic?). The MagiStar will regenerate itself completely in the space of 24 hours, with no other harmful effects.

Habitat/Society: Solitary beings, MagiStars are philosophers, contemplating the movements of the worlds beneath them and how their magic school has effected events on those worlds. They are intensely interested in planetside events involving their school of magic; large battles, mysteries uncovered or solved, new items or spells created, etc. This is a source of pride for them, and may make negotiations for passage with them easier.

As residents living on the crystal sphere, MagiStars are also "living gates" to the Phlogiston. MagiStars can communicate with spacefarers via telepathy. Passage through the MagiStar may be purchased, but the price usually involves some magic item, spell, scroll, etc., related to the MagiStar's school. This item is then consumed by the MagiStar.

As each MagiStar is the embodiment of one school of magic, their personalities exemplify the types of mages that choose to specialize in that school. Most MagiStars are relatively secretive about their specific school of magic, as it is the key to their personalities, and is their prime point of pride.

Abjuration MagiStars consider themselves to be sensible, solid, and cautious in their dealings with other races. To many of the spacefaring races, they come across as cowardly, even paranoid. This personality trait can be used to the spacefarers' advantage, but the advantage must not be overly pressed, for if abjuration MagiStars feel *too* threatened, they could panic, and blindly attack the ship with flares and any appropriate spells. Once they do panic, it is all but impossible to calm them down (especially since most ships can't take that kind of punishment for too long).

Conjuration MagiStars have explosive personalities. They are short-tempered, overbearing, and often insulting to "lesser" creatures. Spacefarers must be prepared with scrolls or other conjuration-related magical items in order to appease their host and potential transport for their disturbance.

Another thing spacefarers hoping to use the conjuration MagiStar's gate must possess is the ability to fawn and grovel convincingly.

Divination MagiStars are introspective, careful negotiators. They seldom seek more than information in exchange for passage. They do have the annoying habit of following any passage agreement they make *to the letter*. Space-farers must be masters of a carefully worded turn of phrase.

Enchantment MagiStars are self-centered and extremely vain. They are often over-confident when dealing with others. Spacefarers must be willing to sing the praises of any enchantment MagiStars if they wish passage. These MagiStars especially enjoy the talents of any bards aboard the ship desiring passage. But woe to the bard who sings off-key or even misses a single note while regaling the MagiStar of its virtues. Obviously, playing to their vanity is the key to success when dealing with these MagiStars.

Illusion MagiStars are very secretive, not very willing to give passage, unless the price involves some important secrets. They enjoy negotiating with allusions to some deep, dark, secret, making cryptic references to events or people unknown to the passengers of the ship desiring passage, forcing the ship's occupants to solve some puzzle or win a riddle contest to win passage.

Invocation MagiStars are greedy and acquisitive. Their spell selection allows them to be very confident whenever contact with spacefarers takes place. They will sometimes resort to extortion and threats of violence if they do not find the price for passage offered to be substantial enough.

Necromantic MagiStars are, naturally, very interested in death. They will take every opportunity to view it up close. Not much more needs to be said here, except that just about the only thing these MagiStars are good for is to eliminate some foe if said foe was to venture to within the MagiStar's range of effect.

Transmutation MagiStars are ready to converse with any passersby, and may not stop for months or years, holding a ship "dead" with its magical effects and flares. They are not unreasonable negotiators as long as the ship's passengers are willing to listen to the latest events on the third world of that system's latest fashions, the MagiStar's latest ideas on the theory of transmutation, or the story of the last passersby this MagiStar talked to (they still may be there), etc.

Once contact has been established, and if the MagiStar is inclined to negotiate, it may temporarily suspend its random magical effects and flares. Ships desiring passage generally stand a better chance of gaining passage if they can lure a specialist mage of the appropriate school to negotiate with the MagiStar; this is not always an easy thing to do.

Ecology: Almost nothing is known about how the MagiStars came to be, what causes magical energy to coalesce in such a manner, or what the MagiStars' relationship is to the *crystal spheres* they inhabit. One theory, completely unproven, states that the stars are the result of the phlogiston's friction against the exterior surface of the sphere.

Note that not all *crystal spheres* have MagiStars, but all of those that do also have an outpost or base of the Arcane within that sphere as well. What the relationship, if any, between the MagiStars and the Arcane is unknown at this time.

❑

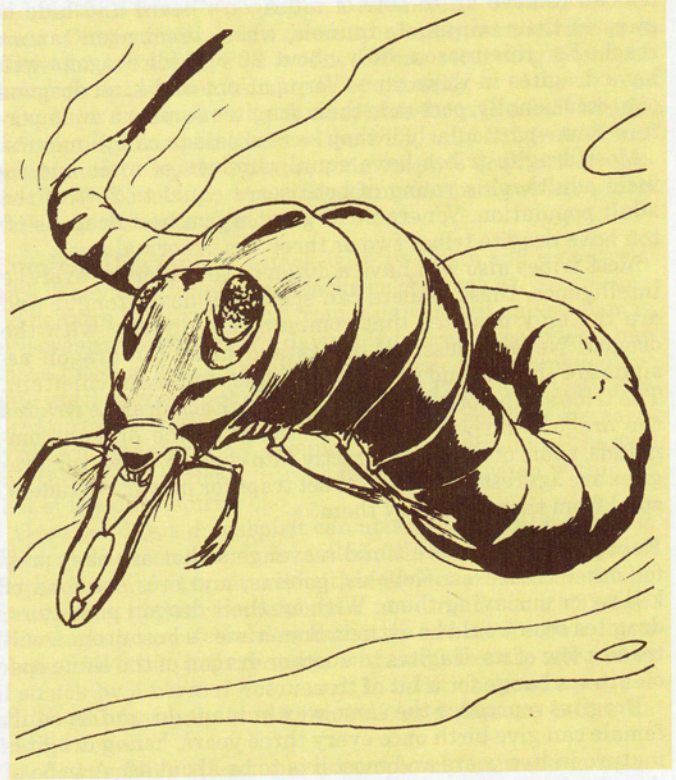
Mosquito, giant

by Jeffrey Morris

	Wriggler	Male	Culex	Anopheles
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any Water	Any	Any	Any
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon	Uncommon	Uncommon	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Swarm	Swarm	Swarm	Swarm
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any	Any	Any	Any
DIET:	Carnivore	Carnivore	Carnivore	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Non (0)	Non (0)	Non (0)	Non (0)
TREASURE:	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	3-30	2-24	2-20	2-16
ARMOR CLASS:	7	5	3	3
MOVEMENT:	Sw 6	6, Fl 15 (B)	6, Fl 24 (B)	6, Fl 18 (B)
HIT DICE:	4	6	7	8
THAC0:	17	15	13	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1	2	1	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6	1-4/1-4	1-8	1-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil	Nil	See below	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	M (5′ long)	M (7′ long)	L (9′ long)	L (12 ′ long)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)	Fearless (20)	Elite (14)	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	120	420	975	1,400

Giant mosquitoes are a plague to humans and other warm-blooded creatures. They can exist in any climate or terrain except in completely waterless deserts. They seek out mammalian blood to produce their young. A giant mosquito begins life as a larva or wriggler, then metamorphoses into either a female or male adult (the males of the two species described here are nearly identical).

Wrigglers look like large, aquatic caterpillars. Their broad heads have antennae on the front and compound eyes toward the back. They have long, hairy mandibles for biting prey.



Female adults have long proboscises equipped with internal stylets for seizing prey; the males' proboscises have no stylets, but males do have sharp claws on their front legs. Otherwise, adult males outwardly resemble the females of their species. All giant mosquitoes have two wings, six legs, and compound eyes. When flying, they can hover, take off and land vertically, and fly backward at one-third speed.

Culex mosquitoes have mottled gray thoraxes. Their abdomens have black and gold bands. Culex wings are clear and scaleless, allowing them to fly faster and farther than Anopheles mosquitoes.

Anopheles mosquitoes have brown thoraxes and black bands on their abdomens. Their legs and proboscises are longer and more powerful than the culex's, and their wings are covered with heavy black scales.

Combat: Wrigglers grab prey with their mandibles. If the victim is small or tiny, the wriggler will hold on and try to swallow it; the victim takes no damage from the mandibles, but must save vs. death each round or be swallowed. Only killing the wriggler or a successful *bend bars* roll will free a victim. A swallowed victim suffers 1d6 points of acid damage each round until totally digested. A wriggler can be attacked internally only with small cutting weapons such as daggers, and then only if the weapon was in hand when the victim was swallowed, A wriggler's internal Armor Class is 7.

Males simply slash at opponents with their claws. They vigorously defend the swarm's females and never retreat or surrender.

Females stab victims with their proboscises. If a female giant mosquito inflicts six or more points of damage in a single hit, she has grabbed her victim with her stylets and will begin draining the victim's blood the next round. Each round of blood drain robs the victim of one point of Strength and gives the female mosquito one hit point. When the mosquito has drained as many points of

Mosquito, giant

Strength as she has hit dice (seven points for a culex, eight for an anopheles), she detaches herself and flies away to lay eggs.

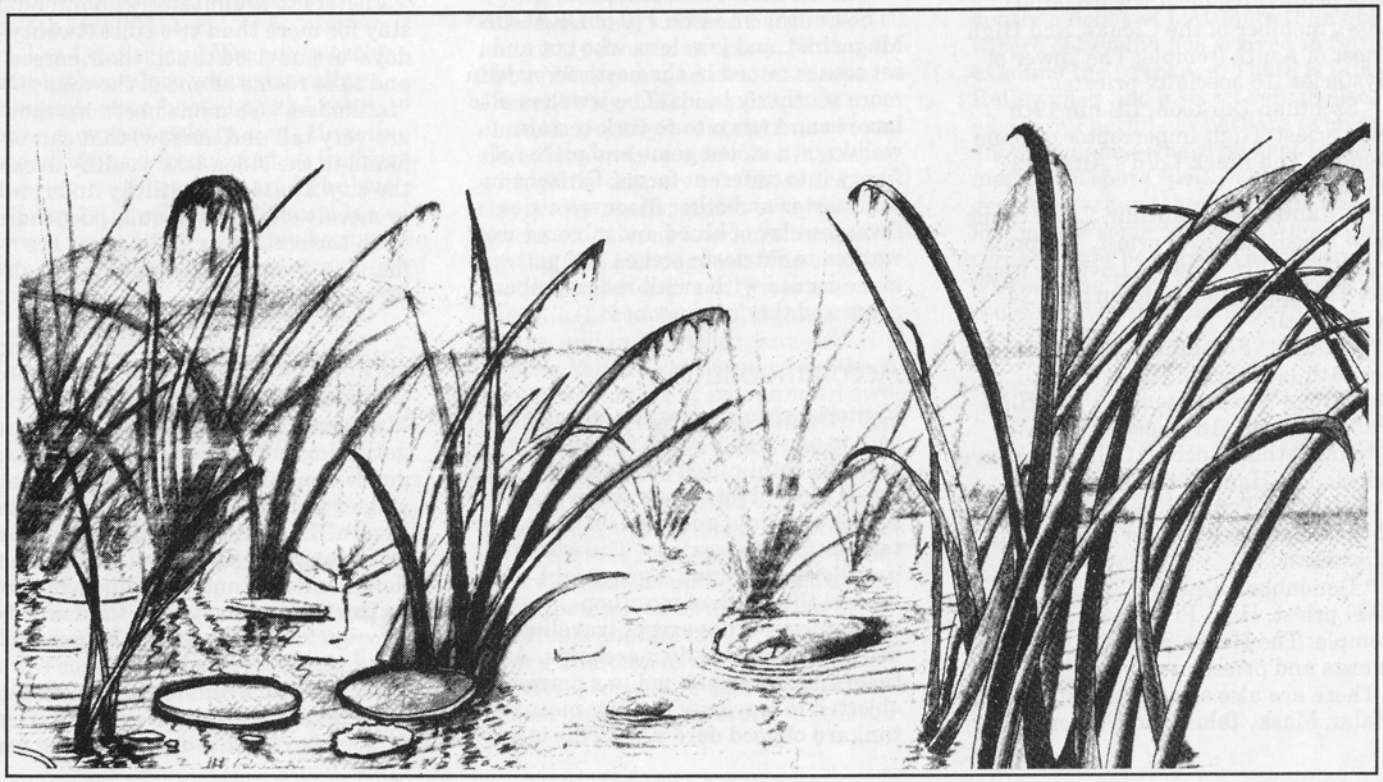
Lost points of Strength are regained at the same rate as lost hit points, either through rest or magical healing. However, all Strength losses must be restored before any damage can be cured. A victim drained to less than three points of Strength falls unconscious. A victim drained to a Strength of zero dies.

Many giant mosquitoes carry a horrible disease with variable effects. The chance that a mosquito carries a disease varies with the climate: Arid/tropical 25%, non-arid/tropical 50%, temperate 10%, sub arctic 5%, arctic 1%. A creature bitten by a diseased mosquito must save vs. poison or develop the disease in 3d12 hours. A victim can acquire the disease only once during a single encounter with a group of giant mosquitoes. When the disease appears, roll 1d4 for the effect: **1.** The victim becomes incapacitated by alternating fever and chills which persist for 1d3 days. These bouts of fever and chills recur every 1d4 + 1 months for the rest of the victim's life or until the disease is cured. During the initial attack, the victim must make a Constitution check each day or die. The recurring attacks, if any, are painful but not deadly. **2.** One of the victim's limbs (determine randomly) swells to four times normal size and becomes useless. The victim loses one point of Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma; if the limb is a leg, the victim's movement is slowed by half. The swelling and penalties persist until the disease is cured. **3.** The victim's eyes and eyelids become swollen, causing blindness. A *cure blindness* spell temporally restores sight (1d4 days), but the condition persists until cured. **4.** The victim's Strength and Constitution drop by five points and the victim falls into a coma for 2d12 hours. If either ability score drops to zero or less the victim dies. The bouts of coma recur every 1d4 + 1 months for the rest of the victim's life or until cured.

Habitat/Society: Culex mosquitoes most often dwell in urban areas, where the supply of human and demi-human blood is abundant. Anopheles mosquitoes prefer animal blood, and usually are found in the wilderness. Female giant mosquitoes lay eggs every time they drain their fill of blood—10-30 eggs per clutch. A single female giant mosquito can lay as many as 300 eggs in her lifetime. About two-thirds of the eggs hatch and become wrigglers. Since wrigglers are cannibalistic, only about one in 10 wrigglers becomes an adult. It takes about a month for an egg to become an adult mosquito. Adult males live about one month, females live two or three months.

Giant mosquitoes travel in swarms of assorted individuals of the same species. To randomly determine the size of a swarm, roll once for males and once for females according to the entry in the **Number Appearing** entry. The swarms lair in hollow trees, caves, or abandoned buildings. If the temperature drops below freezing, most giant mosquitoes die, but some hibernate, especially wrigglers, who bury themselves underwater.

Ecology: Wrigglers consume fish, insects, and any other creatures they can catch underwater. Though they will attack and kill anything, the seldom eat creatures they cannot swallow whole. Wriggler meat is considered a delicacy in some parts of the world. Adult mosquitoes eat only blood. In addition to nourishment, females need large quantities of blood to stimulate their ovaries to produce eggs. Many insectivorous animals prey on giant mosquitoes, including giant bats, frogs, toads, and dragonflies; giant mosquitoes are too stupid to fear these creatures.



Moss

by Gregory W. Detwiler

	Bog Moss	Forest Moss	Swamp Moss
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical and temperate swamps and forests		
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon	Rare	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary	Solitary	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any	Night	Any
DIET:	Omnivore	Omnivore	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Non-	Animal (1)	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Incidental	Incidental	Incidental
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral	Neutral Evil	Neutral Evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-4	1-6	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	9	7	6
MOVEMENT:	1	6	3
HIT DICE:	2	5	8
THAC0:	19	15	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	0	0	0
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Special	Special	Special
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below	See below	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below	See below	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	L (10′ cube)	L (10′ cube)	L (10′ cube)
MORALE:	Average (10)	Steady (11)	Steady (11)
XP VALUE:	175	975	2,000

Bog moss appears as a rich green mass of vegetable matter, usually found in approximately 10′ cubes. The creature nestles in bowl-like earth and rock formations, making itself appear as a normal patch of moss upon the ground.

Combat: Unwary creatures who trod upon the moss fall into the mass of it, where they will be devoured. The bog moss' digestive juices inflict 10 points of damage per round until the victim dies and is ingested. The bog moss' body is more unstable than quicksand; creatures which fall into its body cannot gain purchase to climb out. It is difficult to rescue a trapped creature, as the bog moss' digestive juices also consume organic matter, including ropes and wooden poles. Only chains, metal cables, and magic might be employed successfully.

Habitat/Society: A bog moss prefers to locate where rich soil is within easy reach. Every spring, each bog moss produces about a dozen spores which fly off with the wind. Those landing on suitable soil quickly take root and begin to grow. As the bog moss grows beyond a 2′ cube, it no longer needs roots, and they dissolve. A bog moss does not collect treasure. However, sometimes coins, armor and weapons can be found beneath a bog moss—remnants of victims.

Ecology: Bog mosses eat dirt, other plants, and any creatures which fall into its mass. When meals become sparse, the plant exists through photosynthesis. The moss is especially fond of ferns.

Bog moss has no natural enemies. However, mages have been known to seek the moss' spores for use in magical elixirs and as spell components.

Forest Moss: Forest moss is similar to bog moss. However, it is more mobile and actively seeks out creatures for food. Forest moss is sensitive to light and is more active in the evenings. It is only found in wooded areas, usually beneath large trees where there is plenty of shade.

Swamp Moss: This more powerful form of bog moss requires a wet environment. Because so much of its body is water, it takes only half-damage from fire-based spells. Cold-based spells put the creature in a form of suspended animation.

Oortling

by William W. Connors

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Comets
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Herd
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2-20
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	1–1
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-2 (1d2)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S (3′ tall)
MORALE:	Unreliable (2-4)
XP VALUE:	15

Oortlings are a pathetic race who dwell on the natural comets that exist within the *crystal spheres*. While the oortlings once had a fairly sophisticated culture, they were dominated by the mind flayers early on in their evolution. Since that time, they have been manipulated and controlled by the space faring illithids and kept as cattle.

The typical oortling looks much like a dwarf. They are short, stocky, and noted for their pallor and bloated skulls. Within these skulls are the over-developed brains of the oortlings. Although they are kept from acquiring education or knowledge by their overlords, the oortlings have the potential for great intelligence. As a rule, however, the best any oortling's brain can hope for is to be the main course at a mind flayer feast.

Combat: The oortlings have had all knowledge of combat bred out of them by the mind flayers. They will cringe in fear from even the slightest possibility of violence. In cases where oortlings are in extreme pain or have lost their senses, they have been known to bite and scratch their opponents. While this attack is fairly feeble, it can inflict some minor damage (1d2 points).

Habitat/Society: Oortlings live on the flying mountains of ice and iron that men call comets. They make their homes by tunneling into the frozen surface, eventually into the iron or stone nucleus of the comet. Their communities are usually fairly small by human standards, with only 40-240 (4d6x10) oortlings living on any given comet. Of this number, half will be females and young.

While the oortling culture was once advanced enough to construct great palaces from the ice of their cometary homes, it has degenerated to a state of primitive tribalism. The main reason for this is the domination and domestication of the oortling people by the mind flayers. Even at the height of their culture, the oortlings had no chance of breaking free from the mental and physical bondage into which they were thrust by the illithids.

Currently, the oortlings are a broken people. All creativity or curiosity has been crushed from their spirits, leaving them a ghastly race of cattle. They are tended and guarded by a group of mind flayer "farmers" and then hauled away to sate the hunger of the illithids.

Ecology: Oortlings feed on the ice that makes up the comets on which they live. Their systems are able to break down the ice, extracting vital nutrients from it and filtering out toxins that would kill other humanoids. Only cometary ice contains the chemicals they need to sustain themselves, however, and a diet of normal water/ice will do nothing to nourish them.

Oortlings produce few useful byproducts or trade goods which other races might be interested in. The sole exception to this, of course, are the mind flayers who breed the oortlings as human races breed cattle. Some other cultures have found that the fluid around an oortling's brain is a useful component in the creation of many potions that deal with *telepathy* and other mental powers.

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Phase Jelly

by Greg Deckler

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	J, M, Q
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	8 (tentacles 5)
MOVEMENT:	3, Br 1
HIT DICE:	4
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1-10
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-2
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (4'-7')
MORALE:	Average (10)
XP VALUE:	1,400

The phase jelly is a disgusting blob of sickly-smelling slime. Jellies can be any color imaginable, but a single specimen will be one color throughout. Each jelly has 10 tentacles, each ranging from 12′ to 18′ long.

Combat: The phase jelly attacks similarly to a marine ooze, its tentacles erupting from the floor, ceiling, or walls of subterranean passages. The jelly has the ability to phase into and out of solid stone, making these attacks possible. Although the tentacles secrete a noxious mixture that only causes 1-2 points of physical damage, creatures coming in contact with the mixture must save verses poison at +2 or become paralyzed.

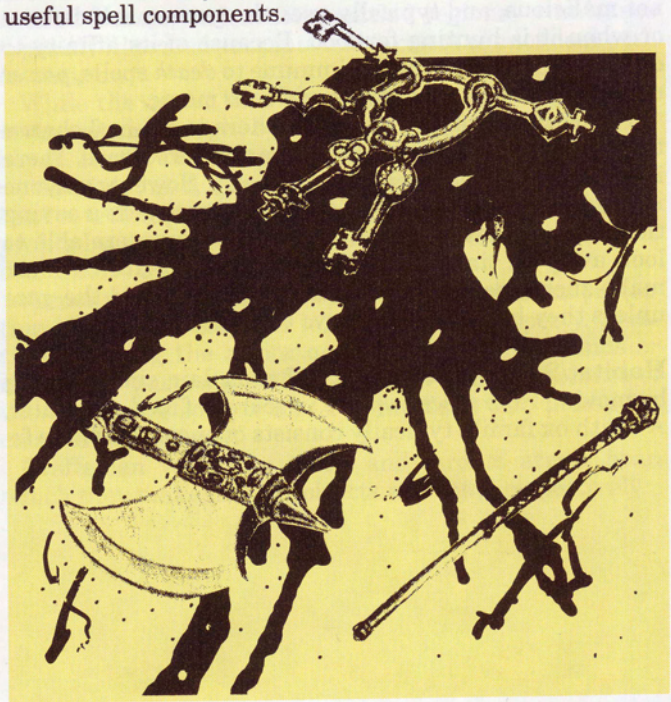
The phase jelly has a far more insidious attack form. If any animal, human, or demi-human remains relatively stationary for three rounds or more in the vicinity of a hidden phase jelly, the jelly will attempt to slowly envelope its victim and phase back into the stone along with the victim's feet. This form of attack adds +3 to the jelly's attempt to surprise an intended victim. If the victim is surprised, the attack automatically succeeds. If the surprise fails, the victim can avoid the jelly with a successful Dexterity check. A victim who is phased into the floor with the jelly looses 8 hit points per turn he is in contact with the jelly and its acidic digestive juices.

The jelly is immune to acid and attacks from blunt weapons. Edged weapons cause only one-half damage. Fire, cold, and electricity cause full damage. In addition, electricity stuns any tentacles it touches for 1-10 rounds. A *phase door* or *passwall* spell will kill the jelly instantly if it is phased with the stone. Spells such as *earthquake, move earth, rock to mud,* or *stone to flesh* will force a jelly to the surface.

Habitat/Society: Phase jelly inhabits the darkest dungeons, usually lurking within the stonework and using its tentacles to sense the vibrations of passing creatures. Metal armor, weapons, and coins can be found in the vicinity of a jelly, as its digestive juices cannot handle these materials. These expelled materials often inadvertently create a trap for adventurers who attempt to greedily gather up the items.

It is a solitary creature and will not tolerate the presence of other phase jellies in its territory.

Ecology: Although the phase jelly can eat virtually any type of organic material, it is especially fond of drow. Phase jelly has no natural predators. Wizards have experimented with the jelly and its tentacles, but have found no useful spell components.



PLANTMAN (MALATRAN MOLD MAN)

by Wellson Clark

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical/Swamps, moist jungle
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribe
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	O, P
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	6-24 or 30-300
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	1 to 12
THAC0:	By HD
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4 + 1/level or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	Medium/Large (4' - 9')
MORALE:	Average (8-10)
XP VALUE:	Variable

art by Jeff Menges

Malatran plantmen are medium to large sized, bipedal fungus creatures. They have sharp, thorn-like claws, and leaf-like tendrils form a fringe on their shoulders, abdomens, and limbs. A topknot of these tendrils sits at the apex of the plantman's head.

Malatran plantmen have brown skin and green tendrils. They are 4 feet tall, plus 1/2-foot per Hit Die. Although they do not have a spoken language, they communicate by sign language and vocalized cries, and can learn to understand Nubari and other languages (by lip reading) at the cost of a proficiency slot. Other hero characters can learn to understand (but not speak) the "Plantman language" at the cost of a proficiency slot.

Combat: Parties of plantmen hunt near their lairs. In the forest, plantmen blend in to their surroundings giving them the same ability to move silently and hide in shadows as rangers of their level. Plantmen will attack any form of animal life for food. Malatran plantmen will use their natural camouflage capabilities to ambush opponents.

Half of the plantmen in a group have 1 or 2 HD, while 25% have 3 or 4 HD. The rest are 5 or 6 HD (equal chances). For every 50 plantmen, there is a subchief with 7 or 8 HD and 1d4+1 bodyguards of 5 HD each. Each tribe of plantmen is led by a chief with 10 HD and 2d4 bodyguards with 6 HD each. Half of the plantmen encountered carry spears, while the others use clubs or go without weapons (equal chances).

Chiefs can also attack with spores; victims must make a saving throw vs. poison or be paralyzed, dying in 5d4 minutes unless treated by a cure disease spell. Victims who die in this manner are reborn 1d4+20 hours later as plantmen with 6 HD. These individuals become the chief's bodyguards.

Plantmen larger than 7' tall suffer damage as large creatures but also gain the benefit of wielding two-handed weapons with one hand. They are immune to charm and electrical attacks, except for charm plants, and take half damage from water-based attacks. Fire-based attacks cause double damage and require plantmen to make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or flee for 1d6 rounds before another save can be attempted.

Player character plantmen can be fighters, rangers, wizards, priests, fighter/priests, or fighter/wizards. All plantmen heroes can move silently and hide in shadows as rangers when in forest terrain. Preserving the forest and natural habitat of plantmen is the primary reason that some plantmen adventure and become Malatran heroes. Spell-casting plantmen are unable to use fire- or cold-based spells. Further, their healing spells are ineffective on animal-based life forms.

Habitat/Society: Plantmen form primitive, settled tribes. Their lairs are usually found in the undrebrush of warm forests and jungles, though some tribes have lairs in underground places as well. Tribes are very territorial.

Plantmen co-exist well with plant and fungus life. They often use shriekers to guard their lairs, and plantmen native to the lair can pass by those shriekers unnoticed. Russet plant is usually found in the vicinity of a plantman lair as well.

New Malatran plantmen are created by russet mold, by their leaders' spore attacks, or by budding from their leaders. Leaders are 10+ HD (and therefore non-adventuring) plantmen and can only bud if food is plentiful. Plantmen heroes are too young to bud new plantmen.

Plantmen have been known to associate with myconids, which view them as rustic cousins.

Ecology: Plantmen live by scavenging and hunting. They will eat meat in any condition, from fresh to carrion. In times of great need, they have been known to eat other plantmen, though they seldom attack members of their own or an allied tribe.

Plantmen can suffer from dehydration when adventuring outside of very moist, swampy areas. They must wet themselves twice a day or lose two Constitution points per missed bath. Lost Constitution points are regained at the rate of two points per bath. A waterskin provides enough water for a single wetting.

Psi-Shadow

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any/Shadowy areas
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Dusk and twilight
DIET:	Small amounts of light
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11-12)
TREASURE:	A
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1 (1d4)
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	18
HIT DICE:	6+6
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	As form
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	As form
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Psionics, surprise, control shadows
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	90% undetectable, magic weapons needed to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	10%, immune to mind-affecting attacks
SIZE:	S (3' pool) or as form
MORALE:	Fearless (19-20)
XP VALUE:	4000

Psi-Shadows look like inky black, but mundane, shadows. They are in fact from the Plane of Shadow, though they travel in the prime material plane from time to time. Their true body form is a shadowy blob, rather like an ameboid pool of ink. They cannot fly and always must be attached to a surface. However, they can move on any surface. They can travel on walls or ceilings as easily as on floors. They are 90% undetectable in shadows or darkness.

Psi-shadows are not undead and cannot be turned or harmed by holy water. They can speak the language of any form they assume (see "combat"). Otherwise, they cannot communicate.

Combat: Psi-shadows do not have a corporeal form and only spells, magical weapons, and light-producing attacks (see below) can harm them. While in their natural form they are not able to cause physical damage, but they can freely move through tiny openings such as keyholes, cracks, and slits.

They have the ability to assume the form, much like a doppleganger does, of any creature with 6+6 hit dice or less. When using an assumed form, they can no longer pass though tiny openings, but they can deliver the assumed form's physical attacks. The assumed form is only semi-corporeal. The psi-shadow retains a formidable armor class and still is 90% undetectable in shadows and immune to non-magical physical blows. One of their favorite tactics is to lurk in the center of a shadowy hallway and then assume the form of some horrid monster (be sure to describe the transformation for full impact). This causes a −4 penalty on opponents' surprise rolls.

Psi-shadows are extremely susceptible to bright light. Attacks which also produce light cause double damage if applicable (such as lit torches, burning oil, *flame tongue* swords, or *fireballs*). *Continual light,* if cast directly against a psi-shadow, causes the creature to save vs. spell or be destroyed, while *light* and other light-producing spells cause them to save vs. death or suffer 1d8 points of damage per spell level, to a maximum of 4d8.

Psi-shadows are immune to all forms of mental control or attack except for the five psionic attack forms.

Finally, they can mentally control all shadows within a 50-foot radius). These shadows can form any pattern desired (often appearing live and intelligent); they cause no real effects or damage, but all attacks against the psi-shadow suffer a −1 "to hit" penalty due to disorientation.

Psionics:

Level	Dis/Sci/Dev	Attack/Defense	Skill	Points
6	3/see below	EW,II,MT,PB/+3	=Int	250

* Psychometabolism—They know all powers of this discipline
* Psychokinesis—*Devotions:* control flames, control light
* Telepathy—*Devotions:* ego whip, id insinuation, mind thrust, psionic blast

Habitat/Society: Psi-Shadows are guardians of twilight, or any situation which produces shadows. They prefer a little light, enough to cast shadows, but not enough to chase the darkness away. They become hostile toward anyone who threatens the shadows they guard. Psi-shadows are strictly individuals with territorial domains. The only time these borders can be crossed is when they need aid in protecting their shadows. Thus, 1d4 psi-shadows can be encountered.

Psi-shadows have an unusually powerful version of the life draining devotion. Any human, demi-human, or humanoid reduced to 0 hit points through life draining—and any such victim who is freshly dead to begin with—becomes an undead shadow under control of the psi-shadow. A psi-shadow's life draining devotion works normally in all other respects. It is common to find 1d6 shadows serving a psi-shadow. Sages theorize psi-shadows were the original cause of all undead shadows.

Ecology: A psi-shadow's only use for riches is in producing more shadows. The creature's treasure usually will be found spread around the lair in little mounds which the creature hopes will lure greedy victims into its clutches. Once destroyed, a psi-shadow vanishes and all of its undead servant shadows become free willed.

RUSALKA

BY BARBARA R. TYSINGER AND CARLA HOLLAR OF ARC FELLOWSHIP

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	River banks/ Shorelines
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any (Usually at dawn or dusk, or in foggy or cloudy conditions)
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	W (x Rusalka's age in years)
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Neutral – Chaotic Evil

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0 (8)
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	7
THACO:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	0
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	0
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Embrace, control water
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	50%
SIZE:	M
MORALE:	Champion (15-16)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	1,000

The rusalka (plural rusalki) is the spirit of a drowning victim, usually a woman, who was murdered. Most rusalki desire revenge on their murderer, and will do all in their power to gain this revenge. This is not always easy since the spirit of the rusalka is tied to the body of water in which it was drowned. If the rusalka is successful in its quest for revenge, it will cease to be bound to the Prime Material plane and will be released to rest in peace. As time passes the rusalka's alignment shifts further and further toward Chaotic Evil. Thus, a recently manifested rusalka will retain some of the memories of its former self, but a rusalka of long standing is a being of almost purely Chaotic Evil, whose only thoughts are revenge on the one who put her here. Male rusalki are sometimes called Vodyanik.

Rusalki retain the general appearance they had in life, and anyone who knew them in life should be able to recognize them. They usually appear to be dressed in the clothing they were wearing when drowned, although the colors are washed out to a faded, watery green. They have pale complexions with a greenish tint and long greenish-blond to green hair, which may appear to have water plants woven into it.

Combat: All rusalki will attempt to lure their victims to their deaths with siren songs, or tangle the nets of fishermen and overturn their boats, drowning them in a watery embrace. The song of the rusalka is enticing, and their forms are beautiful and welcoming, but neither their song nor their appearance have any magical allure. All those seeing a rusalka, except for the murderer, may choose to approach or to avoid them of their own free will. If the murderer of the mortal who has became a rusalka sees the rusalka, he must save vs. spell or be drawn into the rusalka's embrace.

Rusalki become semi-material upon contact with air, assuming human form. They must be in this form to embrace their victims. Rusalki are AC 0 while semi-material, and can only be struck by magical weapons (full damage), or by normal or magical fire (half damage). Rusalki can also be attacked on the Ethereal plane, where they are AC 8. Rusalki can be turned like regular ghosts, but holy water has no effect on them.

Anyone who touches or is touched by the rusalka is subject to its embrace. The rusalka's embrace pulls its victim beneath the water, causing a victim to drown unless a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon is made. The murderer must make this save with a -3 penalty. The victim may be revived if removed from the rusalka's embrace (and from the water) and some means of resuscitation is applied within five rounds of being drowned. Those who successfully avoid the embrace must also make a swimming proficiency check or a strength check to break free. The saving throw vs. breath weapon must be repeated each round until the victim either breaks free, is pulled under, or is released by the rusalka.

Rusalki can control water within 10 feet; they can use waves to slow movement to 1/4 normal and increase chances of drowning by 10%.

As soon as the rusalka takes any damage, it will release any embraced victims, disappear back into the water, and reappear again 15 feet further out into the lake. Any who follow will be subject to the control water attack. Those who follow are slowed to 1/4 normal movement. They must also make a swimming proficiency check at -2 each round or be pulled under the water.

When a rusalka's hit points drop to 5% of its total, the rusalka will withdraw to the Ethereal Plane, where it will remain for 1 year gathering enough energy to re-manifest in the Prime Material Plane. If the rusalka is pursued into the Ethereal Plane it can be "killed" there, but the spirit thus released becomes a true, free-ranging ghost, and as such, it will do all in its power to seek out and destroy its original murderer.

Habitat /Society: Rusalki are found in any climate or region capable of sustaining open bodies of water, but seem to be more common in ponds, streams and small lakes of the more temperate climates. Rusalki usually appear within 5 feet of the shoreline, near the spot where they were murdered, but may appear anywhere in "their" body of water. They cannot come onto dry land, but can manifest in water as shallow as 1 inch deep, thus the occasional reports of rusalki who "walk" the shoreline or who sit by the edge of the water.

Ecology: Rusalki do not contribute to the environment in any way. Various coins and items of jewelry can often be found submerged in the shallows or covered with a layer of sediment near places where rusalki are known to appear. These items are all that is left of the rusalka's victims, and as such, increase with the passing of the years. ■

RUSALKA

BY MARK TEMPLETON OF OSQUIP

	Lesser Rusalka	Greater Rusalka
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate shores	Temperate shores
FREQUENCY:	Rare	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Pack	Pack
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Constant	Constant
DIET:	Nil	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	0	Mx2, X
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral Evil	Neutral Evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-8	1
ARMOUR CLASS:	8	6
MOVEMENT:	9, Sw 12	9, Sw 12
HIT DICE:	3	5
THACO:	17	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 (claw/claw/bite)	3 (claw/claw/bite)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d3/1d3/1d4+1	1d4/1d4/1d6+1
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+2 save vs fire	+2 save vs fire
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	M	M
MORALE:	Fanatic (17-18)	Fanatic (17-18)
XP VALUE:	250	500

Rusalki are female undead who haunt bodies of water in temperate regions. A lesser rusalka is created when a female human or demi-human is drowned by either variety of rusalka. This new rusalka is then under the control of the pack leader (a greater rusalka, or the lesser rusalka with the most hit points). A new rusalka retains the physical characteristics she had in life. For example, an elf would be have a light build and pointed ears, a dwarf would be stout and have a beard. In undeath, the rusalka's skin becomes pale, bloated and slightly scaled. Her most noticeable feature is her eyes, which burn with green fire.

For every pack there is an 80% chance that one of the rusalka will be the greater variety. If a greater rusalka is present, she will always be pack leader. In her true form, a greater rusalka appears much like her lesser companions, but with tougher skin and a more intense fire in her eyes. The true form of a greater rusalka is rarely seen due to a permanent illusion surrounding her. This illusion causes the viewer to see an image of the fairest possible female that his or her mind can concoct, clad in only a robe of mist. True seeing, a gem of seeing, or a robe of eyes will allow the viewer to see the greater rusalka's true form.

Combat: The tactics of the rusalki vary depending on whether or not there is a greater rusalka in the pack. If the pack consists entirely of lesser rusalki, they will hide on land close to the water. There they will wait until someone passes nearby, at which time they will attack. Their first action will be to use their gaze attack on one creature with which they are engaged in melee. They can use their gaze attack once per day, with the effect of ray of enfeeblement as cast by a 3rd level mage. They will then proceed to attack with their sharp nails and teeth.

If a greater rusalka is in the pack, she will lure victims into the water where the others hide in waiting. She does this through the use of an audio illusion, a singing voice so sweet it would put an elven minstrel to shame. This song charms (save vs spell to negate) humanoids into approaching its source from up to 30' away. When they come into view of the greater rusalka, they see her (or rather the illusion) standing at the edge of the water. Those males not already charmed must make another save vs spell, with a -2 penalty, or be charmed as well. If unaffected by the charms, the viewer sees past the illusion and retains free will. Those charmed must follow the greater rusalka into the water. When the victim is waist-deep, the lesser rusalki surface behind the victim and attack. As their first attack, both variety of rusalki will attempt to overbear the closest victims and hold them underwater until they drown. If this fails, they will use their gaze attacks and engage in regular melee. The gaze attack of the greater rusalki has the effect of the spell eyebite cast by a 5th level mage using the sicken option. The greater rusalki can use their gaze attack 3 times per day, though multiple uses on the same target have no effect.

If a female human or demihuman drowns in the hands of a rusalka, she will rise as a lesser rusalka in six turns unless a remove curse is cast on the body. If a female dies by means other than drowning, she escapes the horrible fate. The pack leader eats all those who die and do not rise as lesser rusalki, including all males.

Lesser rusalki can be turned as 5 HD undead. Greater rusalki can be turned as 9 HD undead.

Habitat/Society: Rusalki are organized into packs of lesser rusalki led by a greater rusalka. Should the greater rusalka die, the lesser rusalka with the most hit points takes the role as leader. They all walk onto dry land and await a victim. The first humanoid to have the misfortune of coming across them is attacked. The carcass is then fed to the pack leader. After finishing her meal, the pack leader will begin transforming into a greater rusalka. None but the pack leader is allowed to eat at this strange ritual.

Ecology: No one knows where the rusalki menace came from. The most popular theory is that some girl long ago insulted a god. This god caused the girl to fall into a river and drown. She was then cursed to return as an undead. The girl was horror-stricken and she applied the same punishment to anyone who saw her, thus passing the curse along. Whatever their origins, rusalki are unnatural and are not a part of the natural ecology. ■

The 1999 Club Decathlon, one of the RPGA's programs to get clubs more involved in roleplaying, produced some fine entries in the various game writing categories. In the Best AD&D® Monster category, these two versions of the rusalka tied for first place. Use either, or both, in your home campaigns. The rusalka is a creature out of Russian folklore, and we encourage you to find out more about it at your library or on the web.

Sable Sandcrawler by Milton McGorrill

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Desert/rough
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi-(2-4)
TREASURE:	None
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	9
MOVEMENT:	6, Br 12
HIT DICE:	2
THAC0:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to extreme heat and fire
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T (18" long)
MORALE:	Unreliable (2)
XP VALUE:	250

The sable sandcrawler is a large caterpillar, 12 to 18 inches long, six inches high, and covered with long, soft black fur. The fur is pleasant to the touch.

The sandcrawler has 20 short stubby legs and large, bulbous eyes. Its friendliness and beauty make it very attractive to unwary adventurers.

Sable sandcrawlers are lured to the heat and light of campfires. The sandcrawler quickly approach parties sitting about the fire, chittering shyly and scampering near the flames. The creature will nibble daintily on any offered crumbs, and is quick to allow people to pet it.

The aim of the sandcrawler is to snuggle up next to someone, appearing to fall asleep. A few moments later, the sandcrawler will arise and scamper off into the night.

Combat: The sandcrawler is a passive creature and will attack only when angered or backed into a corner. Its small mandibles can inflict only one hit point of damage per bite.

The principle damage administered by a sandcrawler is through its method of reproduction. The sable sandcrawler must plant its egg in a living mammal host, upon which the developing larva will feed. The sandcrawlers prefer humanoid hosts.

If the sable sandcrawler discovers an adventurer who will let it lie against his bare skin, the sandcrawler will secrete a skin-numbing liquid from glands in its belly. This renders a patch of skin completely numb within one minute. The creature then deposits its single egg just under the skin of the host through a needlelike ovipositor. Depositing the egg takes five minutes. If the creature is disturbed before the five minutes have elapsed, no egg has been laid. However, if the creature successfully deposits an egg, it leaves, its work finished.

The larva grows under the adventurer's skin for about four days, sapping one point of Constitution from the host each day. There is a cumulative 10% chance each day that a raised red welt over the growing larva will be discovered.

The growing larva only can be removed by cutting it out, with the host suffering six points of damage from the process. The larva will die upon contact with air.

If the larva is not detected and removed, the welt bursts at the end of the fourth day, and a tiny sable sandcrawler drops off into the sand, burrowing deeply and disappearing almost immediately. The birth process causes the host body to suffer 2d6 points of damage. In addition, the host must make a successful save versus paralyzation or pass out from the pain for 1d4 hours. Lost constitution can be restored by a *heal* spell or one day of complete rest per lost point.

Habitat: Native to Athas, the sable sandcrawler is a solitary creature, burrowing under the sand to sleep during the day and wandering the surface only at night to hunt for food and search for water in the form of dew. The luxurious black fur of the sandcrawler is composed of tiny hollow tubes which draw the dew into the creature's body. The creature eats primarily small insects and baby reptiles.

The only real danger from the creature is in its method of reproduction (see combat section). If humanoid hosts cannot be found, sandcrawlers are forced to settle for animals. Animals are attracted to the sandcrawler when it releases small amounts of water from its fur when it is licked. When the animals are lulled into a false sense of security by licking the creature, the sandcrawler deposits an egg.

Ecology: The flesh of a sandcrawler is inedible. The fine fur of the creature, however, is prized by the halfling races who find its insulating properties useful. Some halflings have managed to extract an analgesic toxin from the creature and use it on their darts to induce sleep.

Sand Worm by James B. Alan

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Sandy wastes and silt seas
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi-(2-4)
TREASURE:	Q, S, V
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	20, Br 10
HIT DICE:	20-100
THAC0:	5
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	10-40 (10d4)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	G (100′-500′ long
MORALE:	Fearless (19)
XP VALUE:	20,000 add 1,000/HD above 20)

Sand worms are immense and powerful creatures that burrow under the sandy wastes. The creatures range in color from tan, which makes them difficult to spot at a distance against the sand, to golden brown. All sand worms have thick, segmented hide plates that run along the length of their bodies. At the front of the creature, a triangular, plated maw opens to reveal a triple row of jagged teeth.

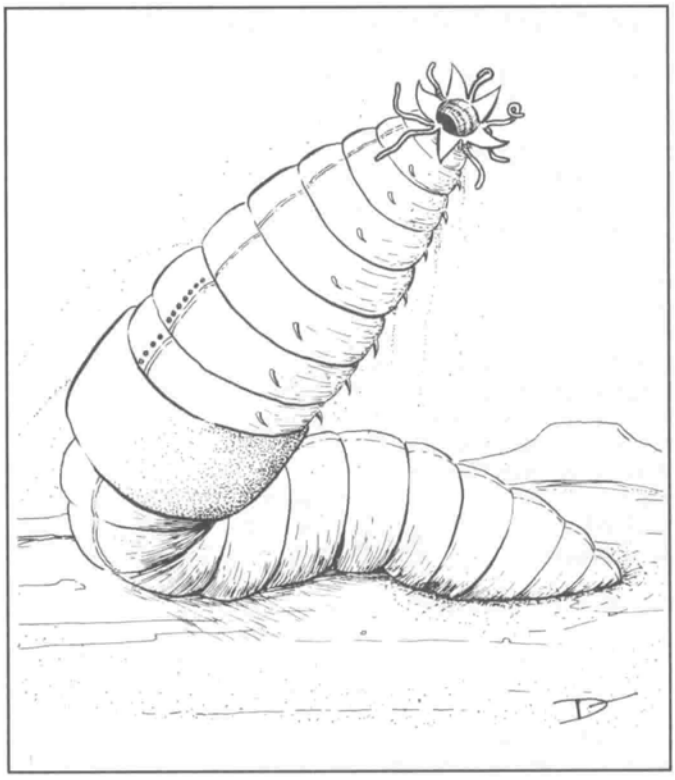
The most fearsome aspect of a sand worm is its size, ranging from 100′ to 500′ in length. The creatures have 1 hit die for every 5′ of length. They range in diameter from 20′ to 40′, and they weigh as much as 100 tons.

Combat: Sand worms sense their prey by vibrations in the sand or silt. The amount of vibrations indicates the size of a potential meal or how many creatures are walking to their doom. The worms are so in-tune with their environment that they can sense vibrations up to one mile away. Worms above ground can sense prey up to one-half mile away.

Just before a sand worm attacks, the sand or silt will be seen to shift like a ripple in a pool of water. The great beasts move so silently that there is no other indication of their passing. The worm erupts two rounds after the ground shifts, and it shoots straight up into the air, leaving its tail anchored in the sand or silt. The worm then crashes down upon its victims, causing 10d4 points of damage. The sand worm bites any remaining victims. Its maw delivers 10d4 points of damage. Any to-hit roll made with its bite attack that exceeds the required number to hit a victim's AC by 4 or more indicates the victim has been swallowed whole. Sand worms can devour creatures that are up to 18′ tall and 12′ wide. Swallowed creatures suffer 4d4 points of damage per round while inside a worm. The creatures are considered digested after 20 minutes, making it impossible to raise them.

Anyone inside a sand worm can attempt to escape by cutting his way out. The interior of a sand worm is treated as AC 7. A trapped creature must inflict 50 points of damage to the worm before an opening has been cut to allow escape.

The worms are terrible foes, immune to all forms of psionics, as well as all fire and heat attacks.



Habitat/Society: The sand worm is a solitary creature that only mates once a year during the heat of summer. During this time as many as 50 of its kind have been seen together, laying upon the sand and bellowing out strange, haunting calls. It is unknown what this unconventional serenade means, but few have been willing to approach these creatures and find out. Those few curious individuals did not return.

Ecology: Sand worms roam the desert in search of prey. Their only reason for existence seems to be to eat. During their travels, small amounts of sand adhere to their sides, strengthening and renewing their hide.

When living food is scarce, the worms have been known to eat rocks, metals, and gems.

Well-armed bands of adventurers hunt the sand worms from time to time, hoping to find a treasure in the creatures' stomachs. The hide of the worm is prized for the armor that can be fashioned from it. The plates provide an AC of 4 and can be enchanted up to a +4 value. However, it is costly and time-consuming to fashion the plates into armor.

The meat of a sand worm is quite delicious. Adventurers who have killed a worm have found that the meat can be preserved with little difficulty, and the meat is easy to dry into a jerky. Fresh sand worm meat commands up to 1 sp per pound, and sand worm jerky up to 4 gp per pound. (These are standard values, on Athas the prices are: meat, 1 bit/pound; jerky 40 cp/pound.)

Scavenger Spirit by Gary Watkins

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Low
TREASURE:	Z
ALIGNMENT:	Any neutral or evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	0 or 5
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	4
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1-4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6 per attack
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Paralyzation, suggestion
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Silver or magical weapons to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5′-6′)
MORALE:	Average (10)
XP VALUE:	650

Scavenger spirits are similar to haunts. Their undead forms are ghostlike, shimmering and insubstantial. In this state they have an armor class of 0. They can assume a semi-material form at will, which gives them an armor class of 5. Scavenger spirits frequently take the form of what their living bodies looked like. However, they are able to assume any medium-sized form, such as human, demi-human or various plants or animals. These latter forms often are used to help them hide or to confuse their quarry.

In life, scavenger spirits were humans and demi-humans who profited from the dead. Most of them were grave robbers or camp followers who stripped those who fell in battle. A few were adventurers who ruthlessly and unthinkingly plundered tombs.

Now, in death, scavenger spirits are cursed to steal from the living. Scavenger spirits can pickpocket with a 70% chance of success. To do this, they must assume a semi-material form. When the scavenger spirit has acquired an item of value, the spirit will flee to its lair and add the ill-gotten gains to its hoard. Characters who are successfully pickpocketed do not see the scavenger spirit.

The spirits are often, but not always, encountered in graveyards or ancient battlefields. Some take up residences near tombs filled with riches and over recent battlefields that have not yet been plundered. They long so desperately for the wealth carried by the dead that they will whisper a *suggestion* to passing humans and demi-humans to stop and take the objects left behind. Once a living person has acquired the wealth, the scavenger spirits are free to steal it. The spirits can use their *suggestion* ability once each turn.

When two or more scavenger spirits are together, they can combine their energies to cast a *dig* spell. This can be used up to three times a day. The spirits often unearth coffins or clear the way to buried tombs in the hopes passing adventurers will stop and loot the dead. The spirits will add a *suggestion* or two if necessary. Again, once the living have acquired the treasure, the spirits are free to steal it from them.

Combat: Scavenger spirits avoid fighting if at all possible; the sole purpose in their unlife is to steal. They attack only when they are in danger or if their hoard is threatened. In combat, scavenger spirits attack with their filthy claws—up to four of them depending on the form chosen. Each claw attack causes 1-6 points of damage. In addition, victims must save vs. spells, at a −2 penalty, or be paralyzed with fear and disgust for 1d6 rounds. If the scavenger spirit is not involved in any other melees, it will loot the paralyzed body and return to its lair. Lawful good priests are immune to the *paralysis* touch.

Scavenger spirits must remain in their semi-material state during combat. The spirits can be harmed only by silver or magical weapons. They are immune to *sleep, charm, hold, death magic,* poisons and cold-based spells.

These spirits are turned as "special" on the priest undead turning table.

Habitat/Society: A scavenger spirit usually remains near the site of its death, though it is not constrained to do so—especially if the location presents few opportunities to steal. Scavenger spritits are found singly or in small groups, each one of them driven by a compulsion to steal.

Ecology: Unlike most other forms of undead, scavenger spirits do not propagate their kind by slaying the living. A victim slain by a scavenger spirit simply dies. Scavenger spirits are only created when a living human or demi-human intentionally steals from burial places or battlefields. These thefts do not include simple acts like picking up a fallen soldier's sword. They usually entail repeated stealing of personal possessions and objects of wealth or importance that were purposefully placed with the dead.

Scavenger spirits hoard treasure and magic, though they have no use for the items. It is simply their curse to repeat the sins they committed in life.

Animals can sense scavenger spirits' unnatural origins and instinctively avoid them.

Shadevar

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CLIMATE:	Any (Western Central Faerun)
FREQUENCY:	Extremely Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	24
HIT DICE:	12
THAC0:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	3-18/3-18
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Special
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Special
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	70%
SIZE:	L (7' tall)
MORALE:	Champion (15-16)
XP VALUE:	13,000

The shadevari are ancient creatures, perhaps older than the Realms themselves. There were originally 13 of these creatures, but most have been destroyed.

For thousands of years, the shadevari served Bhaal, Lord of Murder. Ultimately, Azuth banished them from the worlds of humans and gods.

A shadevar appears as a misshapen beast, vaguely humanoid. The body and face of a shadevar is covered with thick, iron-gray scales. Two black tusks jut from its maw, and a single serrated horn curves from its brow. Two faint depressions replace the shadevar's eyes, as it is completely sightless. At will, a shadevar can extend sharp talons from its fingertips.

A shadevar can "see" by using its sense of smell. This sense is so acute that the shadavar's blindness is in no way a hindrance to its perceptions.

Combat: Shadevari are terrible foes who move with lightning quickness (+3 initiative bonus) and fight with their talons for two terrible rending attacks each round.

The very presence of a shadevar causes *fear* (as the wizard spell) in any creature of low or lesser intelligence within 60 feet.

In normal combat, shadevari are unaffected by *light* or *darkness* spells. An opponent can momentarily escape a shadevar by moving more than 60' upwind of the monster, but a shadevar can track by scent using the tracking proficiency rules with a base proficiency score of 16.

Shadevari are hit only by +1 or better magical weapons. They regenerate 3 hit points per round, starting the round after being injured. Fire, cold, water, electrical, and other magical attacks do not prevent the regeneration, but Shadevari avoid water if at all possible. They seek shelter from rain at once, and they will refuse to cross rivers and streams unless they can do so without becoming wet. Water-based attacks cause +1 damage/die to shadevari.

If a shadevar is somehow given the power to see (through a *cure blindness or deafness, true seeing,* or similar spell) and is then exposed to a bright light (such as that produced by a *lightning bolt, light,* or *continual light* spell), it will suffer 3d6 points of damage per round of exposure. Exposure to such light drives shadevari mad (treat as Intelligence of 1) for 24 hours, after which it recovers.

The only way to kill a shadevar permanently is to pierce its heart. Piercing the heart requires an attack roll of an unmodified 20 with a +4 or better weapon. If the heart of a shadevar is pierced, its body will erupt in a geyser of blood, killing it (without regeneration). Within a few hours, the body will begin to decay rapidly, leaving only cinders.

Habitat/Society: Shadevari are solitary and nearly extinct from the Realms. They do not breed away from their native Plane of Shadows. A shadevar is essentially immortal unless slain by magic.

The last shadevar may or may not have been killed in the Fields of the Dead by the expanded Fellowship of the Dreaming Dragon in the Year of the Wave, 1364 DR. Some sages speculate that another shadevar is imprisoned in the Crypt of Shadows (see FRQ1, *Haunted Halls of Eveningstar*) located somewhere within the Stonelands of northern Cormyr.

Ecology: Shadevari are not native to the Realms and serve no useful function in the ecology, except as predators of human and demi-humankind.

Source: *Crypt of the Shadowking,* by Mark Anthony.

Silt Weird by Ed Peterson

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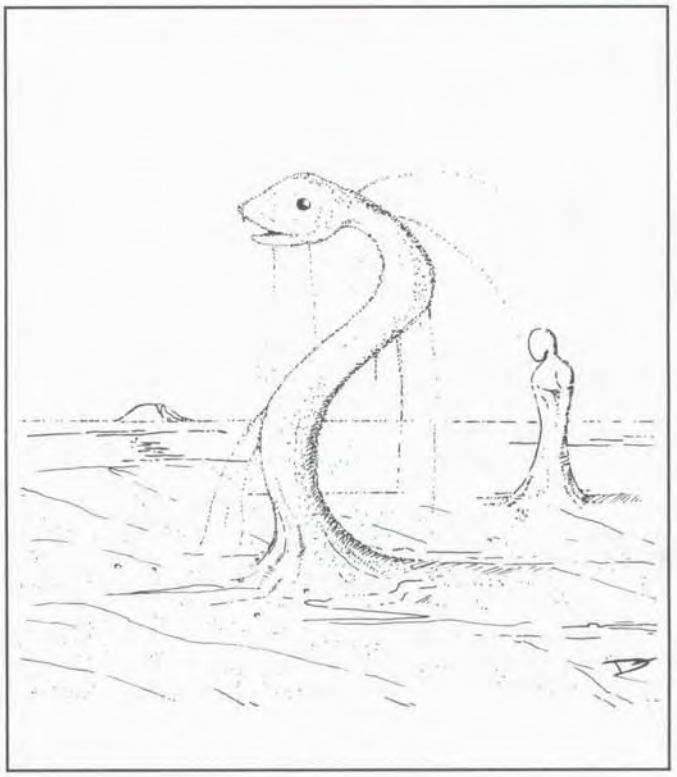
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Sea of Silt and inland silt basins
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (14-15)
TREASURE:	None
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVEMENT:	18
HIT DICE:	8+4
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Nil
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Suffocation
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (30′ long)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	2,000



PSIONICS SUMMARY

Level	Dis/Sci/Dev	Attack/Defense	Score	PSPs
8	1/1/4	EW,PB/IF,TS	14	160

Telepathy—*Sciences:* contact; *Devotions:* ego whip, psionic blast, intellect fortress, thought shield.

Believed to have been birthed in the quasi-elemental plane of dust, the silt weird is a formidable foe of all living creatures. It forms in but a single round from the silt it inhabits. Although it usually takes the shape of a large serpent, it also can form into a vaguely humanoid figure; this has caused it to be confused with a true earth elemental. The creature has been known to use humanoid shapes to lure travelers to their deaths.

Combat: After forming into a serpentine or humanoid shape, the silt weird begins a psionic assault. If these attacks are not enough to finish off the potential meal, the monster next physically lashes out. Any creature struck must make a successful saving throw versus paralyzation or be pulled into the silt. Creatures drawn in the silt will suffocate in 1d4+1 rounds, their life forces being devoured by the weird.

Silt weirds have a special ability which gives them a 50-50 chance to control any earth elemental within 120 yards. Weirds with earth elementals will use these elementals to fight for them, while they remain safe and devour the energy of those who die.

Edged and piercing weapons have no effect on silt weirds; the blades pass harmlessly through the silt. Blunt weapons inflict half damage. Cold-based spells have no effect, and fire-based spells inflict only half damage. The silt weird is immune to all poisons and gasses. A *transmute sand to stone* spell transforms the weird into a 16-hit-die earth elemental. *Transmute rock to mud* instantly kills a weird.

Reducing a silt weird to 0 hit points merely disperses the creature's physical matter; it will reform at full strength in 1d6 rounds.

Habitat/Society: The silt weird is a solitary creature that wanders the Sea of Silt and the inland silt basins hunting for prey. Since the weird's corporeal body is formed from the silt in which it lives, it is unable to travel over land. It is therefore confined to attacking only those creatures that pass within its reach (30 feet).

Silt weirds avoid contact with others of their own kind. The creatures view each other as competition for food and have been known to battle futilely over a section of silt. These fights end in stalemates, as the weirds cannot harm each other. However, one of the weirds eventually goes its own way in search of uncontested food. It is rare to find more than one silt weird in a 10-mile square radius.

Ecology: The silt weird derives its nourishment by absorbing the escaping life force of its suffocating victim. The monster finds conditions on Athas much to its liking, and it thrives in the harsh environment. It is rumored that the border between the silt weird's home, the quasi-elemental plane of dust, and the prime material plane on Athas is tenuous and continually shifting. This enables silt weirds and other denizens of that quasi-plane, such as dune stalkers and sandmen, to enter Athas easily.

Skum

by R. Derek Pattison

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical and temperate/ subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Brood
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal-Average (1-10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Evil (see below)

NO. APPEARING:	2-8 (2d4)
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	6, Sw 15
HIT DICE:	2+2
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	5
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-16/1-6/1-6/1-8/1-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	M (4′-6′ tall)
MORALE:	Steady (11)
XP VALUE:	175

Skum are a race bred by the aboleth from human, demi-human, and other humanoid "volunteers" as beasts of burden and cannon fodder. Skum, however, do not resemble their ancestors. They have an aboleth-like tail and four extremely strong legs, each ending a webbed paw which has two fingers and an opposable thumb. Each digit ends in a retractable claw. A skum's body is covered with a clear, slimy, hairless membrane that is gray-green. While a skum has no external ears, they are not deaf. In the water, they can hear twice as well as a human can in air. The creature's eyes are much like an aboleth's—purple-red and spherical. Having been bred to function in the underdark, skum have 60-foot infravision.

Combat: The skum are pure fighting machines and can attack three opponents at a time, though they usually choose to concentrate their attacks on a single enemy. Skum males have an effective strength of 18 and females have 18/50. Water is the skum's natural element, and when in water they can attack with their bite and all four limbs. On land, a skum's large, buoyant body is clumsy, and the creature suffers a −2 penalty "to hit" and can use only its arms and bite in melee. While in the presence of an aboleth, skum fight until they are victorious, slain, or ordered off by the aboleth.

Skum can be trained to use weapons, but only awkwardly; a skum fighting with a weapon suffers a −2 "to hit" penalty.

A female skum can carry as much as a heavy warhorse in water if the load is strapped to her back. Males can carry as much as a medium warhorse. On land, a skum can carry as much weight as a human with the same strength. A skum's limbs are designed for fighting, not carrying, and they cannot haul loads very far by holding them in their arms.

Habitat/Society: Skum are the end result of at least a millennium of genetic manipulation. They no longer resemble humanity in body or mind. The aboleth have removed what they regard as unnecessary parts—vocal chords, lungs, external ears, hair, hands, etc. The aboleth added what features they thought would be necessary for their servants, such as the tail for swimming and claws and teeth for fighting.

Most skum who still are controlled by the aboleth have low intelligence, but some have been bred to be even less intelligent; some individuals have only animal intelligence.

Skum tend to be as coldly logical as their limited intelligence allows. They have almost no emotions. They communicate with their aboleth masters and with each other through a limited form of telepathy (range 30 yards) that allows them to understand simple commands. Skum telepathy does not allow communications with races other than skum or aboleth, but true telepaths can communicate with skum freely. Skum minds are very susceptible to mental domination. They get no saving throw vs. the aboleth's *enslavement* power and save vs. all other *charms* at −4.

Ecology: Skum breathe through the skin, but their outer membranes must be moist to do so. A skum out of water can breathe normally for half an hour before drying out; afterward, the skum suffers 3d4 points of damage each turn until it dies or returns to the water to rehydrate its membrane.

A skum female lays one egg at a time, after a gestation period of about six months. The egg must incubate on land for four to six weeks, and the female usually buries it in sand or otherwise hides it. If possible, the parents remain nearby to guard the egg. Once hatched, the baby skum is nursed like a human infant and reaches maturity in three years. Skum can live to be about 30, but most die in combat or from abuse much sooner than that. Only about 25% of the eggs laid mature into adults.

Skum have no natural enemies, but most land dwellers in the underdark despise them. A skum unlucky enough to be captured by drow or duergar is in for a long and painful death. Svirfneblin usually take pity of skum captives. Kuo-toa are not known to hate skum, but no skum servant ever has been observed in a kuo-toa city.

Skum will eat anything they can catch, and the aboleth are not above letting them scavenge.

Although the aboleth cannot transform captive humans, demi-humans, or humanoids into skum, they can change them so that their offspring will be skum. This practice has set many lurid tales circulating in the underdark.

Suel Lich

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any/Southern Oerth
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Supra-genius
TREASURE:	A
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral Evil

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	15+
THAC0:	16 base
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See Below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+1 weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	1% per hit die
SIZE:	M
MORALE:	Fanatic (17-18)
XP VALUE:	10,000 +1,000 per level

When the empire of the Suel was destroyed by the Rain of Colorless Fire more than a millennia ago, one of the few creatures to survive this destruction was the Suel-lich. This powerful wizard, similar to the common lich, endures the centuries by transferring its life force from one human host to the next.

A Suel-lich appears as a human with coarse, leathery skin and eyes which glow an ominous black fire. As the Suel-lich grows in power, the skin becomes a thick hide, and the fire in its eyes becomes more pronounced. At the peak of its power, the Suel-lich is little more than wrinkled husk whose head is bathed in black fire. Those who meet a Suel-lich are in for more than they likely can handle.

Combat: Unlike the common lich, the Suel-lich revels in combat against weaker foes. Although it normally doesn't go looking for a fight, the creature will often fight to the death against superior forces (and usually wins).

Any creature with fewer than 3 Hit Dice that gazes into the fiery eyes of the Suel-lich must save vs death magic at +3 or die of fright. Those who make their save are paralyzed with terror for 1d4 turns, and are at the mercy of the evil creature.

The touch of a Suel-lich causes black flame to erupt from the victim, inflicting 1-10 points of damage upon contact. The victim must also make a saving throw vs paralysis or be unable to move. This paralysis lasts until dispelled or until 24 hours pass. This attack ignores all armor, and any item touched in this way must make a save vs. magical fire or be damaged.

The Suel-lich can be hit only by +1 or better weapons or by monsters with 7 or more Hit Dice and/or magical properties. In addition to their natural magic resistance, the Suel-lich is immune to all mind affecting spells, death spells, and wizard and clerical spells below 3rd level. Because of its unique connection with the Negative Material Plane, the spell *negative plane protection* inflicts 5d10 points of damage to the creature if it gets past its magic resistance.

A Suel-lich casts spells as it did before its transformation, but, due to its dark nature and years of magical research, does not require material components. A Suel-lich is considered a special for purposes of turning.

Habitat/Society: Several Suel-liches escaped the Rain of Colorless Fire and migrated into the Flanaess from what is now the Sea of Dust. Some of these liches still roam the world, vying for wealth and power, while others exist in hidden strongholds continuing their ageless research. Regardless of its intentions, the Suel-lich always attempts to hide its true nature. Since little knowledge (written or oral) survived the Colorless Fire, only a handful of sages and loremasters have even heard of such creatures.

Ecology: The Suel-lich is an unholy amalgamation of the human body and energy from the Negative Material Plane. Upon transformation into a Suel-lich, the essence of the wizard is converted to negative energy that needs a human body to inhabit. While possessing a body, the essence of the lich causes the body to age at three times the normal rate, burning it out after a short time. Each time a Suel-lich gains a level, burns out a host, or is reduced to zero hit points, it must find a new body to inhabit.

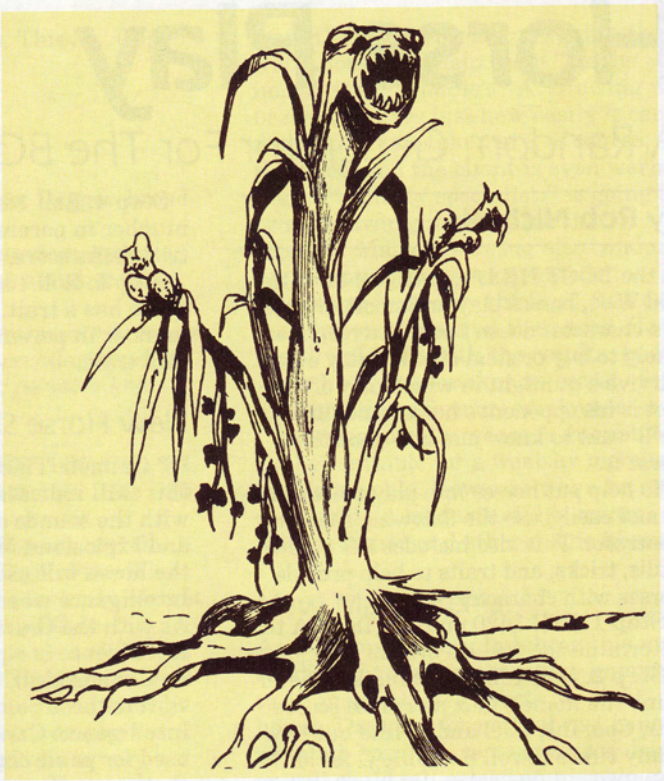
When it comes time to seek a new body, the essence of the lich must take a host with Hit Die or levels equal to the liches level minus 15. Thus, a 19th level Suel-lich must take the form of a 4th level human. If the victim is unconscious, unable to resist, or gives his or her body willingly, no saving throw is allowed verses the transformation. If the victim is conscious or able to resist, a saving throw vs death magic at -1 is allowed to resist possession. The essence of the victim is destroyed when possessed; the spirit is annihilated and cannot be raised or restored by a *wish* spell. If the host body is destroyed, the lich has one hour to inhabit another body or its essence disperses into nothingness. While without a host body, the essense of the lich appears as fiery black energy. While in this form, a *dispel evil* or *holy word* destroys the lich forever.

❑

Telexian Vine

by Eric Sanko

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any non-arctic or desert
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral Evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	0
HIT DICE:	4 +4 (main stalk) 2 (each root)
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4 +1
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Entangle, spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Camouflage, spells
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	25%
SIZE:	M (5′ tall)
MORALE:	Average (9)
XP VALUE:	385



The telexian vine is a malicious and dangerous plant which is capable of speaking and fighting. It produces an addictive, sweet-smelling fruit and deadly blossoms. The vine has a complex system of 8-24 roots that stretch up to 20′ away from the plant, camouflaging themselves against the ground. More roots extend 10′ deep into the earth, anchoring the telexian vine.

The plant boasts one large stalk that hosts its mouth and eyes and 2-4 smaller stalks, all dark green and all resembling corn stalks. In addition, each plant has numerous wire-thin vines that snake up to 60′ away from the plant to search for water. These feeler vines are typically covered with beautiful black flowers and are very sensitive to vibrations, acting as sensing organs for the plant.

Combat: Telexian vines usually wait for their prey to come to them. The evil vines sense the approach of creatures through the wire-thin feelers and will release a fragrant scent to catch potential victims' attentions. If the vine believes a creature intends to eat its fruit, it will do nothing, waiting for the fruit to take effect. However, if the creature appears suspicious of the plant, the telexian vine will attempt to entangle its target with its feeler vines and strong roots. Any creature within reach of the vine has a 50% chance to become so entangled. Entangled creatures must make a successful bend bars roll to break free or be cut out by another character who is not entangled.

Special Abilities: The fruit of the telexian vine is addictive and contains a special, mild paralytic poison. Any creature eating the fruit must save versus spell or become *charmed* by the plant. Creatures so charmed walk numbly to the vine's main stalk, which usually eats them. Telexian vines do not devour all human and demi-humans who eat the fruit, however. Commoners and non-spell casting adventurers are frequently kept around as slaves, their loyalty insured by their addiction to the fruit. These slaves perform errands for the plant, such as acquiring food, water, and—if possible—magic items, some of which the plant can employ. Telexian vines can consume potions, and often do so to aid in their capturing other, useful victims. The slaves are also used to lure others to the plant, sometimes in elaborate ploys.

The telexian vine is especially fond of eating spell-using creatures, humans, and demi-humans, as it is able to "absorb" all 1st and 2nd level spells held in those victims' memories. The plant can retain up to 12 spells of each level, losing a spell when it uses one to attack a target or to defend itself. It "casts" these spells as if it were a 5th level wizard.

Habitat/Society: Telexian vines prefer temperate climates, although they can handle some extremes in heat and cold. They are usually found within 10 yards of a constant water source, such as a pond or stream. A few vines are mobile, having charmed slaves who will transplant them to different locations as the plants desire. One vine was reported to be planted in a large wagon, with slaves moving it around from place to place. Telexian vines keep their treasures buried beneath their main stalk. The vines are especially fond of collecting magic items they can use, particularly potions and wands it can wield with its roots.

Ecology: Telexian vines are capable of eating virtually any plant or animal, although they prefer the flesh of demi-humans. They reproduce through the aid of slaves who carry seed pods to other locations, plant them, and tend them until they start to grow.

The vines are sometimes sought by adventurers who use the fruits for spell components.

Zebranaur

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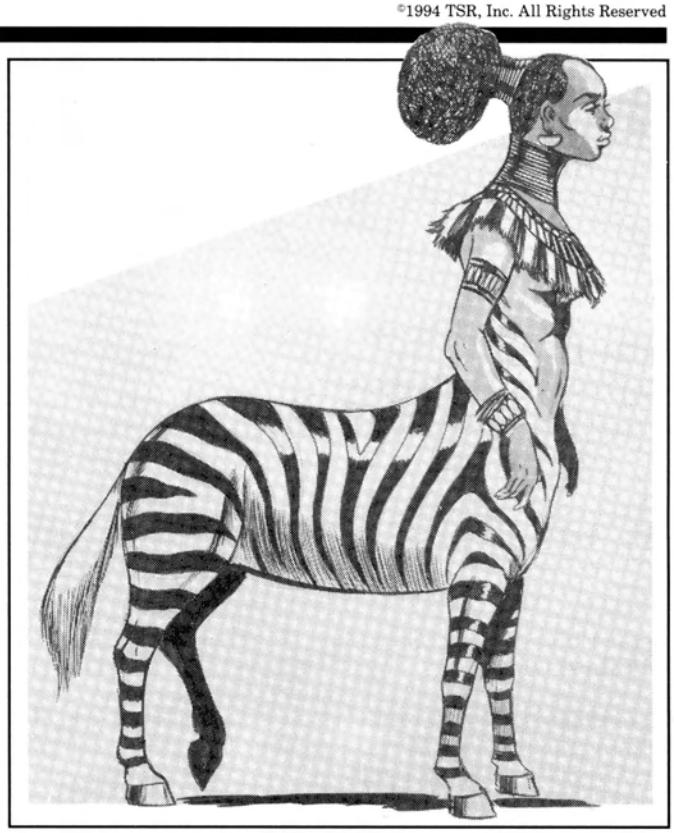
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate plains
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	M, Q (I, Mx10)
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2-16
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	20
HIT DICE:	3
THAC0:	17 (16)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 or 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4/1-4 or by weapon type
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	+1 with bows
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (6′ and taller)
MORALE:	Steady (11-12)
XP VALUE:	Normal: 420 Chief: 650 Druid: 975



Zebranaurs have the upper body of a human and the lower body of a zebra.

A zebranaur's upper body is normally brown, without the characteristic black on white stripes that cover its lower body. Many have a short mane of coarse black bristles running from the middle of the lower back up to the nape of the neck. Most favor a spiky hairstyle, but others prefer the traditional styles of the local humans.

Zebranaurs usually wear an individually embroidered square of supple leather which covers their chests and is tied around the waist and neck with leather thongs. They adorn themselves with jewelry made of wood and bone, using feathers and bright seeds to color their designs. Zebranaurs prize brass and copper jewelry and will trade well-made fringed garments or feathered spears for these items.

Most zebranaurs paint their upper bodies with dark stripes or patterns, using vegetable dyes to enhance the effect of their camouflaged lower bodies. New markings are added yearly to commemorate achievements, battles, or loves. Some tribes engage in ritual tattooing when foals come of age. One southern tribe has developed this tattooing to a fine art. The soft, downy skin from the upper back of an adolescent foal, resplendent with blue, red, and orange markings in intricate designs and patterns is said to fetch at least 1,000 gp in some Calishite markets.

Combat: Because of their long-standing tradition of bow hunting, all zebranaurs gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls with all bows except crossbows. Not all zebranaurs use bows, however. When a band is encountered, 30% use spears, 20% swords, 20% sword and spear, and 30% sword and bow. If unarmed, zebranaurs attack with their front hooves for 1-4 points of damage each. Zebranaurs never wear armor.

Zebranaur society does not discriminate against its female members, and females will make up 30% of any encountered band. In a group of more than 10 zebranaurs, there is a 50% chance that the group includes a chief and a druid.

Habitat/Society: Zebranaurs are tribal creatures, much like the humans who live nearest them. They are led by a chief of 4 HD and AC 6.

Zebranaurs are nomadic by nature, and their temporary camps are well guarded by 8-12 zebranaurs armed with swords and bows.

An average tribe numbers 50-80 members, including 20% children and 30% females. Males are equally responsible for raising the young, preparing meals, teaching, and performing other traditionally domestic duties.

A tribe usually has one druid of fourth or fifth level and three to four druids of levels one to three. They are armed with quarterstaffs or scimitars.

Zebranaurs have an almost photographic memory for abstract designs and shapes. They cannot normally read or write Common, but they paint intricately whorled patterns on tanned leather to record their history. The senior druid keeps these records safe and passes on the knowledge to the next generation.

The typical zebranaur life span is 50-60 years.

Zebranaurs speak the Common tongue and may know another spoken language, usually Goblin, Orc, Gnome, Gnoll, Halfling, Hobgoblin, or Elvish.

Ecology: Zebranaurs hunt most types of small game, supplementing this diet with roots and berries.

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