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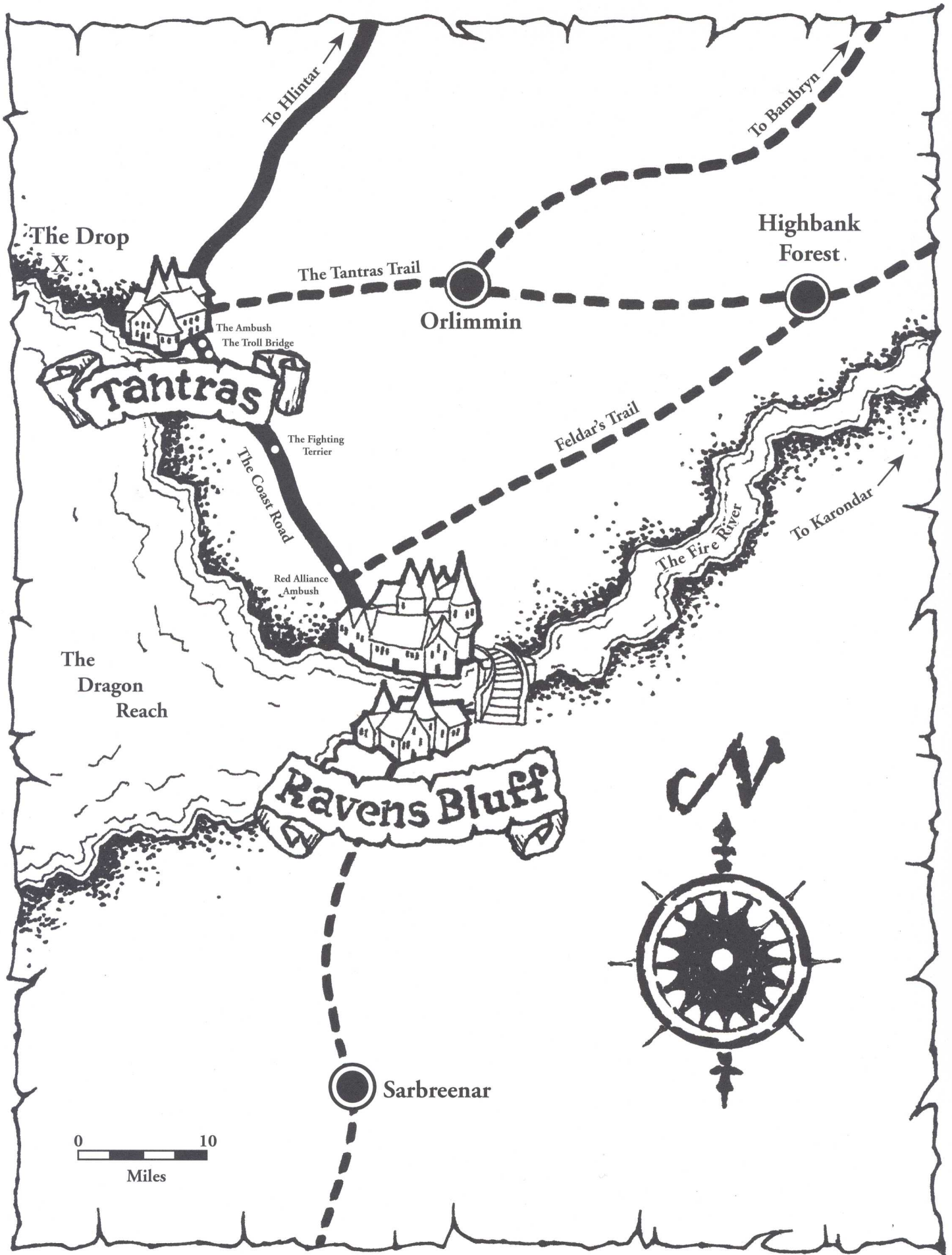
AN RPGA ADVENTURE

KIDNAPPED



by Tom Prusa





The Drop

To Hlinter

To Bambryn

Highbank Forest

The Tantras Trail

Orlimmin

Tantras

The Ambush
The Troll Bridge

Feldar's Trail

The Fighting Terrier

The Coast Road

Red Alliance Ambush

The Fire River

To Karondar

The Dragon Reach

Ravens Bluff

Sarbreenar

0 10
Miles



Kidnapped

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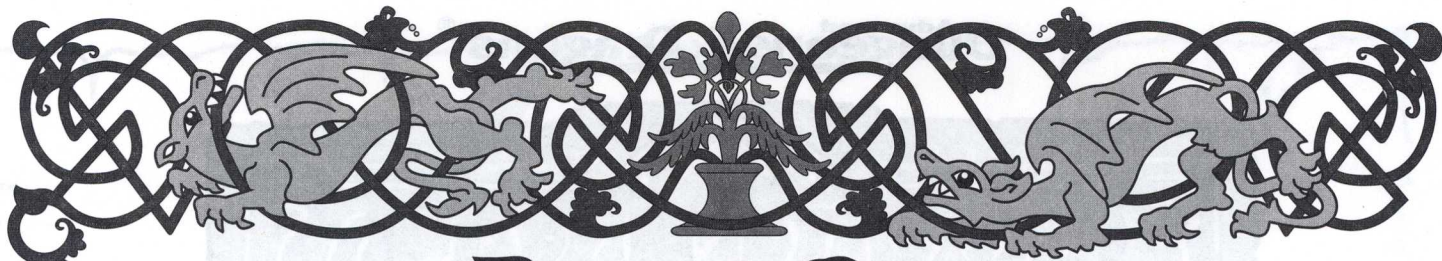


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Part One

The Payoff

DM Introduction

Hykros Allumen—Holy Justice of Tyr, Reverend Judge, high priest of Raven Bluff's temple of Tyr—is a hard but just man. All his life he has followed the way of Tyr, god of justice. He has a reputation as a man not to be trifled with: his rulings may always be just, but they are not always merciful. A very successful adventurer in his youth, he settled in Ravens Bluff a decade ago, married, and began to rise in the hierarchy of the Silver Halls, the local Temple of Tyr. Upon the recent wartime death of SIRRUS Melandor, the ranking local prelate of Tyr, Hykros was chosen to lead the Silver Halls. He is capable, honorable, and remorseless.

Now, Hykros has a problem. His son, eight-year-old Mikhail, has been kidnapped. Mikhail is his only child, the apple of his eye. Having lost his wife only a year ago, Hykros simply must have his son back. Although it goes against everything he stands for, he has agreed to pay a ransom worth hundreds of thousands of gold pieces. The drop-off point for the ransom is the Struggling Squid Inn in the town of Tantras, some twenty miles north of Ravens Bluff. The ransom must be delivered at midnight, two days from today. Since word of the kidnapping and the ransom leaked out, Hykros knows that every thief and bandit in the Vast probably has his or her eyes on the ransom. He has therefore decided to agree to a subterfuge, as much as that goes against his nature. Should he entrust the ransom delivery to his fellow priests of Tyr, they would be sure to draw much unwanted attention and would probably lose the ransom. So, he has accepted the kidnappers' demand to send a false ransom with his own people and entrust the actual payment to a party of adventurers, whose relative anonymity should both protect them and allow them to deliver the ransom safely.

The PCs are supplied with a wagon, a team of draft horses, and the chest containing the ransom. The PCs must deliver the ransom to the appointed spot, defending it from any thieves who figured out the truth of the matter and attempt to waylay them en route. At the rendezvous with the kidnappers, the party must take precautions to make sure Mikhail is handed over safely by the kidnappers. Part One ends when the PCs recover young Mikhail. Part Two deals with the PCs' efforts to track down the kidnappers one by one and bring them to justice. In the process, they gradually learn that the kidnapping is only the first part of a plot against the temple of Tyr; they must strike quickly if they are to prevent the leader of the kidnappers from completing his plan.

Note that this adventure is unusually lethal. However, it is possible for even a low-level party of adventurers to survive and triumph if they think quickly and avoid blundering into the various traps and ambushes that await the unwary. By the same token, even an experienced group of characters should find the adventure a challenge; the foes they face are clever and well-prepared, and many greedy NPCs wish to intercept the ransom. Characters who look before they leap will prosper; those who blunder about will have a very hard time indeed.

The original tournament this module is based upon employed "tiers" of NPCs, so that the DM could gauge the level of threat by

the total HD of the player character party. This published adventure uses the low-level threats as the default; DMs wishing to run this adventure with higher-level PCs should consult the Appendix, where mid-level and high-level variants of their opponents are compiled.

Player Introduction

It's nearing the end of a bright, beautiful day here in Ravens Bluff, the Living City. The druids had predicted a cold rain this morning, but for once they were wrong. The late afternoon sunshine and cool breeze make you glad to be alive. Alive, and on an important mission. At least, you soon will be . . .

All of Ravens Bluff is astir with the news: Young Mikhail Allumen was kidnapped the night before last. Mikhail is the son of the local high priest of Tyr, Reverend Judge Hykros Allumen. Since there are few people in the city richer than Hykros, the ransom should be staggering. Local gossip whispers that it could be more than a million pieces of gold.

This has become very important to you, since each of you has just received a note delivered by a priest or priestess of Tyr. The note is very simple and to the point: "I have need of your services. Please come at once to the Temple of Tyr. Say nothing of this to anyone." It is signed by the Reverend Judge himself, Hykros Allumen. His seal—Tyr's hammer and the scales of justice—accompanies the signature.

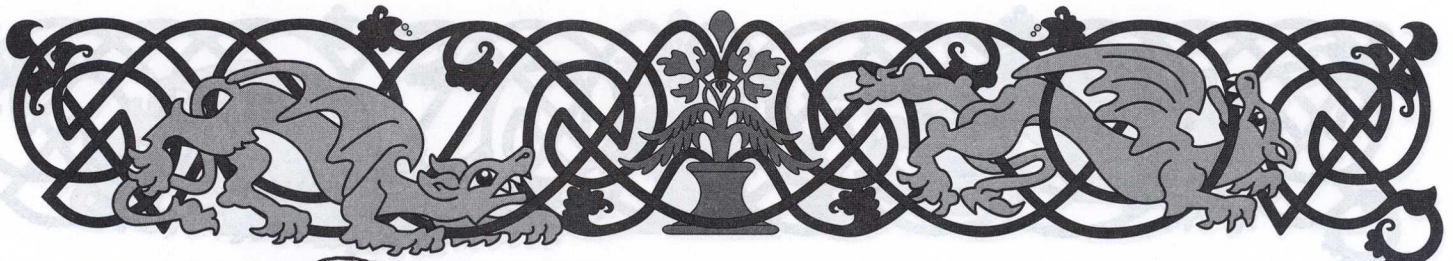
Could it be that you are going to be asked to track down the kidnappers and recover young Mikhail? With thoughts like this passing through your mind, it is with considerable curiosity and a little bit of trepidation that you approach the grand structure that is the Silver Halls of Justice in Ravens Bluff. Surely Hykros does not think you had anything to do with the kidnapping . . .

Your reception at the hall soon puts your fears to rest. As you identify yourselves, you are asked to turn over the note that you received as proof of your identity. There is a short delay as the note and its seal are checked for authenticity. Then, you are ushered into Hykros's private quarters.

Encounter One: The Job

Hykros is a large, robust man. Normally, he is the embodiment of an adventuring cleric. Now, however, he looks a wreck. He has obviously not slept since his son was kidnapped and has a haunted look about him, far different from the aura of complete confidence that he usually radiates. He stands and welcomes you.

"I thank you all for responding so quickly. As you may have heard, my son has been kidnapped. I need someone to unobtrusively deliver the ransom and recover my son. Unfortunately,



word of the kidnapping leaked out before I could suppress it. It could be a very dangerous task, so before I give you any information, I must ask for your word that this will remain secret, whether or not you take the job.”

Pause for the PCs’ answers. If they agree to Hykros’s condition, proceed with the following.

“Since my beloved wife passed on, Mikhail is all I have left. I would give my entire fortune to recover him—and the dastardly kidnappers seem to know the exact extent of my wealth. The ransom will leave me a pauper. My son’s safety is worth every copper. But”—he pauses, choosing his words carefully—“but I cannot afford to pay it twice. Hence, I cannot risk having the ransom lost in transit.

“With the notoriety that this incident has already generated, the departure of a group of powerful clerics of Tyr bearing a large box would be an open invitation to every bandit, thief, and murderer between here and the rendezvous point to descend upon them and try to make off with the ransom. Therefore, with considerable reluctance, I have sent just such a group of priests, all volunteers, as a decoy. Those brave men and women left two hours ago. They know the risks they are running, and my thoughts and prayers go with them—but I believe I have no choice if the ransom is to reach the kidnappers in time to save my son’s life.

“I can offer you little in the way of material reward. I can, though, pledge the eternal gratitude of myself and my order. And the gratitude of the Order of Tyr is no small thing. Tyr does

not forget those who serve the cause of truth and justice. In addition, should you successfully complete your mission, you will have proven yourselves worthy of greater responsibility and I will speak in your favor should certain highly-sought city positions and honors open up in the future.

“I now ask you to make your decision. In fairness, I must tell you that agreeing to undertake the task means submitting to a *quest* spell. It is not that I do not trust you—were that the case, you would not be here. But the kidnappers said that if the ransom is not delivered by midnight tomorrow, they will kill my son. The ransom is sufficient to tempt even the most honest of folk to larceny. I can take no chances with my son’s life. Will you agree to help me?”

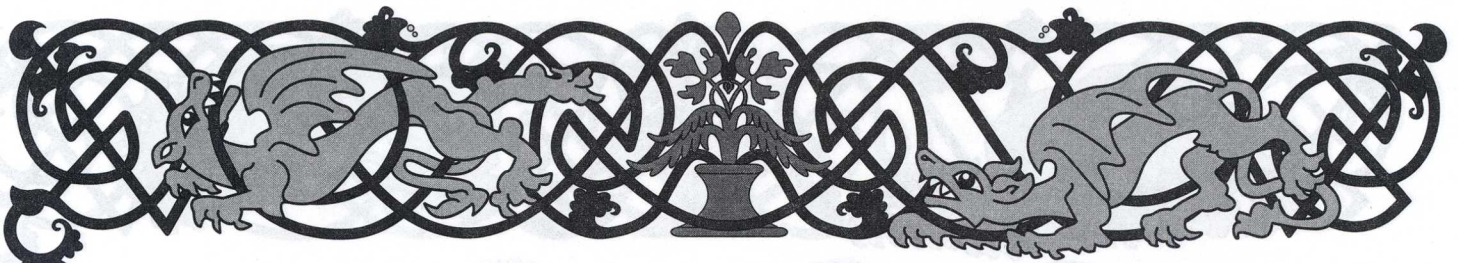
Pause for the PCs to respond. Anyone who responds in the negative is ushered out of the temple and out of the adventure. A PC may change his or her mind upon learning this, and Hykros will accept those who have doubts, so long as they commit in the end. But be firm: no *quest* spell, no adventure. Hykros is adamant on this point. When all of the participants are ready, the *quest* spell will be cast.

“Thank you for your trust. I am sure that the spell was not really necessary, but I hope you can understand my point of view. The spell requires that you do your utmost to deliver the ransom and recover my son. If you attempt to steal the ransom for yourself or let Mikhail come to harm, you will be permanently marked with the sign of a betrayer, recognizable instantly to any goodly priest. You will not be marked if you endeavor to carry out your mission and fail, so long as you have truly put forth your best efforts to keep my son alive.”

If the player characters ask, Hykros tells them that he does not know who the kidnappers are. He was contacted for the ransom demand magically, through a *crystal ball*. The kidnappers showed him his son. The figure that spoke to him wore a hooded cloak and spoke in a whisper. He is not even sure if the speaker was male or female.

The kidnapping occurred while his son was on his way home from a friend’s house. He was accompanied by a young priestess named Turnagon, his “nanny” (actually a combination body-guard/tutor who cared for his daily needs while teaching him the way of Tyr). When they did not arrive at the expected time, a pair of guards were sent out to find them. The guards found Turnagon’s body in a back alley but no sign of Mikhail. She has been raised from the dead at Hykros’s order, and her story is a short one: Three figures in hooded cloaks appeared out of an alley. One of them grabbed Mikhail and forced him into a sack while the other two stabbed her to death. She believes she broke the arm of one of her attackers but cannot be sure. Since she never heard them speak, she can’t say anything about their accent or where they might be from, and she never saw their faces. She knows nothing else. She is still bedfast, recovering from the ordeal. If the PCs insist on seeing her, she will recount her story (pausing often from weakness), clearly deeply concerned for Mikhail but able to tell them nothing new.

Hykros will tell the player characters briefly about the kidnapping itself so they will know what sort of people they are dealing



with: well-prepared, ruthless, and quite willing to kill to get what they want. Since time is short, however, he will quickly come to the nub of the matter:

"Now, as to the details of the job. The ransom is to be delivered to Tantras. Once you get there, you are to take a room at the Struggling Squid Inn, registering as Lord Bilcru and his party. There, sometime before midnight tomorrow, you will be contacted by the kidnappers, who will give you further instructions.

"Let me be perfectly clear. I will not pay for the wrong lad. You must make sure that the youth you recover is my son. I have here a recent painting of young Mikhail." He pauses to look at the small painting before handing it to you. You can see the tears in his eyes as he does so, a sight never before seen in Ravens Bluff. He clears his throat and continues.

"I will provide you with a magical means of determining if a deception is being carried out." He presents you with a crystal vial and a small pot of salve. "Rub this salve on your eyes, then drink this potion. That will allow you to see through illusions, polymorphs, and other deceptions, both magical and mundane. And finally, I am also sending my son's guard dog. He has no other name than 'Dog.'" He indicates a half-wolf that has been lying in the corner. "Dog is very well-trained."

Dog (wolf-dog crossbreed): AC 7 (AC 5 with *collar of protection* +2); MV 18; HD 4+2; 33 hp; THAC0 17 (16 due to combat training); #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+1 (bite); SA gains +1 bonus to attacks and +1 to initiative due to combat training; SD *collar of protection* +2 also grants immunity to *charm* spells and limited empathy with Dog's current master, SZ M (5' long); ML elite (14); Int average (8); AL LN.

Dog knows the following commands, which Hykros will teach to the player characters:

Command	Result
"Dog, find."	Follow a trail (must first be given the scent)
"Dog!"	Attack
"Dog."	Attack to subdue
"Dog?"	Attack to disarm
"Dog, guard."	Protect
Nonverbal*	Stay

*a sharp nod while looking at Dog

Dog looks like a mangy wolf, but he and Mikhail are dear friends. He generally knows whom to attack by following eyes and facial movements and by his empathic link with his master. Dog is extremely intelligent for an animal (and may be smarter than some fighters in the party) and should be played that way. He uses a deep, rumbling growl to discourage familiarity on the part of anyone other than his master. Incidentally, if someone tries to take Dog's collar, Dog can and will take off a finger or two, just as a warning.

Choose a druid, a ranger, or a bard to be Dog's temporary master. If none of these are available, choose the PC with the highest Charisma.

"Dog, go with this person. Mind. Get Mikhail," commands Hykros. Dog moves over to the indicated person's side and sits, looking up at his new master. "Now, if you will accompany me, we will see to the ransom."

He leads you to another room, where a huge trunk lies open upon the floor. The trunk is six feet by three feet by three feet, and it is already more than half filled with sacks of coins. Two men in the vestments of Tyr are sitting at a table, counting platinum pieces and placing them in bags; they do not look up. Also on the table is a pile of bejeweled weapons and five small, open boxes with a shining ring in each.

Hykros leads you into the room and motions for your attention. "Since you are carrying out the mission, I must tell you about the ransom. My associates argued that it would be better if you did not know what it really is. I disagree, since the kidnappers could then claim I had not paid everything they demanded. The ransom is to be worth 500,000 gold pieces. A quarter of the total was to be in platinum pieces, the rest in gems. That is almost assembled.

"In addition, I must hand over five magical weapons, five potions, five magical rings, and five other magical items of power. In case you are questioned by the kidnappers, you need to know just what you are being entrusted with."

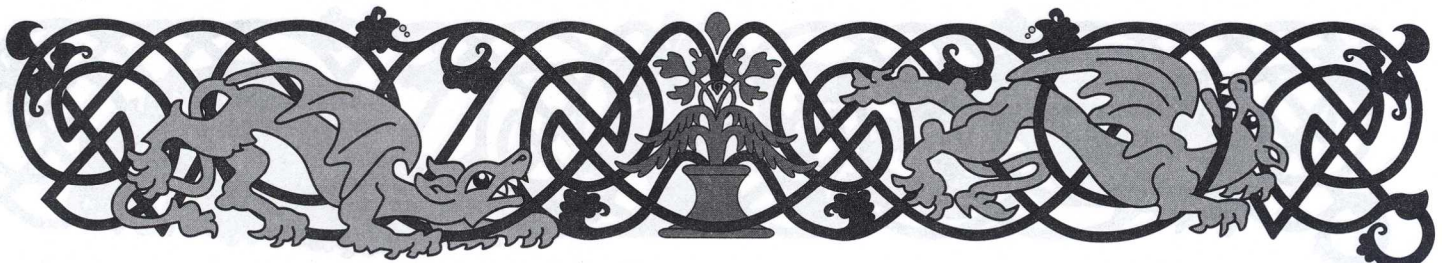
At this point, Hykros gives the characters a verbal accounting of the magical treasure, pointing to each item in turn as he does so. There are five rings: a *ring of wizardry*, a *ring of regeneration*, and three *rings of protection* (with respective bonuses of +1, +2, and +4). The weapons are a *mace of disruption* +2, a *longsword* +1 *flametongue*, a *scimitar of severing* (essentially a *sword of sharpness*), a *rapier* +2, and an *axe of hurling* +1. The potions are an *elixir of health*, an *elixir of youth*, *oil of impact*, *oil of timelessness*, and *oil of disenchantment*. Finally, the miscellaneous magical items are a *necklace of missiles* (with one 5 HD and two 3 HD missiles remaining), a *pouch of accessibility*, a *quiver of Ehlonna*, a *chime of opening*, and a *philosopher's stone*.

"As you can see, a worthy fortune. But it means nothing to me without my son. We should be finished here soon. We have only to finish counting the platinum pieces. I have cast certain protective spells upon the chest to ensure it is not opened prematurely. You should be forewarned that the protections will include a *fire trap* and four *glyphs of warding*: *level drain*, *paralyzation*, *electricity*, and *death*. For your own safety, I beg of you: do not tamper with the chest. The wards will not activate unless someone tries to gain entrance to the chest.

"This allows you to transport the trunk with no fear, since you will not know the key words to the wards. The ransom demand told me what words to use. This is how you can identify the true kidnappers. If someone claims to be one of the kidnappers, let him or her try to open the chest.

"In the meantime, I would like you to come up with a plan for getting the ransom safely to Tantras. Nothing flashy; the emphasis should be on remaining inconspicuous. Of course, I will cover the expenses of such a trip, providing whatever you need in the way of disguises or props. I know you will need a wagon to carry the trunk; I have one in a hidden warehouse. We have about half an hour before the ransom will be ready. This gives you some time to discuss the matter and make your plans. I must





finish packing and sealing the trunk. Dirtin here will show you to a private chamber and help you obtain whatever you may need. I will return shortly.”

Dirtin is one of Hykros's most trusted acolytes, a halfling priest of Tyr. He is courteous but clearly thinks that the priests of Tyr should handle this mission, not some unaffiliated adventurers. He will firmly reject requests that are clearly the PCs abusing the opportunity to go on a shopping trip at Hykros's expense. The characters are supplied only with items that could be used to hide the trunk or with things that help make their cover story (whatever it is) a plausible one. For example, if they decide to pose as farmers with a load of hay, Dirtin will arrange for suitable clothing, pitchforks, and a wagonful of hay. Since they will need a wagon to carry the trunk, they might chose the guise of merchants; if so, the wares supplied for trade should be inexpensive and common, such as bolts of cloth, crates of glassware, or foodstuffs. The total cost of the items they request cannot exceed 1000 gp for the simple reason that this amount represents the extreme limit of the remaining funds Hykros could find or borrow in the available time. Naturally, some requests will be easier than others; some goods might take too long to assemble, while Dirtin will reject others as too likely to draw attention (the very thing they are trying to avoid) or too incongruous to place in the same wagon with the chest of treasure it's meant to disguise.

Note that this 1,000 gp limit does not include the cost of either the wagon itself or the two draft horses to pull it; these are provided by the temple.

Let the PCs have five or ten minutes to discuss their strategy. If they cannot come up with any ideas at all, Dirtin can suggest the farmers-on-their-way-to-market story, the merchant story, a guise as pilgrims on their way to visit the shrine of Torm, an attempt to pass themselves off as a poor family with all their worldly goods piled on the wagon, or even a guise as traveling morticians. He rejects with scorn any plan along the lines of having a mage turn the trunk invisible, as he feels it would be far too conspicuous to have the PCs make a twenty-mile journey with an empty wagon. No matter what story they come up with, Dirtin points out that the weight of the wagon will let anyone who watches the horses carefully see that some considerable weight is on it; he believes it is far too likely that someone will detect for magic or invisibility on such a wagon, giving the whole thing away. *Teleportation* is also unfortunately not an option, as the trunk is guarded against such spells. Dirtin also warns that the kidnappers claimed to have some means of checking on the chest periodically (no doubt some form of *scry*), so hiding it via a *portable hole* or some spell such as *Leomund's secret chest* could be disastrous for the hostage.

Since the characters are to pose as Lord Bilcru and his party once they arrive in Tantras, they may decide to travel incognito under that pseudonym as well. If this is the case, they will have to satisfy Dirtin as to why a noble would be traveling in a simple wagon rather than a coach. Masquerading as poor Lord Bilcru, a noble down on his luck, is acceptable; hiring a coach is not, as such a coach would attract too much attention if accompanied by a company of guards and be sure to draw bandits in the wilderness if it was not. If the PC group is relatively weak on fighters, they may wish to hire sell-swords to beef up the security. Dirtin warns them to choose carefully, as it would be virtually impossible to conceal a valuable trunk this size from the sell-swords. With all of the stories

about the kidnapping, suspicion is sure to lead hired hands to the conclusion that this is the ransom. Should the PCs be firm in their resolve, Dirtin mutters that he will arrange for a few trustworthy people (see the Red Alliance from the next encounter).

Once the party comes up with an acceptable plan, Dirtin excuses himself and dashes off to obtain whatever goods the characters have decided upon to place in the wagon around or over the trunk, clothing appropriate to the plan, and horses to pull the wagon. He insists they take good care of the horses he provides (as usual, he is quite adamant). Of course, they are welcome to take along any riding horses they might happen to have, but PCs are unlikely to own draft horses such as are necessary to pull a weight of this magnitude—the platinum alone weighs 500 pounds, meaning that even a character with 18/00 Strength cannot pick it up. If asked, Dirtin will gladly explain Dog's abilities to the party.

Protecting the Trunk

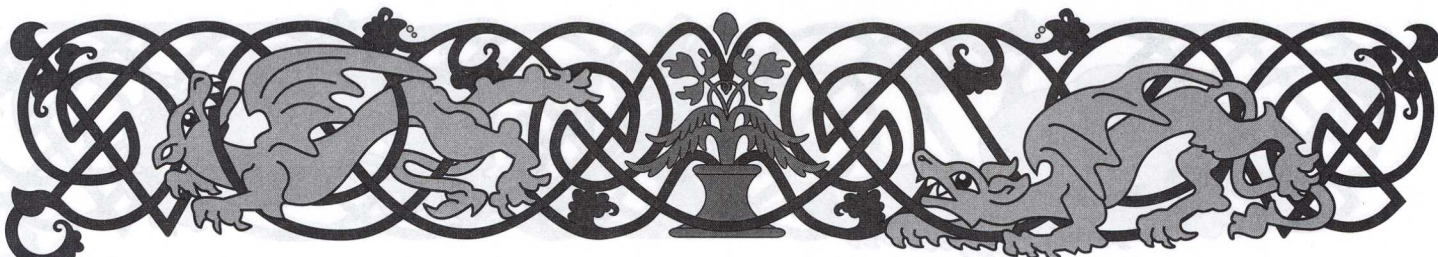
The Holy Justice of Tyr has given the PCs fair warning; should they at some point attempt to get into the trunk, the DM should feel no remorse about hitting them with all the traps. Only Hykros himself and the leader of the kidnappers know the correct passwords to bypass these traps. In addition to the automatic level drain (two levels, no save, affects everyone within five feet of the trunk), the wards' effects include the following:

- *glyph of death*: the person opening the chest must succeed on a saving throw vs. death magic or die.
- *glyph of paralysis*: everyone within twenty feet of the chest must save vs. paralysis or be frozen for 1d4 rounds.
- *glyph of electricity*: everyone within thirty feet of the chest must save vs. spell or take 12d4 + 12 points of damage; the person setting off the *glyph* gets no saving throw.

In addition to the *glyphs*, Hykros has cast a *fire trap* upon the first item atop the packages inside the trunk (the carefully wrapped *flametongue longsword*); if the bundle is touched or picked up by anyone who does not know the password, the trap explodes, causing 4d13 + 13 points of damage to everyone within a five-foot radius. The person setting off the trap gets no saving throw but may, if he or she survives, take some consolation that the long sword itself is unharmed by the blast. The trunk is also wizard-locked (at 18th level, by no less a personage than Alcides Von Tighe, Archmage of the Wizards Guild, as a personal favor to the Reverend Judge). There is no actual lock on the trunk to be picked; a command word must be used to open it. The trunk is iron-bound wood, and both wood and bands have been magically enchanted to resist all forms of damage (so that a *warp wood* or *passwall* spell will not avail to gain entry).

Should the PCs somehow make it through all of this, all of the offending PCs have their foreheads marked with a set of scales with the balance tilted, the *sign of a betrayer*. This mark cannot be covered by anything, magical or mundane. It even remains if the PCs *polymorph* to another form or attempt to hide it with illusions. They cannot return to the Living City and expect to survive. In fact, they cannot expect to survive in any good-aligned country. This option should only be used if the PCs really try to rob the trunk. Someone who accidentally falls against it is not affected; the traps function on intent as well as physical proximity (there is of course no way to “accidentally” get into the trunk).

When the party has devised their plan and received the items they need, Dirtin leads them through a secret tunnel to a warehouse near the temple where the wagon, already loaded with the chest, awaits them. Here they meet one last time with Hykros, who



explains that to have the wagon seen leaving the temple would be too obvious; the warehouse is staffed with acolytes of Tyr, people whose tongues can be trusted. Two people may ride on the wagon seat; the rest are expected to either walk or ride horses of their own. Characters who requested riding horses as part of their "equipment" find average riding horses saddled and waiting, one per character who requested one; those with horses of their own find their personal mounts here as well, ready and waiting (unless the possession of fine horses would disrupt the disguise they have chosen). When the party is ready to leave, Hykros charges them to save his son and gives them Tyr's blessing; proceed to Encounter Two.

Reverend Judge Hykros Allumen (13th-level Specialty Priest of Tyr [Holy Justice]): AC 0 (*field plate +2*); MV 12; 80 hp; THAC0 12; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6+1 (mace) or 2d4 (bastard sword); SA spells; SD spells; SW fear for son, -2 penalty to saving throws from the sphere of Law; SZ M (6'); ML fearless (19); AL LG; XP 8,000. Str 16, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 18, Chr 15. Spells: *bless, combine, command, cure light wound, detect evil, light, protection from evil, remove fear, *augury, detect charm, *fire trap, hold person, know alignment, silence 15' radius, spiritual hammer, withdraw; dispel magic, *glyph of warding (×4), prayer, speak with dead; abjur, detect lie, *divination, neutralize poison, tongues; ***hammer of justice, quest; heal (×2)*. Special abilities (at will, unless otherwise noted): *detect invisibility (at will), detect lie (at will), hold person, holy word, **impending permission (once every ten days), **legal thoughts, **memory read (once every three days), **strength of one*. Ancient History—The Vast (13), Etiquette (15), Local History—The Vast (15), ***Recall Legal Precedent (18), Religion (18).

* already cast

** spell from *Tome of Magic*; if the DM does not use this book, substitute spells from the *Player's Handbook*.

*** described in *Faiths and Avatars*; if the DM does not use this book, substitute a spell from the *Player's Handbook*.

Dirtin (1st-level halfling Cleric of Tyr): AC 10; MV 6; 6 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (war hammer); SD spells; SZ S (3'); ML elite (13); AL LG; XP 65. Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 18, Chr 13. Spells: *bless, combine, sanctuary*. Special abilities: Ancient History—The Vast (14), Local History—The Vast (13), Reading/Writing (16), Religion (18).

Turnagon (3rd-level Specialty Priestess of Tyr [Holy Justice]): AC 10 (unarmored) or 4 (chain mail and shield); MV 0 (bedfast) or 12; 2 hp (normally 20 hp); THAC0 20; #AT 1 (currently none); Dmg currently none, usually 2d4 (bastard sword) or 1d6+1 (mace); SA spells; SD spells; SW currently bedfast, without spells, unable to move or attack, recovering from *raise dead*; SZ M (5'4"); ML champion (15); AL LG; XP 175. Str 15, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 13, Wis 16, Chr 17. Spells: *bless, command, cure light wounds, light; aid, hold person, spiritual hammer*. Special abilities: Ancient History—Ravens Bluff (12), Etiquette (17), Local History—Ravens Bluff (17), Reading/Writing (14).

Experience

- Characters agree to the mission immediately: 100 XP each.
- Characters come up with a good, coherent plan for getting the ransom to Tantras: 100 XP each.

Consequences

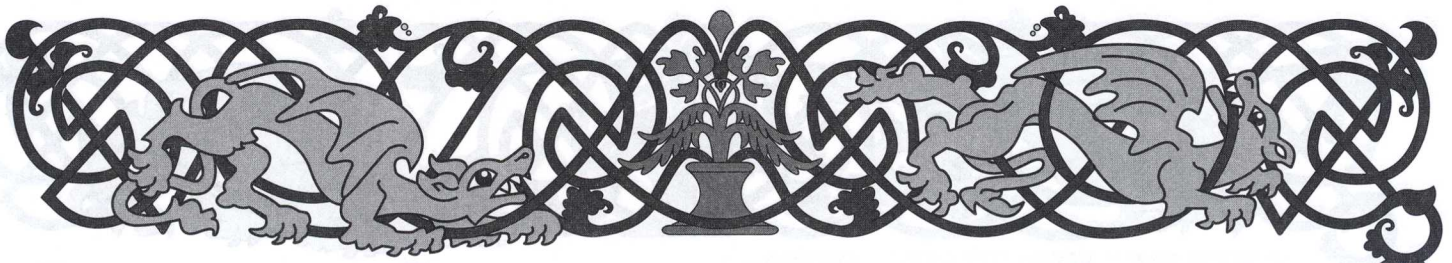
Player characters are free to refuse the mission; make sure the players understand that doing so curtails the adventure then and there. The consequences of accepting the mission and then trying to loot the ransom for their own benefit are fully dealt with above; characters who willfully sabotage the mission, who try to claim some or all of the ransom for themselves, or who stand by and knowingly allow others to do so are all marked as betrayers and must spend the rest of their careers fleeing from paladins, clerics, and other right-thinking people. Once Hykros Allumen pronounces anathema against the PCs, not only the followers of Tyr but all nine other faiths that make up the Civic Religion of Ravens Bluff (the worshippers of Chauntea, Gond, Helm, Lathander, Mystra, Selûne, Tempus, Tymora, and Waukeen) will join in the persecution, aided by the civic government and the knightly orders of Ravens Bluff, all of whom will vie to be the one to bring them to justice. See the second half of the adventure for ideas, substituting the PCs for the kidnapers as the ones being hunted down. If taken alive, the characters will be charged with being Accessories "After the Fact" to Kidnapping and Murder; after being stripped of all honors, titles, and possessions, the minimum sentence they will receive is ten years hard labor. If they're lucky, they won't wind up in prison with people they sent there in their heroic days . . .

Encounter Two: The Red Alliance

At first you feel tense as you drive the wagon through the busy streets of Ravens Bluff, looking for hidden enemies on every side. Slowly you begin to relax as you see how few people take notice of you. Wagons like yours are common here. So far, your disguises are working. As you near the north gates, you find your way blocked by an overturned wagon—apparently a cheese merchant has had an accident. Several workers are picking up goods from the street while the merchant himself is trying to keep bystanders from making off with any of his fragrant wares. The street looks to be completely blocked by boxes and wheels of cheese scattered all around. As you bring the horses to a halt, you realize that backing up would be practically impossible. While you ponder your next move, one of the workers looks up and asks if you could give them a hand with the cleanup.

The PCs probably suspect that this is a trap; it is not. They may help pick up the cheese, or sit and wait for the laborers to do it, or try to turn the wagon around and find another route. If they help pick up the cheese, the grateful cheese merchant offers them a round (about 5 lbs.) of gorgonzola cheese. If any halflings are present in the party, they are each offered an ounce of Luiren Spring Cheese (a delicacy highly intoxicating to halflings).

Whatever course of action the party decides upon, they are approached a moment or two later by Merlika Ogreslayer, a member



of the Red Alliance. This mercenary unit of adventurers is open only to female fighters: alliance members must have red hair (natural or dyed), but that is practically the only criteria for membership, and their morals and ethics are said to be highly questionable. Merlika approaches a PC and attempts to strike up a conversation. She chooses one who is standing and watching, if possible; otherwise, her next choice is one of the PCs who is not riding on the wagon. If everyone is on the wagon, she approaches the back. Merlika is not particularly subtle, and after exchanging a word or two about "the mess" on the street she inquires as to the PCs' destination. If they refuse to tell her, she wants to know what the big secret is. She jokingly asks if they are smuggling young Mikhail Alumen out of town in the wagon. She casually attempts to pet Dog but thinks better of it when Dog growls low in his throat. Dog doesn't like her.

If the PCs are posing as merchants or "Lord Bilcru" and company, she offers her group's service as guards, asking 100 gp as their fee for the trip. If the PCs are posing as pilgrims or a poor farm family, she magnanimously volunteers to travel with them, protecting them on the way, calling it her "good deed" for the week. The more the PCs protest, the more she believes that they are hiding something. Any argument about lack of funds, or a different destination, causes her to become more certain that the PCs have something valuable in the wagon. It should soon become clear that this very public discussion is drawing unwanted attention; characters who think quickly may be able to out-argue her, but it will not be easy. Note that Merlika does not suspect the PCs of carrying the ransom; she just wants to get them alone in the wilderness to rob them.

If back at the temple the player characters had asked Dirtin for some additional muscle to help them protect the shipment, assume that Merlika intercepted his messenger and learned of the mission. She has no idea what the shipment is, only that it's something valuable being taken out of the city tonight. She has learned any passwords the messenger knew and will glibly answer any questions by referring the PCs back to Dirtin (knowing full well that they are in too much of a hurry to go back and check on her story). If the PCs comment that she and her group don't look much like the sort of people who would be hired to run an errand for priests of Tyr, she grins and thanks them for the complement to her disguise ("good, isn't it?"). If they flatly refuse to accept her offer, she rides off in a huff—only to circle back once she is out of sight and follow them from a distance. If they accept, she whistles and five more red-haired women appear, each on a riding horse. They spread out, two ahead and two behind the wagon, with Merlika and the fifth flanking it on either side, seeing it safely out the city gates.

Merlika Ogreslayer (5th-level Fighter): AL NE; AC 2 (chain mail, Dexterity bonus); MV 24 (on horseback) or 12 (afoot); hp 40; THAC0 16 (13 with *bastard sword* +1 plus Strength and specialization bonuses); #AT 3/2 (weapon specialization); Dmg 2d4+4 (*bastard sword* +1, Specialization bonus, Strength bonus); SA weapon specialization (*bastard sword*); SZ M (6'); ML champion (15); AL NE; XP 420. Str 17, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 7, Chr 12. Special equipment: *potion of clairvoyance*.

Tomai, Dakka, Nasom, Salu, and Radi (Red Alliance Members, five 3rd-level Fighters): AC 4 (chain mail, Dexterity bonus); MV 24 (on horseback) or 12 (afoot); hp 24

(average); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (mace) or 1d4 (light crossbow bolt); SZ M; ML steady (12); Int average (8–10); AL N; XP 120 each. Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16.

Experience

- Help pick up the cheese: 100 XP per helper.
- Avoid drawing too much attention during exit from city: 100 XP each.
- Don't allow the Red Alliance to accompany the party: 200 XP each.

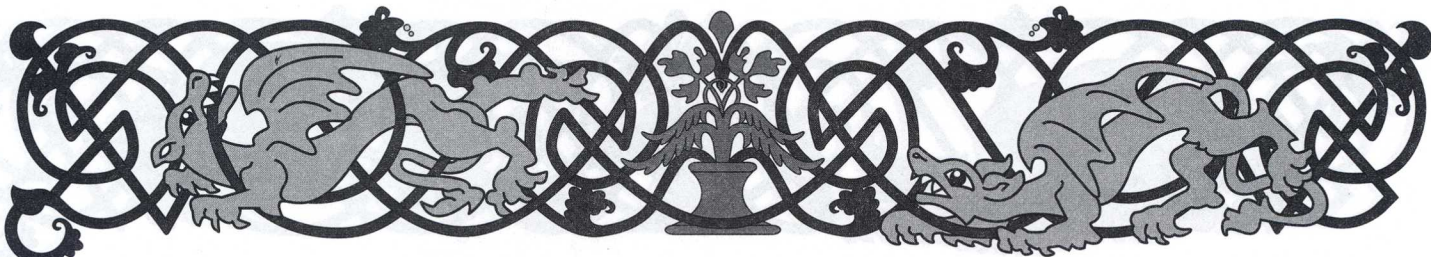
Consequences

Characters who try too aggressively either to get past or turn around may start a fight which will quickly bring the City Watch; brawling with Merlika in the street will certainly do so. Unless they can satisfy the constables, the characters will be taken into custody and their load carried off to the Watchhouse for storage. It's possible for the PCs to win their freedom again after a few hours in the pokey, but this setback will cost them time and force them to worry about making their rendezvous in Tantras. By contrast, characters who pitch in and help out (hopefully leaving at least one PC to watch their wagon) get to go on their way with only slight delay and the hearty thanks of the cheese merchant and his helpers. Deftly putting off the Red Alliance will not prevent trouble, but it will keep the party from being betrayed unawares later on.

Encounter Three: Trouble on the Trail

Despite getting such a late start, you nevertheless make good time and cover roughly a quarter of the distance to Tantras before the darkness forces you to stop for the night. At this rate, with a good night's rest and an early start you should reach Tantras by mid-afternoon tomorrow. For now, though, the horses need rest, as do you. Several good camping spots present themselves: a meadow by a stream, a small copse of trees, and some rocky ground that would allow you to put your backs to a stone outcropping. Where will you camp?

Let the PCs pick their spot. Those with Animal Handling should be able to tell that the draft horses will need water and grass. If they do not camp by the stream, someone will have to spend an hour carrying water to the thirsty horses; if they camp by the rocks, the horses will need grain or other feed as well as water (assuming the PCs thought to request some among their stores). However, the copse of trees and the rocky outcropping both allow the party a better defensive position than the stream. If the Red Alliance are accompanying the PCs, they leave the selection of the camp spot up to the party (if asked for advice, they mention that the rocky outcropping is the most defensible position). Merlika assigns two guards to each watch, choosing the middle watch for herself. She tells the PCs that their presence on watch is not required. If the party insists, she agrees without argument. She does make it clear that she expects someone in the party to do the cooking, as her women are fighters, not domestic help.



The first part of the night passes without incident. As the second watch draws to a close, the Alliance members strike. If all the PCs have trustingly gone to sleep, then the women attack them in their sleep. They would swiftly overpower and subdue the sleeping PCs except for one thing: Dog. As soon as the women rise from “sleep” and begin to move into position, Dog growls low and licks his master’s face, waking the PC. Whether he or she realizes what is happening depends on how quick-witted (and suspicious) the player is; if the character shouts out a warning right away, then the Red Alliance attackers only get one free attack (at a +4 bonus, as all the PCs are prone targets) before the characters can respond.

If any PC stayed awake to share the watch, one of the two Alliance guards on watch (Nasom) steps to the edge of camp and peers out into the darkness. She claims to have heard something. The other guard (Merlika) and the PC(s) hear nothing. Allow any PCs on watch a surprise roll. Whether they succeed or not, Merlika suddenly attacks—from behind if at all possible, gaining a +2 bonus on the back attack (+4 if the target is surprised). At the same moment, Nasom whirls and strikes at the nearest character and the rest of the Alliance women roll out of their blankets and move to attack.

If the PCs refused to allow the Red Alliance to accompany them, the party has a normal evening at first. But about two hours after midnight (again, near the end of the second watch), the women find them and move quietly into position. The PCs on watch have a 1-in-6 chance to hear the camp being surrounded (2-in-6 for elves or those with the Alertness proficiency). If the women succeed in closing with the party without being noticed, roll to see if the PCs are surprised when Merlika launches her attack (the PCs suffer a -2 penalty to their role, as Merlika has used

her *potion of clairvoyance* to determine exactly where each PC is sleeping or standing. This allows the Red Alliance to move into position with a minimum of noise or fuss. On the other hand, the PCs have Dog, who will growl and wake his temporary master the round before the attack, just as above.

The Red Alliance attackers begin by launching crossbow bolts at the sentries (remember that surprised targets do not gain any AC bonuses from Dexterity). The Red Alliance expect to down all of the sentries with one volley. If they succeed, allow each falling sentry a Constitution check: success means he or she manages to croak out a warning or fall upon a sleeping PC, thus waking the camp. Whether the women defeat the sentries or not, they draw their melee weapons and charge the next round; PCs have that round to get to their feet and snatch a weapon. Note that fighters and clerics do *not* have time to put on armor and that the DM is well within his or her rights to rule that any PC attempting to sleep in armor cannot regain hit points or spells.

If the Red Alliance reach the wagon, two of the women climb onto it and start throwing stuff off. When they see the trunk, they grab it and immediately set off its *glyphs*: both are paralyzed, level-drained, and blasted by lightning, killing them both (and incidentally making a mess of any items the PCs have placed in the wagon). The sudden deaths will cause the remaining women to flee if possible; if not, they must make successful morale checks or surrender.

If the Red Alliance withdraw, the survivors follow the party from a distance. During the next day, tell the PCs that from time to time they have a feeling of being watched. At one point let the rearmost party member spot a red-haired woman on horseback far behind. If a PC tries to go after her, she rides away as fast as she can. The Red Alliance continues to follow the PCs until they reach the troll bridge (Encounter 5). After seeing the PCs dispatch the troll(s), the surviving women decide that they want nothing to do with this party.

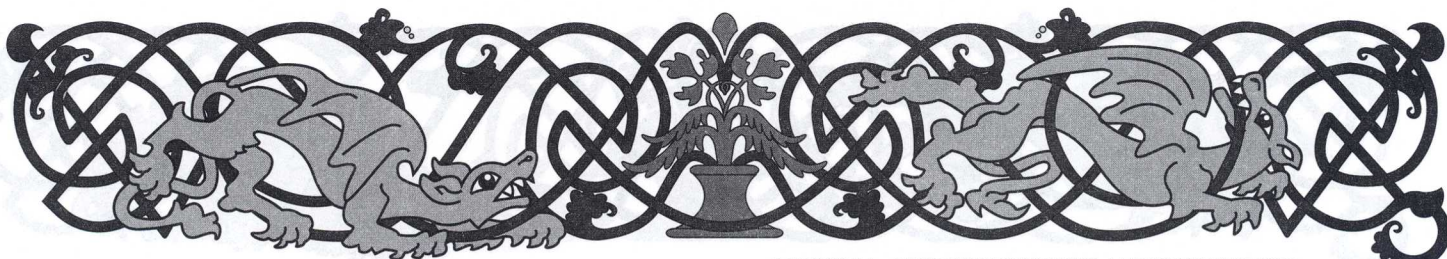
Experience

- Insist on having PCs on watch with the Red Alliance: 100 XP each.
- Don’t let the Red Alliance reach the wagon: 150 XP each.
- Defeat or repel the Red Alliance: 300 XP each.
- Managed to raise the alarm when knocked unconscious: 100 XP (that PC only).

Consequences

It’s possible that the PCs will be handily defeated by the Red Alliance. If this happens, simply have the women call for the PCs to surrender as soon as it becomes clear they are winning (they intend to capture the characters and ransom them later). Once they believe the victory is theirs, they concentrate on the wagon and the box, probably setting off the traps before the last PC falls. Under no circumstances will the women fight to the death once it is clear that they have lost: if they cannot flee then they will surrender, trusting that the characters will not kill captives over a simple highway robbery. They know nothing about the kidnapping and will be stunned to learn the importance of the errand they have stumbled upon.





Encounter Four: The Fighting Terrier

After last night's ambush, you are even more wary than you were yesterday. You defeated the Red Alliance, but who knows what other foes and robbers lurk between here and the rendezvous point? Keeping a careful eye out for trouble, you have covered another ten miles by early afternoon. Up ahead, you spy a comfortable-looking roadside inn. You know you'll have to stop soon and give the horses a rest—and you wouldn't mind a bite to eat and a chance to stretch yourself.

As you draw nearer, you see that the sign above the door depicts a barking dog. Those of you who have traveled this way before know this is the Fighting Terrier Inn—a friendly spot with good food and better drink. Several horses and a mule loaded with skins are tied up outside the building, and four old men who look like farmers lounge in front of the inn. Just before you draw up alongside the inn, you hear an ominous *crack!* from one side of the wagon.

Characters who stop to check on the noise find that a spoke in one wheel has cracked. Replacing the spoke is impossible without removing the wheel, which in turn means unloading the wagon in full view of everyone at the inn. In fact, while they are stopped the innkeeper comes out to welcome them while his customers (the four farmers outside, a family of three, and four rough-looking men dressed as outdoorsmen) stare. If told of the problem, the hostler calls for his handyman, Pyles, who shuffles into view from the stables to the rear. After examining the wheel for a minute he announces that he can fix the wheel if they are willing to wait overnight but that it is also possible to splint the spoke if they want to keep going. The innkeeper, an elderly halfling named Winslow Farmer, invites them inside to wait while Pyles mends the spoke and tests the remaining wheels to see that they are all sound (the four farmers stand around offering advice all the while).

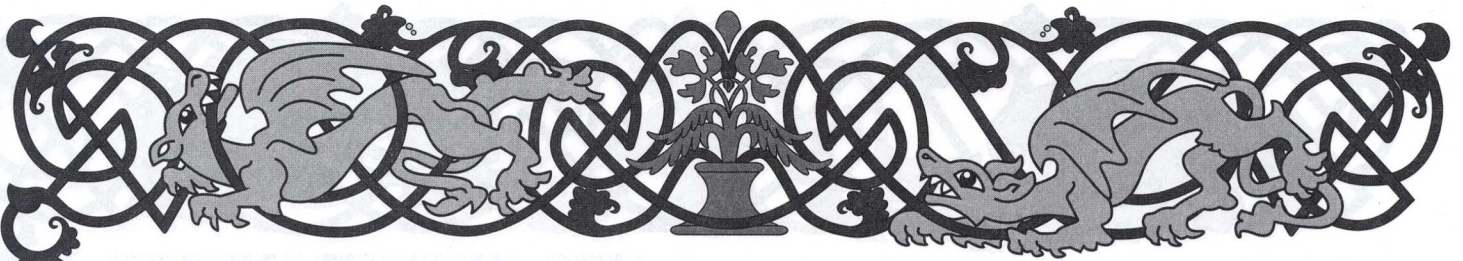
Those who accept Winslow's invitation find the inn a cheery place. Inside, the other guests have returned to their tables. The four outdoorsmen sit around one table playing cards; they look a fairly disreputable lot. The other table seats a family of three: a father, a mother, and their eight-year-old daughter Marcy. Winslow is cheerful, curious, and pleasantly plump. He makes it a point to welcome his guests personally, asking their names, their business, what they would like to drink, their destination, what they would like to eat, their company, their employer, whether they would like to stay the night, their cargo, and everything else. The party may become intensely suspicious of Winslow, but he is quite harmless, simply insatiably inquisitive. Winslow is a good listener and may actually help the PCs by pointing out holes in their cover story (claiming to be poor pilgrims but carrying obviously valuable magical swords, for example). He points out such discrepancies, waiting expectantly for an answer. He does not challenge the PCs' answers, although he greets obvious lies by rolling his eyes and letting out a disbelieving "Uh-huh. Yeah, sure." Winslow is a font of information, if the PCs manage to get a word in edgewise. He mentions that he is waiting for a shipment from Tantras



and at first thought the PCs were bringing his load of supplies. He also mentions that only this morning several priests and priestesses of Tyr rode through escorting a heavily guarded wagon. "What's going on in Ravens Bluff?" he asks. "We don't usually see priests of Tyr escorting a wagon."

The four "outdoorsmen" playing cards are actually bandits. They attempt to listen in on the PCs' conversation but take no overt action. If approached, they claim to be trappers; if confronted or attacked, they flee immediately. Each carries only 10 to 12 cp, but they have a pile of skins on a mule outside worth 100 gp if taken to a furrier. These men are scouts for a larger group of bandits. They know now that the priests' wagon was a decoy (see Encounter Six), so they are looking for a disguised party with the ransom. They are not sure it is this party, but they are suspicious enough to pay close attention to any strangers. Two of them carry on a low conversation, just enough to keep up a rumble of talk from their table. If someone tries to overhear the conversation, it is about the trouble they had tracking down a bear and how much they can expect for the skin at the furrier's. The other two use their Detect Noise skills to try to eavesdrop on the party. The bandit facing the PCs also has the Reading Lips skill. When Winslow stops bothering the PCs, the outdoorsmen pay their tab with copper pieces and leave. If anyone watches them, they ride off towards the north (the direction of Tantras).

The family is just what they appear to be: a normal farm family, on their way to Ravens Bluff for a wedding. Marcy, the daughter, quickly turns into a pest. She wanders over to the PCs and wants to know if they are (a) rich, (b) famous, and (c) heroes. She especially wants to see magic. If anyone is foolish enough to admit to spellcasting ability, she pesters that character incessantly. If appealed to, her parents tell her nonchalantly to "stop bothering the



nice people, dear," then go back to their meal; Marcy ignores them. If someone casts a *cantrip*, *audible glamer*, *phantasmal force*, or similar minor magic, she is very impressed. It also spurs her on to ask for more. Of course any display of real magic scares the wits out of her mother, who comes over and grabs Marcy by the ear, scolding her and telling her to keep away from people like that. "Everyone knows mages would as soon turn you into a toad as look at you," she warns. If approached, the family know nothing that can help the party: they have come overland from their farm and thus can report nothing about events on the road ahead.

If, by some chance, the party has been foolish enough to leave the wagon unguarded out front, Marcy mentions that the old men outside seem awfully interested in the stuff in their wagon (if the PCs glance outside, they see the farmers standing around looking innocent). After the outdoorsmen leave, she asks the PCs "How come two of those men did all the talking while the others just sat and listened? They listened so hard. Are outdoorsmen hard of hearing?" Pester the PCs, but give them the chance to figure out that the outdoorsmen were listening to their conversation with Winslow.

Most food that the PCs might ask for is not available until the supply wagon comes. For now, all Winslow has is lamb stew and pale ale. The stew is very tasty: Winslow's wife Marler is quite a cook. She is also very protective of her kitchen. Should any halflings, or anyone else for that matter, attempt to enter her kitchen, she takes a wooden spoon to them. The kitchen is her domain—no invaders allowed.

The party may decide not to go inside the inn, as they may all want to stay with the wagon. Winslow thinks this is very strange and says so; he wants to know what it is in the wagon that's so valuable. Refusal on the PCs' part to allow Pyles to unfasten the horses and let them graze while he works on the wagon will meet with disbelief and disapproval on Winslow's part (he has no truck with people who abuse their work animals). Most of the encounter should play the same as if the PCs entered the inn—Marcy wanders outside to pester the PCs, the outdoorsmen move to a table near a window so that they can watch the PCs, the four old men lounge about and offer Pyles unhelpful advice, and so forth.

Three of the four old men (Ben, Auxil, and Murthy) are retired local farmers who meet here every day and spend several hours playing knucklebones for copper pieces. Determined questioning might reveal that the fourth is a newcomer who has only been around the last two days. The newcomer has been losing heavily at knucklebones, and the others like that. "Yesterday," one crows, "he lost almost 40 coppers!" Should anyone decide to play knucklebones with the farmers, each farmer has a Gaming skill of 10. Hiram, the newcomer, has a skill of 19; he uses it to lose consistently. Games are for 1 cp per throw and the highest roll without going over the player's Gaming skill wins. A PC who plays but does not have the skill wins only if all three farmers miss their roll and Hiram makes his. The farmers question any guards left with the wagon but don't pay much attention to the answers. In fact, it should be hard for the PCs to get a word in edgewise. Every time a PC says anything, it reminds one of the farmers of his adventuring days. They all claim to be retired adventurers. Two of them actually served in the militia in Tantras thirty years ago; the third merely tells tall tales. The fourth one—the newcomer—is actually one of the kidnappers; he's watching for the ransom and wants to make sure it gets safely to the rendezvous point. No fool he, he realized the priests were a decoy and is fairly sure that this is the wagon with the real shipment. Since he wants the ransom delivered, he takes no action against the PCs and may even help them

in small ways. For example, he watches the "outdoorsmen" ride away and, after they are out of sight, mentions that he never saw trappers who could afford horses but didn't need skinning equipment. "A strange bunch," he comments. "Wonder what they want up Tantras-way?" Hiram is a lean, weathered man with a neat beard and long, dark hair streaked with gray.

When the PCs have finished lunch, gaming, and repairs, tell them that the horses are rested enough to continue. The bill is not steep: 2 sp covers meals and drinks for the whole party. Grain for the horses comes to another 2 sp. Repair costs for the wagon wheel is the steepest expense: 5 gp (although Winslow can be bartered down to only 3).

Winslow Farmer the Innkeeper (2nd-level halfling Fighter): AC 8 (Dexterity bonus); MV 6; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SZ S (3'7"); ML steady (11); Int high (14); AL NG; XP 65.

Pyles the handyman (zero-level human): AC 10; MV 12; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1 (fist); SZ M (6'2"); ML unreliable (4); Int average (8); AL N; XP 7.

"Outdoorsmen" (four 4th-level Thieves): AC 8 (leather jerkins under coats); MV 12; hp 16, 19, 12, 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) or 1d6 (short sword); SA backstab (+4 to attacks, double damage); SD thief abilities (Detect Noise 45%); SZ M; ML steady (12); Int average to high (9, 10, 11, 14); AL NE; XP 175 each.

Ben, Auxil, & Murthy (three farmers—Ben & Auxil, F1; Murthy, zero-level): AC 10; MV 9 (age); hp 6, 5, 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (knife); SZ M; ML average (9); Int average (10); AL NG; XP 15 (Ben, Auxil) or 7 (Murthy). Special ability: Gaming (10).

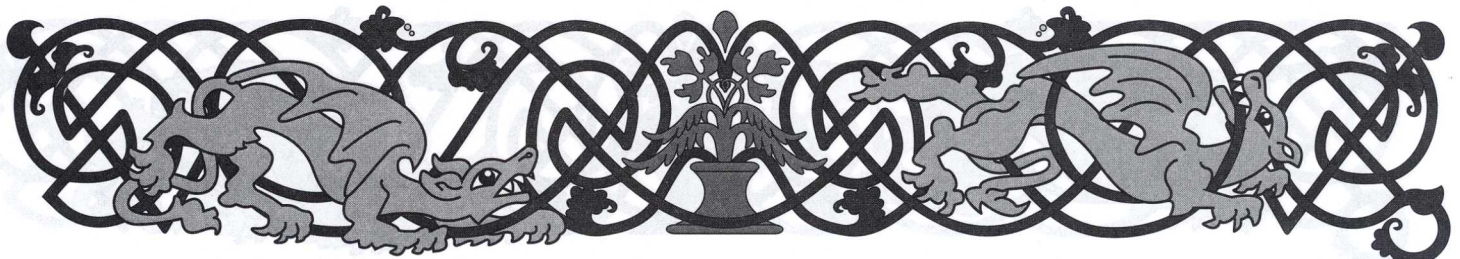
"Hiram" (actually Todus Hill, 11th-level Thief and leader of the kidnappers): AC 6 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 55; THAC0 15 (14 with *stiletto +1*); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2 (*stiletto +1*, Strength bonus); SA backstab (+4 to attacks, quadruple damage); SD thief abilities (see below), *stoneskin*, *ring of free action*, *ring of spell storing (dimension door)*; SZ M (5'10"); ML elite (13); AL NE; XP 2,000. Str 16, Dex 18, Con 9, Int 15, Wis 7, Chr 10. PP 75%, OL 70%, FT 80%, MS 50%, HS 80%, DN 70%, CW 95%, RL 40%. Special abilities: Gaming (19), Tumbling (18). Special equipment: *potion of invisibility*, *scroll (undetachable lie)*.

Experience

- Post a guard over the wagon: 50 XP (0 XP if more than half of the PCs stay to watch the wagon, as that draws too much attention).
- Keep up the party's story in spite of Winslow's questioning: 100 XP.
- Find out that Hiram is a newcomer: 100 XP.

Consequences

Characters who continue on without stopping to fix the wheel have it come apart on them a half-mile farther down the road, tipping anyone riding on it into the ditch while the cargo slides off onto the road. Since the PCs cannot carry the chest themselves



(it's simply too heavy and bulky to haul for miles), they must walk back to the inn to get help. Pyles can find an old wheel in the hayloft that is almost a match for the ruined wheel and attach it to the hub of the old wheel, having them ready to go on their way in only four hours (late afternoon). Since the replacement wheel is slightly smaller than the other three, characters must travel slowly and carefully if they wish to avoid further disaster.

Encounter Five: The Troll Bridge

Leaving the Fighting Terrier behind, you proceed north to where the road crosses a deep gorge over a small stream. As you approach, you see an overturned wagon on the far side of the bridge. Food, wine, and other supplies are strewn out over a wide area. You see no sign of life. Dog stops and growls.

Allow the PCs a round to prepare, then read the following:

From over the edge of the gorge come a huge, green monster, its fetid odor carrying to you even on this breezy day. A troll! From the looks of it, it's hungry . . .

This troll is one of several who have taken to waylaying travelers in this area. It was smart enough to leave the priests of Tyr alone as too tough to handle. The PC party, though, looks to it like easy pickings.

Troll (1): AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 24; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+4/1d4+4/1d4+8 (claw/claw/bite); SD regenerates 3 hp per round (starting three rounds after being wounded); SZ L (9' tall); ML elite (14); Int low (5); AL CE; XP 1,400.

The troll's first attack is an attempt to grab someone and throw him or her into the gorge. If the troll succeeds in getting a grip (this requires success on two out of the troll's three attacks in the same round), the character is launched into the gorge. On a successful Dexterity check, the PC can grab a tree root or creeper and halt his or her fall. On a successful Strength check the next round, he or she can climb out of the gorge. Failure on either of these checks means the character falls thirty feet, taking 2d6 points of damage (the stream cushions the shock somewhat). It takes three rounds and a successful Climb Walls roll (with a base 40% chance for non-thieves) to climb back up to the level of the road.

The troll is a dangerous foe, especially if it manages to toss several PCs into the gorge early in the combat. The party has two advantages to offset that. The first is Dog. Use Dog judiciously. He does not run in and get slaughtered by the troll—instead, he times his attacks (for example, distracting the troll when a PC is down and about to take a fatal blow the next round). Dog should not carry the battle, but he should help out.

Their second advantage only reveals itself if the PCs are in bad shape and about to be wiped out. Suddenly, the troll stiffens and slumps over with a gaping wound in its back (a surprise backstab at quadruple damage). The PCs' savior is Tadus, who has used a *portion of invisibility* to sneak up on the creature. He remarks dryly that

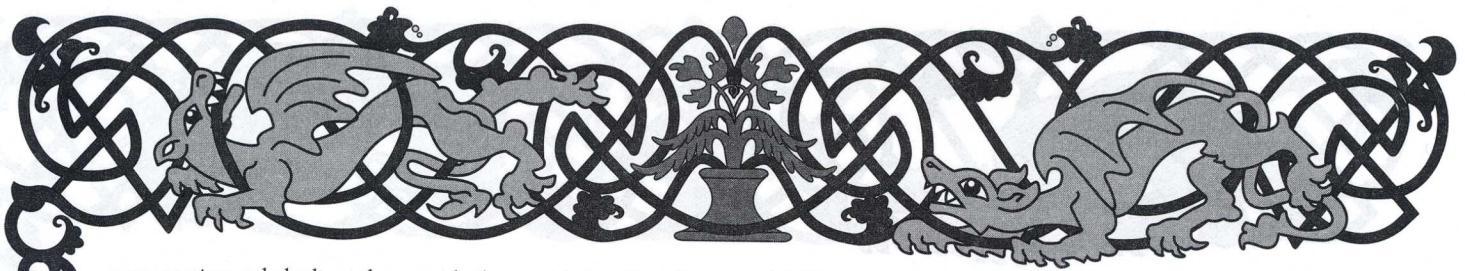


they need to do a better job than that of protecting the ransom. If the PCs recognize him from the inn and refer to him as "Hiram," he does not correct them. Under no circumstances does he reveal his true name or that he is one of the kidnapers. He avoids direct lies but leads the party to think that he is on their side and has been sent by the temple of Tyr to make sure the ransom reaches its destination. Since he just saved their skins, it may be easier for them to jump to the conclusion that he is one of the "good guys" (after all, his interests and theirs correspond in the short term—getting the ransom safely to Tantras). In addition, he has cast an *undetectable lie* spell on himself (off of a scroll).

If the party doesn't need his help in the fight, Tadus just sits invisibly on a boulder and watches. When the melee is over, he appears, clapping very slowly and sarcastically. He congratulates them, saying "You're more competent than you look. It appears that the ransom may make it to Tantras after all!" He suggests that they had better watch their tongues in Tantras, as not everyone wants to see the ransom delivered. He stresses that it is the PCs' responsibility to perform their assigned task well.

"You have to remember that it is up to you to deliver the ransom. If someone takes it from you, the kidnapers won't listen to excuses, they won't try again, and they won't be understanding. Your fault, their fault, some troll's fault—it doesn't make any difference. They'll just send that boy's body back in a basket. You understand?"

Tadus insists on a verbal answer. He wants to humble the PCs and make them realize what a disadvantage they face. Also, the



more passive and obedient they are, the better things will go (from his point of view) at the rendezvous. PCs who figure out that he is one of the kidnapers may try to capture him to learn Mikhail's location. Todus tells them that if he doesn't return, neither does the boy. If they persist, he says "Sure looks like Hykros found some stupid guards. Hope the ransom makes it" and dives into the gorge. He is currently protected by a *stoneskin* spell with twelve uses remaining, so missile weapons or lucky blows cannot affect him; he also wears a *ring of free action*, so he cannot be held or paralyzed. As he falls, he activates a *dimension door* spell within his *ring of spell storing* and vanishes safely away.

If the PCs stop and search the overturned wagon after they have crossed the bridge, they find that the shipment of foodstuffs to Winslow Farmer has been fouled by the trolls pawing through them. However, they can locate two flasks of fine elven wine (value 25 gp each), a cashbox with 23 gp and 43 sp, and enough food for themselves (and grain for the horses) to last three days. Of the wagon's merchants, guards, and horses there is no sign, other than several large patches of blood. If the party descends into the gorge, they can locate the trolls' lair in a cave around the bend. All that remains of the missing men are some fresh, still-pink, clean-picked bones (split open to suck out the marrow). Two dead mules are here as well, and the trolls' treasure: 300 gp, 24 sp, 34 cp, and a stoneware bottle (containing a *potion of invulnerability*). Of course, if the characters stay here too long, the other trolls may come back . . .

Experience

- Defeat the troll without help from Todus: 1,400 XP.
- Figure out that "Hiram" is actually one of the kidnapers: 300 XP.

Consequences

Unlucky characters could come to grief here in several ways. If they simply run away from the troll, it kills the horses, leaving them with no way to transport the chest the rest of the way to Tantras (if at least one PC is mounted, their best bet is for that character to ride ahead, hire a cart, and bring it back—this gets them into Tantras late but is their best remaining option). If the PCs somehow manage to kill Todus (perhaps with a timely *lightning bolt* or other heavy-damage spell), the other kidnapers panic when their leader does not return and kill Mikhail. However, they naturally still want the 500,000 gp ransom and lack time to find another small boy of the same size and appearance, they persuade Calagor (see page 27ff) to cast *animate dead* on Mikhail's corpse. The kidnapers go ahead with the rendezvous as promised (see Encounter Seven) but are careful to keep Mikhail far enough away from the PCs so that they cannot see the boy is one of the walking dead.

Encounter Six: The Ambush

You continue on the road to Tantras. After traveling only another mile or two, you spot a thin plume of smoke in the distance.

Wait for the party to get another half-mile closer to the smoke before you continue.

The smoke is rising from a burning wagon. All about are scattered bodies. Several corpses are burnt beyond recognition, but on a few bodies you can see Tyr's symbol. The presence of several other bodies indicates that the priests and priestesses did not go down without a fight. It appears that the battle must have started with a *fireball*, for the two priests on the wagon apparently never got a chance to move.

This is all that remains of the decoy party. The PCs can look around a bit: they find the attackers took everything of value, so there is no magic or money left. A smashed chest a short distance away is filled with copper pieces, many of which have been flung about by the no-doubt disappointed bandits. The characters may wish to bury the bodies of the dead clerics, depending on how much time they have left (those who have traveled the road before know they are now less than three miles from Tantras).

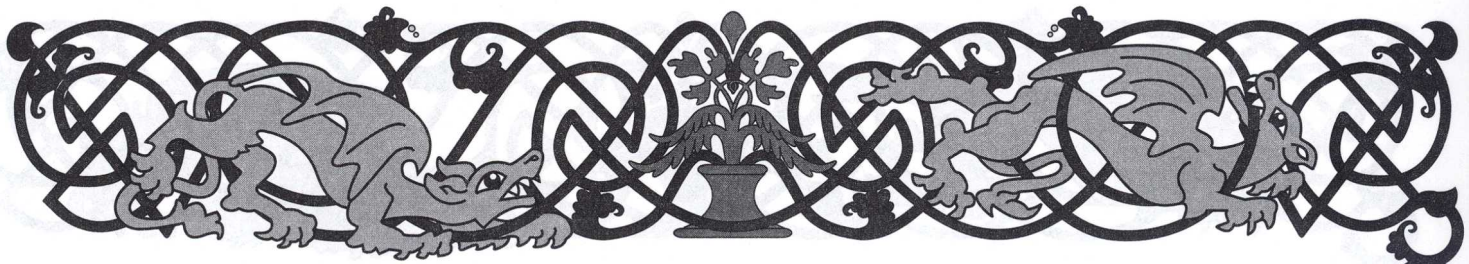
The party should be nervous and somewhat jumpy by now. They have no further encounters on the road, but keep up the tension. Occasionally mention the feeling of being watched. Have Dog break out into a warning growl, then subside. Tell them one of the horses gets spooked (sharp-eyed characters may spot several snakes slithering away as fast as they can). Keep the characters on edge, feeling that something is about to happen at any minute. When they finally do arrive in Tantras, without further incident, any passer-by can tell them where the Struggling Squid is located (all NPCs they ask make the same comment: "Funny . . . You don't look like sailors"). Descriptions of the Squid (should they ask for them) range from a middle-class merchant's inn to a cheap gambling dive where a man can't get a fair shake of the knucklebones.

The Struggling Squid Inn

The sign outside this place depicts a squid with its tentacles tied in knots. The inn caters to ship captains, merchants who deal with these captains, and locals who work in the dock area. When the PCs arrive, they hear music bursting from the inn. Apparently some kind of party or festival is taking place. The place looks packed. Their horses are unhitched and taken into the attached stable; Dog also must go to the stable, as he is not allowed inside the inn.

They may expect trouble checking in, but a room has been reserved for "Lord Bilcru." It is the only room available at the inn. It has been paid for, but that doesn't stop the innkeeper from trying to collect again. He asks the party for 10 sp for one night. "There is a festival going on, after all," he explains. If the party insists that the room has already been paid for, he acquiesces with a shrug. "Cain't blame a man for tryin'," he remarks. If the party demands a different room, allow them Intelligence checks: remind those who succeed that the kidnapers are expecting them to stay in this room. Allow them Wisdom checks as well; those who succeed feel that ignoring the kidnapers' instructions would be very dangerous for the boy.

The innkeeper takes them at once to their room, talking all the way. He is a wiry little ex-sailor with a peg leg named Paron; he opened the Struggling Squid after losing his leg more than 20 years ago. Given half a chance, he launches into the story of how he lost his leg. He exuberantly describes the fierce storm and the giant squid threatening his ship, his heroic fight against the monster with only a broken cutlass, how the mast snapped and crushed his leg, and his valiant struggle against the odds to command a wounded crew until the ship safely reached home. Actually, he lost his leg when the mainmast fell on it during a storm; the story has grown with every telling. Paron wears leather armor every waking moment, believing that it "keeps me in trim!" Paron knows



nothing of use to the PCs but hangs around, talking up a storm and extravagantly praising the room (*look! real feather beds! proper fit for a lord, they are*) until they take the hint and give him a tip, whereupon he promptly returns to the bar and leaves them alone.

Paron, retired sailor (4th-level Fighter): AC 8 (leather jerkin); MV 6 (peg leg); hp 14; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (belaying pin); SZ M (5'3"); ML average (10); Int average (8); AL N; XP 120.

The room is large, with two big canopied beds (Paron will leer knowingly if male and female PCs announce their intention to stay in the same room). A small seaman's chest lies at the foot of each bed; each chest has a padlock with a large brass key in it, there for the customers' use. A table and a chair stand near a large, shuttered window (actually a French door, or walk-in window). It is a corner room, with another walk-in window in the other outside wall. The door is made of stout wood with a simple lock (+10 to lockpick chance). On the table rests a porcelain pitcher filled with water (drinkable, though paranoid characters may fear to try it). A flowered bowl and a blue towel lie next to it. A discreet chamber pot, complete with a lid, rests beneath each bed. Both windows open onto a balcony that runs around the building, leading to stairs near the stable. This means that there are effectively three entrances to the room.

Let the PCs get settled in. They were told they would be contacted here at the inn before midnight. They may want the trunk with them; if so, it can be brought in through the balcony (with some difficulty). If they simply leave it in the stables, adjust the following encounter accordingly to accommodate the different setting. If they leave it unguarded, the bandits described below will simply walk off with as much of the loot as they can carry (aside from those killed by the traps, of course).

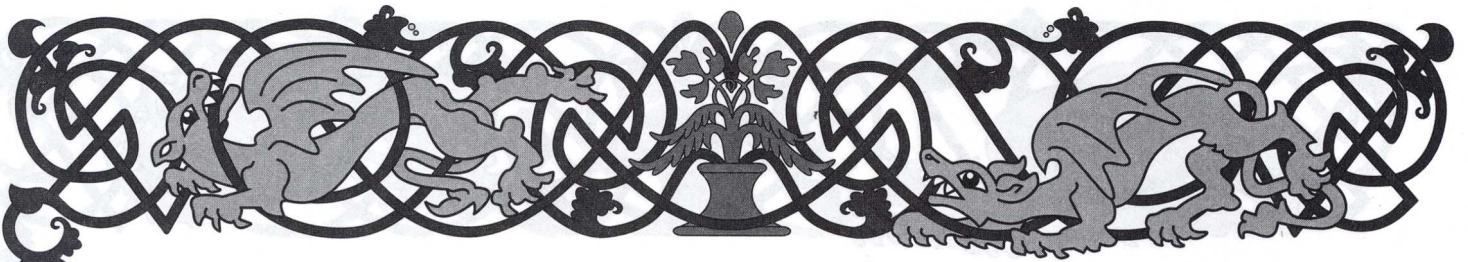
If the PCs decide to remain in the room until they are contacted, ask them about food. If anyone is hungry, someone must go downstairs and bring food up (unless they thought to ask Paron before he left to send something up). The PCs may also want to check on Dog or the horses; anyone who does so finds that the animals are being well cared for in the inn's stable by a deaf old ex-sailor (Hobbs, a former mate of Paron's). Any PC who goes downstairs is invited to join the celebration in the common room. There are plenty of attractive dancing partners, jovial drunks who want to buy drinks, and crusty sailors willing to swap sea stories. Everyone in the place is having a good time and will be eager to share the fun with the PCs. Sleep will be impossible for those who stay in the room even if they are so inclined; the music and clamor are just too loud.

Not surprisingly, the PCs are being watched; as soon as the party is separated, the thieves make their move. If the PCs display good sense and stay together, the thieves move at about two hours after dark (about 10 o'clock). Note that these are not the kidnapers but simply opportunistic bandits, part of the same group that murdered the priests and priestesses of the decoy party. Any PC who wandered off by himself or herself (for example, to the stables or to order food) is targeted for an ambush before the main attack (those in the common room are safe—too many witnesses). Take the player of that character aside and resolve the ambush before running the main combat. To keep the other characters from becoming too suspicious, the DM might want to also take aside the player of a character in the common room to roleplay out an

encounter with a flirtatious fellow guest, a drunk who seems to drop significant hints about the party's mission, or something else of the sort. Remember that the party downstairs allows the thieves to blend in but can also do the same for the PCs. For example, if a PC separated from the main group before they entered town, he or she might join the throng and unobtrusively watch for trouble from a distance (be sure to play out that character's observations away from the main group as well).

The robbers have a reasonable idea of the PCs' numbers and classes; their estimation of PC levels is based on their earlier observation at the Fighting Terrier. This is not the whole band, of course—some were killed or injured in the battle with the decoy party, while others are scouring the roads for the real ransom. This particular group of the bandits is led by Winas Calobi, a mage of considerable power. He attempts to stay out of melee if possible, hoping to reserve his skills for the magical defenses on the trunk. His overconfident younger brother, Kneader Calobi, on the other hand, thinks himself a match for any PC and lets loose with his spells at the first opportunity. The thieves and thugs split up intelligently, doubling up on PCs in order to knock opponents out of the fight as quickly as possible. The robbers don't particularly want to kill everyone in the party; they just want to put them out of action—for instance, a PC disabled by a *web* or *hold person* spell will not have his or her throat cut while helpless but simply be tied up or knocked unconscious. If the PCs are still together in the room, the robbers come in from all three entrances. The thugs burst in through the windows, followed the next round by the thieves. The mages wait outside for one round and then use a skeleton key stolen from downstairs to open the door and enter, Kneader in the lead.





The gang's plan is simple. They want to subdue the PCs as quickly as possible. Then, Winas will *reduce* the chest. The thugs (boosted by Winas's *strength* spells) will carry the trunk down to the stables, where a small cart is ready. Once the bandits get safely out of Tantras, the brothers will use *detect magic*, *knock*, and *dispel magic* to break into the trunk. They plan to split up the loot and flee in all directions. The problem with the plan is that Winas and Kneader do not have enough power to disenchant the trunk. All they might succeed in doing is getting themselves paralyzed, drained, fried, and killed very, very dead. In fact, the traps will be set off as soon as they try to cast the *reduce* spell on the trunk.

If the battle takes more than ten rounds, the city guard shows up, accompanied by Paron who points out which of the combatants are paying customers. The remaining bandits attempt to flee at once. The PCs will not be required to make a statement or come down to headquarters; in Tantras, this sort of thing is considered an "occupational hazard" for out-of-towners.

Winas Calobi (5th-level wizard): AC 6 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 14; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M (5'4"); ML elite (14); AL NE; XP 650. Str 9, Dex 18, Con 7, Int 15, Wis 10, Chr 14. Spells: *color spray*, *magic missile*, *read magic*, *reduce*; *knock*, *Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*; *dispel magic*. Special items: scroll (*magic missile*, *strength* (×2), *hold person*).

Kneader Calobi (3rd-level Wizard): AC 6 (Dexterity bonus, *ring of protection* +1); MV 12; hp 10; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M (5'6"); ML champion (15); AL NE; XP 270. Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 6, Chr 17. Spells: *detect magic*, *sleep*; *web*.

"Outdoorsmen" (four 4th-level Thieves): AC 8 (leather jerkins); MV 12; hp 16, 19, 12, 16; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) or 1d6 (short sword); SA backstab (+4 to attacks, double damage); SD thief abilities; SZ M; ML steady (12); Int average to high (9, 10, 11, 14); AL NE; XP 175 each.

Thugs (two 1st-level Fighters): AC 6 (ring mail and shield); MV 12; hp 10, 12; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (short sword, Strength bonus); SZ M; ML 13 (elite); Int low (7); AL N; XP 35 each. Str 16.

City Guard (ten 2nd-level Fighters): AC 4 (chain mail and shield); MV 12; hp 12 each (average); THACO 19; #AT 1 or 1/2; Dmg 1d6 (cudgels) or 1d4+1 (heavy crossbow bolt); SZ M; ML elite (14); Int average to very (10–12); AL LN; XP 65 each.

Experience

- Bury the priests of Tyr: 100 XP each.
- Listen to Paron's story: 5 XP.
- Bring the trunk up to the room: 150 XP.
- Find a way to better the odds (for example, having someone go to the stables and then sneak back up to the room): 100 XP.
- Defeat the robbers with no help from the city guard: 300 XP.

Consequences

If all the PCs are killed in this battle, their mission to rescue young

Mikhail Allumen fails; proceed to the second half of the adventure, where a new set of player characters can attempt to avenge both Mikhail and the dead heroes. It is far more likely, however, that a defeat merely leaves most of the PCs *webbed*, *held*, or otherwise temporarily immobilized. If so, they can reclaim their chest and continue. Of course, the best possible result would be for them to handily defeat the bandits without seriously impairing their ability to face the real threat later on—the kidnappers.

Encounter Seven: The Drop

You're still cleaning up after the robbery attempt when, shortly before midnight, you think you hear something. You stop and hold your breath. There it is again!—a soft knock at the door.

Allow the PCs to make any preparations they see fit. If it takes more than a round, the knock is repeated and a muttered voice says "Come on, come on, I ain't got all night." When they open the door, read or paraphrase the following:

You open the door to reveal a rough, weather-beaten man. He tosses a red scarf to you. "I comes t' git ya," he mumbles. "Yore wagon is hitched up downstairs, ready t' go. We gots t' be there by moonrise—less'n an hour fr'm now—so don't waste no time. I be waitin' downstairs wi' th' wagon. Th' front is bein' watched, so don't ya go that way."

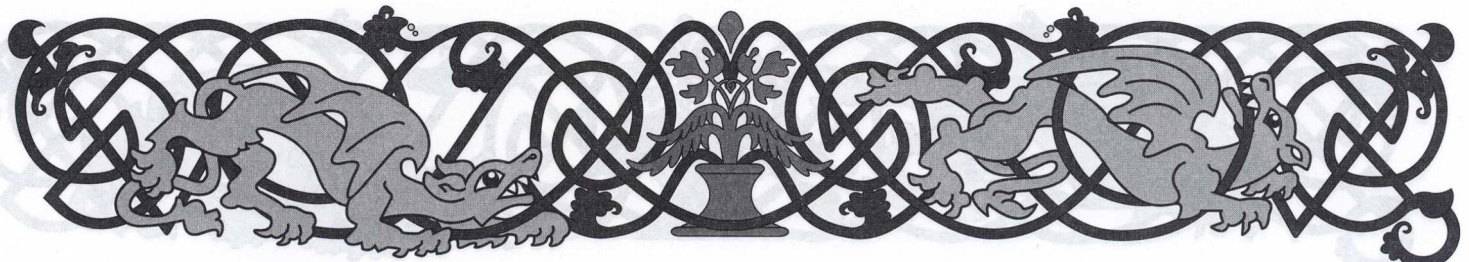
The red scarf matches the one that Mikhail is wearing in the painting the PCs have, as they can clearly tell by comparing the two. The PCs probably have questions: how they are going to make the exchange, where they are going, is Mikhail safe, etc. Their contact has no intention of answering any of them:

"It don't matter none where we be goin'. I takes ya there. All ya needs t' know is that if somebody tries t' follow us, or if I ain't back by moonrise, that li'l boy is a goner. As fer th' swap—well, I ain't nuthin' but a messenger, but I heared they got this real good sharpshooter wit' a great big crossbow somesplace where he can see th' boy th' whole time. If somethin' goes wrong, won't be no way t' tell him not t' shoot, even if th' boss was o' a mind ta. Anythin' go wrong, that li'l boy's dead, sure as shootin'. Sure as shootin'." The ruffian grins a particularly offensive smile. "I be waitin' out back." He turns and shambles downstairs, leaving you to get ready.

The PCs can have a few minutes to make preparations; this should be counted as real time. If five minutes pass and they still haven't taken the trunk downstairs, the messenger returns. He is getting impatient but plays on the PCs' apparent lack of concern for Mikhail ("poor ol' chap. A real shame, ain't it, what's goin' t' happen t' him"). In other words, give the PCs a little time to get ready—but only a little.

When they get to the wagon, the two draft horses are already hitched to the wagon and ready to go. Dog is also already on the





wagon, keeping a suspicious eye on the stranger. His tail thumps once in what might be a wag when his “master” arrives, but that is all. The messenger is waiting silently, mounted on his own horse (an old dappled mare); any PC mounts are also saddled and waiting. The messenger merely sits and waits for the PCs to get mounted. After a few seconds, he says “Time’s a-wastin’. Let’s git,” and starts off. The PCs should think they must follow or risk losing the boy. Actually, the messenger doesn’t want to risk losing the ransom, so he’ll wait a few dozen yards down the street until the PCs catch up.

You ride through Tantras, exiting the town by the north gate. The air is clear and calm, although there is a hint of rain to the north. Lightning flashes can be seen in the distance, along with a very faint rumble of thunder. The messenger continues to lead you north, moving his horse at an easy walk.

Suddenly, you cross into what can only be a dead magic zone. All spellcasters feel spells fade from their memory, to be replaced by a throbbing headache. Swords and armor become heavier and unwieldy. No wonder magical scrying couldn’t locate young Mikhail . . .

The exchange location is in a dead magic zone a few miles northwest of Tantras. The kidnapers are expecting a double cross, probably magical in nature, and have no spellcasters to counter such tricks. The dead magic zone neutralizes any magical advantages the PCs may have. Only specialty priests and priestesses of Mystra, goddess of magic, can cast spells within a dead magic zone. Hence, unless one of the PCs is a specialty priest or priestess of Mystra, none of the PCs’ magic works. Spells which are already active continue to work, but no new spell effect can be triggered. Spellcasters get a splitting headache but do not actually lose spells; they simply cannot access them for the present. As soon as the party leaves the zone, the magic returns (and uncast spells return to the spellcaster’s memory).

After traveling a while longer, you can see that the trail leads directly down into a small valley. There is a campfire burning below. You can see a single figure moving around the fire. As you proceed into the valley, you again have the feeling you are being watched. Once or twice you think you pass a hooded figure—it is too dark to make them out, but your imagination is sure that all of them carry heavy crossbows with poisoned bolts, all pointed in your direction. You’re not far from the sea and can hear the waves pound on the coast below.

The campfire lies at the base of a steep incline. Crouched near the fire is a lone man in a cloak, carrying a heavy crossbow. As you approach, he rises. It’s the same man who spoke to you after the encounter with the trolls! “About time you got here” he says. “We were beginning to worry about you.”

Pause for character actions, remembering that their choices at this time are mainly verbal. If anyone tries to move off into the darkness, the kidnapper orders them to halt. Anyone who tries to get too close he orders back, “if you value the boy’s life.” He wants all the PCs standing in front of him, weapons sheathed, before he turns over the boy. If asked, Tadus does not reveal his real name. If the party still thinks his name is Hiram, he does not correct them.

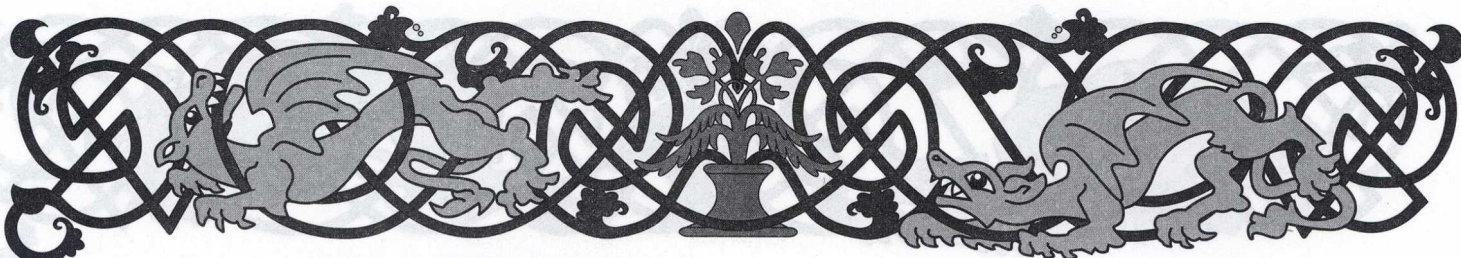
When the characters have dismounted, he asks them to move away from the wagon so he can inspect the ransom, pointing to the base of the cliff where he can easily keep an eye on them. If the PCs insist on seeing the boy first, he agrees. He yells out a single name—“Will!”—and the PCs hear the sound of a horse approaching through the dark. On it is a man, with a boy sitting in front of him. The boy’s hands are tied behind his back, and he has a sack over his head (and a gag in his mouth, although this is not immediately apparent). The newcomer resembles Tadus quite a bit (they are brothers). Will slides off his horse, keeping careful hold on the boy. He makes the boy stand close to the fire and pulls out a huge axe, holding the blade level with the boy’s neck. The messenger (Clive) goes over to them and gets a heavy crossbow from Will’s horse, which he trains on the PCs. Tadus turns to the party.

“Now, this is how it’s going to be. I’ll check the trunk first. You had better hope that the ransom is all there. If anybody moves, my brother will kill the little boy. You already know about the other crossbows. We put wyvern poison on the quarrels. It won’t be as messy as a battleaxe, but the boy will be just as dead.” He reaches in a pocket and pulls out a small corked vial. “We also gave him something to keep him quiet. This is the antidote—just another little piece of insurance to make sure you behave. Act up, and I smash this little tube—and I don’t think you’ll be able to find another this side of Ravens Bluff. Certainly not in time for it to do any good.”

“But if you’re smart, and do what I say, nobody has to get hurt. We all just walk away and go on about our own business. Now, keep your hands off the hilts of your weapons and step back from the wagon. When I know that the ransom is all there, Clive and I will get on the wagon and drive it out of here. Will will take your horses. Don’t worry, we’re kidnapers, not horse thieves. We’ll leave your horses picketed about a mile from Tantras. It should take you about an hour to reach them. With that kind of a start, you’ll never find us. I advise you not to look, as you wouldn’t like it if you found us. Do you understand all that?”

Tadus insists on an answer. He prefers to press a knight or paladin, if one is available; someone who might consider his or her word to be binding. He wants to keep control of the PCs, to keep them in enforced passivity. He is quick to spot any attempt at spellcasting (assuming the party does contain a specialty priest or priestess of Mystra) and orders them to stop, gesturing at his henchmen who stand ready to strike the hostage if he gives the sign. If the PCs consider just letting Mikhail die and then let his father trying to raise him from the dead later, remind them that (a) Mikhail is a young child, so his resurrection survival roll is not good (30%) and (b) the *quest* spell they accepted does not allow for things like *raise dead* spells: if Mikhail is killed because of their foolishness, they will be forever marked as betrayers. If they still persist, Tadus, William, Clive, and the still-hidden Nivers One-Shot all strike simultaneously, killing the hostage. The PCs’ careers are over. Give them plenty of warning—but if they insist, be firm: as the boy’s lifeless body crumples to the ground, their foreheads suddenly burn with a searing pain as a fiery brand is scorched into their flesh (those who fail saving throws vs. death magic pass out from the pain).

Assuming the PCs play for time, the encounter becomes a deadly game in which each side maneuvers for advantage and waits for the other to make some small mistake. If the PCs ask to

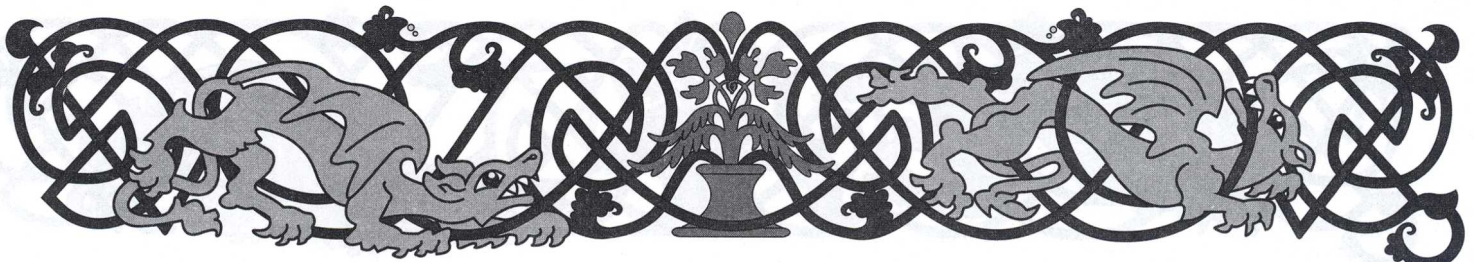


verify that the boy is really Mikhail, Tadus allows it while he is checking the ransom. Checking Mikhail can be done either by means of the portrait provided by Hykros (which exactly resembles this boy) or by Dog. Dog is initially somewhat suspicious, since Mikhail has been drenched in perfume to prevent bloodhounds from being able to track him. Dog must get very close to Mikhail to recognize him. The kidnappers allow this but with the condition that the PCs remain where they are.

Magic doesn't work here, so Tadus is not worried about approaching the trunk (besides, he knows the passwords). He opens it and examines the contents with carefully restrained glee. His skilled thief's eye tells him what the gems are worth in an instant. When he is satisfied, he closes the trunk and with difficulty shoves it to the edge of the wagon. He nods to his brother and tells the PCs to tie their horses' reins together. Clive climbs up on the seat of the wagon and then trains his crossbow on the PCs again (aiming it at one without armor if possible). Tadus then orders the PCs to stand together off to the side at the base of the cliff and nods again to Will, who leaves Mikhail's side and joins Tadus in the back of the wagon.

The PCs may have a plan, but remember that the kidnappers have set this up carefully. At the first sign of trouble, Clive lets loose with his crossbow. Tadus grabs hold of the chest as Will gives it a mighty push; it falls out of the wagon, hits the ground, and both it and Tadus disappear into the earth. At the same time, Nivers lets off a shot at the hostage, figuring that this will distract the greatest possible number of PCs. The only ways to save Mikhail are (a) for a PC to somehow cross the intervening distance very quickly and either knock the boy down (inflicting 2 hp of damage and stunning him) or throw his or her own body in the path of the oncoming missile(s) OR (b) to command Dog to save him (his current master's simply saying his name is enough; Dog knows what to do), in which case Dog knocks Mikhail down and is struck by the bolt instead. To add to the confusion, the next round Silmon emerges from the sinkhole that had hitherto concealed her, leaps atop the nearest horse, slaps it into motion, and rides off into the night with all the other horses in tow (PCs only catch a glimpse of a woman with long blonde hair, dressed all in black). At the same time, Will leaps after Tadus down the newly opened tunnel, while Clive throws up his hands, leaps to his feet, and shouts out "I surrender!" This is merely a ruse on his part to gain time, and he jumps down the tunnel after Will the next round.

If the PCs don't try anything, the getaway plan remains the same, except that Tadus yells out "Now!" as Will gives the chest its push. From up above, the PCs hear a rumbling sound. If they glance up, they cannot see anything because of the sheer incline, but they should have no doubts that the kidnappers have unleashed a rock slide. Dozens of large boulders are rolling towards the PCs as the ground itself begins to shake. So long as the PCs stay exactly where they are, they are perfectly safe (a kind DM may allow them Intelligence checks to realize the fact); the boulders' momentum will cause them to fall several feet in front of the cliff, where they pile up before the PCs. Mikhail is also safe, having been carefully positioned by the kidnappers out of the path of the rockslide. However, should the PCs run forward in an attempt to outrun the rockslide, they place themselves directly in the path of danger, as do any who pursue Tadus or Silmon (or, worse yet, climb the cliff into the path of the oncoming rocks). Such characters must make three Dexterity checks. Success on all three checks means the PC is only struck a glancing blow by a boulder



and takes a mere 1d12 points of damage. Failure on one check increases the damage to 1d20 and imposes a -2 penalty on both the other checks. Two failed checks means that the PC takes an additional 3d6 points of damage and pins the character beneath the rubble; he or she will need outside help to free himself or herself. If all three checks are failed, the PC has been crushed beneath tons of rock, taking 1d100 additional damage. The only available shelter other than the cliff itself is the sinkhole Silmon was hiding in; one human-sized character or two halfling-sized ones can crouch in here and escape any damage, although they will need outside help afterwards to remove the rocks overhead.

Characters who survive the rockfall may dig out trapped colleagues, attempt to pick up the kidnapers' trails, or check to make sure Mikhail is okay (he'll live). Note that Tadus's claim to have drugged or poisoned him was just a bluff, although the vial he claimed to contain the "antidote" is actually filled with Type J poison (save vs. poison or die, taking 20 points of damage even on a successful save)—a final, vengeful parting shot in case he was killed or captured. The rockslide completely buried his escape tunnel, killing the unfortunate draft horses in the process. Should the PCs eventually clear it and investigate, they find a smooth chute (remnant of an old dwarven mining operation) that leads all the way down to the sea, where only the smashed remains of the chest and a few scattered platinum pieces mark the spot where Tadas, Will, and Clive escaped by boat with the treasure. If someone climbs the cliff to investigate the area from which the rockslide came, he or she finds the bootmarks of a large, heavy person and a second set of faint tracks that look like the bare footprints of an elf, half-elf, or small, light human. The boots lead to where a large, heavy horse (probably a warhorse) was tethered, but the hoof marks are soon lost on the rocky ground; the second set of tracks simply vanishes (DM's note: Nivers took to the trees and carefully hid her tracks). As for the PCs' horses, Silmon has gotten too much of a head start for them to catch up with her, but the characters do find their horses two mile or so down the road, as promised, carefully tethered on the grassy marge of a small stream.

The Kidnappers

Tadus Hill (11th-level Thief): AC 6 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 55; THACO 15 (14 with *stiletto +1*); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2 (*stiletto +1*, Strength bonus); SA backstab (+4 to attacks, quadruple damage); SD thief abilities (see below), *stoneskin*, *ring of free action*, *ring of spell storing*; SZ M (5'10"); ML elite (13); AL NE; XP 3,000. Str 16, Dex 18, Con 9, Int 15, Wis 7, Chr 10. PP 75%, OL 70%, FT 80%, MS 50%, HS 80%, DN 70%, CW 95%, RL 40%. Special abilities: Gaming (19), Tumbling (18).

William Hill (5th-level Fighter): AC 2 (chain mail and shield, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 34; THACO 16 (13 with battleax specialization and Strength bonus); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+6 (battleax plus Strength and specialization bonuses); SA weapon specialization (*battleax*); SZ M (5'11"); ML fanatic (17); AL N; XP 420. Str 18/77, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Chr 9.

Clive (4th-level Thief): AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; hp 23; THACO 19 (18 with crossbow and Dexterity bonus); #AT 1 or 1/2; Dmg 1d6 (short sword) or 1d4+1 plus poison (heavy crossbow bolt); SA backstab (+4 to attacks, double

damage), poison (save vs. poison or die, taking 1d6 points of damage even on a successful save); SD thief abilities (Hide in Shadows 60%, Move Silently 40%, Detect Noise 45%); SZ M (5'7"); ML average (10); AL N; XP 420. Str 9, Dex 16, Con 4, Int 12, Wis 8, Chr 6.

Silmon (6th-level Thief): AC 4 (studded leather, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 21; THACO 18 (16 with heavy crossbow); #AT 1/2 (crossbow) or 2 (rapier and stiletto); Dmg 1d4+1 plus poison (heavy crossbow bolt) or 1d6+1/1d3 + poison (rapier/stiletto); SA backstab (+4 to attacks, triple damage), poison (save vs. poison or die, taking 1d6 points of damage even on a successful save), two-handed fighting style; SD thief abilities; SW -2 penalty to rapier attacks, -4 penalty to stiletto attacks (two-handed fighting style); SZ M (5'9"); ML elite (13); AL N; XP 650. Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 14, Chr 16. PP 65%, OL 10%, FT 15%, MS 35%, HS 45%, DN 10%, CW 40%. Special abilities: Riding—land based (17), Rope Use (17), Swimming (15). Note that Silmon is left-handed, so she fights with the rapier (her main melee weapon) in her left hand, not her right.

Nivers One-Shot (3rd-level elven Fighter): AC 8 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 20; THACO 18 (17 with crossbow plus Dexterity bonus); #AT 1/2 or 1; Dmg 1d4+1 plus poison (heavy crossbow bolt) or 1d4 (dagger); SA poison (save vs. poison or die, taking 1d6 points of damage even on a successful save); SD elven woodcraft, 90% resistant to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M (5'); ML champion (16); AL NE; XP 175. Str 10, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Chr 14.

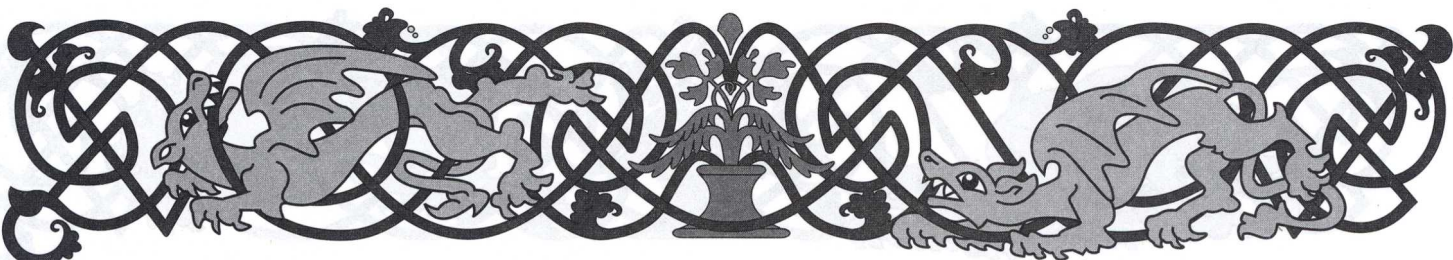
Bartholomew Biggs (7th-level Fighter): AC 3 (plate mail); MV 12; hp 65; THACO 14 (11 with Strength and specialization bonus); #AT 2; Dmg 1d10+7 (two-handed sword, Strength and specialization bonuses); SA weapon specialization (two-handed sword); SD parry; SZ M (6'4"); ML fearless (19); AL LE; XP 970. Str 18/96, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 13, Chr 16. Special abilities: Riding—land-based (16).

Experience

- Verify Mikhail's identity (using either picture or Dog): 50 XP.
- Save Mikhail: 300 XP each.
- Survive landslide: 200 XP each.
- Ride out landslide without injury: additional 100 XP each.
- Capture or kill any kidnapper: 100 XP (plus NPC's individual XP value).

Consequences

In many ways, this is the climactic encounter of the entire adventure. So many things could go wrong that it is impossible to detail them all here. Roughly speaking, the three main issues are (a) do the PCs make the delivery and save Mikhail? (b) do the PCs succeed in capturing any or all of the kidnappers? and (c) do any or all of the PCs perish in the process? The second half of the adventure assumes that the characters survived, that the kidnappers escaped, and that Mikhail is safely returned to his father. If any heroes died, Hykros will try to have them *raised*—the second half of the adventure may thus involve the PCs hunting down their own murderers.



Should none of the PCs survive, and the bodies be unrecoverable, Hykros will summon a new group of adventurers and ask them to avenge their murdered colleagues. If, on the other hand, the PCs killed or captured one of the villains, simply ignore the encounter in the second half dealing with that character. For example, if Will was killed before he could escape then they won't have to face him in the final confrontation with his brother; if Silmon was killed then she won't be present at Bartholomew's hanging, and so forth. If Clive was killed, most of the information the PCs can sweat out of him on page 21 can be extracted via *Speak with Dead* or by interrogating a *raised* Clive. The most important of all the kidnapers, of course, is Tadus; if he is captured then the others make a rescue attempt. If he is killed, assume that Calagor goes ahead with the fiend-summoning (see page 27ff) but the PCs should be able to stop him in time by following up on clues to the Hill brothers' identities.

On the other hand, if the player characters' actions lead to Mikhail's death, they are branded as traitors. Most so marked will flee the Reverend Justice's retribution, but PCs are full of surprises and a few may want to return to Ravens Bluff to face the music. If this proves to be the case, a grim Hykros initially has them chained and manacled but then offers them one last chance at redemption: bring the kidnapers to justice, and he will pray to Tyr to mitigate their guilt.

If the PCs are successful in their mission, proceed to the Epilogue, adjusting the boxed text as necessary.

Epilogue

Your trip back to Ravens Bluff is uneventful. Mikhail proves to be a likable young lad, and Dog is overjoyed to have him back. Unfortunately, Mikhail remembers nothing that can be of value in tracking the kidnapers except that there were perhaps half a dozen of them, mostly men; the only names he heard were "Tadus" (the leader), "Will" (Tadus's brother), and "Silmon" ("the nice one").

Back in the Living City, Hykros Allumen welcomes you with open arms. His reunion with Mikhail is a touching one; it makes you feel that all of the trouble has been worthwhile. After embracing his son, Hykros looks up at you and says "I have little to offer you but thanks right now. And my thanks are eternal. My son is safe. When you are rested, I have a second task for you, if you wish it. This time there is no compulsion, no *quest* spell. Your own desire for justice should be motivation enough. These . . . these *monsters* have committed crimes against me and mine, against you and yours. I would see them brought to justice. You know better than anyone what kind of vermin they are. I give you until the morning to decide. If you agree, we will share information at that time. Now I must attend to my son. Thank you, from the bottom of my old heart."

End of Part One

Part Two

The Payback

In this half of the adventure, the heroes collect clues and track down the kidnapers from Part One one-by-one, forcing them to answer for their crime. In the process, they uncover further crimes in the making . . .

Encounter One: A Call for Justice

The last several days have been eventful. The next few promise to be even more so. You have delivered a ransom, rescued a hostage, fought off bandits, and seen the high priest of Tyr with tears in his eyes. But the job is unfinished: the kidnapers escaped justice. You have a personal score to settle with them as well after all they put you through. It is no surprise, when you arrive at the Silver Halls of Tyr on this wet, rainy morning, that you are obviously expected; the respectful acolytes show you to Hykros Allumen's chambers at once.

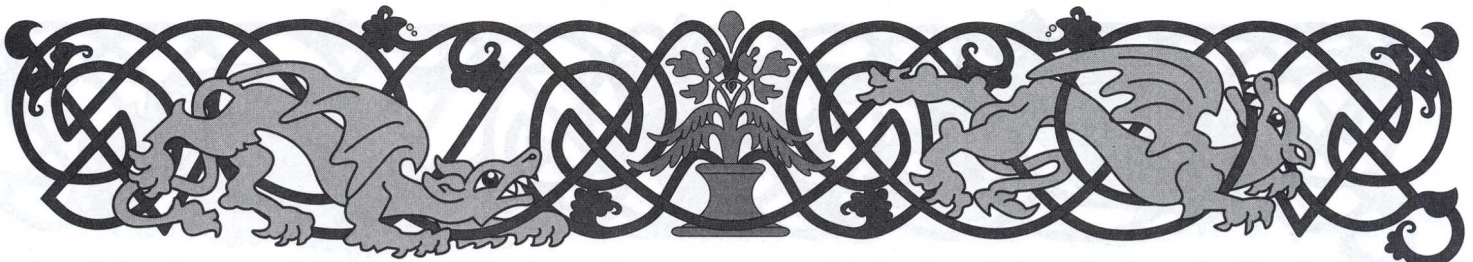
The Reverend Judge welcomes you with a warm smile but also a glint in his eyes which makes you glad you are not the targets of his controlled anger. "Welcome, my good friends. I am grateful that your sense of justice is as strong as mine. Those fiends must be brought to justice. I ask you to undertake this task.

"This job is to be yours because you have earned it. Also, you are the only ones who have seen the kidnapers. If you strike quickly, you may even catch some of them before they know you are still alive. I am prepared to deputize you in the name of Ravens Bluff. If you agree, raise your right hands and swear to uphold the laws of Ravens Bluff."

Pause for the PCs' responses.

"You are special deputies, reporting only to me. You have authority only to investigate and arrest the kidnapers of Mikhail Allumen. They are to be returned here, alive if at all possible. Your fee is to be 500 gold pieces for each kidnapper returned alive to stand trial. There is no reward for bringing them in dead; we need to make an example of such miscreants. If we do not, other children may suffer. This must be stopped. Incidentally, although it is not normally accorded to deputies, there is a finder's fee for the treasure. Since the ransom was my own fortune, I have a little latitude in this case. You may keep 15 percent of all wealth recovered, plus any personal items of the kidnapers not identified as stolen property.

"If you recover the magical items, I will reward you with your choice of an item from my private stock. The city needs a trial; the public demands that justice be done. Only thus will frightened parents and children alike be able to rest easy again. If attacked, you must, of course, defend yourselves—but this is not an assassin's mission. Are we clear on that?"



Again, pause for party reaction. If the PCs agree, they are given badges marked with the “raven and shield” symbol of Ravens Bluff, the shield in this case bearing the scales of Tyr. Hykros then asks for a description of the kidnappers that the PCs saw. Allow them Intelligence checks for each kidnapper they saw to recall the following details (roll separately for each kidnapper).

- **The leader:** The party may know him as “Hiram.” They probably saw him three times (at the Fighting Terrier, after the fight with the troll, and at the ransom payment) and so should be able to describe him carefully: hawk nose, neatly trimmed black beard with some gray in it, dark shoulder-length hair streaked of gray. He exhibited a forceful personality, seems to have planned carefully for various contingencies, and was very graceful in his movements. He stood about 5’10” tall and weighed perhaps 180 lbs. He spoke in an educated manner. They may have concluded (falsely) that he is some kind of wizard, due to his appearances and disappearances.
- **The messenger:** The leader called him “Clive.” While he initially pretended to just be a messenger, his actions at the drop point indicate he was a member of the gang. He is an older man with raggedy hair and beard that were once red but now turning white, very bad teeth, and an offensive smile. He was about 5’7” tall and overweight (around 200 lbs). He had the speaking habits of an uneducated man.
- **“Will”:** This man held Mikhail at axe-point during the exchange. He resembled “Hiram,” having the same hawk nose. His hair was coal-black, as was his mustache. He was very strong, able to move the chest with no trouble—perhaps a fighter? He stood around 5’11” and weighed about 210 lbs. He followed the leader’s instructions very closely.
- **The blonde woman:** The PCs only caught a quick glimpse of her, but she appeared to be tall, slim, and attractive. She was able to keep hidden from view and also had no trouble leaping unto the horse. Her hair was long and very pale blonde. Sharp-eyed PCs may have caught a glimpse of a scar on her left cheek.
- **Other kidnappers:** At least one other kidnapper had to be there to start the rock slide. This may or may not be the same person as the sharpshooter Clive and “Hiram” claimed was covering Mikhail from the darkness. Given the distance and the darkness, he or she must have been quite skilled. If the characters climbed the cliff and investigated further, they should have determined that there were at least two unseen kidnappers: the large booted person who started the rockslide and a smaller person who either kept lookout or was the sharpshooter.

Hykros thanks the PCs for all this information and tells them that he has had his agents watching for anyone spending a lot of platinum pieces. Such an obvious action would be ridiculously stupid, but then criminals usually are stupid—otherwise they wouldn’t be criminals. Last night, two reports reached him of large amounts of platinum pieces changing hands.

One man lost over 1000 pp at the Lucky Coin tavern in a single night’s gambling. Another man reportedly purchased the Eye of Wisdom, a large perfect ruby, for 5000 pp plus many other gems; the ruby had been on display at the Sparkling Edge gem shop for several years, with an asking price of 50,000 gp.

He warns them not to harass the innocent in their search for the guilty—but be equally sure not to let the guilty escape. Encounter Two concerns the unfortunate gambler. Encounter Three deals with the connoisseur of fine gems. The PCs may follow up on these leads in any order they wish or even split up and tackle each simultaneously.

Other possible clues the PCs may try to follow up on turn out to be dead ends. No one at the Fighting Terrier, for example, can tell them anything about “Hiram.” None of the bandits who attacked them at the inn in Tantras have any connection with the kidnappers, so questioning any survivors elicits no useful information. Any attempt to follow tracks from the exchange point carries the PCs no further than the spot where the kidnappers met briefly to split up the ransom, after which they scattered; an opportune rain has washed away all trace of where they went thereafter. DMs who wish to make the adventure less linear might want to insert a red herring or two (see below).

Experience

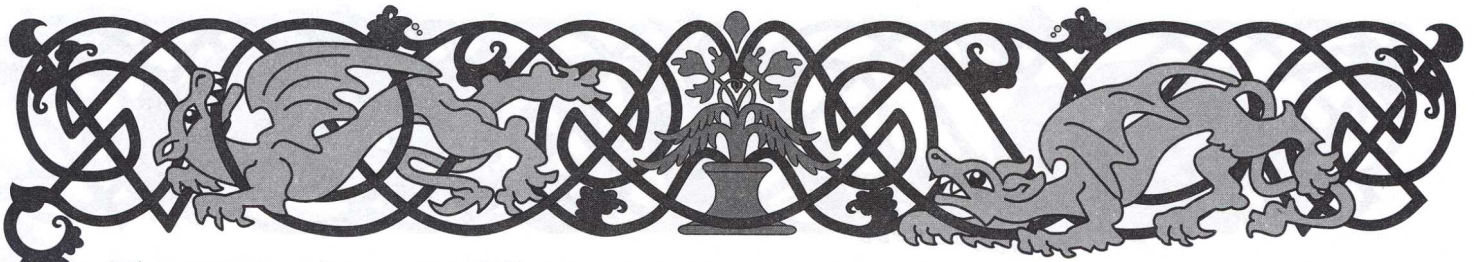
- Agree to the job: 100 XP.
- Turn down any portion of the finders fee: 100 XP.
- Reason out that there must have been at least six kidnappers: 200 XP.

Consequences

If the PCs managed to capture one of the kidnappers, he or she refuses to talk but soon breaks down under the threat of the gallows. Turn to the relevant encounter below for what each kidnapper knows: Encounter Two for Clive, Encounter Four for Bartholomew and Silmon, and Encounter Five for Nivers (Tadus and Will don’t talk, whatever the pressure or inducement). Any kidnapper killed whose body can be retrieved will be subjected to *raise dead* and then questioned, with similar results. Naturally, each will try to strike the best bargain he or she can in return for the information, except for the Hill brothers (who will be smugly defiant to the end).

If the PC party is weak, it can be bolstered by bringing in Turnagon, young Mikhail’s companion/nanny/guardian who was slain in the original attack. She has now fully recovered and has a score of her own to settle with the kidnappers. Similarly, if any PC died in the course of the first half of the adventure, Hykros has done all he could to have them either returned to life or their remains decently buried; surviving comrades can be supplemented by old friends who wish to avenge their fallen comrades. The DM might even rule that a PC who died in the course of the mission spontaneously rises as a revenant dedicated in bringing the people ultimately responsible for his or her death—the kidnappers—to justice.

The Red Herring: PCs may hear, either through Hykros or their own contacts, of a woman who just purchased a lavish dwelling for 2000 pp on her first day in the city. Further investigation turns up a description of her as being very pale, with long blonde hair and dressed entirely in white. Character who pay a visit to the four-story yellow-brick mansion on Yhevver Way (near the great Coliseum) must talk their way past the tottering old butler (Heidreks) to meet with the lady of the house: Talisen the silent. Talisen is an ex-adventurer who’s recovering from a recent encounter with a vampire that left her mute from a damaged throat. She has just enrolled in the Wizards Guild and hopes to develop new versions of her spells that do not require verbal components. While she slightly resembles Silmon, any character who caught a glimpse of the kidnapper and succeeds on an Intelligence check can tell this is not the same woman. The DM should embellish this roleplaying encounter as he or she sees fit.



Encounter Two : The Lucky Coin

The Lucky Coin is a moderately-priced establishment near the docks. It is known for its games of chance, which are more or less honest, if somewhat weighted towards the house. The owner is "Lucky" Leathertoed, a halfling said to be able to smell the money in your pocket when you walk in the door. The inn is quiet in the morning light; the heavy activity doesn't start until after dark.

Entering, you see a well-kept common room. The tables are relatively free of scars, and the walnut bar shines. Behind the bar, a large burly man polishes gleaming mugs, apparently just killing time. Through an arch, you can see several gaming tables. Only one of them is occupied, by a half-elf rolling knucklebones while the croupier watches. As you enter the bartender looks up and smiles at you. "Welcome to the Lucky Coin. Would you care to wet your whistle, or are you here to see if the luck is with you today?"

Let the PCs respond. If they ask about last night, the bartender, Erasmus, is eager to talk. He is a big, easy-going man who served in the crusade against the Tuigan barbarians, then retired to Ravens Bluff. He likes his job here and loves to talk about the road, adventuring, people, or pretty much anything else. Erasmus is scrupulously honest and very adept at spotting cheats.

"Never saw anything like it, I didn't. That man made the worst bets I've ever seen anyone make. But he just kept pulling out the platinum. He didn't look like he was rich—ratty old clothes and all—but he had plenty o' coins in those pockets. I say 'had,' because before he passed out I heard him say that we'd cleaned him out. But hey, he did it to himself. Betting a hundred platinum pieces on a 35-to-1 shot—what an idiot! 'Course, we didn't throw him out on the street. Put him up in the best room in the house, the boss did. He's like that. You watch, he'll probably stake the fellow a loan if he's really broke."

The PCs will probably be expressing a desire to see the unlucky gambler. Erasmus refuses at first, protesting that the man is a guest of the house. The fellow was also extremely drunk when they carried him upstairs last night. Erasmus wouldn't want to be awakened in such a state, nor would he wish it on anyone else. A badge, of course, changes things. As soon as one is shown, Erasmus fetches his boss. Lucky listens to the PCs' story and then shows them up to the room. If they insist that the platinum pieces were stolen, Lucky replies that most of the coins were lost to another patron. Lucky only got the house cut, about 500 pp. If the PCs want that, they must bring a signed order from Reverend Justice Allumen, exempting Lucky from taxes on it. The PCs can get such a document if they return to the temple.

Up in the room, they find Clive, snoring loudly. His weapons (a normal short sword and a crossbow) are on the floor beside the bed (Clive has no idea they are there; they were placed there by a thoughtful Erasmus last night when he put the unconscious loser to bed). Clive does not awaken when anyone enters his room. In fact, it requires a bucket of water or some determined shaking to rouse

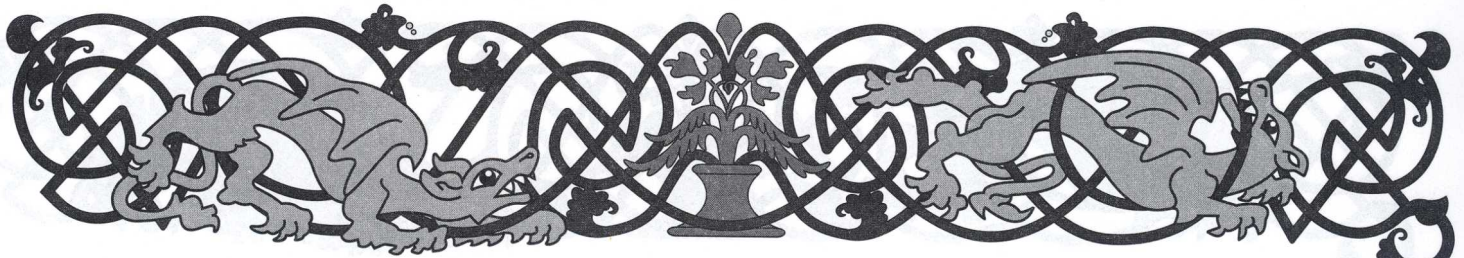
him. When he is finally able to focus his eyes, he recognizes the PCs at once, shrieks, and attempts to flee—not very effectively (all his ability checks and skill rolls are at half-normal). If the PCs are maintaining any kind of hold on him, his attempt fails. If they do not, he trips running down the stairs and nearly breaks his neck, lying stunned at the bottom. Capturing him is easy.

Clive is sure that the PCs have come to kill him. When they don't do so immediately, he begins to relax a bit. If he is placed under arrest, or if he is shown a badge, he offers to make a deal. Given his situation, Clive doesn't have much to bargain with except for information. He'll take any kind of deal, ranging from a complete pardon to an agreement to mention his help to the priests of Tyr. He asks for a full pardon but does not insist on it. The deal is entirely up to the PCs. In order to save his own skin, Clive gladly rats on his friends, eventually telling the characters everything he knows. They may want to take him back to the temple, or they may question him here and now in his room. It makes no difference. If they go back to the temple, Hykros is "busy" (he has actually gone home to be with his son and make sure Mikhail is alright). Dartin, his halfling aide, is authorized to speak for him but agrees only to mention Clive's assistance to the judge.

Erasmus Flowers (3rd-level Fighter): AC 10; MV 12; hp 20; THACO 18 (16 with Strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4 (club, Strength bonus); SZ M (6'3"), ML elite (14); AL CG; XP 120. Str 18/80, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 16, Chr 15. Special abilities: Gaming (15).

Lucky Leathertoed (10th-level halfling Thief): AC 5 (leather armor, Dexterity bonus); MV 6; hp 45; THACO 16 (15 with throwing knives); #AT 2; Dmg 1d3 (throwing





knives); SA backstab (+4 to attacks, quadruple damage); SD thief abilities; SZ S (3'); ML champion (15); AL NG; XP 1,400. Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 11, Chr 17. Special abilities: Gaming (17).

Clive (4th-level Thief): AC 10; MV 12; hp 23; THACO 19; #AT 1 or 1/2; Dmg 1d6 (short sword) or 1d4+1 (heavy crossbow bolt); SA backstab (+4 to attacks, double damage); SD thief abilities (Hide in Shadows 60%, Move Silently 40%, Detect Noise 45%); SW currently unarmed, unarmored, and hung over; SZ M (5'7"); ML average (10); AL N; XP 120. Str 9, Dex 16, Con 4, Int 12, Wis 8, Chr 6.

What Clive Knows

- The leader, known to the PCs as Hiram, is really Todus Hill of Thy. Todus has some kind of vendetta against the temple of Tyr, but Clive never found out why.
- The younger brother is William Hill. Will has a short temper, but he's a heck of a fighter. He pretty much does whatever Todus says. Will has slain at least four priests of Tyr with his battleaxe, three of them in their sleep.
- The shooter was Nivers "One Shot" Moonflaw, an elven outcast. She has a custom-made crossbow; Clive says he never saw her miss with it (a slight exaggeration). Nivers is small (about 5' tall), with short silver hair and purple eyes; Clive thinks she would be cute ("a bit o' all right") if she wasn't so focused. She's missing the little finger of her right hand—some kind of mark of shame, he thinks, from the way she refused to speak about it. Nivers was not part of the original group; she was hired only to shoot the boy, if necessary. Todus met and hired her somewhere here in Ravens Bluff, but Clive doesn't know where. Nivers said that she planned to stay in the area for a while, as she had already had several "interesting offers."
- The rock slide was started by Bartholomew Biggs, a big, brown-bearded fighter. He always claimed to be the son of a noble, and the rightful Baron of Karondar, wherever that is (PCs with Local History know that Karondar is a little backwater barony about 120 miles up the Fire River). Bartholomew always said that if he had enough money, he would hire mercenaries to retake his ancestral home.
- Silmon Margoli is the one who ran the nanny through. Clive claims to have seen her commit other senseless killings as well. It should be clear that he is painting her in as bad a light as possible (she spurned his advances; this is his chance to "get even"), alternating between describing her as a cold-blooded killer and scolding her as "soft" for objecting to killing the horses in the landslide. Silmon is tall, slender, and attractive, except for a scar on the left side of her face. She fights "fancy style," with "one o' them-there needle-swords" (a rapier) and "a funny little icepick o' a dagger at th' same time" (i.e., a stiletto).
- Clive thought that the PCs were all dead or wounded. When the kidnapers left the dead magic zone, they met up a few miles down the coast, where Todus gave everyone his or her share of the ransom and they quickly split up. Bartholomew said he had an appointment with a mercenary captain and rode westward. Silmon, who Clive thinks "had a thing" for "th' baron," went with him. Will and Todus sailed off on their ship. Clive headed for Ravens Bluff, riding with Nivers as far as Tantras. She stopped off at the Struggling Squid Inn, claiming "pressin' business," and Clive "ain't seen her since."

- The ransom was not split evenly (Clive grumbles a bit about this). Todus planned and set up the whole thing, so he insisted on half of the gems and platinum pieces and most of the magic. Each of the others got 10% of the gems, 2500 pp, and one magical item. Silmon took the rapier, Bartholomew took the axe, "One Shot" took the quiver, and Clive took the *flametongue* sword.

Clive lost his *flametongue* along with his money last night. He doesn't remember it, but Lucky saw a tall half-elf wearing it as he left. The PCs may search, but the *flametongue* has already left Ravens Bluff. They cannot locate it. However, Clive still has a stash of gems hidden in his boots. He doesn't mention it, as he hopes to keep the loot and maybe use it to bribe his way out of jail later on. Unfortunately for him, he's not thinking very well and the party may notice that by his own account Clive should have received a fortune in gems as part of his share. If they ask him, he starts, then claims to have lost them gambling. He doesn't do a very good job of lying, though, crossing his feet and unconsciously trying to hide his boots. His manner should make them suspicious; if they decide to search him he make no objection unless they think to search his boots, in which case he wails and tries ineffectually to stop them. He has only 3,000 gp worth of the jewels left; the rest was lost to a very skilled pickpocket. He will be dumbfounded if confronted with this fact, and search frantically for the missing gems, accusing the bartender and landlord of having taken them (a charge that is totally false).

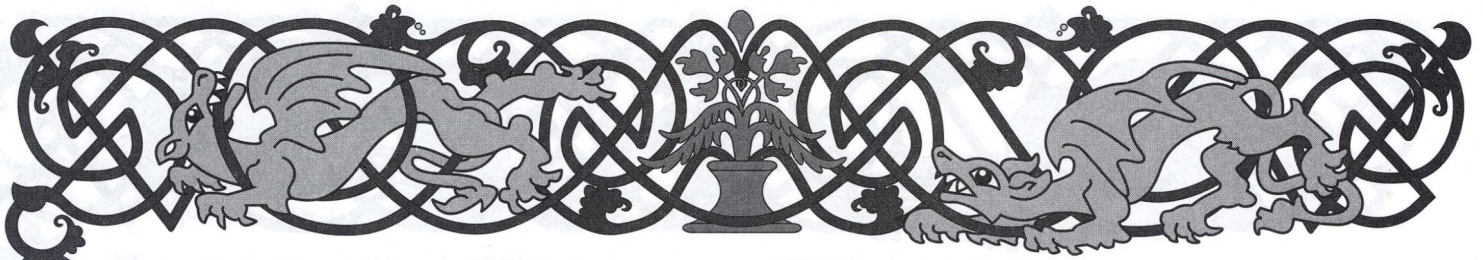
When the PCs have finished questioning Clive, they should drop him off at the temple where the acolytes will see to his imprisonment. After sharing their new leads with Dirtin, they may continue to the gem shop (Encounter Three).

Experience

- Capture Clive: 500 XP.
- Get Clive's information: 200 XP.
- Retrieve either Lucky's cut or the gems stashed in Clive's boots: XP equal to 15% of the monetary value.

Consequences

Clive is pathetically easy to capture. This is a good thing, because his information is vital to the PCs if they are to find the other kidnapers or stop Todus before he completes his quest for vengeance. Should they somehow fail to grab Clive, or accidentally kill him in the attempt, they will have to search for other means to get the information he could have provided. Make them work for it; characters who flub an easy mission like this one deserve to have to suffer some extra grief. Eventually, through assiduous questioning, following up slender leads, lavish bribes, and calling in favors from everyone they know, they should stumble upon a few scraps of the information that Clive would have babbled out. Note that even though Clive is a kidnapper, the characters are not authorized to kill him except in self-defense; those who do are soon charged with murder and find themselves in very deep waters indeed.



Encounter Three: The Sparkling Edge

The Sparkling Edge gem shop is a respected business in Ravens Bluff, patronized by nobles, merchants, and adventurers alike. The proprietor is Oscar Kerlin, a small, slim man who keeps a very sharp eye on his gems while customers are in the shop. He is aided in this by his apprentice, Max Darkeyes—a lousy gem cutter, you have heard, but a very effective guard.

Oscar is happy to talk to the PCs. He is still excited about the sale of the Eye. He says he'll miss it, as it was a beautiful stone. With its deep red hue and the perfection of its facets, more than one mage has told him it was made to be enchanted. He feels that it is the most beautiful gem his shop has ever handled. When asked about the purchaser, he provides a good description. The man was clean-shaven, about 5'9", of medium build, with jet-black shoulder-length hair. The name he gave was Tomas Mountain. Oscar had never met him before and has no idea where the man went.

This is close to the description of Todus that the PCs have, but not an exact match. Todus wore a false beard and streaked his hair with gray before assuming his guise as "Hiram"; he washed this out and removed the beard as "Tomas." Don't provide any hints, however; let the PCs figure it out for themselves. If they have already spoken to Clive, they may pick up on the fact that only the leader kept enough platinum to purchase such a gem.

If the PCs insist that the Eye was bought with stolen funds, Oscar demands proof. The PCs can't give it to him. However, he agrees to return all funds if the Eye is returned to him. If the PCs get nasty, Oscar demands that they see Hykros, who backs up Oscar (the party doesn't have enough proof yet to insist the money be returned).

From here, the PCs can either go to the Lucky Coin (Encounter Two), if they have not already done so, or report to Hykros (Interlude) before leaving for Karondar (Encounter Four).

Oscar Kerlin (3rd-level Thief): AC 7 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (club); SA backstab (+4 to attack roll, double damage); SD thief abilities; SZ M (5'2"); ML steady (11); AL LN; XP 65. Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 15, Chr 12. Special abilities: Appraising (14), Gem Cutting (15).

Max Darkeyes (4th-level Fighter): AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; hp 39; THAC0 17 (14 with bastard sword plus Strength and specialization bonuses); #AT 3/2; Dmg 2d4+5 (bastard sword plus Strength and specialization bonuses); SA weapon specialization; SZ M (6'2"); ML champion (15); AL CG; XP 175. Str 18/64, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 15, Wis 12, Chr 12. Special abilities: Appraising (15), Gem Cutting (9).

Experience

- Recognize Todus from the description, or remember that Todus used a disguise before: 100 XP.
- Realize they lack enough proof to force Oscar to refund his fee: 50 XP.

Consequences

Todus has covered his tracks well, but this incident should give player characters some idea of what he's up to. The exact reason he needs the Eye is not yet clear, but that he plans to enchant it should be obvious, and from their past acquaintance with his methods they should suspect he plans to use the gem for no good purpose. If the PCs failed to capture or question Clive in Encounter Two, then allow Todus to hear that they are on his trail, snooping around and asking questions. He hires some thugs to kill them; PCs who survive the ambush may be able to trace the thugs back to Todus.

Interlude

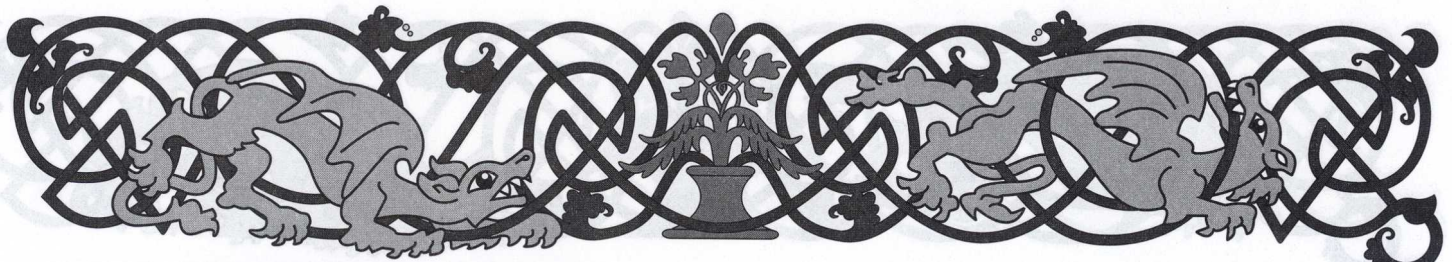
Once the PCs have checked out all available leads and reported back to Hykros, it should be clear that they need to prepare themselves for another journey. As before, the temple can provide them with horses (medium warhorses for fighters and clerics, riding horses for everyone else). Should a character wish to buy a horse of his or her own, the price is 75 gp for a riding horse and 225 gp for medium warhorses; saddle and harness are an additional 25 gp.

Should the characters wish to follow up their lead on Nivers first by traveling to Tantras, they are unable to find any trace of the renegade elf there, although the town is abuzz with news of the assassination, two nights ago now, of one of Lord Lassalar Ormitar's most trusted assistants. Since Ormitar is not only one of the lords who sits on the High Council that rules Tantras but also the head of the Guard (the Tantran equivalent of the Watch), this is big news. The local Thieves Guild, the Grayclaws, is being blamed for the crime but vigorously denies it. If the PCs ask around, they find out that the dead woman was struck down by a poisoned crossbow bolt fired from several streets away by an unknown assailant. They will probably conclude (correctly) that Nivers was the assassin, but they will be unable to prove it. However, expressing too great an interest in the matter will cause both Ormitar and the Grayclaws to notice them. Ormitar will have them hauled in for questioning, only to let them go in disgust when it's clear they have no more than suspicions to go on. The Grayclaws will quietly surround them in a street or hallway and ask for "a few moments of their time," question them closely for a description of Nivers' appearance and methods, then thank them before melting away.

It is 120 miles—four days of good hard riding—to the barony of Karondar, far up near the headwaters of the Fire River. The journey passes without incident (unless the DM decides otherwise, of course).

Encounter Four: Trial of a Baron

Bartholomew Biggs is the son of the former self-proclaimed "Baron of Karondar." His father was ousted when Bartholomew was but a child. The reason for this people's revolt was simple: the elder Biggs was a lousy ruler. He taxed the people outrageously, treated them with contempt, and wasted the money on his private hobbies. Finally, the people had had enough and banded together against the baron. They were led by a peasant hero named Ridal Sureblade (a cousin of Tordon Sureblade, now the Lord Magistrate of Ravens Bluff). With the backing of most of the citizens, the evil baron was ousted. Bartholomew's father died in exile a decade ago, embittered, impoverished, and despondent. Bartholomew never forgot that he should have been a baron, although most who know him realize that he would be an even worse ruler than his father.



It is the morning of your fifth day on the trail. You have reached the barony of Karondar. With its burned fields and abandoned farmhouses, this place has clearly felt the horrors of war—and recently too; some of the ruins still smolder. You are not surprised when, as you're passing a cluster of farms, you are surrounded by stout men and women carrying pitchforks, hunting bows, and rusty old halberds.

"Are you here to join with Bartholomew's rebels?" their spokesman asks. You can see their knuckles tighten on their weapons as they await your reply.

If the PCs respond that they have come to arrest Bartholomew, the people smile and calm down immediately. "You're too late!" they crow. "Baron Sureblade's got him in the lock-up, just waiting long enough for them to build the gallows!" They then offer the PCs a wineskin of the local vintage to "wash the trail dust out of your mouths." The folk are jubilant that the rebels have been put down; the leader of this militia band, Tanson Snodgrass, brags about how his group set the mercenaries they tangled with to flight. They even got to see Baron Sureblade himself in combat—an awesome sight, he assures them.

If, for some reason, the player characters lie and claim to be on the side of the rebels, they are ordered to dismount and surrender their weapons. They are then taken to the Baron for trial. At the "capital" (the only village in the barony, home to some two hundred humans and halflings, with two real stone buildings!) they are searched and their badges found. The real story should then come out quickly.

Either way, the PCs learn that the Baron single-handedly captured Bartholomew Biggs. In fact, his trial has already been held, and he hangs today at noon. Most of the militia wanted to be present at the hanging, but they have to stay on duty here at the border. Karon, the capital city—village, actually—is a few miles up the road. If the PCs ride hard, they can make it to the hanging with plenty of time to spare.

The Hanging

You arrive in the village of Karon only about half an hour before high noon. Workmen seem to be putting the finishing touches on the gallows in the town square as you enter town. A large crowd—everyone in town, apparently—has already gathered, most carrying weapons of some sort. The village lockup is located just off the square. A half-dozen uniformed men carrying longswords guard the jail. They wear the symbol of the scales of justice over a sheaf of wheat, the same as the standard that flutters over the town's only mansion.

The PCs cannot get in to see Bartholomew without the Baron's permission. The guards are vigilant—some of the mercenaries escaped, and Baron Sureblade doesn't want to take the chance that they might try to rescue their leader. If the PCs ask, the guards laugh and say that they'll be seeing him soon enough at the hanging. Another four guards wait inside to back them up if needed.

The Baron is across the square, in the village meeting hall. This hall is the temporary base of operations for the Baron's forces. It's a busy place, with guards and messengers coming and going steadily. As they attempt to enter, the PCs are challenged by two guards. The characters must identify themselves and state their loyalties. The guards do not take them at their word, but they do send a message to the Baron. Word comes back that the Baron will be happy to see the

visitors from Ravens Bluff this afternoon, after the hanging. The PCs must come up with some plan if they are to see the Baron before the hanging.

There are several ways to accomplish this. If bribed with 25 gp or more, the guards can at least get the PCs close to the Baron. Or, if heated words are exchanged at the entrance, another group of guards come to investigate. As long as the PCs keep insisting loudly, they are ushered in to see the Baron. Sending the message that the PCs need to see the prisoner before the hanging also gets an audience with the Baron.

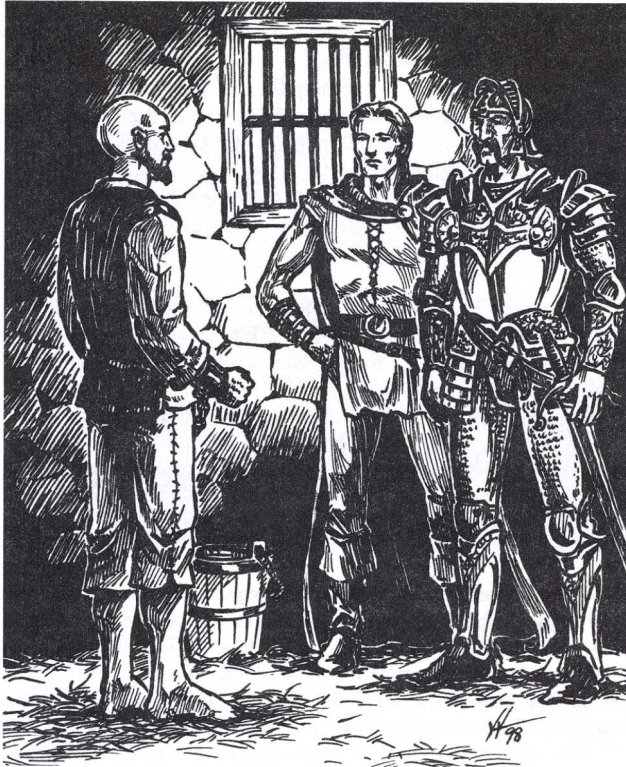
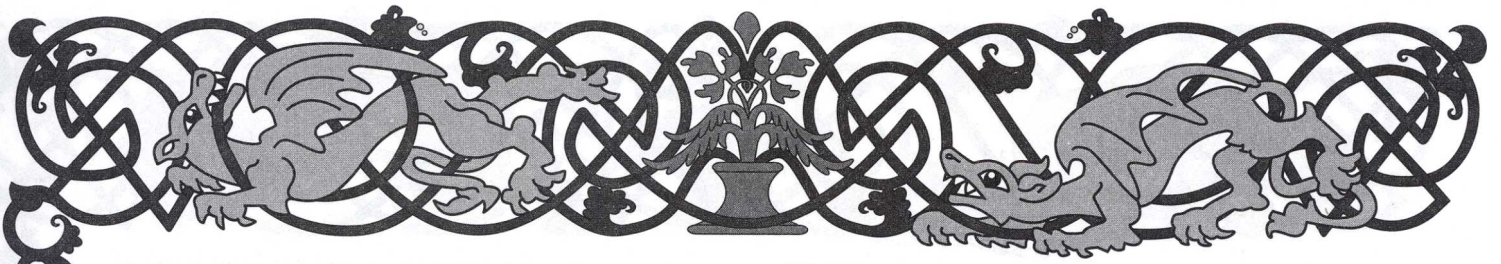
Baron Ridal Sureblade is an imposing figure of a man. The scales of Tyr over the wheat field mark both his shield and his tabard. He moves easily in his plate mail as he stands to greet you. Those of you who are experienced with the sword get the feeling that this is not a man to be faced lightly. His face shows character, while his eyes have a softness to them that belies the otherwise stern countenance. "What can I do for the visitors from Ravens Bluff?" he says. "I apologize, but I must ask you to be brief. Pressing matters, you know."

If the PCs ask to see Bartholomew, the Baron asks why. When they explain the situation, he grants their request. He sends a sergeant along to clear them with the guards. They may also demand that the Baron immediately surrender his prisoner to them, as duly appointed officials of Tyr. He responds that justice in his barony is administered by him, under the watchful eye of Tyr. The PCs have no jurisdiction here. However, he certainly would like to cooperate with the agents of the temple, so he will allow them to see the prisoner. Appeals to his sense of justice fall on deaf ears, as he knows that what he is doing is just. The rebel has caused death and suffering to many good men on both sides of the conflict. As long as he remains alive, he is a focal point for trouble. Claims that the PCs are acting for his cousin, the chief magistrate of Ravens Bluff, are immediately detected as falsehoods. The Baron gets angry when the PCs lie, and he tells them so in no uncertain terms.

If the Baron is told about the ransom extorted from Hykros Allumen (to whom he sends his greetings), he agrees that the property certainly belongs to the temple. Bartholomew had no money on him when captured, but he did carry a magical axe; Ridal asks if the axe was part of the ransom. When he learns that it was, he sends a guard to fetch it. Once the characters have identified it, the Baron says he will have it returned to the Church of Tyr by armed escort. He does not turn it over to the party; if asked why, he says that it has become his personal responsibility.

Let the PCs roleplay with Baron Sureblade for a few minutes, but remind them that time is passing. Sentence has been passed, and the baron will not delay the execution. If they immediately go to see Bartholomew, they have at most fifteen minutes to speak with him. Before they see him, they must check their weapons at the door.

When the PCs confront him, he recognizes them. He looks shocked and swears violently. Then, his manner changes and he pretends to be glad they escaped the rockslide. He even claims that he deliberately delayed setting off the avalanche for a few seconds to give them a chance to escape. It should be clear that he has no idea that the PCs were safe from the rocks so long as they stayed put, but if they bring this up he again looks stunned, then quickly claims he planned the whole thing that way. Bartholomew is desperate. He will make any kind of threat or promise to stay alive. The PCs



it felt like all the time she was thinking about the best way to kill you, the perfect spot to stick a knife in, or a crossbow bolt. She gave me the creeps. I was glad to see the last of her. I don't know where she went, and I don't want to know.

If asked about Tadus ("Hiram") or Will, or when the questions are done, he gets a crafty look and launches into his final plea.

"I tell you, this isn't justice. I was trying to get my rightful barony back. I lost. For this I'm supposed to pay with my neck. Meanwhile, Tadus is walking around free, planning destruction on a massive scale. I know where he is and what he's going to do. You think you're so special, you high and mighty servants of Tyr. When Tadus gets through with your temple, there won't be anything left but rubble. I'll be happy to tell you all about it as we ride out of here. But if you let me hang, I'll take it to the grave with me. You've got to get me out of here or that temple is history."

should have questions for him about the locations of the other kidnapers and the fate of the ransom.

If questioned about Silmon, he has this to say:

"Silmon? I wish I had her here right now so I could wring her neck. She was supposed to be so good. As far as I know, she died in the last battle. I hope it took a long time, too. She was supposed to be watching my back when I led the charge. But that cursed Baron snuck up on me and got me from behind. A proper coward's trick, that was. Silmon must have run off—and she claimed she cared about me, too. She was one of my captains; I imagine she'd be in here with me if she still lived—ready to take one last dance with me, on the end of a short rope."

If asked about Clive, he says

"That loser? I'm not surprised you caught him already. A drunk, a loser, and a fool. And to think that Tadus gave him an equal share with me, a baron! I should have taken it from him, but he scampered off before I got the chance, the coward."

If asked about Nivers One-Shot, he says

"That one? She's crazy. Take my advice and have nothing to do with her. Touched in the head. I don't know what those other elves did when they booted her out, but I don't blame them. The way she'd look at you with those funny eyes of hers—

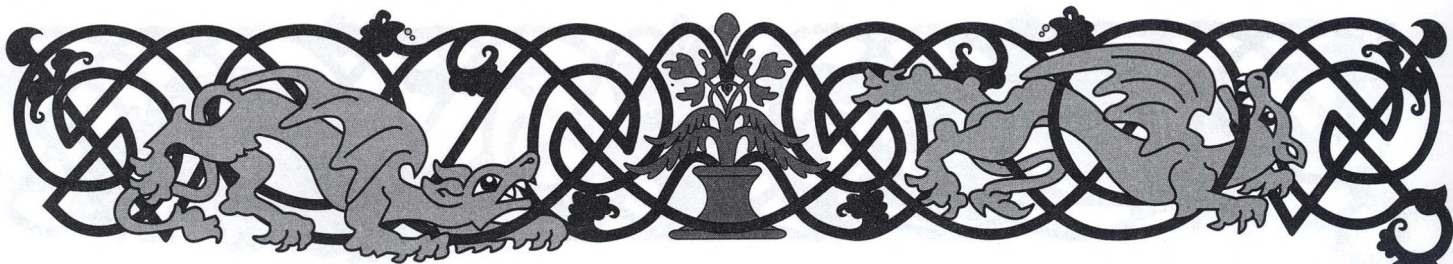
This may cause the PCs to rush over to the Baron and repeat this story. Ridal will see them immediately. He listens and agrees that this is a concern, if true. Of course, he notes, the rebel is almost certainly lying to save his worthless neck. Nonetheless, he agrees to accompany them to visit Bartholomew one last time, to get to the truth of the matter. Bartholomew repeats his threat while the Baron rests his hand on his sword. When he is finished, Ridal says that there is some truth to what he says, but not much. He urges Bartholomew to make a clean breast of it. He'll feel better if he clears his conscience before he dies. Bartholomew laughs. Pause for the PCs to come up with suggestions.

The PCs have only a few options here. Helping Bartholomew escape will almost certainly fail—they just don't have time to plan anything. Not only would they have to kill honest men and women, but the escape attempt would be in clear sight of over a hundred armed people. Negotiating for Bartholomew's release into their custody won't work any better. The Baron is simply not going to let the rebel leave. Remember that the Baron is a paladin of Tyr, convinced that what he is doing is just. They cannot sway him. Threats to the Baron, of course, are ineffective. Pleas touch his heart but do not cause him to change his course: he simply says, with regret, that he cannot help them—Bartholomew has hurt too many people and must pay for his crimes here and now. Baron Sureblade does promise to give them a document with his seal on it to present to "his brother in Tyr" at the temple. In it, he will explain what happened, and why the PCs failed to bring in Bartholomew. This proof that they did their best is the most the PCs can hope for.

Don't let this scene drag on too long; it will be frustrating for the PCs and accomplish nothing. When a few minutes have passed, the Baron cuts them off sharply, saying it is noon, and justice awaits.

The hanging is to be a simple thing. No grand speeches, no drum rolls. Ten guards march Bartholomew towards the gallows. Suddenly he makes a move. One guard lies on the ground, his skull crushed by a blow from Bartholomew's manacles. He is free! He jumps on a nearby horse, shouting "You'll never hang me! I will return, and you will all pay for this!" At that moment you hear the sound of more than a dozen bows and crossbows. Bartholomew was right about one thing—he didn't hang. He falls to the ground, already dead. The Baron sheathes his sword and looks down at Bartholomew. "So ends the rebellion."





The above scene takes a single round. The PCs will probably not be close enough to Bartholomew to save his life or help him escape. They can take whatever action they wish, but it is overwhelmingly probable that Bartholomew will die.

Allow the PCs to make Intelligence rolls at this point. Those who are successful notice that the horse he jumped on is a heavy warhorse. If they take a closer look, they find the owner trying to calm the frightened animal. The farmer is happy to tell them where he got his new plowhorse. He picked it up for only 25 gp, saddle and tack included, from a woman who said it had belonged to a friend of hers killed in the fighting. If asked for more about the woman, he has little to add—she was a stranger, had long blonde hair, and was quite attractive, he thought, “except for the scar.” She said something about having to leave town right after the hanging, but they might still be able to find her at the Rusty Bucket tavern—a great thatched building just down the street on the edge of town. If the PCs climbed to the top of the cliff at the ambush site and found the hoofprints, any character with Track- ing can automatically tell that this is the horse that left those prints.

Baron Ridal Sureblade (14th-level Paladin of Tyr): AL LG; AC -2 (plate mail and shield plus Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 76; THACO 7 (2 with *longsword* +3 and Strength bonus); #AT 2; Dmg 1d8+6 (*longsword* +3, Strength bonus); SA paladin abilities SD paladin abilities; SZ M (6'5"); ML 16 (champion); Str 18/80, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 16, Chr 17. Special abilities: Ridal's magical longsword has the power of *detect lie*.

Bartholomew Biggs (7th-level Fighter): AC 10; MV 12; hp 65 (currently 15); THACO 14 (12 with Strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d2+5 (fists plus Strength bonus); SZ M (6'4"); ML fearless (19); AL LE; XP 420. Str 18/96, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 13, Chr 16. Special abilities: Riding—land-based (16).

The Rusty Bucket

If the PCs arrive at the Rusty Bucket within ten minutes, their quick response pays off. A handsome bay riding horse stands ready to depart, and a tall blonde woman with a scar is exiting the tavern just as they enter—in fact, she bumps into the first PC through the door. She is wearing a backpack and clearly is on the point of leaving town. Allow Intelligence rolls for the PCs; success allows them to recognize her as the woman who took the horses during the ransom exchange and also to recognize the jeweled rapier she is wearing as part of the ransom. If they have missed all clues so far and let her pass, she mumbles an apology, leaps on the waiting horse, and rides off.

If confronted, Silmon tries to fight her way to her horse. Unfortunately for her, the PCs stand in the way. Give the PCs a good fight for a round or two. She expects no mercy and believes she will hang if captured, so at first does not surrender or submit gracefully even if overborne, restrained, or disarmed; she kicks, screams, bites, claws, and tries to twist free. The altercation soon draws the attention of the Baron, who arrives on the third round. If she has made it to her horse but not yet escaped, Baron Sureblade grabs the reins and easily parries any blow she aims at him. If she has actually gotten on horseback he unhorses her. In either case, she suddenly kneels before the PCs and offers her rapier hilt-first in surrender to them.

Once Silmon is subdued, the Baron offers the PCs a set of manacles (complete with key) if they lack rope to tie up their captive. He asks if they will turn their prisoner over to him to take Bartholomew's

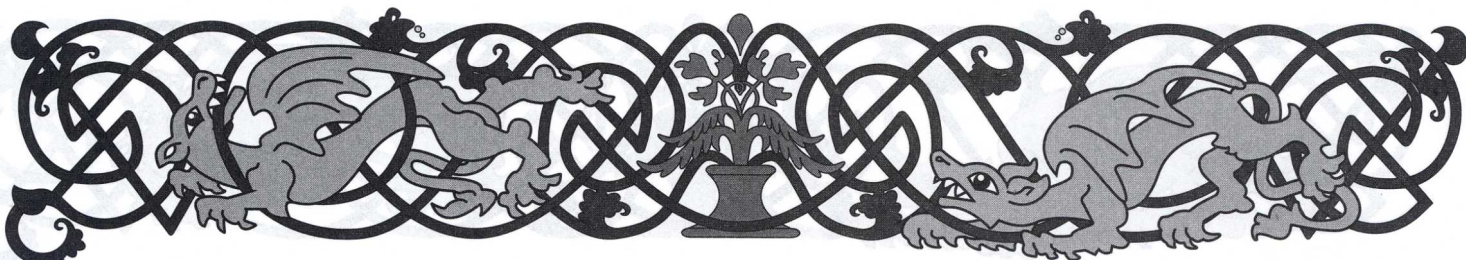
place on the gallows. Silmon turns pale and almost faints at this. Now is a good time to question her. They have plenty of evidence that she is one of the kidnappers: she carries the *rapier* +2 from the ransom, matches the description they should have gotten from Clive, and looks exactly like the figure they caught a brief glimpse of during the ransom payment. However, she carries no platinum pieces, although she does have two diamonds worth 1000 gp each in her purse. If asked about the rapier, she claims to have inherited it from her father and insists the characters attacked her for no reason. She also denies being part of the rebel force. The Baron pronounces her a liar and asks the PCs again to release their prisoner to him for trial and execution. At this Silmon breaks down and agrees to answer any questions the PCs may ask if only they will save her from the Baron. See “What Silmon Knows” below.

Silmon (6th-level Thief): AC 4 (studded leather, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 21; THACO 18; #AT 2 (*rapier* and *stiletto*); Dmg 1d6+3/1d3 + poison (*rapier* +2/*stiletto*); SA backstab (+4 to attacks, triple damage), poison (save vs. poison or die, taking 1d6 points of damage even on a successful save), two-handed fighting style; SD thief abilities; SW -4 penalty to *stiletto* attacks (two-handed fighting style); SZ M (5'9"); ML elite (13); AL N; XP 650. Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 14, Chr 16. PP 65%, OL 10%, FT 15%, MS 35%, HS 45%, DN 10%, CW 40%. Special abilities: Riding—land based (17), Rope Use (17), Swimming (15). Note that Silmon is left-handed, so she fights with the rapier (her main melee weapon) in her left hand, not her right.

What Silmon Knows

- Tadius wanted the gems and magic for some kind of special ceremony. She don't know exactly what it involved, only that Tadius swore that he would finally have his revenge on the clerics of Tyr. He claimed that he would reduce the Temple of Tyr to rubble. He said something about “We'll see how well they handle abishai.”
- She don't know where Tadius went, although she does know that he needed a mage for the ceremony. He had already contacted a high-level mage who lived right in Ravens Bluff—a wizard named Calagor. He needed the ransom money to pay Calagor's fee and also to afford some sort of special gem needed for the summoning.
- Clive is a thief, a drunk, and a worm. They shouldn't believe anything he told them.
- If Bartholomew couldn't be baron, he's better off dead, poor fellow; he couldn't have lived any longer with the thought of being deposed by a holier-than-thou paladin. If asked why she helped him then, she looks down and mutters something about “my only chance to be a baroness.”
- Will is no fool, but he does whatever Tadius tells him. Wherever they find Tadius, they'll find Will as well.
- “One Shot” had a job in Tantras, something to do with “government work.” But that was supposed to happen last week, so it's far too late for the PCs to stop her now. Silmon has no idea how to contact her [this last part is a lie; she actually sent a message summoning Nivers to Bartholomew's aid after he was captured and know she is probably on her way. As this represents her last hope, nothing can pry this information out of her].

If asked what happened to the platinum pieces and the rest of her share of the treasure, she merely says that she had to settle some



old debts (partially true). If pressed, she says she gave most of it to Bartholomew to help pay for his mercenary army (partially true). Finally, she claims to have buried it “where no one will ever find it” (also partially true) and tries to bargain with the PCs: her freedom in exchange for her share of the ransom. If this doesn’t work, she clams up and refuses to tell them any more about it.

As long as the PCs stand up for themselves, they get to keep their prisoner. The Baron asks only that the PCs promise that Silmon will be turned over to the Ravens Bluff authorities to stand trial for her crimes.

Experience

- Treat the Baron politely: 100 XP each.
- Question Bartholomew: 100 XP each.
- Get a document from the Baron explaining what happened to Bartholomew: 50 XP each.
- Capture Silmon alive: 300 XP each.
- Insist on keeping custody of Silmon: 200 XP each.

Consequences

By and large, the only enemies the PCs have to fight in this encounter are those of their own creation (Silmon is the obvious exception). If they run afoul of the border guards and have to fight their way to the capital, things will go badly for them. Not only will they probably be killed or at the very least brought to Karon in chains (the locals are very good at using ambushes, nets, trip-wires, and other tricks to overpower an arrogant armed force, having just had experience on Bartholomew’s mercenaries), but they will almost certainly arrive too late to speak with Bartholomew. Silmon also will have departed, and they will not encounter her again—she makes her way down to Turlagol and takes ship to distant parts. A raid on the jail is a bad idea, but it’s just possible clever PCs may bring it off. If so, they must look for treachery from Bartholomew, who will seek to slay them or escape at the first opportunity. If they fail to capture Silmon, assume that the descriptions and clues they gave Hykros before leaving Ravens Bluff are enough for them to identify a few possible suspects and that checking out one of these leads them to Calagor’s tower. Finally, if the PCs refuse to save Silmon from the Baron, she refuses to answer any questions. She is tried that same evening of complicity in the rebellion (plenty of people saw her fighting at Bartholomew’s side in the early attacks) and sentenced to hang the next day. Unless the PCs come up with some plan to get her away from the very watchful guards or can convince her to help them (difficult but not absolutely impossible), she goes to her death without speaking and her stash of the loot becomes one of the legendary lost treasures of the Vast.

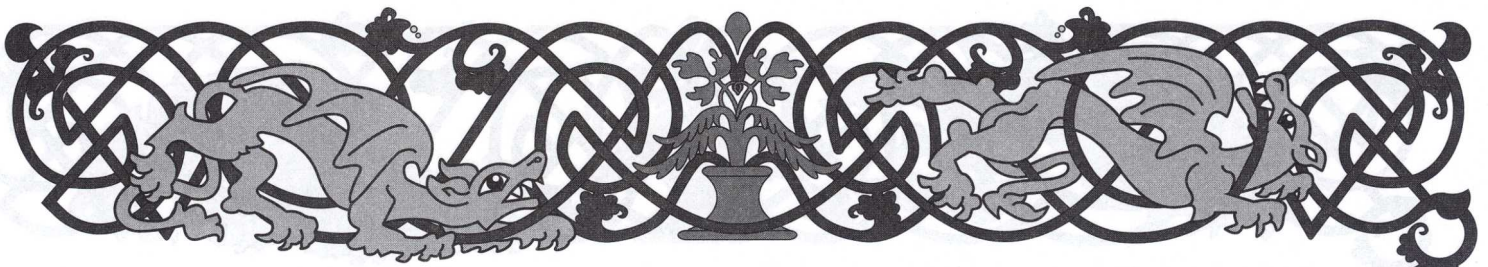
Encounter Five: Quarrels in the Dark

The trip back down the Fire River is at first uneventful, unless the DM wants to have the PCs encounter a few wandering humanoid bands (fragments of Warlord Myrkysa Jelan’s now-scattered army that assaulted Ravens Bluff the previous summer). Silmon is a model prisoner who does everything possible to lull their suspicions and win their sympathy; she even does her best to fight off attackers if the camp is assaulted. Ask the PCs for watches each night; the fol-



lowing encounter overtakes them when they are two nights out from Ravens Bluff.

Silmon had attempted to summon Nivers to Bartholomew’s aid after he was captured, but the elven sharpshooter did not get the message in time. While traveling upriver, she discovers the PCs, with Silmon in tow, on their way back downriver to Ravens Bluff. “One Shot” has heard of the PCs’ exploits by now, as has most of Ravens Bluff, and decides not to wait for the party to come after her but to eliminate them first. Accordingly, she slips quietly into sniper position up one of the great trees that line the river banks at this point and draws a bead on the lookout. Since she is an elf, she can do so virtually noiselessly. If the first shot completely disables the only guard, she takes her time, shooting the other PCs one by one in their sleep (a kindly DM might allow a falling guard the chance to cry out on a successful Constitution check). If on the other hand that first shot stirs up a hornet’s nest of PCs leaping to their feet, running about, and shooting wildly into the dark, she takes her time, reloads, and fires again. The darkness and foliage provide her with excellent cover as she slips from tree to tree; in addition it will be hard initially for the characters to figure out where the attacks are coming from (they are likely to look at ground level, for a start; it will take a successful Tracking or Intelligence check, at a –5 penalty, to establish the general position of the sniper). As long as the PCs are milling about, shouting, and offering her excellent targets, she continues to take pot-shots at them. If they seem to be getting too close or all get under cover, she slips away, only to return an hour or so later and try again from a different direction. Nivers is not above shooting their horses in order to prevent their escaping her, and she will stalk them all night if necessary. If it becomes too dangerous, she slips away and comes back again the next night or day. She will even



follow them into the city itself, sniping from upper windows down city streets, until they either kill or capture her.

Under the cover of all this confusion, Silmon attempts to escape. It is up to the DM whether or not she has been able to free herself from her bonds via her proficiency in Rope Use (if manacled, she might have coughed up a lockpick swallowed earlier to avoid detection)—she has had plenty of time for multiple attempts. At any rate, assume she frees her legs and is able to move, even if her wrists are still restrained. She runs towards the river and dives in. Any PC who dashes after her is targeted by Nivers for a poisoned bolt, but the elf has no time to spare more than one shot at such a tempting target. Unfortunately for Silmon, if she fails her Swimming proficiency check (the DM should assign whatever penalty he or she sees fit if her hands are still bound) she begins to drown, perishing in four rounds unless rescued. If her escape attempt fails, Silmon lapses into despondency and gives no further trouble, refusing to eat and rarely even speaking thereafter.

If one of the PCs decides to use Silmon as a shield, reasoning that Nivers wouldn't fire at one of her fellow kidnappers, he or she soon learns the error of this logic: Nivers shoots Silmon in the throat (+4 to her attack role against such a perfect, restrained target) with a poisoned quarrel, eliminating a witness able to definitely link her to the kidnapping.

Nivers One-Shot (3rd-level elven Fighter): AC 8 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 20; THAC0 18 (17 with crossbow plus Dexterity bonus); #AT 1/2 or 1; Dmg 1d4+2 plus poison (*heavy crossbow bolt* +1) or 1d4 (dagger); SA poison (save vs. poison or die, taking 1d6 points of damage even on a successful save); SD elven woodcraft, 90% resistant to sleep and charm; SZ M (5'); ML champion (16); AL NE; XP 270. Str 10, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Chr 14.

If the PCs manage to kill or capture Nivers, they find that she has a sack with 5,000 gp worth of gems left over from the ransom. Her custom-made crossbow is a beautiful piece of work but not magical. She has ten magical *crossbow bolts* +1, all poisoned, and ten normal bolts. She no longer has the *quiver of Ehlonna*, having traded it and her platinum for the magical crossbow bolts. Nivers refuses to cooperate in any way with her captors (remember her innate 90% resistance to *charm* spells) and in any case has no useful information about Tadus's identity, location, or plans.

Experience

- Kill Nivers: 270 XP.
- Capture Nivers alive: 500 XP each.
- Save Silmon, or prevent her escape: 200 XP (to character who plucks her from the river).

Consequences

Even though the PCs face only one opponent here, and the weakest of all the kidnappers at that, she is still a deadly foe because of her ability to strike with surprise and her poison-tipped bolts. The characters will need to come up with a clever plan to entrap and defeat her (hanging tripwires or strings hung with bells around the camp, having one or more party member hide some distance off, arranging blankets and bundles to look like sleeping PCs, etc.). Note that she has only twenty bolts with her; if she expends them all, she will have to break off her attacks until she can acquire more. She is a persistent foe who will continue to stalk them, off and on, until she is killed or captured—or until she kills the last of them, which would

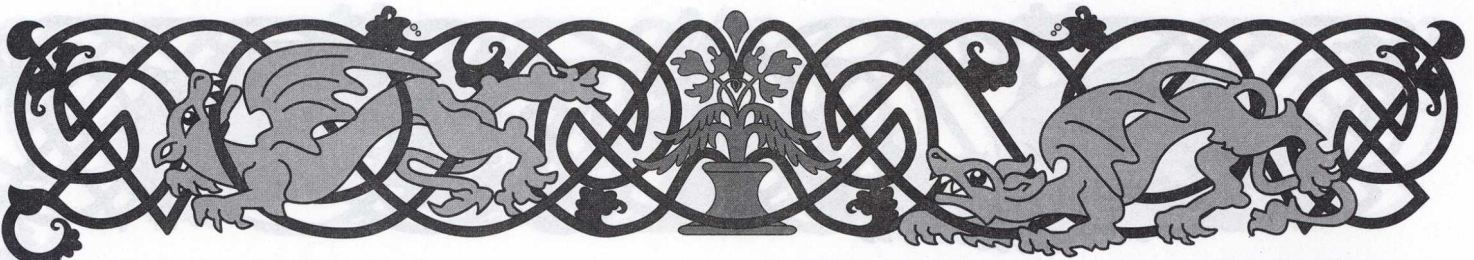
make a depressing ending to the game. PCs who are in great difficulties may get a break; if wounded, Nivers might leave a trail of blood, for example. If they are really desperate, they might recall that both the forces of law and order and the Thieves Guild in Tantras are out for an unknown assassin's blood; giving them Nivers' name and description would be an excellent way to ensure that she is too busy trying to stay alive to harass the PCs further.

Encounter Six: The Showdown

Upon arriving back in the Living City, the PCs will no doubt want to go to the temple at once and report to Hykros. They can turn over any prisoner(s) and pass on what they have learned. Hykros thanks them for their efforts to bring Bartholomew to justice and does not blame them for their failure to bring him in alive—he trusts Baron Sureblade's judgment ("Tyr's will is strong in him") and believes justice has been done in this case. He praises them for capturing Silmon (assuming they get her to Ravens Bluff safely) and dealing with Nivers (if they've actually managed to take her alive). If they got Silmon to talk, he sends Dirtin to check temple and civic records regarding "Calagor" while he prepares to pay a personal visit on Archmage Von Tighe of the Wizards Guild. If they failed to get this clue but managed to get both Clive's information on Tadus and the clues from the gem shop, he has investigated these in their absence and has several leads for them to follow up. He tells them to take a day to "get some well-deserved rest" and come back tomorrow for the final stage of their mission.

How the PCs spend the rest of that day is up to them. If they are still being stalked by Nivers, the DM may arrange a quick hit-and-run ambush, as described in the last session. They may decide on a little investigation on their own accord, using street contacts, further grilling of Clive, or checking the public records office for any trace of Calagor or the Hill brothers. Research at the Wizards Guild or the right questions at the Ministry of Art might, at the DM's discretion, give them some inkling of how Tadus intends to use the great gem (i.e., in some sort of summoning ceremony). A quick visit to the Diviners Guild brings rather disconcerting omens of doom directed at the Silver Halls and anyone associated with it.

When they return the next day, Hykros announces that he believes he has the final information they need to locate the Hills. He introduces them to Randeau, a captain in the City Watch, whose team will accompany them to arrest Calagor on charges of plotting against the city. The Reverend Judge believes that Calagor in turn will lead them to the Hill brothers, thus closing the circle and bringing the last of the kidnappers to justice. While there is no direct proof of Calagor's involvement, he has asked the Lord Magistrate to draw up a warrant authorizing the Watch to bring him in for questioning. He cannot authorize the PCs to make the arrest themselves, but he would like them to accompany the Watch detachment and assist in case Calagor resists arrest. He stresses that they must place themselves under the Watch's direction and that Randeau is in charge of the mission. Assuming they agree, the PCs then meet the rest of Randeau's unit: three 4th-level Fighters (Sugs, Madhur, and Cecil), a 5th-level Priest of Torm (Ohtar Ketilsson), and a 7th-level Mage named Dor. Dor has memorized three *knock* spells and two *dispel magics* as well as two *read magics* and two *erase* spells to counter *wizard locks*, *glyphs*, and other magical barriers. Allow the PCs to make any preparation they feel necessary before proceeding to Calagor's tower.



Calagor's Tower

The City Watch treat the PCs politely but make it clear they view the PCs as "civilians" who are not really necessary to the mission. Randeau has been handed this mission by Lord Magistrate Tordon Sureblade in person and has no intention of delegating or sharing any of that authority; even if one or more of the PCs are fellow Watch members, the jurisdiction on this assignment is his, and he intends to keep it that way. Given the seriousness of the crime, the Lord Magistrate has issued a "knock" warrant, allowing the Watch to use force or magic to enter without permission of the owner if the captain in charge of the group deems it necessary.

The trip to Calagor's tower is quick and uneventful. It turns out to be on the south bank of the Fire River in a part of the Crow's End district known locally as "The Shutters"—a rundown area of warehouses and boat-rental stalls. The Tower of Calagor itself is unimposing: a stone building only about thirty feet high on a back alley between Helhavryn's Walk and Red Sails Way. The windows are all shuttered, and there is but a single door. The door is of black iron, while the tower is of smooth granite.

Randeau leads the Guard up to the door, with your party trailing behind. Ordering everyone back, the priest of Torm moves up and casts his *find traps* spell. As he completes the spell, he steps back, muttering to himself. He turns to Randeau. "There are at least two *glyphs* on the door, and there's a magical trap of some kind on both the lock and the knocker. It's powerful. I suggest that Dor see what she can do."

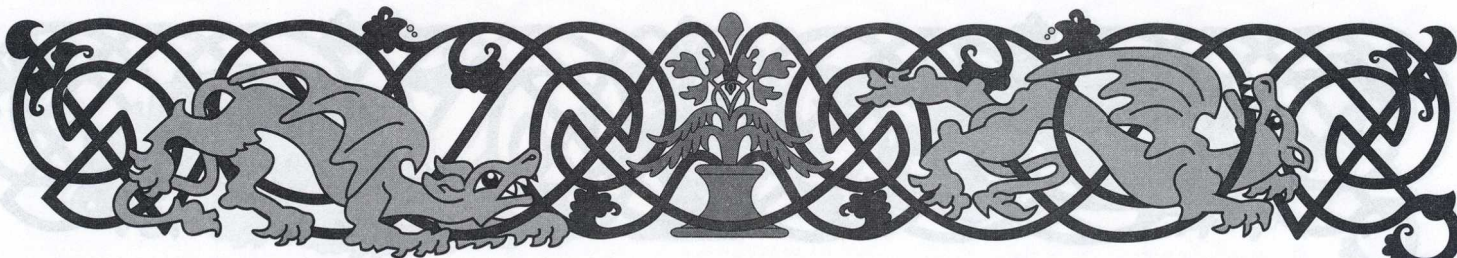
Dor steps up and casts her first *dispel magic*. The priest checks again and decides that it is now safe, but the door is still *wizard-locked*. Randeau applies himself vigorously to the knocker, calling out for Calagor to "Open up, in the name of the Watch!" When he gets no response after several minutes' knocking, he nods to Dor and steps back. Dor uses her first *knock*, and the door swings open, revealing a short hallway just as cluttered as any mage's tower. At the far end of the hall you can see what looks like a small, crowded kitchen, dirty dishes piled precariously high on the table. A cluttered coat rack near the entrance holds two hooded cloaks as well as a few wizardly looking hats. There is a closed door on either side of the entryway. There is no reaction to the door's opening, nor to Randeau's call for Calagor to "Step forth!"

Ohtar checks the hallway, pronouncing it safe. Randeau orders your party to remain here while "his men" check out this floor, adding that "Mages is tricky buggers. May try to slip out behind us while we're poking about inside. Keep a sharp eye out, eh?" Feeling rather superfluous, you watch as the guards cautiously enter the tower one by one. Sugs proceeds to the kitchen, calling out that it is empty but has stairs going up. Madhur and Cecil check the two side doors. Madhur reports an empty library, Cecil a sitting room—recently used but now empty as well. Randeau, Ohtar, and Dor advance warily to the middle of the hall, ready to move to any guard's aid at a moment's notice. Sugs shouts from the kitchen that he's found a concealed door in the back of the pantry. Randeau and the rest move into the kitchen. Just as they reach it, you hear Ohtar scream "Don't touch that!" as you hear the sound of a door opening. Suddenly blinding flashes of lightning play about the whole first floor of the tower, hiding the hallway and kitchen

from your view. Screams fill your ears, dying out one by one. Then, as quickly as it came, the lightning is gone and you can see again. All is quiet within the tower. You can see the charred bodies of Dor and one of the guards—too badly burnt for you to tell which one—still smoking where they lie twisted on the floor at the far end of the hall. You can smell the aroma of roasted flesh as Randeau staggers down the hall towards you, apparently in a state of shock. When he's about halfway down the passage, he disappears suddenly as a section of the floor swings out from under him. You hear a curse, cut off suddenly as the trapdoor swings shut again. You're on your own now.

What's happened here is that Sugs opened the concealed door in the pantry, setting off a *chain lightning* glyph that struck dead all the guards except Randeau (the sixth and last in the chain; he made his saving throw). Any magical items that the City Watch contingent were wearing did not save against the multiple electrical strikes. Opening the cabinet also triggered a mechanical trap, withdrawing the supports from the trap door in the hall (this did not detected as a "trap" until the supports were removed). Investigating the trap door Randeau fell through reveals a shaft opening onto the cellar, with a dead guard captain fifty feet below. Note that while the trap door is as wide as the hallway it is easy to avoid or jump over once detected. The door Sugs opened in the pantry reveals stairs going down. PCs climbing the stairs to the upper level find two large, low rooms: one the mage's bedroom and the other his lab. Calagor has already removed his spellbooks and any items of value, as he has a high regard for the investigative powers of the City Watch and the Silent Network and intends to depart immediately on an extended absence as soon as his part in the summoning is complete. Wary characters who climb up the outside of the tower and attempt to get in through a window find that the shutters are trapped with a *programmed illusion* that explodes into a phantasmal *flaming sphere* centered on the window. Note that most characters suddenly enveloped in what looks, smells, and feels like a huge ball of fire will lose their grip and plummet to the ground, taking another 2d6 points of damage (a *Climb Walls* roll at half the normal chance is required to keep from falling).

Characters who descend the other set of stairs to the cellar would be wise to check for traps, given their experience in this tower so far and the fate of the Watchmen and -women. There are twenty-five steps, and the 13th step from the top has a small, nearly invisible tripwire stretched across it. The wire is made of adamantine; it does not set off any trap but instead slices into the leg of anyone who walks into it, inflicting 1d6 points of damage. His or her movement rate is halved until the damage is healed, and that PC must immediately make a Dexterity check or lose his or her balance and fall the rest of the way down the stairs. The fall causes an additional 1d6 points of damage and puts the character flat on his or her back at the very feet of the flesh golem. The golem has been charged to keep anyone out of the cellar. It will pursue intruders up the stairs and throughout the tower but not into the street. Note that it is quite possible that the PCs can defeat the golem, even if they are all 1st-level. Given the golem's poor AC, they may be able to wear it down. Remind the fighters that they can still parry attacks, even if they lack a magical weapon. The golem is slow enough that they can easily keep ahead of it on the stairs, nor will it remember the trap door (although it does carefully step over the trip-wire). It pursues them as far as the door of the tower, and while the PCs should have no trouble jumping over the trap in the hall, the golem follows them blindly, disappearing



with a roar when it steps on the trap door. Since it is considerably larger than the average human, it gets stuck in the shaft and cannot escape without help.

When the golem has been dealt with, the PCs can proceed to explore the basement. The cellar contains a storage room with sacks of flour, food, and some bulky spell components. In the far corner is another stairway leading even further down into the earth. This stairway is also trapped; the steps are covered with grease. Anyone searching for traps automatically succeeds. Characters stepping in the grease must make Dexterity checks each time they try to move. Failure means a hard fall to the bottom, suffering 2d6 points of damage. There are two ways to reach the bottom safely; the flour from the storage room can be used to cover the grease, giving the PCs a +4 bonus on their Dexterity checks, or characters can simply sit down on the steps and scoot down them one by one (this method guarantees that the PCs employing it arrive safely at the bottom).

Flesh Golem: AC 9; MV 8; HD 9; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8 (fist); SD immune to nonmagical weapons, immune to most spells, electric attacks restore 1 hp per die of "damage"; SW magical fire and magical cold spells *slow* the golem for 2d6 rounds; SZ L (7½' tall); ML fearless (19); Int semi (3); AL N; XP 2,000.

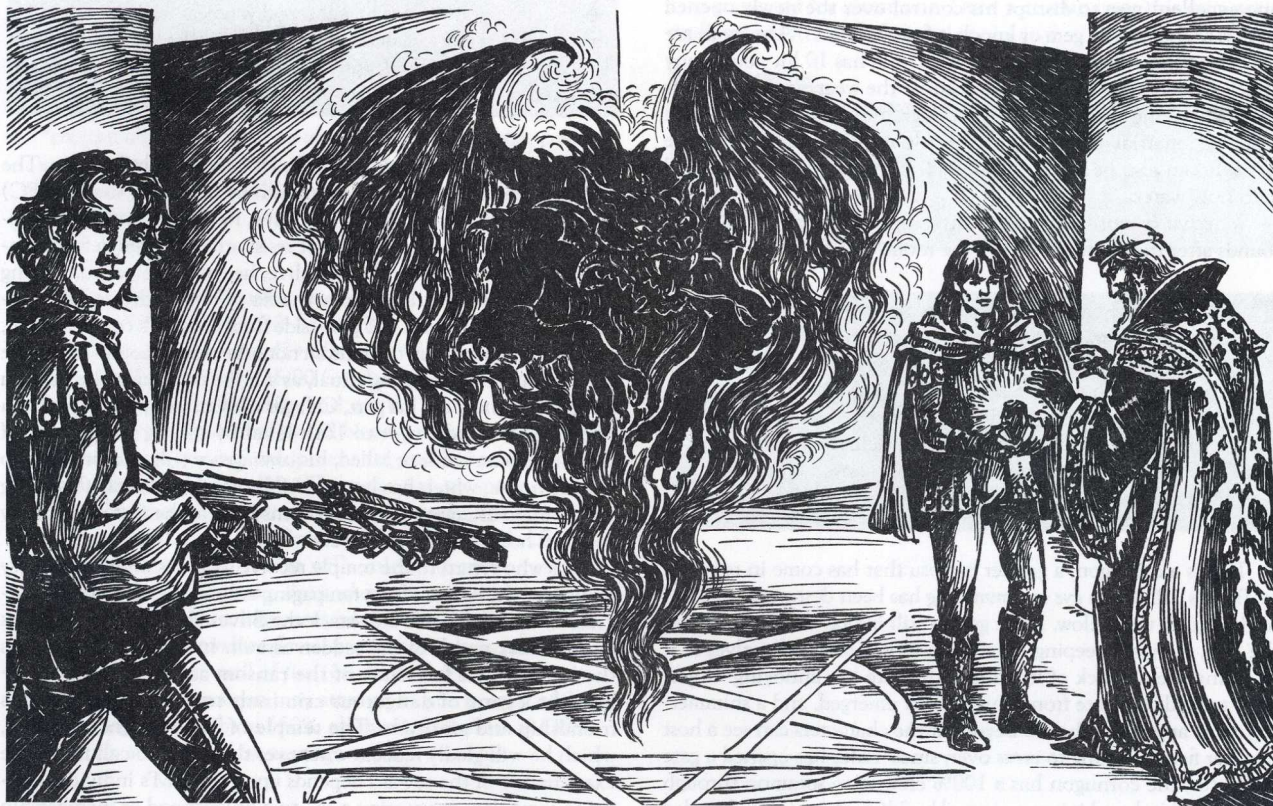
The Conjuring

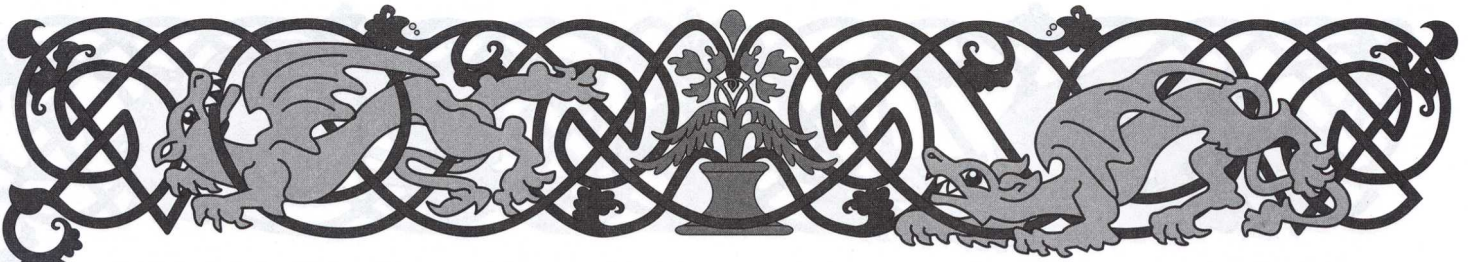
Here in the sub-basement is where the conjuring is taking place. When the PCs reach the foot of the stairs, they see a short hallway ending in a large, iron-bound door. Both hallway and door

are, surprisingly enough, untrapped, but the door is locked. Characters can overcome the door by picking the lock, by a *knock* spell, by chopping down the door (consider it AC 5, with 15 hit points), or by searching for the key. Calagor has hidden a spare key on the lintel above the door; anyone searching for it will automatically discover it. Ask the PCs for their positions in relationship to the door, then proceed.

You open the door to reveal a large underground vault, shaped like a perfect pentagram. A circle in the center of the room contains a smaller pentagram. Three figures stand in separate corners of the room. You recognize two of them as two of the kidnapers—the men you now know are Todus Hill and his brother Will. Will stands alert, a cocked crossbow at the ready. Todus holds a huge ruby in his hands; it glows from within. The third figure, an old man with a great white beard, dressed in coal-black robes, must be the mage Calagor. Several items are heaped in the central pentagram; you recognize them as most of the remaining items included in the ransom. Calagor chants, an odd falling and rising sound that seems to come from very far away, pointing one hand at the gem and the other at the pile of magical items. As you enter, the magical items fade from sight and the ruby begins to emit an eerie black glow. "The sacrifice is complete!" cries Todus. "At last, I have the power! I shall exact my vengeance! I summon ye, fiends from the abyss, to punish the whining priests of Tyr!"

An evil glow appears in the center of the inner pentagram as a figure composed of inky darkness begins to take form . . .





The PCs have several options at this point. They may flee, they may attack, or they may attempt to interrupt the summoning. If they flee, Tadus unleashes multiple fiends against the priests of Tyr; the baatezu rampage about, doing great damage and slaying many innocents as well as a number of Tyr's faithful, before being repelled. Any prisoners the PCs brought back (e.g., Clive, Silmon, Nivers) are killed messily in their cells. If they attack, Will fires a single bolt at the nearest character (a *blessed* bolt intended as insurance in case whatever they summoned got out of hand) and closes to melee with the characters, drawing his battleaxe as he comes. Calagor only casts spells against them if personally threatened (opening up with *power word: stun*), concentrating instead on defensive magics. Tadus, for his part, holds back and concentrates on completing the summoning. If they try to interrupt the summoning, it is too late to stop the ceremony altogether; all they can achieve is to ensure that whatever arrives is not under Tadus's control (obviously a risky move). If one of the PCs moves towards the center of the room, Calagor screams out in pure terror: "Don't step on the pentagram, you fools!"; this may give them a clue both of how to disrupt the summoning and of the risk they run in the attempt. Attacking Tadus before two rounds are up or breaking the pentagram (scuffing one of its lines, deliberately stepping onto a line, splashing it with holy water, etc.) causes the summoning to go awry, with the results given below. Note that while Will stands by his brother to the end, Calagor is not going to hang around and deal with uncontrolled fiends; any interruption causes him to quickly *dimension door* to a safehouse he had previously prepared several blocks away.

Tadus holds the *eye of summoning* created for him by Calagor; one excellent way to disrupt his control over the newly opened gate is to shatter the gem or knock it from his hand. Alas, both are easier said than done. The gem is AC 0 and has 10 hit points; any attack that shatters the gem also destroys the weapon that struck it (no item saving throw applies). If struck by a bare-handed attack (e.g., by a martial artist), the attacker loses his or her hand at the wrist. It can also be destroyed by a *bless* spell or by being doused with holy water.

Whether or not the gem is shattered, the baatezu appears two rounds after the characters enter the room.

Suddenly, the battle seems unimportant. As the air fills with the stench of sulfur, the darkness in the center of the pentagram takes solid form—a nine-foot-tall horned fiend covered with scales and brandishing a wicked barbed whip. Your weapon arm falters before this being of evil incarnate; even with your combined strength, what hope have you of defeating such a creature? Fleeing seems like a very good option now. Before you can act, though, the fiend smiles. It's a horrible sight.

This is a cornugon, a greater baatezu that has come in response to Tadus's call. If the *eye of summoning* has been destroyed, proceed to the boxed text below. If the gem is still intact, the fiend ignores the PCs, at most sweeping them aside if they fling themselves at it or giving them a flick of its whip if they are too annoying. It gestures towards the gate from which it just emerged, and a shimmering circle appears in the air. Beyond it the characters can see a host of other fiends waiting to cross over; since Tadus has opened a gate to Baator, the cornugon has a 100% chance to summon through more of its kind, and it is soon joined by 2d6 barbazu (scaly, bearded

fiends flourishing great saw-toothed glaives), 2d8 abishai (red and black gargoyle-creatures), and two of its fellow cornugons, each of whom summon a like number of barbazu and abishai in turn. Tadus commands them to destroy the temple of Tyr and everyone within it; then hunt down and slay every priest and priestess of Tyr within Ravens Bluff, and all their families. The fiends let out cries of joy and teleport away to perform this agreeable duty.

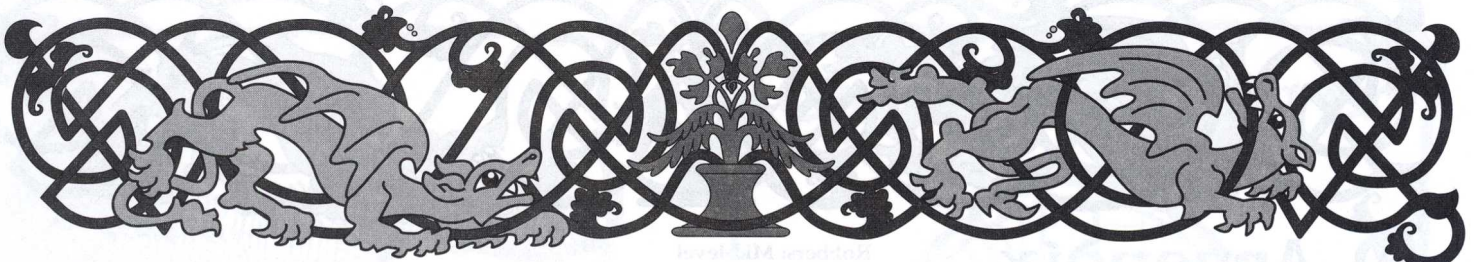
The PCs' only hope now is to destroy the gem (breaking the circle at this point prevents the automatic summoning of more baatezu but does nothing more than annoy the baatezu already in Ravens Bluff). If they wait until the fiends teleport to the temple, they get a free attack on Tadus (he is momentarily lost in an ecstasy of revenge). Killing Tadus at this point does nothing to stop the fiends from continuing their rampage. However, should the PCs succeed in shattering the *eye*, all the barbazu and abishai are banished back to the Lower Planes; two of the cornugons vanish as well (apparently banished, they actually hide themselves in Ravens Bluff to plot further mischief, but that is beyond the scope of this adventure). The first cornugon returns to complete its business with the man who summoned it here, arriving in a burst of yellow smoke that stinks of sulfur:

The baatezu looks at you one by one, and you feel your blood go cold. Then its gaze rests on Tadus, and its eyes narrow. "There you are, little man. Such arrogance, to think that you could control me! Me! My turn now, I think! You are mine!" Tadus stands frozen in terror. As the fiend reaches for him, Tadus turns to flee—too late; the fiend is upon him like a cat on a mouse before he has taken a single step.

"I have plans for you, little one." says the fiend as it and Tadus begin to fade from sight. The last sound you hear from the leader of the kidnapers is an anguished wail of despair that lingers in the air long after he has vanished from view. Then they are gone. So end all who embrace the path of evil.

When the battle is concluded, the PCs may search the room. The *eye* has been shattered into numerous ruby fragments (one per PC) worth 2,000 gp each. If Will is still alive, he falls to his knees weeping, face in his hands, and does not resist arrest or even defend himself if attacked. Whether dead or alive, he can be searched, turning up several items from the ransom: the *axe of hurling*, the *ring of protection +1*, and a sack with 400 pp. Aside from Calagor's compensation, items and treasure from the ransom not otherwise accounted for were used up in the summoning ritual, as a bribe to placate the baatezu being summoned. For his part, Calagor *teleports* away at the first sign of danger (he didn't get to 16th level by taking risks); even if knocked unconscious or killed, his *contingency* still teleports him to his safe house, which has been carefully shielded to foil all scrying and location attempts. He flees Ravens Bluff at the first opportunity and does not return for many years.

PCs who return to the temple receive a heroes' welcome if they prevented the baatezu from rampaging around the city. Hykros survives even if the fiends did attack the Silver Halls, but many of his faithful flock perish in the sudden assault. In either case, he gives the heroes their fair share of the ransom as agreed. They have brought a gang of dangerous criminals to justice and won his friendship and gratitude. The temple of Tyr owes them a favor, which he will gladly redeem whenever they wish to call it in. The exact nature of the reward depends upon the DM's individual ongoing campaign; sponsoring a PC to a knighthood or membership



in the Wizards Guild would be entirely appropriate examples.

Tadus Hill (11th-level Thief): AC 4 (*ring of protection* +2, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 55; THAC0 15 (14 with *stiletto* +1); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2 (*stiletto* +1, Strength bonus); SA backstab (+4 to attacks, quadruple damage); SD thief abilities (see below); SZ M (5'10"); ML elite (13); AL NE; XP 3,000. Str 16, Dex 18, Con 9, Int 15, Wis 7, Chr 10. PP 75%, OL 70%, FT 80%, MS 50%, HS 80%, DN 70%, CW 95%, RL 40%. Special abilities: Gaming (19), Tumbling (18).

William Hill (5th-level Fighter): AC 1 (chain mail and shield, *ring of protection* +1, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 34; THAC0 16 (13 with battleaxe specialization and Strength bonus or *axe of hurling* plus Strength bonus); #AT 1/2 (heavy crossbow) or 3/2 (battleaxe) or 1 (*axe of hurling*); Dmg 1d4+1 (heavy crossbow bolt) or 1d8+6 (battleaxe plus Strength and specialization bonuses) or 2d6+1 (*axe of hurling*); SA weapon specialization (battleaxe); SZ M (5'11"); ML fanatic (17); AL N; XP 420. Str 18/77, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Chr 9.

Calagor (16th-level Mage): AC 0 (*bracers of defense* AC 4, *ring of protection* +4); MV 12; hp 39; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SD spells; SW overly cautious; SZ M (5'10"); ML unsteady (6); AL LE; XP 6,000. Str 10, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 17, Wis 12, Chr 13. Spells: *change self*, *detect magic*, *identify*, *read magic*, *unseen servant*; *detect evil*, *detect invisibility*, ESP, *invisibility*, *levitate*; *hold person*, *nondetection*, *protection from evil* 10' radius, *protection from normal missiles*, *wraithform*; *detect scrying*, *dimension door*, *enervation*, *extension I*, *wizard eye*; *advanced illusion*, **contact other plane*, *dismissal*, *hold monster*, *teleport*; **contingency*, **enchant an item*, *globe of invulnerability*; **limited wish*, *power word: stun*; **permanency*. Special items: *ring of wizardry* (doubles 3rd-level spells), *elixir of health*, *elixir of youth*, *philosopher's stone*.

*already cast.

Cornugon (Greater Baatezu): AC -2; MV 9, fly 18 (C); HD 10; 79 hp; THAC0 11; #AT 2 or 4; Dmg 1d3+6/1d6+6 (tail/whip) or 1d3+6/1d4+6/1d4+6/1d4+7 (tail/claw/claw/bite); SA Str 18/00 (+6 damage), *fear aura* (5' radius—save vs. rod/staff/wand or flee in terror for 1d6 rounds), wounds inflicted by tail bleed for 1 point of damage per round until treated, whip *stuns* targets (1d4 rounds, save vs. paralyzation to resist); SD immune to weapons of less than +2 bonus, regeneration (2 hp per round); MR 50%; SZ L (9' tall); ML elite (14); Int exceptional (16); AL LE; XP 10,000. Special abilities (at will, unless otherwise noted): *advanced illusion*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *detect magic*, ESP, *infravision*, *know alignment* (always active), *lightning bolt* (thrice per day), *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics*, *suggestion*, *teleport without error*, *wall of fire* (once per day). In addition, once per day a cornugon may attempt to *gate* in each of the following: 2d6 barbazu (50% chance), 2d8 abishai (35% chance), and 1d3 fellow cornugons (20% chance).

Experience

- Defeat golem (includes using trapdoor): 200 XP each.
- Disrupt summoning: 250 XP each.
- Kill Will: 420 XP.
- Capture Will alive: 500 XP each.
- Prevent Tadus from attacking temple of Tyr: 500 XP each.

Consequences

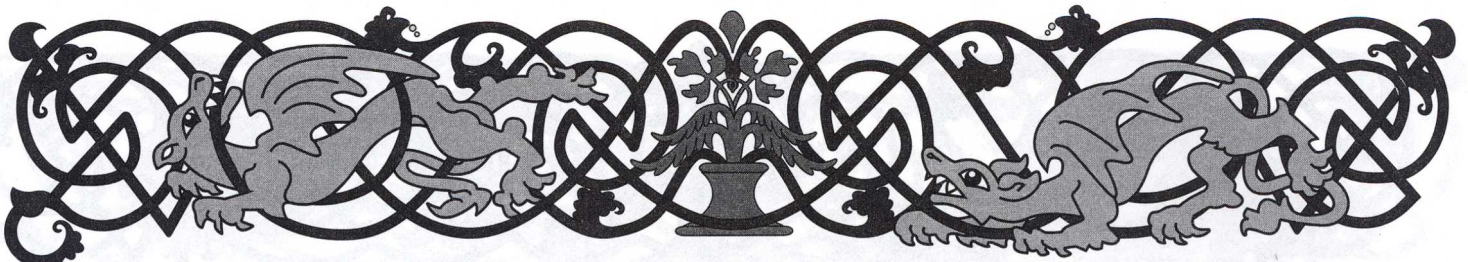
Characters who negotiate their way through this final encounter without falling prey to the various traps in Calagor's tower and manage to disrupt Tadus's summoning of the fiend are to be congratulated for a job well done. If any of the kidnapers were taken alive, play out the trial (held by the highest court in Ravens Bluff and presided over by Lord Magistrate Tordon Sureblade himself), allowing the player characters to testify as well as surviving NPCs of note (Hykros, Dirtin, Turnagon, etc.). The trial is swift and decisive, and all the defendants are found guilty. Unless the PCs spoke out in favor of mercy, and cited mitigating circumstances, all the surviving kidnapers are sentenced to death as culpable in the deaths that occurred as a result of the kidnapping, from Turnagon's murder in the initial kidnapping to all the priests and priestesses in the decoy party and the men and women of the Watch that died in Calagor's tower (don't forget to mention any PCs that died when reading out this tally). If Nivers was taken alive, she is extradited to stand trial in Tantras for the assassination she committed there.

The executions are carried out the next day; the PCs are requested to attend but may decline if they wish. Clive is wheedling, Will defiant and cursing, Silmon silent and withdrawn. After each has been hanged, the bodies are cut down and hauled off to the city graveyard for interment. Draw a curtain over this grim scene and proceed to the Epilogue.

Epilogue

The kidnapers have all been accounted for; your mission is a success. Hykros sees to the division of your reward, saying "I am most pleased with your efforts. You are worthy servants of Tyr. Receive my greatest thanks and know that you are truly servants of justice and valued citizen of the city of Ravens Bluff."

The End



Appendix

This adventure is easily adaptable to different levels of play, as described in the introduction. The stat blocks listed in the main body of the text assume the player characters will be low-level (1st-3rd). Mid-level (4th-6th) and high-level (7th and up) parties may need sterner challenges; the following NPC and monster stats are provided for the DM to substitute as he or she sees fit.

The Red Alliance: Mid-level

Merlika Ogreslayer (8th-level Fighter): AL NE; AC 2 (chain mail, Dexterity bonus); MV 24 (on horseback) or 12 (afoot); hp 60; THACO 13 (10 with *bastard sword +1* plus Strength and specialization bonuses); #AT 2/1 (weapon specialization); Dmg 2d4+4 (*bastard sword +1*, Specialization bonus, Strength bonus); SA weapon specialization (*bastard sword*); SZ M (6'); ML champion (16); AL NE; XP 1,400. Str 17, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 7, Chr 12. Special equipment: *potion of clairvoyance*.

Tomai, Dakka, Nasom, Salu, and Radi (Red Alliance Members, five 5th-level Fighters): AC 4 (chain mail, Dexterity bonus); MV 24 (on horseback) or 12 (afoot); hp 34 (average); THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (mace) or 1d4 (light crossbow bolt); SZ M; ML elite (14); Int average (8-10); AL N; XP 270 each. Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16.

The Red Alliance: High-level

Merlika Ogreslayer (13th-level Fighter): AL NE; AC 1 (chain mail, Dexterity bonus); MV 24 (on horseback) or 12 (afoot); hp 90; THACO 8 (4 with *bastard sword +1* plus Strength and specialization bonuses); #AT 5/2 (weapon specialization); Dmg 2d4+6 (*bastard sword +1*, Specialization bonus, Strength bonus); SA weapon specialization (*bastard sword*); SZ M (6'); ML fanatic (17); AL NE; XP 4,000. Str 18/57, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 7, Chr 12. Special equipment: *potion of clairvoyance*.

Tomai, Dakka, Nasom, Salu, and Radi (Red Alliance Members, five 7th-level Fighters): AC 2 (chain mail, Dexterity bonus); MV 24 (on horseback) or 12 (afoot); hp 67 (average); THACO 14 (13 with mace and Strength bonus, 12 with crossbow and Dexterity bonus); #AT 3/2 (mace or light crossbow); Dmg 1d6+2 (mace, Strength bonus) or 1d4 (light crossbow bolt); SZ M; ML champion (16); Int average (8-10); AL N; XP 650 each. Str 17, Dex 17, Con 16.

Trolls: Mid-level

Troll (4): AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 24, 26, 23, 29; THACO 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+4/1d4+4/1d4+8 (claw/claw/bite); SD regenerates 3 hp per round (starting three rounds after being wounded); SZ L (9' tall); ML elite (14); Int low (5); AL CE; XP 1,400 each.

Trolls: High-level

Troll (7): AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 24, 26, 23, 29, 34, 38, 40; THACO 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+4/1d4+4/1d4+8 (claw/claw/bite); SD regenerates 3 hp per round (starting three rounds after being wounded); SZ L (9' tall); ML elite (14); Int low (5); AL CE; XP 1,400 each.

Robbers

The outdoorsmen remain the same at all three tiers, although they employ more subtle tactics at mid- and high-levels (letting the thugs go into the room first, slipping in behind the main battle and trying to maneuver around into backstabbing positions, etc.).

Robbers: Mid-level

Winas Calobi (7th-level wizard): AC 6 or better (Dexterity bonus, *shield* spell); MV 12; hp 20; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M (5'4"); ML elite (14); AL NE; XP 975. Str 9, Dex 18, Con 7, Int 15, Wis 10, Chr 14. Spells: *color spray*, *magic missile*, *reduce*, *shield*, *knock*, *Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*, *web*; *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*; *confusion*. Special items: scroll (*magic missile*, *strength* (x2), *hold person*).

Kneader Calobi (5th-level Wizard): AC 6 or better (Dexterity bonus, *ring of protection +1*, *shield* spell); MV 12; hp 13; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M (5'6"); ML champion (15); AL NE; XP 420. Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 6, Chr 17. Spells: *burning hands*, *light*, *shield*, *sleep*; *Melf's acid arrow*, *spectral hand*; *vampiric touch*.

Thugs (four 4th-level Fighters): AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; hp 29, 32, 25, 27; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (scimitar, Strength bonus); SZ M; ML 14 (elite); Int low (7); AL N; XP 175 each. Str 16.

Robbers: High-level

Winas Calobi (10th-level wizard): AC 6 or better (Dexterity bonus, *shield* spell); MV 12; hp 34; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M (5'4"); ML elite (14); AL NE; XP 1,400. Str 9, Dex 18, Con 7, Int 15, Wis 10, Chr 14. Spells: *color spray*, *magic missile*, *reduce*, *shield*; *knock*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*, *web*; *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *uraithform*; *cone of cold*, *confusion*; *hold monster*, *shadow door*. Special items: scroll (*magic missile*, *strength* (x2), *hold person*).

Kneader Calobi (7th-level Wizard): AC 6 (Dexterity bonus, *ring of protection +1*); MV 12; hp 20; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M (5'6"); ML champion (15); AL NE; XP 650. Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 6, Chr 17. Spells: *burning hands*, *light*, *magic missile*, *shield*; *Melf's acid arrow*, *spectral hand*, *web*; *Melf's minute meteors*, *vampiric touch*; *ice storm*.

Thugs (six 7th-level Fighters): AC 4 (chain mail and shield); MV 12; hp 38, 47, 53, 61, 48, 45; THACO 14 (13 with Strength bonus); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+1 (scimitar or battleaxe, Strength bonus); SZ M; ML 15 (champion); Int low (7); AL N; XP 650 each. Str 17.

The Kidnappers

Two of the kidnappers—Clive and Bartholomew—have the same stats at all three tiers. Todus has the same stats but at mid-level retains his *ring of free action* (rather than sacrificing it to the baatezu); at high-level he retains not only the ring but is also under the protection of a *stoneskin* spell and a *minor globe of invulnerability*.

Note that various of the kidnappers gain special items between their first and final appearances from their shares of the ransom. Thus, William gains a *ring of protection +1* and an *axe of hurling +1*, Silmon gains a *rapier +2*, and Nivers "One Shot" gains ten *crossbow bolts +1* (actually by trading her *quiver of Ehlonna* for them with an off-stage NPC). Similarly, Todus has some items when first encountered (at the Fighting Terrier and Troll Bridge) which he later expends, replacing them with items garnered from the ransom. Finally, the *eye of summoning* should have 20 hp in a mid-level game and 30 hp in a high-level one.

The Kidnappers: Mid-level

William Hill (7th-level Fighter): AC 0 (plate mail and shield, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 45; THACO 14 (10 with *battleaxe +1* plus Strength and

specialization bonuses); #AT 2/1; Dmg 1d8+7 (*battleaxe +1* plus Strength and specialization bonuses); SA weapon specialization (*battleaxe*); SZ M (5'11"); ML fanatic (17); AL N; XP 650. Str 18/77, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Chr 9.

Silmon (8th-level Thief): AC 0 (elven chain, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 31; THACO 17 (19 on stiletto due to -2 attack penalty from two-handed fighting style); #AT 2 (rapier and stiletto); Dmg 1d6+1/1d3+poison (rapier/stiletto); SA two-handed fighting style (ambidexterous, therefore no attack penalty on main weapon and only -2 penalty on secondary weapon), backstab (+4 to attacks, triple damage), poison (save vs. poison or die, taking 1d6 points of damage even on a successful save); SD thief abilities; SZ M (5'9"); ML elite (13); AL N; XP 975. Str 15, Dex 18 (ambidexterous), Con 12, Int 11, Wis 14, Chr 16. PP 75%, OL 30%, FT 35%, MS 60%, HS 70%, DN 15%, CW 50%. Special abilities: Riding—land based (17), Rope Use (18), Swimming (15). Note that Silmon is left-handed, so she fights with the rapier (her main weapon) in her left hand, not her right.

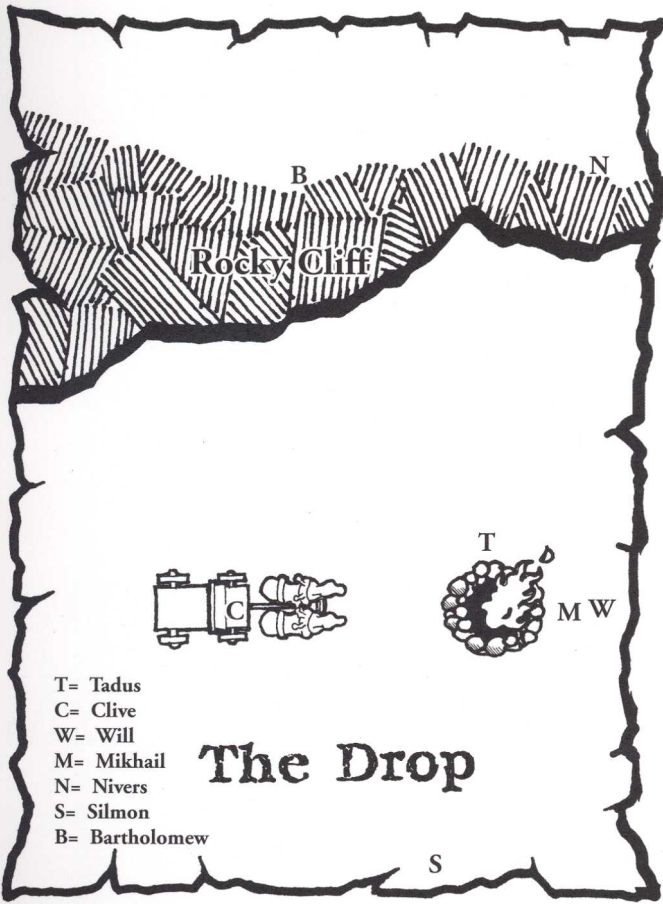
Nivers One-Shot (5th-level elven Fighter): AC 7 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 27; THACO 16 (13 with *crossbow +1* plus Dexterity bonus); #AT 1/2 or 1; Dmg 1d4+1 plus poison (heavy crossbow bolt) or 1d4 (dagger); SA poison (save vs. poison or die, taking 1d6 points of damage even on a successful save); SD elven woodcraft, 90% resistant to sleep and charm; SZ M (5'); ML fanatic (17); AL NE; XP 650. Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Chr 14. Special items: *bracers of brachiation*.

The Kidnappers: High-level

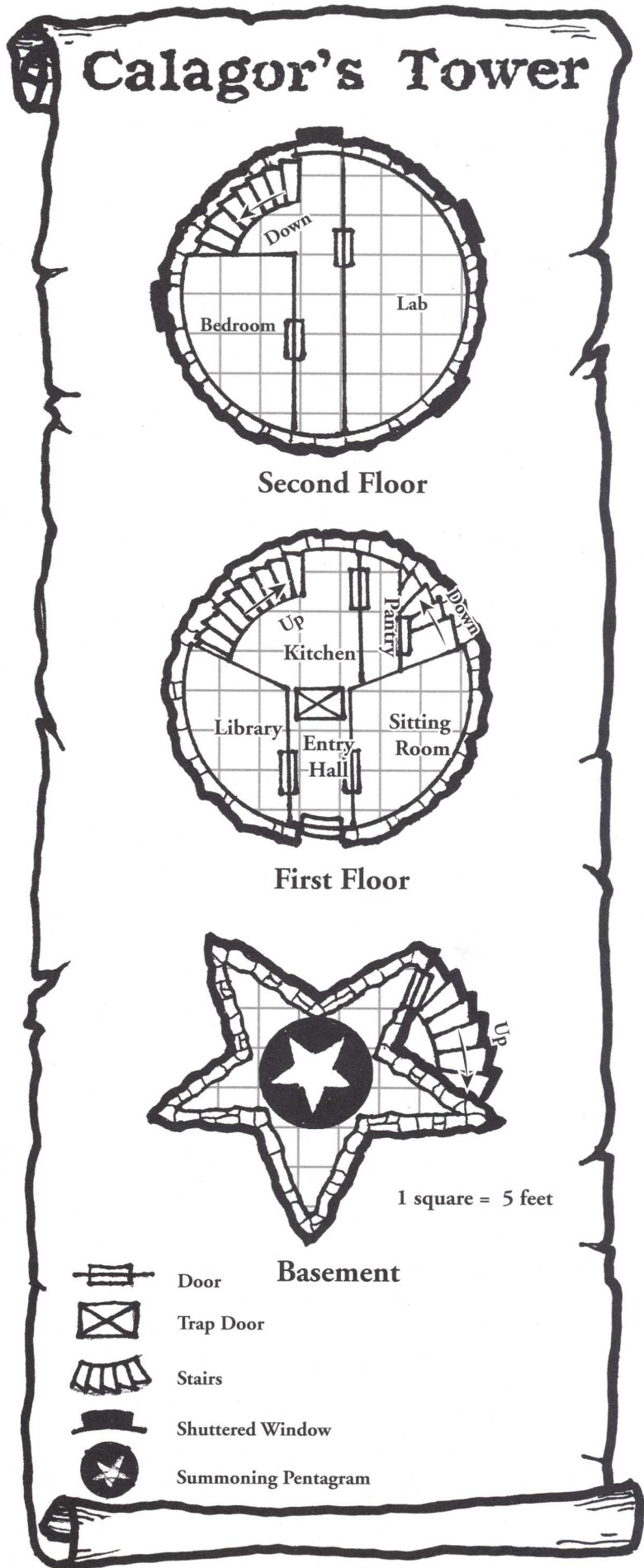
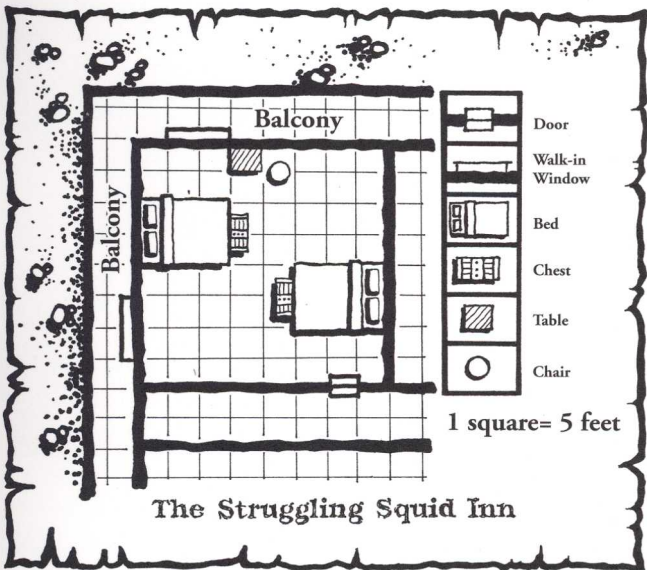
William Hill (9th-level Fighter): AC -2 (*plate mail +1* and *shield +1*, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 63; THACO 12 (7 with *battleaxe +2* plus Strength and specialization bonuses); #AT 2/1; Dmg 1d8+8 (*battleaxe +2* plus Strength and specialization bonuses) or 2d6+1 (*axe of hurling*); SA weapon specialization (*battleaxe*); SZ M (5'11"); ML fanatic (17); AL N; XP 975. Str 18/77, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Chr 9.

Silmon (11th-level Thief): AC -2 (*elven chain +2*, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 42; THACO 15 (17 on stiletto due to -2 attack penalty from two-handed fighting style); #AT 2 (rapier and stiletto); Dmg 1d6+1+poison/1d3+poison (rapier/stiletto); SA two-handed fighting style (ambidexterous, therefore no attack penalty on main weapon and only -2 penalty on secondary weapon), backstab (+4 to attacks, quadruple damage), poison (save vs. poison or die, taking 1d6 points of damage even on a successful save); SD thief abilities; SZ M (5'9"); ML elite (13); AL N; XP 1,400. Str 15, Dex 18 (ambidexterous), Con 12, Int 11, Wis 14, Chr 16. PP 75%, OL 75%, FT 35%, MS 75%, HS 85%, DN 15%, CW 65%. Special abilities: Riding—land based (17), Rope Use (18), Swimming (15). Note that Silmon is left-handed, so she fights with the rapier (her main weapon) in her left hand, not her right.

Nivers One-Shot (8th-level elven Fighter): AC 6 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 53; THACO 13 (8 with *crossbow of speed* plus Dexterity bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 plus poison (heavy crossbow bolt) or 1d4 (dagger); SA poison (save vs. poison or die, taking 1d6 points of damage even on a successful save); SD elven woodcraft, 90% resistant to sleep and charm; SZ M (5'); ML fanatic (18); AL NE; XP 1,400. Str 10, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 10, Chr 14. Special items: *bracers of brachiation*, *brooch of shielding* (39 pts), *cloak of elvenkind*.



KIDNAPPED



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by Tom Prusa

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